

## Principal's Note



As we celebrate the 20th Odyssey of our school, our hearts feel full. Milestones like these are not simply about the passage of time. They are about people, dreams, bonds, and reminiscences. Every parent would agree that nothing is more precious than their children, and the nurturing grounds whether home or school, are sacred spaces where some of their most cherished memories are created.

It all began with a beautiful vision to create a dynamic learning environment where accomplishments are tempered with humility and success is gauged by the kindness in our hearts. Today, our school embodies this aspiration. The flame lit by our founders is now tended with equal devotion by the next generation.

This year's annual theme, Kindness, is not just a value we endorse but a way of life that has shaped our campus since inception. Evident in seniors mentoring their juniors, in children extending their learning through community outreach initiatives, in children making space for each other in classroom interactions; small gestures that go a long way in creating an environment where kindness is not just taught but truly felt.

Our 20-year journey has been shaped by countless hands and hearts. Our alumni who once sat in these classrooms now spread their wings across the world, carrying a little of BHIS wherever they go.

What we hold dearest at BHIS is that our walls speak not with borrowed wisdom, but with the handwritten words of our own children. Their reflections, art, and poems adorn our corridors—their honesty our finest ornament.

We live in a world that constantly asks, "What's next?" Yet the real magic lies in trusting the process. To us, BHIS has always felt like an exquisite mosaic. Fragments of triumph and trials, of conversations and experiences, of friendships and farewells—unique pieces of a larger, vibrant picture—come together to form a coherent and resplendent design.

This 20th year is a beautiful pause to look back with gratitude, ahead with hope, and to keep walking—guided always by truth and kindness.

Here's to the spirit of Billabongers—to shine, strive, and soar!

- Ashish Agarwal



Left to Right: Arzoo Hajela, Hamza Shamim, Simar Kalsi (Editor-in-Chief), Vidushi Lavania, Simarjot Singh Maan

# ONE WAVE

## in the 20th Odyssey

*"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." – Lao Tzu*

The beginning of an expedition is as significant as the distance covered. This 20th Odyssey is a dedication to two decades of learning and viewing the world with new perspectives.

My journey began on my first day at Billabong. Like a sailor navigating foreign seas, it started with subtle waves, new classrooms, new faces, and the pure bliss of learning to be. At first, the oceans were calm, the horizon endless, and every wave carried me closer to the ocean of hope.

Those first years are the ones I will always cherish: the days when teachers welcomed me with open arms and I made my first friends, the ones who turned the classroom into a second home, alive with laughter, secrets, and the warmth that made the unfamiliar feel familiar.

But, as the saying goes, no odyssey stays calm forever. As I grew older, the journey evolved with silent battles, gaining confidence in myself, learning to accept responsibility, coping with mistakes, finding the courage to try again, and navigating the complexities of friendships. There were moments of self-doubt and unexpected challenges, like hidden reefs and rocks disguised beneath the surface.

However, I overcame those obstacles. Sometimes my classmates' laughter reminded me I wasn't alone. At other times, my teachers supported me, pointing me in the right direction when I needed it most.

This is the beauty of an odyssey: how each morning reveals its magic in the form of new pages and beginnings, whether in the twinkle of starry light or the gentle rustling of leaves along a secret path.

I have learned to move past hesitation and speak with confidence, to express myself rather than stay silent. Responsibilities that once seemed overwhelming shaped me into someone dependable and strong. My teachers became sparks of guidance in uncertain times. Because of their insight and faith in me, I grew into a stronger, more compassionate person.

Billabong has been much more than just a building with classrooms; it has shaped my personality in ways I will always treasure. From the curious young girl who first stepped off the bus to the person I am today, every experience has left an indelible mark.

The kindness of teachers and friendships that feel like family have molded me into who I am. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has guided, encouraged, and walked this path with me. As Billabong celebrates its 20th Odyssey, I realize that my tale is just one wave in the vast ocean of experiences that have flowed through these halls. I am proud to be a part of this voyage, to contribute my own chapter, and to carry its spirit forward into the future.

- Navleen Kaur Bagga (10D)

## Editor's Note

An odyssey is never made by one traveler alone. It is shaped by countless voices, each adding its own rhythm to the journey. As we present the 20th Odyssey, this issue is not just a reflection of two decades of Billabong's growth, but a chorus of student voices alive with imagination.

Within these pages lie expressions of creativity that go beyond words or brushstrokes. They are glimpses of thought and imagination. Each poem that dreams, each sketch that speaks, and each article that questions carries the individuality of its creator, yet together, they weave a collective narrative.

For us on the Editorial Board, curating these voices has been nothing short of watching

separate pieces fit together to complete a puzzle that never existed before. That is the real magic of being a Billabonger: we're all so different, and yet we fit.

This issue is a composition stitched from many perspectives, yet bound by one thread, forming a shared vision that honours two decades of Billabong's journey while echoing the aspirations of the young minds who will shape the years ahead.

As you turn these pages, may the 20th Odyssey enkindle in you the same wonder it has sparked in us, and reveal the boundless creativity and potential it embodies.

Simar Kalsi - Editor-in-Chief

Theme:  20th Odyssey



# Independence Day

The staff and students celebrated the 78th Independence Day with great enthusiasm. The campus resonated with patriotism and reverence as students' presentations and performances paid homage to the nation's journey to freedom.



## FRANCIESTA

Franciesta 2025 was truly delightful. Students put in immense hard work to bring French culture to life. From the mesmerising decorations to the delicious treats and fantastic plays, the festivities made this day truly unforgettable.



## WSRO WORLD STEM & ROBOTICS OLYMPIAD REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2025 AT BHIS BHOPAL

The World STEM and Robotics Olympiad (WSRO) turned the campus into a hub of innovation and problem-solving. From designing smart scooters to calculating carbon footprints, over 200 students from different schools showcased projects that offered innovative solutions to the challenges of tomorrow.







# INTER-HOUSE TRIATHLON 2025

The Inter-house Triathlon tested endurance and strength as students across grades 3-12 representing their houses swam, cycled, and ran with determination. Their energy transformed the event into a showcase of grit and healthy competition.



# CISCE REGIONAL SPORTS MEET 2025

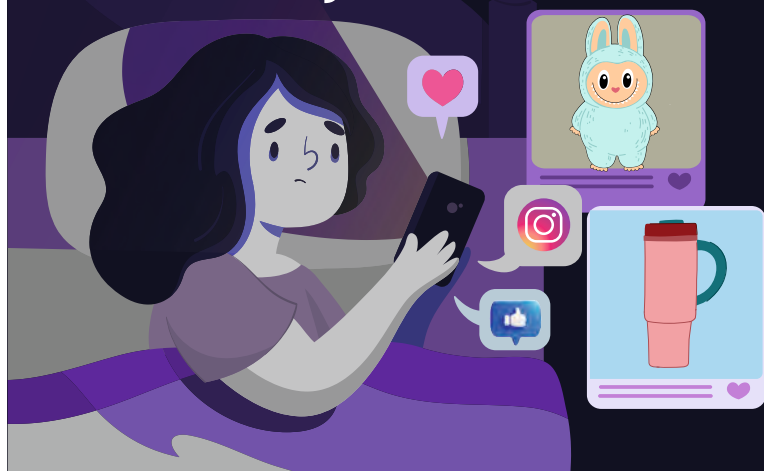
Hosted by Billabong High International School, Bhopal, the CISCE Regional Sports Meet 2025–2026 brought out talent, discipline, and teamwork among students from different zones of Madhya Pradesh.







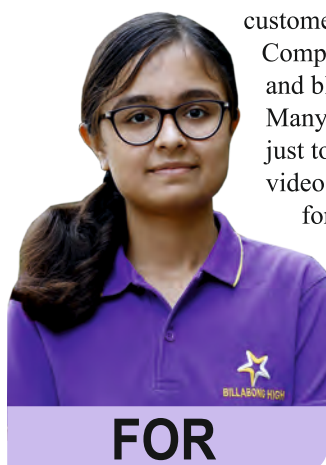
## LABUBU, FOMO & THE PRICE OF POPULARITY-



### Viral Collectibles are Fueling a Dangerous Culture of 'Material Obsession.'

The upsurge in viral collectibles like Labubu, Pokémon cards, sneakers, and merchandise has been promoted as a cultural hobby, while masking the reality of overspending, material obsession, and the search for social validation.

These collectibles are not simple toys crafted for innocent fun, but tools of customer manipulation and profit-driven motives. Companies introduce limited editions, "rare" pieces, and blind boxes, often leading to panic purchasing. Many customers spend savings and ignore essentials just to keep up with fast-changing trends. Unboxing videos with millions of views create more hype, forcing others into the same consumerist frenzy.



**FOR**

While the sellers name these collectibles as "modern expressions of creativity, culture, and community," we must remember that creativity lies in new styles, new patterns, and, more importantly, in new ideas; replicating the same product in merely different shades does not deserve to be called creativity. What initially began as shared joy

has now turned into destructive competition.

In fact, the most famous collectible of the late 1900s, Cabbage Patch Kids, caused riots, where parents frantically broke glass displays and carried out hysterical acts just to get a plastic head doll for their children. As the demand for Air Jordans skyrocketed in the early 2000s, so did the instances of violence and crimes surrounding their releases.

While, the opposition might argue that collectibles have a long history, aging from collecting stamps and baseball cards, and they have always embraced the joy of collecting; but is this collection for personal happiness and self-satisfaction or for higher position in the social hierarchy, that is determined by the rarity of collectible one owns?

The fear of missing out, or as we call it, 'FOMO', drives people to buy impulsively, not out of need, but out of fear. Each launch feels urgent, pushing customers to rush rather than reason. This constant pressure takes away the delight of collecting and replaces it with stress, wasteful spending, and social comparison.

A 2023 report by Spherical Insights & Consulting, projects the global collectibles market will grow from USD 288.34 billion in 2023 to USD 489.48 billion by 2033, driven by rising consumer interest and investment in rare items.

Some compare this to overspending on books, but here lies the difference: readers know what they want. Collectors often spend recklessly on blind boxes, again and again, until they get the "right" piece.

Collecting anything, whether it be cards, toys, sneakers, clothes, etc., should be for oneself and never to impress the public or belittle your peers.

Collectibles were meant for delight, but the sellers have now changed the motive to societal recognition.

In the end, viral collectibles and limited-time editions aren't about appreciating art or fun. They fuel overspending, fragment human connections, and foster obsession. The real collectibles today are not toys, but people's emotions, savings, attention, and, most importantly, their self-worth.

What began as harmless fun and group activity has now slipped into material obsession and social competition.

- Diya Chhabria (11A)

In today's fast-paced digital age, viral trends can make or break the popularity of an item overnight. I'm sure we've all at least heard of them – every few weeks, there's something new that half the world seems to need in order to stay alive. While it does feed into a culture of needless consumerism, such habits are not as harmful as often portrayed and also bring some positive effects alongside their negatives.

The problem with these collectibles lies not with the item itself, but with an intrinsic human trait: the desire to collect. This is a habit all of us have in some form or the other, and to blame the entire phenomenon on the coming and going trends of collectibles would be an overstatement.

It is also important to keep in mind that most people who partake in the craze are not buying things because they are genuinely obsessed with the item, but are instead following the newest trends. For example, a person may buy a Stanley cup not because they are truly obsessed with cups, but because they want to be part of the trend. Similarly, Labubu collectibles have gained massive attention on social media platforms, where fans post and trade them, creating temporary but intense waves of interest. In fact, Labubu's revenue increased by 200% in the first half of 2025 compared to the previous year (<https://www.demandsage.com>).

Furthermore, these trends can bring about a positive change: a sense of community. For people who are averse to social interactions, such collectibles can help them open up and interact positively with like-minded people, becoming more comfortable in social situations. For generations, both adults and children have bonded over collectibles, such as trading cards or sneakers. Labeling these as mere products of material obsession overlooks the sense of togetherness they foster.

FOMO (fear of missing out) is another important factor in the popularity of these trends. While FOMO drives many to buy the latest items, it is a social inclination rather than an effect of the collectibles themselves.

The act of purchasing these items solely to be included in a trend is a side effect of FOMO—not the item itself.

While viral collectibles may seem overhyped or fleeting, at the end of the day, they are just trends — here for a moment, then gone. Think of the Dubai chocolate craze where TikTok trend for 'Dubai chocolate' causes international shortage of pistachios (<https://www.theguardian.com>) and once the buzz wore off, so did the obsession. The same goes for items like Labubu or Stanley cups. Their popularity is more about social connection and shared experience than a true obsession with material possessions. As one trend fades and another rises, it becomes clear that these moments of hype are part of a cultural cycle, not a sign of growing materialism.



**AGAINST**



- Gabriella V. Marques (8F)





## THE ONLY PLACE IS BILLABONG... TO DREAM AND FLY

I was three and a half years old when I first stepped into Billabong. My very first interaction with my teachers happened online. I recited a poem but suddenly paused and stayed completely silent.

The teachers tried to talk to me, but I just smiled. My mom gently told them, “She’s a little quiet.” One of the teachers then said, “Okay, if Devanshi doesn’t want to speak and will only smile, we will leave now.” They began to close the session.

And that’s when I suddenly shouted, “Ma’am! Wait, wait! I want to talk to you!”

I said, “I will answer everything!”

Then, with all the excitement in me, I recited my very first poem- “Chubby Cheeks!”

The teachers smiled and asked, “Is that really you, Devanshi?”

I said proudly, “YES, YES, YES!”

They clapped.

That was my moment and a beautiful journey began.

I have met some of the most amazing teachers who love me and I love them dearly, my friends, and our funny world of joy and so much learning.

Billabong, your colourful walls and exciting classes make me love you more and more every day. I promise to make you proud one day. And now, as Billabong celebrates its 20th Odyssey, I too begin a new journey of dreaming bigger, flying higher, and creating my own story with Billabong by my side.

With love,

Devanshi Pattanaik Routray (1E)



## THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS

Imagine you wake up one morning, check your bank account, and discover that there is no money in it. You receive word that the bank has gone bankrupt. You step outside and notice "For Sale" signs on your house and all over the street.

The 2008 Financial Crisis, also popularly known as The Great Recession was a financial catastrophe that started in the US real estate market.

It all began in the 2000s after the dot.com crash and 9/11 attacks, when the US economy slowed. To boost the economy, the federal reserve lowered their interest rates and provided cheap loans, allowing many people to buy houses. This demand for houses created a housing bubble, that is the houses became overpriced. Ideally, banks give loans to people who have good credit scores, stable jobs and the capability to repay their loans. But in the 2000s, banks started giving loans called subprime mortgages to people with low credit scores and income. The banks bundled thousands of such mortgages into Mortgage Backed Securities (MBS), which were given AAA ratings, the highest possible, by credit rating agencies. These MBS were sold to investors, to offload the risk.

This bubble burst happened in 2007-2008 when the interest rates rose and the house prices dropped, because owners could not repay the hefty loans. Defaulting and foreclosures increased, making the MBS values come to a standstill, thereby resulting in banks and investors booking huge losses. Prestigious banks like the Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. A Global Recession started, causing worldwide stock markets to crash, and a surge in unemployment. Countries worldwide that traded with the US or held US mortgage securities were affected. The Government initiated massive bailouts and interest rates cut down to prevent complete collapse. However, some companies like Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, BlackRock not only survived, but also thrived after the crisis.

The crisis thus taught that over-reliance on debts and excessive risk-taking is fatal, and interconnectedness of financial markets may result in a local problem becoming a global issue.

Sources  
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- Nishit Rathore (11C)

## The Gold Medal Myth



*In the words of Maria Shriver, an American journalist, “Perfectionism does not make you feel perfect. It makes you feel inadequate.”*

I know this is a dramatic assertion to start with, but unfortunately, this is the reality. We have been lied to. Success is not about being “the best”; it is about being better than you were yesterday. I remember the exact moment I realized, chasing ‘the best’ was draining me and making me feel like I was falling short. It was the final exam season, where, despite earning an impressive score, I felt discontent just because I could not achieve the status of a ‘perfect scorer’. This exhaustion weighed more than the achievement. “Was this really a success?” I wondered. That moment forced me to rethink success. Was I working toward something meaningful, or just caught in an endless cycle of competition?

We have all at some moment, longed to be at the top. Trust me, the top spot is overrated. What truly counts is the wisdom you gain and the lessons you carry forward. “Perfection” is too good to be true. Every person has their own flaws, and these flaws should be embraced, not hidden. Finding beauty in your flaws increases your self-esteem. You become more confident, acquiescent, and most importantly, satisfied. After embracing your flaws, work on them to turn them into strengths. Now, you might be wondering – didn't I just say to embrace your flaws? And now I am talking about turning them into strengths? Yes, and here's why: embracing your flaws does not mean settling for them; it means accepting them as a part of who you are, so you can grow from them rather than be ashamed of them. To make this clearer, imagine this situation: “You excel in studies, arts, and sports. Your talents shine in every direction. But the only flaw that holds you back is anger. Work on channeling that energy into calmness and seeing the magic that kindness brings. It will not only transform you but the world around you.”

This idea is simply not a personal perspective, but the centre of a whole Japanese philosophy, “Wabi-Sabi”. Japan has a rich tradition of philosophical and aesthetic concepts, one of which is Wabi-Sabi. Put in simple words, wabi-sabi is the beauty of imperfect things. In Japan, wabi-sabi is unnoticeable, but everywhere - cracks on a teapot, green moss on a rock, falling cherry blossoms, and more. This philosophy had a profound impact on me. I wrinkled my dress, but instead of ironing it, I decided it was a fashion statement - wabi-sabi chic!

Perfectionism often convinces us that flaws are failures. The first step, embracing your flaws, helps break free from the unrealistic standards that perfectionism imposes. The second step, working on your flaws, is where transformation takes place. Perfectionism tells you that anything less than first place, anything short of ideal, is not enough. The real strength lies in improving at your own pace and recognizing that personal growth matters more than external rankings. When you cease pursuing the notion of 'best' and begin concentrating on what is better, success becomes a sustainable, fulfilling, and meaningful journey. True excellence resides not in perfection but in the pursuit of progress. Lastly, life is not a highlight reel; embrace the bloopers.

- Shreeya Hotwani (8E)

## GOING FROM BLACK TO WHITE

Did you know that your hair goes on a journey too, just like the odyssey of life?

When you are young, your hair is typically black or brown, but as you age, it begins to lose its color. Eventually, when you grow older, your hair turns completely grey.

Have you ever wondered, “Why does hair turn grey?” Let me answer that for you!

Each hair follicle contains pigment-producing cells that determine the color of your hair. These cells inject colored granules into the hair cortex (the outer layer of the strand). These granules can be black, brown, yellow, or even a mixture of shades! However, as we age, these pigment-producing cells become less active and eventually stop working. As a result, the new hair that grows becomes colorless, appearing white. When mixed with the remaining weak granules of black or brown, this creates the grey hair we see!



- Samriddhi Saini (4B)






# Odysseus' Journey

Across the sea, so far and wide,  
Odysseus sailed with hope as guide.  
Storms were strong, the waves were tall,  
But he stayed brave through it all.  
Monsters roared, the sirens sang,  
Still, he sailed with a heart so strong.  
Through every trial, every test,  
He dreamed of home—that was best.  
At last, he saw his land so dear,  
His journey done, his home was near.  
Though he traveled far and long,  
His heart was home, where he belonged.


- Aarna Maheshwari (7B)



# ODYSSEY

The skin crackles and burns  
Crying for freedom in the desperately gleaming sun.  
The sails dance in jubilation and the sea barely sways the ship.  
A voice utters- 'Finally' from the bleeding lips.  
Soon, the gleaming sun turns into a scorching flame.  
The vessel echoes with the crashing waves as they call out the lucky sailors' names.  
The skin enjoys what was once torture, basking in the heat.  
They reach the paradise that they had always hoped to meet.  
Fresh, heavenly smell overwhelms their once numbed senses-  
The grainy yet soft sand transitions into a lush evergreen forest.  
They let down their guard, all their defences.  
They sigh ever so gently in relief, free of the ship and for it- their detest.  
As they stare back at it, lying solemn and melancholy,  
They yearn for its creaking floorboards and rust.  
For they had finally found their paradise, surely-  
However, the journey, for this joy- was a must.


- Rhythm Rohani (11B)



# Odyssey of Learning

Two decades of dreams at Billabong's core,  
Where knowledge grows and spirits soar.  
Twenty years of learning's bright embrace,  
Each student finding their unique place.  
Challenges met with courage bold,  
Stories of wisdom waiting to unfold.  
A journey of minds, of hearts that dare,  
Celebrating potential beyond compare.  
Our odyssey continues, ever bright,  
Learning's beacon burning pure and light.


- Simarjot Singh Maan (9C)



# 20 YEARS STRONG

For twenty years, we've laughed and learned,  
With every challenge, our spirit burned.  
Billabong High, our second home,  
A place to dream, to rise, to roam.  
Lessons go beyond the page,  
With projects that help us think and engage.  
Debates that spark our minds to grow,  
And coding skills that steal the show.  
Teachers guide with open hearts,  
In every class, they play their parts.  
Interactive talks, discussions deep,  
Help us improve, not just repeat.  
Sports have always been our game,  
With courts and fields that built our name.  
From football, cricket, and hoops so tall,  
To squash and badminton—we thrive in them all!  
With tests to keep our minds so clear,  
So lessons stay fresh year after year.  
Independence Day, Republic too,  
We celebrate with pride so true.  
Then comes the annual event, a grand night,  
With dance and music, a wondrous sight!  
Let's not forget school trips, that take us far and wide,  
Like IAYP Rishikesh, where we conquer the tide.  
Twenty years strong, yet just the start,  
The best is ahead—we're ready to chart!


- Aditya Sharma (10C)



# The School Voyage

A magical day at school,  
Isn't just riding a horse or swimming in a pool,  
It is the friendships we make,  
That makes our lives truly great!  
With the love we get from our teachers  
It fills our hearts with joy that forever reaches!  
The enchantment in writing or reading a story  
Which brings joy and glory!  
The quest of achieving knowledge  
Is in the thrill of going to school or college.  
The Odyssey of hard work, mastery, intelligence, and learning  
gives us immense contentment and a life full of earnings!

- Zahaa Chaghtai (4A)







## THE LAST BUS RIDE



She didn’t know why she got on that bus, but she knew she couldn’t go home with a storm inside her. She didn’t notice the silence, because the words in her head seemed too loud. Even the bright sun looked dull.

She got down at the last stop. It was a park. Suddenly, her eyes stopped on one a girl who was with her friends. She looked identical, but not exactly like her. She had longer hair, her eyes were glowing, her clothes were bright in colour, her smile seemed like it could light up the whole place, and her laughter was something she could only dream of.

Without realizing it, she was staring into the girl’s soul. The girl noticed, walked straight towards her, and with a warm smile said, “Kid, you’ve come too far. Take this bus and go home.” Embarrassment flushed her cheeks, and she left.

Later that night, lying in bed, she smiled, realizing that it was not a stranger but her, just older, brighter, and stronger. The bus, the bus route, even the driver, no longer existed. But this ride, meeting herself, was the hope she needed,z hope to go on, hope to smile again, because one day, that will be her.

- Malertamil Karthikeyan (11B)

## Ollie’s Odyssey: THE TINY TURTLE’S BIG JOURNEY

Deep within the blue ocean, a tiny turtle named Ollie lived happily with his family in Coral Cove. One sunny morning, Ollie swam too far while chasing a shiny jellyfish and got caught in a strong current!

“Whoa!” cried Ollie as the waves carried him far from home.

He landed in a deep, dark forest, where a crab guard challenged him. “Only the brave may pass!” Ollie took a deep breath and danced the “swim-twist-wiggle” he had learned from his big brother. The crab laughed and let him go.

Next, Ollie met a sleepy whale named Wanda. “I’ll take you home,” she yawned, “but only if you tell me a good story.” So Ollie told her all about Coral Cove, sea-star races, and bubble games. Wanda smiled and carried him halfway.

Then came the storm. Lightning flashed! Ollie hid under a floating log. “I just want to go home,” he whispered, holding back turtle tears.

As dawn broke, Ollie spotted something - a familiar coral shape! He swam faster than ever before.

“OLLIE!” shouted his family, and they huddled him tight.

“I had an odyssey!” Ollie beamed. “I met a crab, a whale, and a storm... but nothing beats being home!”

And from that day, Ollie became the bravest turtle in Coral Cove - and the best storyteller too!

- Faaleha Khan (4A)



## THE LOST WALLET



It was lunchtime at the school, and the playground was alive with noise. Cricket balls were soaring in the air, children were giggling, and students were running in all directions. Among them was Shlok, a shy 7th grader who preferred reading over running.

As he walked by the basketball court, he noticed something shining in the light - a wallet on the ground beside the shaded bench under a banyan tree. He picked it up and looked inside. There were a few hundred rupees, a library card, and a school ID card.

It belonged to Arjun, the most popular student among the 9th graders. He was an athlete, a top student, and had a reputation for his flashy sense of style. Shlok’s heart pounded. No one had seen him pick it up. He had enough money now to buy that set of novels he had been wanting. No one would ever know. But then his mother’s words rang in his head: “Character is who you are when nobody is looking.”

Shlok took a deep breath, walked into the staffroom, and handed the wallet to his class teacher, Mrs. Mehra. “I picked this up near the basketball court,” he whispered.

That same day, in the last period, the principal announced, “Today, we would like to recognize a student who demonstrated real honesty. Shlok of grade 7 returned a lost wallet without pocketing a single rupee. He reminded everyone that values are more important than popularity.”

The class erupted in cheers. Arjun walked up to Shlok, smiling shyly. “Thanks, man. I didn’t even realize I had dropped it. You’re the hero.”

Shlok said little, but he smiled - a quiet, proud smile. At that time, Shlok may not have scored a goal or a six, but he had earned something better: respect.

Thus, an act of kindness never goes unnoticed.

- Mrigank Mukund Om (7D)





James Gunn has honestly saved the DC Universe. This movie isn't just a reboot but the revival of hope, optimism, and classic heroism. Superman has always been the poster boy of superheroes, the one everyone secretly wants to be. With a fresh face, new characters, and a shift from the older versions, this film really takes us back to the roots of the "Man of Steel".

We meet a younger Clark Kent (David Corenswet), trying to juggle his job as a journalist at The Daily Planet and being, well, the most powerful guy on Earth. The story takes place three years after Clark became Superman. Of course, Lois Lane (Rachel Brosnahan), the fearless reporter, is back as his love interest. The film is set in Metropolis, where the villain, Lex Luthor (Nicholas Hoult), shows up as a smart, ruthless CEO of LexCorp. He absolutely despises Superman and plans to

bring him down by creating chaos with Ultraman (Superman's clone) and an engineer who helps him out. David Corenswet pulls off the sincerity and charm Superman needs, while Rachel Brosnahan makes Lois Lane witty, brave, and super sharp. Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor is both classy and scary, a villain who uses brains, power, and money instead of fists. The Justice Gang members like Green Lantern, Hawkgirl, and Mr. Terrific show up too, and are comic-accurate. The side characters could have had more depth, but they still made an impression.

What makes Superman (2025) stand out is its mix of hope, humor, and optimism. It doesn't make fun of heroism, it celebrates it. Gunn gives us a Superman that feels classic but also relatable to today's world.

- Siddharth Handa (11A)



Image credits: <https://www.youtube.com>

Life is Beautiful is a moving and truly one-of-a-kind film. Set during the Second World War, it blends humour and heartbreak in a way that has continued to touch audiences even years after its release.

The lead character, Guido Orefice, is an Italian man who often finds himself in tricky situations but always handles them with a smile. From start to finish, Guido's bright spirit shines through even the darkest times. His cleverness and optimism act as a shield against the harsh realities of war, bringing moments of humour during times of suffering. The film balances these lighter scenes with touching moments of longing, creating a powerful emotional journey.

The story itself unfolds in two halves. The first half is lighthearted and joyful, with Guido building his life, earning respect at work, and eventually marrying and starting a family. The second half is much

darker, yet it delivers a message about staying positive during the toughest of times. It is incredible how seamlessly the movie flows from one half to the other, and how the contrast is portrayed on screen with such grace.

What stays with me the most is how Guido's love and hope transform even the hardest circumstances into something meaningful and beautiful. This movie lingered in my mind long after it ended because of the way it balances humour and heartbreak so authentically. Ultimately, it is a story about hope and love that resonates deeply.

Directed by and starring Roberto Benigni, Life is Beautiful has touched millions worldwide and went on to win three Academy Awards. It kept me engaged throughout and left a lasting impact, making it one of my favourite films of all time.

- Uddish Sharma (10C)

If plot twists could write a chapter, this show would be thicker than our Mathematics book. The Squid Game franchise has earned a place in the hearts of viewers worldwide. The show blends emotions that the director, Hwang Dong-hyuk, has intricately presented to us.

Season 3 continues from the cliff hanger of Season 2, where we saw Seong Gi-hun witness the death of his dear friend, Park Jung-bae. The new season begins with Gi-hun returning to the Game room in the same coffin used for the dead. When he regains consciousness, he is completely broken and has given up all hope.

As the games resume, our faith in humanity dwindles with each round. We come across very familiar games like Hide-and-Seek and Jump-Rope. By the end of the Hide-and-Seek game, we are introduced to Kim Jun-hee's baby. The baby forces us to confront the main theme of the season, Survival vs Humanity, as it questions whether retaining one's soul is possible in a system built on cruelty.

In the final game, Gi-hun's powerful speech and slow death leave a deep impact. His death is so sad that even the VIPs couldn't laugh, well, except Bryan Bucco, who accidentally bet his money on Player 222. Happy accidents, I guess.

This franchise isn't just a spectacle of trauma, it's a philosophical gut-punch. I am sad that the Korean version has ended. Now, don't call it schadenfreude or something entirely new, but this show is a whole new emotion. And it is definitely not for the weak.

I enjoyed watching it and would give it 10 plot twists out of 10, and a bonus marble for Gi-hun.



Image Credits: <https://www.youtube.com>

- Amayera Mishra (7F)



Image credits: <https://www.goodreads.com>

Recently, I read a book titled, 'The Odyssey', retold by Louie Stowell and illustrated by Matteo Pincelli. In the ancient world of Greece, there lived a mighty warrior named Odysseus. He was the king of the island of Ithaca, known for his clever mind and bravery in battle. Odysseus was one of the Greek heroes who fought in the Trojan War.

After the war, Odysseus longed to return home to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus. However, the journey was not easy. Odysseus faced the anger of the gods, especially Poseidon, the god of the sea, who made his voyage very

dangerous.

The journey, which should have taken only a few weeks, stretched into ten long years and was filled with incredible challenges and encounters with mythical creatures. One of the first obstacles was the land of the Lotus-Eaters. Another was the Cyclops, including the giant Polyphemus with a single eye. Perhaps the greatest challenge was facing a six-headed monster.

At last, Odysseus sailed back to Ithaca and finally reunited with his wife and son.

Just like Odysseus never gave up, we too should continue on our journey to success. There might be times of difficulty, but if we work hard and believe in ourselves, we will reach our goals. Let us be brave, wise, and strong.... just like Odysseus!

- Nandini Choudhary (3A)



### Nano Banana: The Photoshop Killer?




Image credits: <https://arbisoft.com>

The AI boom is definitely taking the world by storm. It has only been three years, and already a lot has been accomplished. By comparison, at the same point in the mobile phone boom, the iPhone 4 hadn't even been released yet. Assumptions and sentiments about AI have become much more defined now.

Enter Nano Banana, officially known as Gemini 2.5 Flash Image. Developed by Google DeepMind, this cutting-edge AI model is making waves in the image generation space. While not flawless, it stands out for its impressive capabilities.

What distinguishes Nano Banana is its exceptional understanding of context and nuance. While many AI models falter with intricate scenes and detailed prompts, Nano Banana excels in rendering them with ease. It demonstrates a rare comprehension of spatial relationships and artistic intent. Additionally, it maintains character consistency across multiple prompts, ensuring that characters and objects remain consistent throughout. Remarkably, it operates at a cost-effective rate of \$0.039 per image.

However, it's not without its shortcomings. Occasionally, it struggles with intricate details and text, such as adding unintended letters to words or misrepresenting human hands.

While Nano Banana may not render tools like Photoshop obsolete just yet, it offers a glimpse into the future of AI. It signifies a shift towards "agentic" AIs: models capable of making consistent decisions and acting more like collaborators than mere tools. This evolution underscores that the AI boom is driven by tangible advancements rather than mere speculation.

**TECHNOLOGY HEAD**  
- Siddesh Jain (11A)

### VINTAGE VIBES, MODERN MINDSET THE RISE OF THRIFTING CULTURE





Image credits: <https://chatgpt.com>

Alongside this, with the fashion era of the 2000s taking over the internet by storm, the youth are resorting to thrift stores for vintage pieces to relive that period of time.

So, why is the rise of this culture vital for the preservation of not only the fashion community but also the fight against climate change? Looking at the bigger picture: clothes are worn only 7-8 times before being discarded. About 87% of these discarded clothes are incinerated or left in landfills. That's around 92 million tonnes of barely worn clothes wasted every year or roughly one garbage truck full of clothes every second. The waste generated by the textile industry has resulted in a massive carbon footprint and thousands of tonnes of methane gas released by decaying fabric. Yet, this is just one statistic for a much larger problem.

Thriftng might not be the ultimate solution to the climate crisis, but it is a first step toward achieving sustainable goals and reducing the negative impact of the fashion industry on the environment. Thrifting and upcycling culture is set to become a turning point in fashion, standing proof that style can be affordable, creative, and sustainable all at once.

- Kyna Goel (10B)



TRAVELOGUE  
THIS BHO PAL

## Ladakh Diaries

Our 6-day trip to Ladakh was full of adventures - mountain climbing, snowmobile rides, camping, hiking, and even losing two mobile phones along the way! We reached the highest motorable road in the world and visited many military bases. The Kargil Light Show touched our hearts and even brought us to tears. Salute to all the soldiers who work with so much courage in the freezing cold and with so little oxygen. I also saw snow for the very first time, and that made the trip even more special!

Image credits: Zahra Husain

- Zahra Husain (1F)





Image credits: Zahra Husain

## THE LITTLE MONSTERS OF ME



Why are you here, Sadness Monster?

I'm just a little sad because we lost the football game.

It's okay to feel sad I'm sad, too.

You can go now, Sadness. I'm going to play with my friend!

Let's go have some fun and play? Happy Monster!

You bet!

Written & Illustrated by:

Sadness is just a visitor - welcome it, learn from it, and let happiness stay a little longer.

- Dikshita Mamtani (9B)





## Tête-à-Tête with

### Mental Health Experts

*Dr. Tony Sam George*

&

*Dr. Cathlyn Niranjana Bennett*



Founder and Director  
The NeuroPathways Institute



Founding Co-Director  
The NeuroPathways Institute

#### Q What was your vision and what inspired you to start the NeuroPathways Institute?

Dr. George: I always knew I wanted to work in medicine or science, but I felt a calling to become a therapist and counselor, especially for young people struggling with addictions. I took a purposeful break, worked with a youth organization, and realized I wanted to make the biggest impact by helping others directly.

That question - "Am I doing what brings the most impact to people around me?" led to the creation of NeuroPathways Institute. Over the years, we gathered knowledge and research, but we wanted to use it to truly transform lives.

NeuroPathways is grounded in evidence-based practices and cutting-edge neuroscience because that is what makes the greatest difference. Our focus is on reaching those often overlooked, with an emphasis on community work and accessible mental health interventions. The name "NeuroPathways" reflects this: "neuro" stands for neuroscience, and "pathways" represents the different paths to help, contribute, and build. It's more than an institute—it's a space that helps people live better lives using science and evidence.

Niranjana Bennet: Early in my career, I interned at Christian Medical College and worked with a child who had a brain injury. That experience showed me the difference between merely surviving and living life to your full potential. It inspired me to create programs that support people early in life, helping them thrive.

We also realized that certain practices today can prevent conditions like dementia later in life, but very few organizations focus on this. We wanted NeuroPathways to offer meaningful programs and train people to make a real impact.

#### Q This year's World Mental Health Day focuses on the theme: 'Mental health in a globalized world. Given your extensive work on mental well-being across different countries, what has your experience been in observing mental health in diverse cultural contexts? Do the challenges tend to overlap or are they significantly different from one another?

Mental health across nations and cultures is both similar and different, there's no simple answer. There are universal aspects, but culture also shapes experiences in significant ways.

For example, a few years ago, I spent time in Mexico working with students in a medical college and later in the community. During a Q&A session, the questions the students asked were very similar to those I received from students in India or Canada. This shows that some challenges, like facing life hurdles, relying on personal resources, and seeking support are universal.

There are also common patterns across countries, such as the silence around mental health. Even in developed nations, where mental health is more openly discussed, stigma and reluctance still exist. Access to affordable mental health services is another shared issue. In a recent joint research project, 10 students from India and 10 from the US explored these challenges. Both countries face access issues, though the context may differ.

Young people everywhere show similar patterns of vulnerability and advocacy. The brain develops fully around age 25, making adolescence to the mid-20s a period of heightened vulnerability. Across cultures, young people experience anxiety, relational stress, and pressures amplified by digital exposure and changing family structures.

At the same time, cultural differences shape the reasons behind mental health struggles. In our research, Indian students often cited academic pressure, family expectations, and life stress as reasons for suicidal thoughts, while their counterparts in the US focused more on feelings associated with existing mental health conditions. Local culture, economic conditions, political movements, and approaches to support, such as the use of faith healers in some Indian and African communities also influence how mental health is understood and addressed.

In summary, there are clear similarities in experiences, particularly among young people, but the reasons behind challenges and the ways communities respond are shaped by culture, society, and local ecosystems. Mental health is simultaneously universal and deeply contextual.

#### Q Can biofeedback be used not just as a treatment but also as a practice tool for mental health and how do you see emerging technologies like brain training and neurofeedback shaping the

#### way we understand and approach well-being in the years ahead?

Yes, definitely. Neurofeedback began as a tool for diagnosable mental health conditions, but over time we've realized it has a much wider impact. For instance, Abhinav Bindra, India's first Olympic gold medalist in 2008, is believed to have used a combination of neurofeedback and biofeedback to enhance focus and attention.

Applications extend across fields: the Italian soccer team AC Milan has a dedicated room for mental health and peak performance training using neurofeedback, which reportedly contributed to some of their championships. NASA astronauts also use neurofeedback for training.

Emerging technologies, such as smart glasses that monitor brain activity and attention levels, indicate the future will bring a variety of wearable devices. This will expand neurofeedback beyond clinical use into broader performance, lifestyle, and well-being applications.

#### Q How can young people build a more comprehensive connection with elders, especially teachers and parents whose life experiences and challenges were very different from their own?

I think it helps to recognize the differences between the world of a young person and that of an older generation. Our world moves so fast, full of technology and rapid change, while previous generations experienced a slower pace. One useful approach is to openly share your world with them. Sometimes we assume they won't understand, and that mindset blocks opportunities for common ground. I remember my father, who was over 80, asking me about AI psychosis, at that time, I hadn't even heard the term! Sharing music, experiences, or interests can open up these conversations.

Sharing rituals also helps. Cooking with a parent, discussing a favorite book with a teacher, these create spaces for meaningful interaction and connection.

Finally, it's important to embrace intergenerational humility. Every generation has its blind spots, but there's always something to learn from one another and something we can teach as well.

#### Q What practical steps do you think students of our age group can take to keep their social media use from turning into an addiction or an unhealthy dependence?

These are important questions, especially since technology is such a big part of your world. Technology itself isn't the problem, it's how we use it. One practical step is using technology to manage technology, such as setting app timers or screen limits. These tools help us become more aware of our usage and more intentional about our time online.

It's also important to replace screen time with other engaging activities,

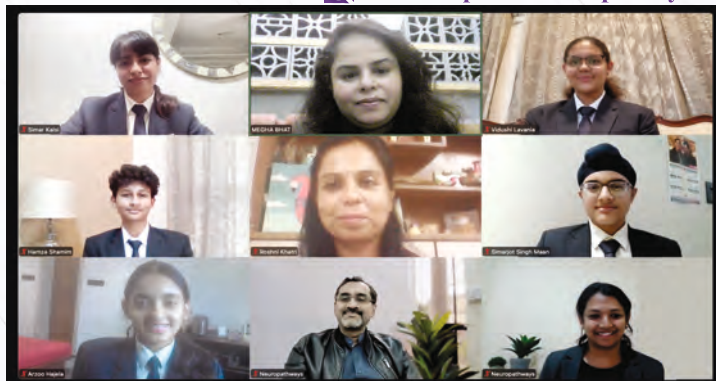
like joining a dance class or a football club, so we're not constantly drawn back to our devices. Another helpful approach is to practice pausing. For example, if you open Instagram just to reply to a message, notice when you start scrolling and consciously choose to stop. Being mindful about how we interact with our devices helps prevent them from hijacking our attention.

#### Q As students, we often feel the passage of time speeding up with the rising demands. Balancing academics like school and coachings, extracurriculars, and the pressure to excel in multiple areas rather than focusing narrowly on just one. From a psychological perspective, how does one cope with the stress created by these overlapping expectations?

When we try to move too fast, we often overlook the need to slow down. External pressures like upcoming exams and thinking about future careers create a hypercompetitive academic environment. This can lead to cognitive overload, where the brain struggles to juggle multiple tasks and stimuli, making time feel shorter.

Many students try to pursue excellence in several areas at once, which fragments attention and builds chronic stress. Social comparison also plays a role—parents, peers, and social media create benchmarks that students measure themselves against, adding to the pressure.

Psychologically, one way to manage stress is to prioritise tasks by asking, "Which task needs my attention most right now?" Categorising tasks by urgency and importance helps manage workload and build long-term character, even if results aren't immediate. Time should also be blocked for study, rest, and recreation, with sleep treated as a vital nutrient for mental and physical well-being.







“In photography, there is a reality so subtle that it becomes more real than reality.”  
– Alfred Stieglitz



Chinmay Patidar (12A)



Hidaya Syed (3E)



Hajra Khan (8A)



Samiya Sami (10D)



Tanishq Parmani (8E)



Aardra Singh (12B)



Novyana Soni (5C)





Advika Rajwansh (4D)



Krishaansh Goyal (4B)



Diksha Bajaj (11F)



Radhika Tharani (11F)



Aiman Fatima (10B)



Rhythm Rohani (11B)



Adya Saxena (4A)



Shatakshi Saini (3F)