



## Principal's Note

*"The most precious jewels are not made of stone but of flesh."*

- Robert Ludlum

The goosebumps and tears of victory associated with India's performance at the Tokyo Paralympics 2021 are still etched in our minds. 5 gold, 6 silver, 8 bronze; a whopping 19 medals in all!!

A momentous occasion: the unmasking of the differently-abled, not just of their indisputable potential but equally their narrative of just how they beat the odds.

Indeed, there is exquisite potential embedded in each one of us but many a time we choose not to unmask the genius within us. Nelson Mandela once said, 'There is no passion to be found playing small and settling for a life less than the one you are capable of living.'

What is it that holds you back? Fear of rejection? Fear of failure? Belief in others' judgment about you, over and above your own self-belief, self-worth?

J.K. Rowling's first manuscript of Harry Potter was rejected on multiple occasions before it became the world's most widely read book. Steve Jobs not only returned to save Apple after being sacked from it but also went on to lead the digital revolution. Talent needs to be nurtured and polished with dedication and perseverance to bring out its dazzling brilliance.

Are you ready to pick up the gauntlet? After all, Billabongers are the smart, compassionate and empathetic new generation which has the ability to make a difference.



- Ashish Agarwal

## Student Editorial Board



**Mannat Kaur Kandal**  
Editor-in-chief



**Aarnya Tuteja**



**Devyani Sadho**



**Nilotama Singh**



**Ridhima Dwivedi**

# Masked: The Truth of Life

*"We all wear masks, and the time comes when we cannot remove them without removing some of our skin."*

- Agatha Christie



The fact that we are masked became obvious to us only recently, when we started wearing the physical mask. Ironic isn't it, that we needed a physical mask to remind us of the much-required unmasking? Had it not been for COVID- 19, this realisation may not have dawned upon us at all, and we would have continued to live our masked lives. The physical mask was not so ubiquitous all this while, but it seems that the virtual mask had always been a reality. The mask has been an inseparable weapon for survival and prosperity in a world full of cut-throat competition.

It has been used not just to conceal the truth but also to highlight the falsehood. It has been there to project to the world a rosy picture of oneself, full of all the requisite virtues. Ensuring smooth progress of oneself, the mask serves as a perfect mechanism to display a façade that the world likes. It hides the natural qualities of variety and dissent. It also hides weaknesses like fear, apprehensions and lack of confidence. The truth cannot remain hidden for long and its realisation occurs one day. However, by that time, the world has already been deprived of the beautiful, unmasked reality.

Who cares if the true gift of all humankind remains under wraps and only a tiny fraction of it reaches actualisation? Who cares if we regress by remaining happy and satisfied with the false progress that gets glorified? But how does it help? Why is hiding essential? Why is the world happy with the unreal?

In a world where people look for quick returns even if it comes at the cost of cutting corners, shortcuts become the order of the day. People do not seem to have the patience to accept what at first appears unseemly but is beneficial in the long run. There is no place for flaws in market-driven human behaviour; therefore, the masks come in handy while selling untrue dreams of prosperity to the buyer. All such successes remain ephemeral

and soon reality starts unmasking itself, and that is the time when one works overtime to hide even more. In a world where turnover and profits take centre stage, truth and quality take a beating.

In the foregoing, I describe that in such a background we hide our real qualities and start masquerading to meet the demands of the desired stereotypical beauty. But such masquerading prevents us from reaping the real benefits of our God-given qualities and beauty. It is a loss not only for the individual but for the entire humankind.

'A stitch in time could have saved nine' but alas, nobody has time for that as we continue to stitch our masks time and again. The enjoyment of the false present soon melts away and the ugly reality of the wrongs done in the past cloud all such enjoyment.

You, my dear readers, are all precious gifts. Concealed under a glossy exterior, appealing to the eyes, the picture of perfection. Have you ever seen people receiving a gift? The way their eyes light up and their face creases into a smile that is beyond endearing? That's how people feel when they meet you. However, under that perfect exterior is an even better entity, and that is your true identity.

Leap, not because the world expects you to, but because you want to. Peel off the mask that has deprived the world of the gift that is you, and allow the world to discover what they have been missing. We all should realise that our inner beauty is more beautiful than that of the contrived mask, and only patience is required to understand and appreciate it.

- Arzoo Hajela (7C)

## Editor's Note

Art liberates the soul, and not only reflects the deepest thoughts of an artist, but evokes the deepest emotions in those who witness its beauty. For us, the Editorial Board, there is no better feeling than relaying this magic, from the hearts of Billabongers, to you, our dear readers.

As we sat together (virtually) to ponder upon the theme of this issue, we realised that the idea sat right there, staring back at us. We have spent the last one-and-half years with a mask concealing our faces, but the metaphorical mask has accompanied us since time immemorial. Thus, came through the idea of "Unmasked" - An attempt to unmask not only ingenuity but also the truckload of creativity that Billabongers possess. This is not only an elaboration, but also a clarification - We are not asking you to move

about without masks!

Taking over from our wonderful predecessors, the process of compiling our first issue for this year has been a concoction of joy, anxiety, excitement and pride. As for me, taking over this column for the first time is indeed special, and as I pen these words down (alright, type!) My heart is full of gratitude. To be able to communicate with all of you, through this ensemble, is a privilege I acknowledge and cherish. So, dear readers, I warmly present to you the October issue of the Billabong Bulletin, which we hope will bring as much joy to you as it did to us, while we brought it together.

- Mannat Kaur Kandal, Editor-in-chief

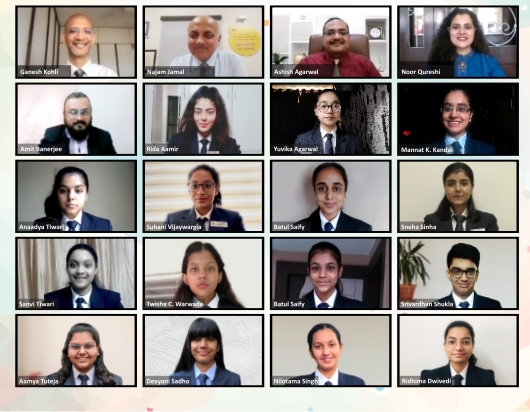


## India's 75th Independence Day



On this Independence Day, our honourable Chairman, Mr Najam Jamal along with our school Principal, Mr Ashish Agarwal conducted the flag hoisting ceremony on the school premises. In addition to that, virtual celebrations at Preschool and Primary School were filled with tricolour hues and unmatched patriotic fervour. From painting lotus cut-outs to making tricolour pendants, the preschoolers thoroughly embodied the patriotic spirit. On the other hand, the children from primary learned all about the contribution of our freedom fighters in our independence. A creative writing competition was also conducted on free speech by our school and Yuvaliterati.

## Investiture Ceremony 2021-22



The school bore witness to an enthusiastic group of young leaders, as the Investiture Ceremony 2021-22 took place on 31st July, 2021. After the Student Council 2020-21 executed their responsibilities wonderfully in a year full of challenges, the newly elected Student Council officially entered office, with a vision to make this academic year a resounding success.

Yet again, the Investiture Ceremony took place virtually, and was streamed live on Facebook. Our Principal, Mr. Ashish Agarwal, started off the proceedings by welcoming the chief guest cum installation officer for the ceremony, Mr. Ganesh Kohli (President & Chief Mentor, KIC UnivAssist, founder of the ICR movement & co-founder, The Aha Movement). He motivated the elected Council and presented them with a new mantra, seeking reference from the popular Star Wars franchise - "You can do or do not, there is no try." He emphasised the importance of decisiveness, taking action, the role of leaders to always look for solutions, and ended with a reminder for the young leaders to always remain true to their own selves. He asked the students to not be frustrated with the pandemic and spoke of the capacity of a true leader to surrender, and learn in any situation. He added an important philosophy inspired by Lao Tzu - "When the leader is forgotten, the work is done." According to him, a leader always carries a knife with them, to chop off their ego. His words definitely elevated the stature of the solemn occasion, imparting some valuable lessons. Former School Captain, Shah Hussain shared his experience of leading the council during unprecedented times. The incumbent School Captain, Rida Aamir delivered her acceptance speech as she motivated her council to give their best. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by the hosts, Ms. Noor Qureshi (Literary Coordinator) and Mr. Amit Banerjee (High School Faculty, English Department). After an enthralling online election, the Investiture Ceremony marked the beginning of an exciting year for the young leaders.

## MP & CG Regional Association Literary Events 2021

With the objective of providing an opportunity to our young speakers to showcase their skills, confidence, and poise the MP & CG Regional Association Literary Events 2021 witnessed a massive participation across 18 schools in the Declamation and Debate Competition.

While our school hosted the regional round for Declamation, the Debate competition was held virtually at Laurels School International, Indore.

For declamation, the participating students from grades 6-12 delivered impactful speeches by Malala Yousafzai, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Gretta Thunberg, APJ Kalam, and Oprah Winfrey among others. The topic for the Debate "Climate change is the greatest threat to humanity today" was revealed on the spot and the students were required to prepare within an hour.

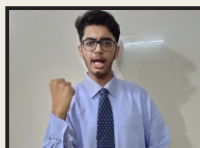
Such literary events not only enhance critical thinking but also boost confidence to speak on impromptu topics. One thinks carefully about the best framework, persuasive strategy, and diction to communicate power-packed messages to the audience.

The eloquent participants of Billabong High International School, Bhopal stood out in both the competitions with their poise, confidence, and exceptional oratorical skills. We wish them luck for the national round.

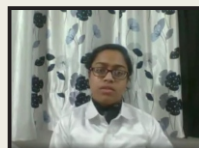
### DECLAMATION



**Elakiya Selvendran**  
Grade 7  
Sub-junior category, 1st Position

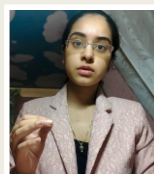


**Srivardhan Shukla**  
Grade 9  
Junior category, 2nd Position

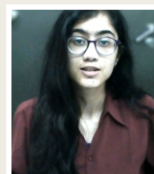


**Ashna Azeem**  
Grade 11  
Senior category, 1st Position

### DEBATE



**Mannat Kaur Kandal**  
Grade 11  
1st Position (Against)



**Anhaaita Vijayvargiya**  
Grade 12  
1st Position (For)

## BHIS bags the Winning Contingent Award at Diplomathon Global India Connect 2021

Diplomathon Global India Connect 2021, a series of consecutive student dialogues and debates across different regions recognizes the efforts of students and their commitment towards learning and growing. The platform focuses on the cultivation of a growth mindset, strategic collaborations, mindful actions, carefully crafted speeches, and impromptu outlook amongst secondary and high school students.

Billabongers, having specialized in acing this literary event, bagged a coveted position among the top 10 schools of India at Diplomathon Global India Connect 2021 held in September 2021.

The following four delegates from our school were recognized for their stellar performance in the event:



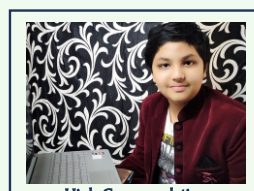
**Best Delegate**  
**Nilotama Singh**  
Grade 9

World Startup Association, Facebook



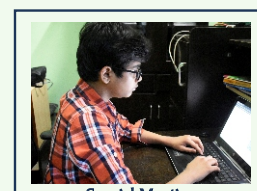
**High Commendation**  
**Anushka Rai**  
Grade 12

International Motor Vehicles Association, Ford Motors



**High Commendation**  
**Daksh Agrawal**  
Grade 7

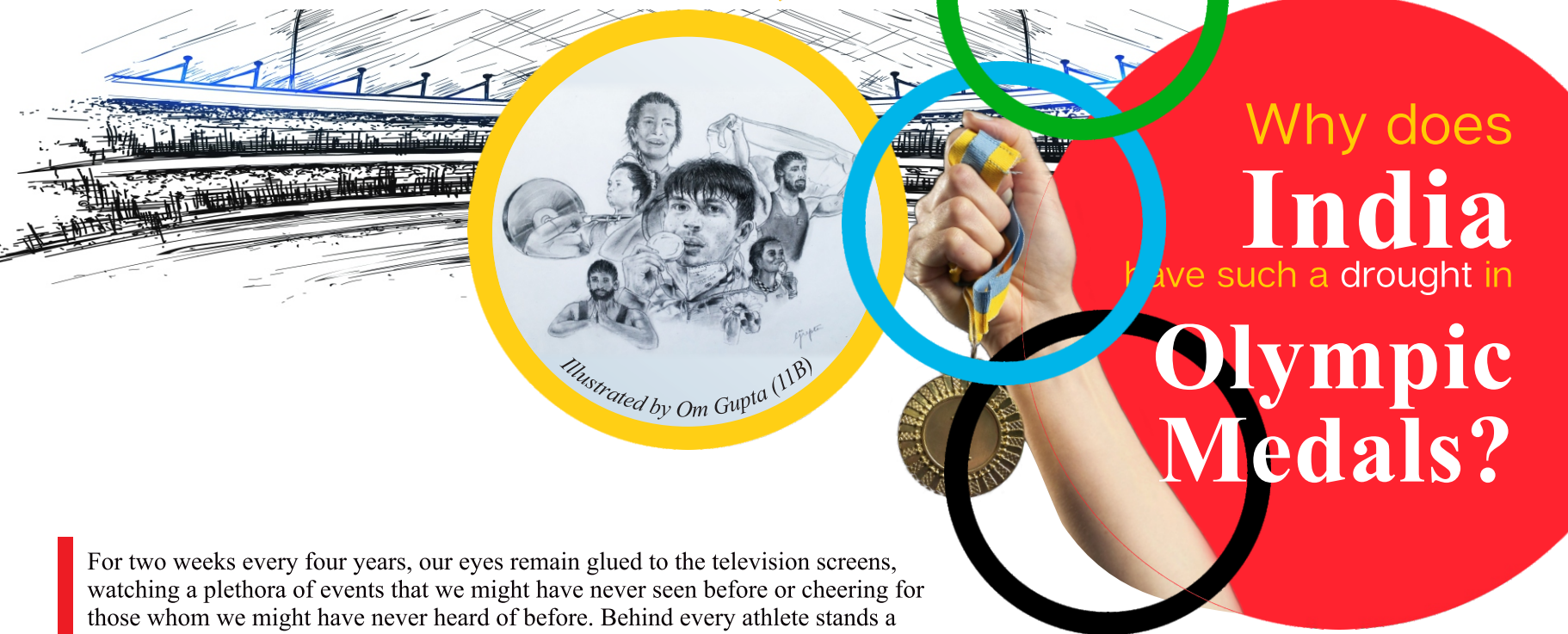
FFA; Armenia



**Special Mention**  
**Priyansh Khare**  
Grade 9

International Motor Vehicles Association, BMW





## Why does India have such a drought in Olympic Medals?

For two weeks every four years, our eyes remain glued to the television screens, watching a plethora of events that we might have never seen before or cheering for those whom we might have never heard of before. Behind every athlete stands a nation - weeping, praying, and celebrating, and as one manages to climb the elusive Olympic podium, an entire nation gets united to celebrate the victory. With this page, we commemorate that very spirit, and celebrate the stupendous performance of our athletes at the Tokyo Games!

Nations big and small - all have managed to conquer medals at the Olympics. This includes African countries like Kenya, which itself has 100 medals. USA, China, Russia, Japan, GBR all are established sporting nations. Moreover, countries like Germany, Ireland, and other emerging nations are also progressing in

New sporting talent is emerging in India; we have come a long way since 1896, when India got its first Olympian, Norman Pritchard, who won two silver medals. Today, we have Neeraj Chopra, our first athletic gold medallist and second individual gold medallist, after Abinav Bindra.



In 100 years, India has managed to only produce 35 medals, including the ones in 2021. India is slowly improving inch-by-inch, and is striving hard to produce champions. Even the government is starting to give priority to sports, but there are still major things that we are missing. People have to change their mindset towards sports educational institutions. Today, India produces more engineers than China and the U.S.A combined but doesn't

have more than a few sports stadiums, which are insufficient for the needs of our country; only Northern states like Haryana, Sikkim, Delhi and other western states like Maharashtra (Mumbai) and Gujarat are able to produce champions. Other factors, like infrastructure and a bigger budget for the sports field also play an important role, and are much needed by our sportsmen. This will ensure that they are able to show their

sports. However, why does India lag behind even though we are one of the most competitive nations? Even with a population of 1.5 billion, we cannot produce more than a handful of champions. Nations like the U.S. have intrinsically motivated people who themselves want to play sports, and sports are celebrated in their nation. They produce champions left, right and centre. They have resources, motivation and the moral support of the athlete's nation and family. Nations like China have extrinsic force factors like the rigorous elimination process, wherefrom a very young age, they select thousands of players who compete with themselves and have an intense competition. However, the problem with that is that the ones who lose, end up in a lifetime of labour.

have more than a few sports stadiums, which are insufficient for the needs of our country; only Northern states like Haryana, Sikkim, Delhi and other western states like Maharashtra (Mumbai) and Gujarat are able to produce champions. Other factors, like infrastructure and a bigger budget for the sports field also play an important role, and are much needed by our sportsmen. This will ensure that they are able to show their



Illustrated by Joanna M John (1A)

alacrity for the sport. Their worries for their well-being must also be removed, so that they can play their sport of choice without any fear of how to earn their bread. This will in turn give them a decent lifestyle.

Slowly, more and more people are being more motivated to play sports. Thus, in 2021, we saw a magnificent feat by players who brought us seven medals from the Olympics. New dreams have been ignited by our Olympians

like shuttler P.V. Sindhu and our very own 'balvati' Mirabai Chanu Saikhom, who have now become household names. India seems to have a bright future in sports, and perhaps, in Paris 2024 we may even see more Olympic golds being bagged by us!

- Srivardhan Shukla (9B)



Illustrated by Aradhya Mishra (5D)



# SEDITION LAW IN INDIA

Should it stay or be scrapped?

FOR

AGAINST

According to section 124A of the IPC, sedition is when 'Any person by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government established by law in India'. Recently, it attracted a lot of press as well as debates. These debates were regarding the right to freedom of speech and expression taken away by this law. However, I believe that this argument might be a little misguided.

The government encourages, nay requires you to be civil so that the functioning of the system remains smooth. The non-compliance with the law might lead to an uproar of offensive speeches that can cause hatred and brutality, not only towards the government but also towards defenceless minorities. This volatile system might lead to a decrease in the expression through speech. However, more than that, it stops the hatred people have for each other and sets an example by showing us that the cruelty in our ways can't be tolerated.

The government is the official political system by which a country or community is administered and regulated. It is essential so that peace and tranquillity are brought about in the nation and everything doesn't become utter chaos. The Anti-Sedition law ensures that the government stays intact and curbs the provocation of a revolution. A revolution causes a power shift from our democratic society which is supposed to be "of the people, for the people and by the people" to ludicrous authority without the proper means and methods to provide for our country.

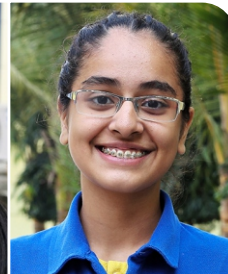
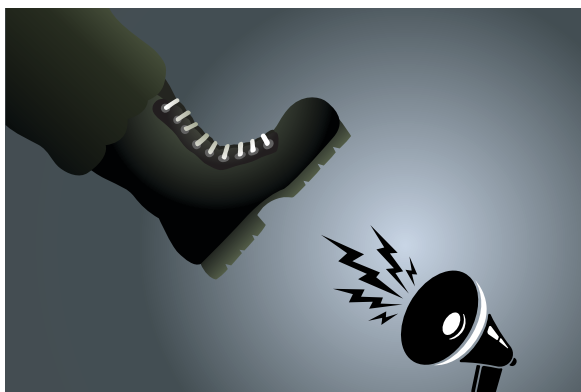
The nation is also supposed to have a set of rules and regulations aiming towards public order. These guidelines set a clear path so that we stay sincere and do not pose threats to our society. This law will lead to the preservation of national integrity and national security which we need intact. These rebellious acts need not have platforms, for they are just deceiving you from forming your own opinions and understanding the gravity of the situation from your standpoint.

In addition to the previous point, actions have consequences and hostile activities

corresponding to punishments. If not stopped, they can cause the establishment of parallel administrations overthrowing the government. For example, the Maoist insurgency - where an internal threat led to a breach in our national security and the safety of the people along with the government was compromised.

These are some of the many reasons why the arguments against this law are not completely unreasonable, but just a more complicated issue than it appears on the surface level. Acknowledging the fact that the sedition law is essential, but still has multiple drawbacks, it should at least be narrowed down, so that it can accommodate more freedom of speech and expression.

- Devyani Sadho (9B)



The sedition law is unconstitutional and redundant. There is no other way to go about it. We inherited the law from the British, who used this law before 1947 to suppress the Indian independence movement and Indian nationalists like Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were convicted under it. There is nothing more ironic than the fact that the very law that India has kept since the British rule has been repealed 10 years ago, by Britain itself. Not only Britain, but countries like the USA, (removed parts of it) South Korea and Scotland have also struck down the law.

Free speech is the essential pillar upon which rests the functioning of a healthy democracy. Does criticising or showing disloyalty towards the government equate to showing disloyalty towards the country itself? I'm afraid not. Sedition is not a menial charge, but its increased frequency seems to show that the police and the prosecution surely think so. As per Sec 124A of IPC, whoever "brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the

government established by law in India shall be punished with imprisonment for life to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine." The word "disaffection" is ambiguous and open to interpretation. It is a convenient medium of misuse. One report said that between 2015 and 2019, 191 sedition cases were filed, and trials were completed in only 43 of those cases. In these, the conviction rate was minuscule - Just 4. This is a clear indicator of the fact that the

utterance of some words against the government can start up the FIR process. In 2016, six sedition cases were dropped by the police for the lack of evidence and two were termed as false cases in final reports. Who can forget 21-year-old Disha Ravi, the climate change activist who was arrested for "sedition"? All the police had against her was that she had disseminated a "toolkit" regarding the farmers' protest.

The worst part about sedition charges is not the fear of conviction, but the process itself. Individuals who are charged with sedition are removed from government jobs, live without their passports, and have to suffer under the financial and emotional burden of court appearances, legal fees and social stigma. Such gruelling procedures encourage others to indulge in self-censorship, thus creating a culture of silence and conformity. In the landmark ruling in 1962, (Kedarnath Singh vs the State of Bihar) the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the law, but clearly mentioned that the scope of sedition only extends to "call or incitement for violence." However, it is rarely seen that the requirement is met before making arrests or slapping charges.

Governments have often emphasised the importance of this law for "national security". However, the Indian Penal Code already has different provisions for "disrupting public order" or "overthrowing the government with violence and illegal means." Thus, there is no need for this draconian law in a country like India. Moreover, India has a string of international commitments, including its signing of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, which are being violated by the blatant blocking of free speech by this law.

India fell from "free" to "partly free" in the World Freedom Index in 2020, and a major reason for this was the increasing number of sedition cases. Also, India ranked 142nd out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index in 2021. The sedition provision has contributed to a chilling effect on freedom of the press in India, as well. Even the Supreme Court, in July 2021, sent a strong message across to the centre, questioning the "colonial law". The apex court also questioned if it is needed, 75 years post-independence. In the favour of all those activists, journalists, politicians and most importantly, citizens, who come forward to question authority, it surely is not.

- Mannat Kaur Kandal (11B)





# Body Shaming

## The normalised evil

'We are our own worst critics' is a phrase we often use to describe when we as individuals become too harsh on ourselves. For most people, it's natural to always be better or try to be the best version of themselves. However, this trend is now resulting in severe mental health disorders, especially when it comes to our physical appearances. This is compounded by society's specific standards of beauty. We commonly see overweight characters be the running joke of the show, resulting in "fat jokes" and manifestations of self-doubt, also known as body shaming.

Body shaming is known as the practice of expressing negative views about another individual's body shape or size (a form of bullying) that can result in trauma, especially at a young age. According to a report, 90% of women recognize body shaming as a common behaviour.

Passing negative comments about the size or shape of anyone's body can be extremely damaging to them, and could potentially lead to low self-esteem, anger, self-harm and even mental health disorders like body dysmorphic

disorder. Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is a disorder characterized by a continued obsession with one or more parts of the body, causing severe distress and malfunctioning. This aspect can be non-existent or barely visible to others. People with BDD deal with symptoms like looking in the mirror and becoming obsessed with their looks, seeing a part or all of their body in a negative way or asking for cosmetic surgery to correct, for instance, rhinoplasty, while they appear normal to everyone. A person may also pursue unnecessary surgery, unsafe weight loss habits (such as crash diets) or inappropriate use of hormones to build muscles. Body shaming can also lead to various types of eating disorders, which have the highest mortality rate out of any mental health disorder.

Sadly, body shaming is common among both men and women, having different body shapes and sizes. It includes criticisms of being both 'too fat' or 'too skinny', often picking on flaws that are completely irrelevant. Many magazines, television programs, and social media platforms tend to contribute to body shaming, which has started normalizing these

damaging behaviours. It is important to understand the consequences that may arise from this.

Body shaming will always be present unless one changes the way we look at ourselves and others in a positive and healthy way. It is important to practice self-love and try not to let negative comments bother you. The National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) has come forward to fight against body shaming on social media, and also encourages individuals who face body shaming to embrace their true selves. We should always remember that entering a negative cycle of comments does not do any good in any situation.

Our physical appearance never speaks our heart or defines our soul.

- Ananya Singh Baghel (9A)



## MODERN LIVING

### Are we making ourselves ill?

Image credit: rfa.com

India is growing fast, and we are becoming modern in thinking as well as our lifestyle. Apart from the metros and the bigger cities, even the smaller towns are flooded with modern technology, to make our lives easier, more comfortable, and luxurious. This influx of modernism has made people idle, fun-loving, and inactive. As a result, they have become weak, unhealthy, and disease-prone. Even though medical science can be credited for increasing the life expectancy rate, human beings are suffering from all kinds of known and unknown diseases. Our casual attitude towards our health is making us suffer beyond what meets the eye. We should be more cautious about our eating and drinking habits. Dysentery, diarrhea, jaundice, and typhoid are some diseases that have been invented by us.

Modern amenities like air conditioners, washing machines,

refrigerators, microwaves and even products like tinned food made our life comfortable; however, they have minimised physical labour, which is very necessary to keep our body fit and healthy. It has kept us away from our natural environment. Modern insecticides and repellents are producing more adverse effects on our health than the protection they promise to offer us. Less labour, luxurious and sedentary lifestyle, unhygienic food etcetera is making us dependent upon unnatural and artificial things. Exercise, eating healthy homemade food, and inhaling fresh air have become dreams, thanks to trending apps like Swiggy and Zomato.

We are all aware of the key factors that help us keep fit and healthy. Start with simple steps like taking a flight of stairs rather than looking out for a lift or choosing raw fruit over a can of juice. I pledge to practise these. Do you?

- Vidyanghan Kedia (7C)

## NMASKED

### Mystery

Image credit: midcurrentchurch.org

"What is wrong with them? Why do they keep fighting? Why are their fights always one-sided? Why doesn't she reply when she is such a strong lady? What is happening inside? Why did they ask me to go out?"

It's normal for parents to fight, right? Everyone's parents fight. But there is something seriously wrong with my parents. They do not get along at all. They cannot have a single civil conversation. They cannot even sit near each other. The funny thing is, they are both amazing people as they are.

My mom is so cool. She has no hang-ups at all. She can allow you to have a dinner of momos and honey chilli potatoes with cold drinks (mind you, plural). She will pick you up right from the school gate with a change of clothes at the back of her car and take you straight to the mall for an afternoon of fun and frolic. Her funda is very simple. She lets you enjoy to your heart's fullest so later, she can guilt you into studying hard.

My dad is seriously awesome! He loves me so much. I can get away with murder and still come out unscathed if I have him by my side. I can do nothing wrong in his eyes. And he is really funny. Always joking around, always laughing (Well! around me).

Not only with me, but both of them are unarguably liked by everyone. They are kind, gentle people. They are humble. They are hard-working. They are helpful. They are loving.

But, together they are a lethal combination. Neither talks about the other, once the doors open, I'm left to imagine and decipher my own conclusions about why they fought, who was at fault, who won and so on. I have spent many sleepless nights shuffling the blame from one to the other.

There's a lot that still needs to be unmasked about them, I think before I can finally be at peace.

- Mehar Batra (9E)





# Serendipity of Life

A cup of sweet milk in the morning,  
 With no brisk walk in the evening.  
 Hygiene and boredom inside,  
 With no fun and play outside.  
 Eating healthy stuff is all good,  
 With no enjoyable junk food.  
 Being at home, sick and tired,  
 But now I realise how much school is admired.  
 The virus is still active,  
 It can't be held captive.  
 You have to follow certain rules,  
 And hope everything improves.  
 We may be young or old,  
 All we need is to be bold,  
 Against the enemy untold.  
 We can't go to malls,  
 Nor can we go to waterfalls.  
 If you have to go out think twice,  
 Wear your mask and be worldly-wise.  
 The season here is autumn,  
 Sit and snack on a cookie crumb.

Read good books and gain wisdom,  
 Leading to a wonderful outcome.  
 Every weather is a miracle of Nature,  
 Appreciate it 'cause, it's an adventure.  
 Covid-19 is playing a hide & seek game,  
 By following rules, we can ensure its end game.

On a happy note,  
 Paper boats in the puddles float.  
 Pollution is at an all-time low,  
 Running wild is the doe.  
 Birds seem to be chirping,  
 Busy collecting food for preserving.  
 Bonding with family is reconnecting,  
 The love and care for each other are growing.  
 Forgotten indoor games become persistent,  
 Loved ones do not feel so distant.  
 Twist & turn and up & down,  
 Life is like a rollercoaster, so smile and never frown.  
 Wear your favourite mask,  
 As we abandon our dismay, for ourselves to unmask.

- Aarna Tiwari (7B)



# Unmasked World

They created their own little world,  
 where they could remove their masks one by one,  
 the masks they had put up,  
 to shield their inner selves from the outside world,  
 The masks that were put up,  
 from the fear of being judged;  
 They created their own little world,  
 where they could remove their masks one by one.

They wanted to unmask each other,  
 And find out who they are,  
 They wanted to have the privilege  
 To see a soul in this masked world;  
 They created their own little world,  
 Where they could unmask each other one by one.

He wanted her to see,  
 All his vulnerabilities,  
 Explore the depths of his emotions,  
 And unmask the treasures of love, only for her to see;  
 So they created their own little world,  
 Where they could unmask themselves one by one.

She wanted him to know,  
 Her deepest and darkest desires,  
 The secrets she had hidden in the depths of her soul,  
 And unmask her inner self, only for him to know;  
 So they created their own little world,  
 Where they could unmask themselves one by one.

- Paloma Jain (10C)

# Hesitation

Her face was hard and grim,  
 Her eyes were of colors dim.  
 I placed a hand on her shoulder,  
 With arms of gentleness I held her.  
 Cold was her breath and brow,  
 Trembling her hands were now,  
 "It is okay," I whispered to her.  
 Her vision turned into a blur.  
 With the cascade of emotions,  
 Something else broke off her face,  
 Shards of something hard and rough,  
 Fell on my lap and I looked at her:  
 Streaming with glistening tears,  
 A face I had not seen on her before,  
 For it was gentle, soft and in a daze,  
 Surprise sparked across my mind.  
 I looked at the battered, broken bits,  
 And at once all of them aligned.

I knew better than to ask.  
 For the thing that had broken off  
 her face, was her mask.

- Juveria Fatima (8B)



Life was always fast-paced, we never slowed down,  
 Until everything stopped when Corona came to town.

Now all is quiet and there is peace all around,  
 We've looked in our hearts and kindness we've found.

I miss my school and my squad,  
 I miss sharing the fun times and this makes me sad.

We now learn with Mom, this is a new feature,  
 But we can't wait to get back to our school teacher.

When will I throw my arms open wide  
 And shout to the world, "We can all go outside!"

Maintain social distance and wear a mask at all instances,  
 The end is in sight, together we'll win this fight.

- Yesha Rohira (1F)



Image credit: Samvi Barnwal (9B)

I look into the mirror and feel those scars,  
 Backstabs and wounds unleashed with power;  
 The barbs of arrogant abuse still hurt,  
 I hide them well with a nice pink shirt.  
 I pick up my pride and paint the humiliation,  
 Yes, sir, I have prepared myself for scrutinization.  
 I reject to hide in dark and wither away,  
 I burn myself to light each new day.  
 As I scrape prejudices layer by layer,  
 In an endeavour to find my inner self;  
 I am a superwoman with a special power,  
 A worker by the day and a juggler every hour.  
 My attitude may not fit the societal Basque,  
 I am a mind with thoughts invariably unmasked.

- Minha Durrani  
 (Teacher, Middle School)

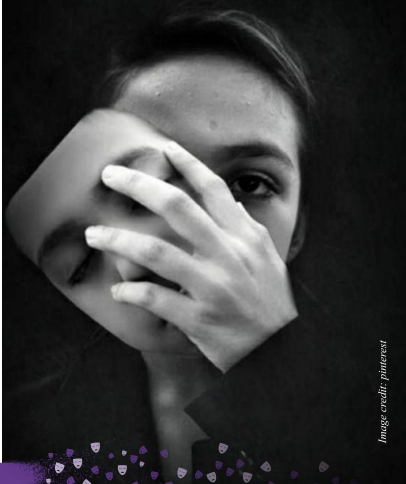


Image credit: Pinterest



# Humanity Unmasked

I was a regular customer at a highly decorated and exotic 5-star restaurant. The extravagant showpieces, the arabesque carpets that were laid on the floor with the bright off-white lights would fill me with delight. The privilege of being able to dine in a restaurant where the same five rupees worth tea was of about two hundred rupees was very satisfying. The chattering of the diners and the noise inside did not seem to irritate me, an otherwise unsociable person who hated company. Another pleasure was of wasting food, which I saw as a sign of wealth.

I noticed a very shabby-looking man in rags come and sit near the cashier. He would disappear at regular intervals and come back again. This pattern would continue until eight in the evening. Whenever any waiter would take the leftover, uneaten food, he

would request for it and take it in a polythene bag he would hang in his hand. "It is so shameless of him," I thought. People could not buy food for themselves and were eating someone else's food. That became a routine, a sight of that person disgusted me and spoiled my mood each day. With intentions of making trouble for him, I rushed to the manager one evening and complained about admitting beggars in the hotel. I was happy to know that he would be moved out, at the prospect that I would get to have dinner peacefully each evening.

I stepped into my luxurious car and pressed on the accelerator to go home. I was thinking about the mysterious man and inadvertently took the wrong road. I saw the same man walking in front of me and decided to follow him and see what he did. He was walking towards a nearby slum area. "Ugh, he

must be a resident of these slums," I thought. To go further, I had to park my car and walk because the houses were extremely close to each other and there was hardly any space between them. The conditions in which the residents lived devastated me. For the first time in my life, I was thankful for what I had. As soon as the man stopped near a closed, abandoned shop, many excited, fragile and malnourished children crowded him. He fetched plates from another bag he had and served them.

Tears ran down my eyes, I was so furious at myself. It was time for a change, in my attitude and conduct. When the real identity of this man was unmasked, it filled me with guilt. I had thought so low of this person and abused him in my mind whenever I saw him. And there he was, the greatest example of humanity, he had



Image credit: portlandmuseum.org

withstood so many bad treatments. I decided to do something for these people. I secretly pledged to feed them and try my best each day.

- Kanishka Paltani (8B)

## Balaclavas for Masks



Image credit: pinterest.com

There is a lot that I dislike. There are certain things I have a particular distaste for- perception, idolisation, idiocy, and death. Not Death itself (not that I like Death a great deal either) but death; proof of one's mortality- which I don't have- it's been eons and I still don't know if that's a good thing or not, though. There are days when I wonder what it would feel like to cross paths with Death, not while we're working on the same battlefield or in the same hospital, but when it slowly crawls over to me- would it feel warm like sunlight or icy in the way only those people do who have a place reserved in hell for them? Would Death deem me, a mere Reaper, worthy of dying happy? I suppose not. Not when I never pitied or sympathized, or frankly, cared. But then again, why should when I'm not human. I do not feel. I do not seek. I do not care. I simply watch, observe and collect shrivelled up souls, which most of the time don't even know if I am Death or the Reaper.

Humans are ignorant. They call me a Soul Eater when all I ever do is guide them. Yet I don't dislike them in the way that I do other things. They are frugal, disappointing, and even after years of evolution they still don't know who exactly is it that guides them into their next life after dying in their physical one. Still, it's their behaviour I hate, not them. Humans, after all, are weak and know nothing about the world, or the afterworld, really. I can't hate the people I collect the souls of, it would be foolish to hate my job when it's the only thing my existence is for.

I have watched and I have observed. I have held the souls of multiple children in my arms at once because there were too many to collect. I have dragged souls out that were stuck underneath bombshells. I sat beside the elderly who clung to their bodies even after Death had done its job and left already. I have stood next to lonely souls, who didn't have a single shoulder to lean on when they were alive, watch themselves get carried by four. I have heard souls beg for food, not realising

that they have died and don't feel hunger anymore. I have seen, heard, been present, but never done anything that isn't my job. Because my job isn't to comfort, it is only to guide the dead to their final resting place, some place they'll call their own, somewhere they'll spend all of eternity.

This year, the weight of the souls in my arms was heavier. The numbers obscuring the names. Instead of grumbling about the clothes they were wearing while in the casket, this time they silently mourned for themselves as they sunk to the bottoms of rivers in body-bags; silent and alone with no family to watch them go. And not for the first time in my existence, I thought that there were humans out there stealing lives and doing Death's job for it, and they should don balaclavas instead of masks to perfect the look. Robbers and criminals that steal lives and jobs, though I'm not sure if Death is grateful for the extra help or not.

I often wonder how Death goes about doing its job. Is it extra careful with the good ones and enjoys tormenting the ones who deserve it, or is it as indifferent as I am? I don't get to make choices, to make changes; but Death does. It gets to choose when it's time, who's time it is, who gets to live longer, and who gets to cheat and run away. But still, I wouldn't want to trade places with it; not when it faces the begging, the tears, the desperation at its arrival- while I receive grudging acceptance. No, I don't think I envy him at all.

It's the humans I envy. It's they that haunt me. There's something about the damned, the weak, the mortal, that sets me on edge. How is it that the very beings that love and hate so fiercely and fear the unknown, haunt the things they can't see? The world is perplexing and I don't know how long it will take to end, but I have a feeling, an awful, terrifying one, that I'll be scouring souls even after it does.

- Rida Aamir (11B)

## The Mask that Flew

Aqsa knew she was queer by the time she was 13. The second her best friend put kajal on her eyes, something awoke in Aqsa. She also knew what it meant to be queer in her country, so she kept it to herself. Other than the girl she loved of course. They hesitated to confess to each other when they were young.

There was a precipice they would go to after college, it was said to be haunted, but what's a ghost in front of a half-hour of holding hands that were forbidden to touch? They weren't hesitant anymore. Just in love. On the precipice, along with the two, was pure innocent happiness, an emotion they were alien to in their own homes. It's like they were forced to mask themselves in their homes, and somehow both of them managed to unmask each other. Holding hands, they would often read stories about people who didn't fit in.

On the 28th of June, Aqsa lay on Alhayaa's covered legs, reading poetry and playing with her copper anklet. Alhayaa dreamt of something snatching her collar, and before she could discern the fact that she wasn't dreaming, she felt a sharp pain on her cheek. It was her brother. He had slapped her across the face. The first thing Alhayaa saw was a shivering Aqsa silently weeping. She knew what was about to happen. They both knew. There was no denying it, no escaping it. The law allowed it.

Alhayaa smiled at Aqsa, letting her know that it was okay. They were going to be together now. They tried to hold each other in this world for the last time. Alhayaa's brother dragged her by her hair. Aqsa wore her lover's anklet on her arm as she made her way to the edge of the cliff. She couldn't help but laugh thinking about how ironic Alhayaa's name was. It meant life, the thing she was being robbed of before she could even experience it. She felt sorry for the previous spirit. She felt happy they had something to call home now. She felt happy because she knew it would never change. Aqsa unhesitatingly reached the end of the cliff, looked over the precipice one last time and jumped into a world she knew would have no pain.

She jumped, and she flew.

- Gurnoor Bedi (11B)



Image credit: Netflix

### Walking Dead Meets Property Brothers

Set in the town of Santa Clarita, California, realtor couple Sheila (Drew Barrymore) and Joel (Timothy Olyphant) Hammond live a dull suburban life, with their daughter Abby (Liv Hewson). Their quiet life is upended when Sheila dies. And then comes back to life. And then craves human flesh. 'Till death do us part' is no barrier for Joel's love as he scrambles to find a cure for her condition while and covering up her murders. Eric (Skyler Gisondo), their next-door neighbour and Abby's friend, becomes involved in their undead shenanigans and the four of them battle suspicious neighbours, zombie hunter knights, derelict FDA codes and the consequences of murder sprees.

Drew Barrymore plays a charismatic devious role, the mischievousness of whom is highlighted by Olyphant's exasperated reactions. As the reluctant accessory to multiple murders, Joel's face is always filled with superlative expressions, be it a horrified grimace, steely smoulders, grudging acceptance, or increasingly incriminatingly manic nervous smiles. The juxtaposition of grotesque gore and the subdued American suburban life is embodied by the

two. Their dispositions are contrasting, but their relationship is refreshingly strong and healthy, which makes watching their interactions delightfully pleasant.

The show is brimming with absurdism, wordplay, and clever one-liners, and while the humour is unsubtle, it is precise and well-timed. The comedy isn't dark as in it isn't subversive or even offensive. The plotlines have a repetitious outline, but it is a colourful silly show that doesn't take itself too seriously, and neither should you. The quirky music and the well-lit suburban interiors make for a fun background to gruesome crimes being committed by 'upstanding members' of society. The main characters are memorable and endearing and are assisted with a brilliant supporting cast. Some may consider the gore excessive, but I cannot think of any scene that isn't complemented with exaggerated blood sprays or severed body parts. The sunny and peppy show has undertones of suburban satire and overtones of soulless consumerism, but on a surface level, it is a purely enjoyable show.

- Hia Sadho (12B)

Source: imdb.com

This bewitching novel by Nino Haratschvili tells the tale of a Georgian family through the generations.

The story is meant for twelve-year-old Brilka, written by her aunt, Niza. Brilka escapes her home and Niza writes a book for her so that she can know her family's history. Niza narrates the story of the struggles of the Jashi family, beginning with Stasia, then her sister, Christine, Stasia's son and daughter, Kostya and Kitty, and so on. They all go through different stages of misery and happiness, to find their ultimate goal in life.

The blurb emphasizes the secret recipe for hot chocolate, which is said to be cursed. After reading the book, I realised that the author tried to make this "secret recipe" a turning point in the story, but it wasn't incorporated into the plot as much as one would've wanted. Stasia's father was a well-known chocolatier, and this recipe belonged to him. This recipe was said to ruin lives, if not given in an

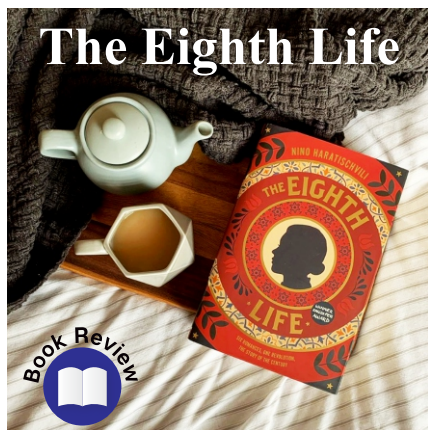


Image credit: Northern Bibliophile

appropriate amount. Stasia's father meant to share it with her only, but her sister, Christine got hold of it and used it recklessly in order to make people happier, in place just worsened matters even further.

Alongside the family, this book also gives updates on World War 2. This war played an important role in the story, as it affected three of the important characters in the book, Christine, Kostya, and Simon.

I must admit, the prologue was quite underwhelming and somewhat bored me, but later in the story, it all makes sense. When the storyline begins, it is quite engaging. Since the book was originally written in German, I would suggest having a translator app handy, even though the book is translated into English, as some German terms are still left in the book.

Overall, I enjoyed the book thoroughly. It is jam-packed with details and sparks the imagination.

- Aparajita Singh (9B)

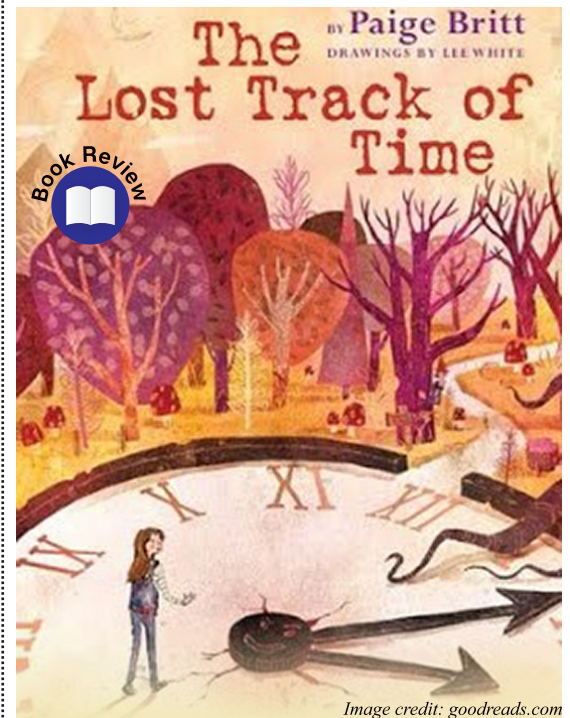


Image credit: goodreads.com

The author of this delightful book, which is also her debut novel, is Paige Britt, who resides in Georgetown, Texas. The plot of the book is simple, as it follows the life of Penelope, a young girl who dreams to become a writer. Penelope is a creative and enthusiastic child who loves to 'moodle' (to find out the meaning, you have to read the book). However, how could she pursue her passion when her mother scheduled every minute of her life? How could she prove that writing was not a waste of time when her mother asked her to be more productive?

One day, she finds a hole in her schedule - a whole day unplanned. What follows is an eye-opening and mesmerising journey through the Realm of possibility. Penelope must find the Great Moodler, fight the evil Chronos, and save herself from the clutches of time!

This book will surely take you on an amazing adventure that teaches you that time doesn't count - people do. I recommend this book to all those who find themselves stuck on the road to achieving their goals. With an excellent usage of words, this book motivates you to look at things from a different angle, especially for those who feel that their imagination has exhausted itself.

Brimming with clever language and masterful wordplay, "The Lost Track of Time" is a high-stakes adventure where nothing is impossible!

- Ashna Azeem (11A)

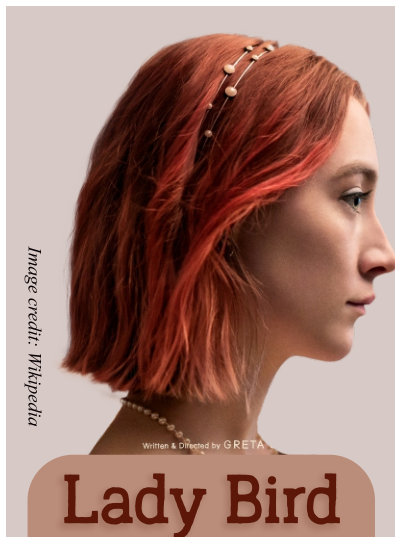


Image credit: Wikipedia

### Lady Bird

Lady Bird is a defining coming-of-age film.

It is emotional and heart-warming, beautifully written and directed by Greta Gerwig. The film is a fascinating story of a girl who is striving for

perfection and acceptance. It is about dreams, first love interest, and heart-breaking moments while taking your first steps into adulthood.

A high school teenager, Christine McPherson, self-named "Lady Bird", is at a critical point in her life. She is a girl who just wants to escape from the grasp of her financially troubled family, is trying to climb the social ladder of high school, and is on her way to shoot at her chance to move out and live in a city with culture.

Saoirse Ronan does a perfect job at embodying the role, bringing her energy and sense of humour. And with Laurie Metcalf alongside her, they perfectly capture the complex relationship between a mother and daughter. Their relationship is an important aspect of the film, and they pull off

a believable dynamic.

Set in 2002, Sacramento, California, it shows the city in all its glory, or lack thereof, portraying the mundane life of a family living on the wrong side of the tracks.

Cinematographer, Sam Levy, was told by Greta Gerwig that she wanted the film to "look and feel like a memory."

In the very first scene, we have an encounter with her parents, who have forgotten what it's like to be a teenager (in this case, particularly the mother), the joy of turning eighteen, and the urge to get away from home. Lady Bird faces the same challenges.

Lady Bird is a film about new beginnings and letting go. It is refreshing with its realness and simplicity and definitely worth a watch.

- Naba Murtaza (11B)





# Beetroot Juice

Here is a quick and simple recipe of Beet Juice to give you a punchy stamina boost. It detoxes your body and is loaded with much needed vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Nothing is better than a chilled juice which gives your body the essential nutrients you need with a fantastic taste!



Image credit: indiatimes.com

## Ingredients:

- 5 beetroots medium sized
- 50 grams ginger
- 1 lemon
- A pinch of salt (optional)
- To garnish: Ice, Mint

## Instructions:

1. Start by washing your beetroots and ginger. Peel and cut the beetroots into small pieces that you can put into a juicer. You don't need to peel the ginger, just make sure it's small enough to fit into the
2. Simply add the ginger and the beetroot into the juicer and churn out fresh juice.
3. Add lemon juice and a pinch of salt as per taste.
4. Stir well.
5. Garnish with lots of ice cubes and fresh mint leaves
6. Serve chilled in an attractive glassware.

- Daksh Agrawal (7A)

# FLORICULTURE

As nature depicts its beautiful metamorphosis during autumn, fall is the perfect time to marvel at the flaming colours that accompany the cool weather. Most people expect gardens to flourish only in the spring season; however, we have brought for you a series of gorgeous blossoms that can brighten up any park during fall! From the staple Chrysanthemums to the vibrant Snapdragons, these fall-blooming flowers can survive the upcoming cold and frost as well, making them a perfect choice for any gardening enthusiast.



Gazania



Snapdragon



Dahlia



Black-eyed Susan



Amaranth



Daisy



Dahlia



China Rose



Chrysanthemum

- Nilotama Singh (9B)

# RICE FACE MASK

October may be called the 'month of beauty', however it also signals the approaching of winter season. During these few months, your skin may take a turn for the worse and become dry. Not only this, but acne too is a frequent visitor for us teens.

Well fear not fellow Billabongers, because I have got the perfect face mask recipe for your skin problems, be it acne, dryness or even dark spots.

## Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp rice
- 4 cups of water
- 2 tsp of raw milk
- 2 tsp of olive oil or coconut oil (olive oil is preferred)

## Instructions:

1. Boil two tablespoons of rice until it gets sticky.
2. Blend this sticky mix of rice and water until smooth.
3. To this, add two teaspoons of milk and two teaspoons of oil. (Use one tsp of oil and add another of milk, if you have oily skin)
4. Mix until it turns creamy. Pour the mixture in a separate bowl.



Image credit: helloglow.co

## Directions for Application:

- Take a good amount of the face mask and rub it on your face until it is covered well.
- Leave it on for 30-45 minutes.
- Wipe with tissue and wash the leftover with slightly cold water.

- Omaima Alam (9B)



## Tête-à-Tête with Suyash Keshari

This time around, the Editorial Board had the opportunity to interview an adventurous soul who has been stalked by tigers, charged by elephants and followed by dolphins – Mr. Suyash Keshari. He is an award-winning Wildlife presenter, filmmaker and conservationist, who has taken up several projects with WWF International and Animal Planet, as a live host. He is the Chief Safari Officer at Safari with Suyash, a brand born out of a real-life web series, that follows him on adventurous journeys to discover the rich biodiversity around the world. With his extensive knowledge about wildlife and his visible passion for its conservation, it was an absolute delight for the members to be able to converse with him. As a successful individual in an unconventional field, he gave some valuable insights and shared some interesting anecdotes, making it an extremely engaging and informative session.



**Suyash Keshari**  
Wildlife Presenter and Filmmaker

### Excerpts from the Interview

**Q1** You are merely 25 years old and have visited 23 plus countries, hosted for the Animal Planet and WWF, and created a brand for yourself. How did this all begin? What got you into wildlife?

I grew up in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and that really influenced the kind of person I became. People visiting national parks was always a part of conversations among family and friends. By the time I was three or four years old, my grandfather had already introduced me to television channels like National Geographic and Animal Planet (He speaks about an incident where he was with his grandfather at a zoo and learnt the reality of animals who are kept captive in zoos. This struck a chord in him and set him on his journey). Over time, I realised that animals can entertain us but without their expense, by seeing them in their own habitat (He tells us about how he has been attached with wildlife since an early age, his childhood photography experiences and how his attachment slowly developed into a passion). I studied in the US, worked in the US House of Representatives and even took up a political advocacy job in Washington DC. I always wanted to take up my passion for wildlife photography professionally. So, I decided to quit my job in May 2019 and focus on my passion.

**Q2** What according to you is the gravest threat being posed to the rich Indian wildlife today and how can we salvage it? What does the future of wildlife look like for our planet if things continue to be the way they are?

Our population is growing at a very fast pace, and we are not doing anything to ensure that it does not overburden our society and natural resources. Since we have such a large population, we need more forest resources which leads to unsustainable development and depletion of forest habitats. We need to aim for sustainable development. The climate crisis adds to the issue of population and tests the abilities of our wildlife and nature. We cannot solve these issues all at once and we need to start small. We need to modify our education system, not only in terms of schooling, but also the way we talk to the community. We need to have a large-scale approach, but the ask for the approach needs to be small so that anyone can execute it. In terms of wildlife, India's national parks are becoming islands of paradise surrounded by concrete oceans. We have to ensure that we are connecting different national parks through wildlife corridors.

Talking of the future of wildlife, unfortunately, it does not look very bright. If we continue at the current pace, the wildlife will be restricted to small fragmented habitats in national parks. There is a lot of genetic inbreeding which will lead to several problems in national parks in India. Out of the hundreds of national parks in India, only a few will truly survive the test of time. We need to save wildlife for the sake of wildlife and not only for our future generations, because just like we, as humans, have the right to survive, the animals in the wild do too.

**Q3** In the journey of developing a deep-rooted love for wildlife, did you ever encounter a life-changing incident that has left a deep impression on you?

I have had many life-changing incidents during my journey, but the most recent one would be Solo's death. She was a female tiger whom I had followed since she was a cub, and it felt like we grew up together (He gives us a description about Solo's life, her cubs, how she struggled to survive and even during her worst times she remained a calm mother). I followed the lives of many tigers but I put Solo above the rest, and dedicated every single day to sharing her life with people. I was emotionally attached to her. After all the hard work my crew and I did, for her to die due to poisoning from potential poaching made me question my work and I lost faith in societal work. This was in the mid-October, 2019 and I did not want to go back to Bandhavgarh. After a few months, I returned and reconnected with a lot of other tigers and realised that they had to be protected. The faults during Solo's time should not be repeated. During this period, having a support system at home was extremely helpful. When the Brut documentary came out in February 2021, it touched the lives of millions of people and many people were talking about Solo. I felt that Solo's death evoked emotions in

the minds of people about what we need to save and protect. This really helped me to spring back.

**Q4** How was it transitioning from a political advocacy job to wildlife filmmaking and photography?

I was always doing wildlife photography and filmmaking passionately, but making it a career was very challenging. This was because when you are in a corporate job, there are many comforts and there is stability. But, when you want to begin your entrepreneurial journey and build a brand, there is uncertainty (He continues to describe the challenges of starting an entrepreneurial journey). Every day has been different and challenging but every time I think about it, I feel so lucky to be doing what I do. I have age on my side and I don't have the pressure of starting a family. This allows me to take risks and learn from them. The transition was difficult, taught me a lot in life and matured me. It is very important to devise a plan, implement it and analyse before taking risks.

**Q5** How much time do you spend a day shooting an episode of your web series and what does a typical day look like while shooting?

Shooting can go for up to 16 to 17 hours a day. In India, I wake up between 3.45 a.m. to 4 a.m., have a strong cup of coffee, talk to the team, get equipment ready, plan, have some food and leave. Then we enter the field at sunrise and stay there all day irrespective of heat, rain or cold. We have our breakfast and lunch in the field. We come out only after sunsets and return to the lodge by 7.30 p.m. to 8 p.m., have dinner, off load equipment, clean it, take a backup of photos & footage and repeat the same process the next day.

Shooting in Africa is more difficult because there we are allowed to be in the field as long as we want. We constantly come back and eat and go out again. During the shoot for season 2 of Safari with Suyash, sometimes we would get back at 3 or 4 a.m. and leave at 7 a.m. We were hardly getting enough sleep and the weather in which we were shooting, mornings would be 2°C to 3°C and afternoons would be 30°C to 35°C. This made my crew and I really tired. I even got tick bite fever but we enjoyed the experience. I could enjoy it because for me it is about wildlife and not only photography.

**Q6** What would be your advice to the budding wildlife photographers and enthusiasts out there? How should they keep themselves driven during the ups and downs of their careers?

For upcoming photographers, the biggest problem that even I face, is that we get into the spiral of likes and dislikes on different social media platforms. What we need to remember is that it's not about people liking it, but probably the content is not even reaching people due to the algorithms of these apps. One does not need to seek approval. Art has to be art for yourself as well. You need to appreciate your art. Wildlife photographers, specifically, have to remember that they need to put wildlife first, photography next, storytelling first, photography next, conservation first, photography next, and pleasure of seeing first, photography next (He continues to tell us about his past wildlife photography experiences). Passion is more important than anything else at a young age because that is what will keep you driven.

**Q7** We know about your connection with the state of Madhya Pradesh. Having grown up here and travelled the world, what is one unique aspect about our fauna that differentiates us from the rest?

Tigers, leopards, cheetahs, langurs, sloth bears, sambhars are everywhere in India but nowhere is there a density so high as in Madhya Pradesh. It is the tiger capital of the world and the leopard state of the world. Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover and has done an excellent job in conserving tigers and their landscapes. World's first rewilding of tigers happened in Madhya Pradesh and the people of the state appreciate that. It is embedded in our culture and it is our state symbol. The concept of tigers being interconnected with our culture, the tribes and the community as a whole keeps me coming back to Madhya Pradesh.





**“I go and get the camera and do it. Photography is a medium in which if you don't do it then, very often you don't do it at all, because it doesn't happen twice.”**

**- Paul Strand**



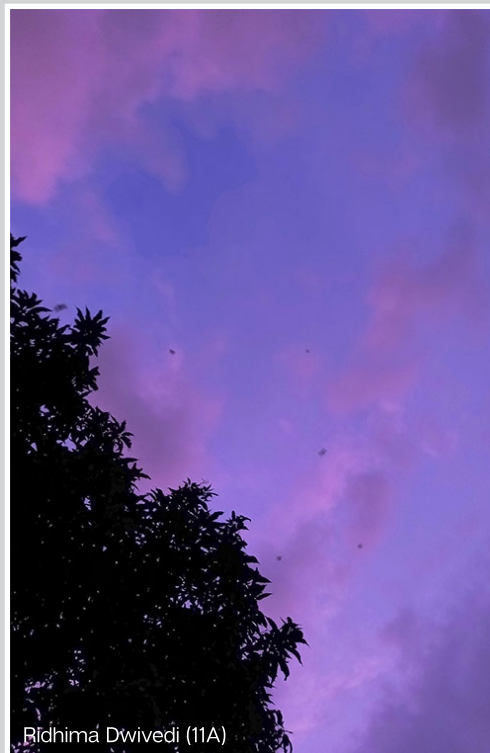
Ridhima Dwivedi (11A)



Saadhya Nainani (6F)



Sarthak Kumar (11B)



Ridhima Dwivedi (11A)



Vihaan Roshan (8A)



Prakhar Bhandari (8B)



Bhavika Changlani (11C)



Nilotama Singh (9B)



Bhawishya Achary (9C)



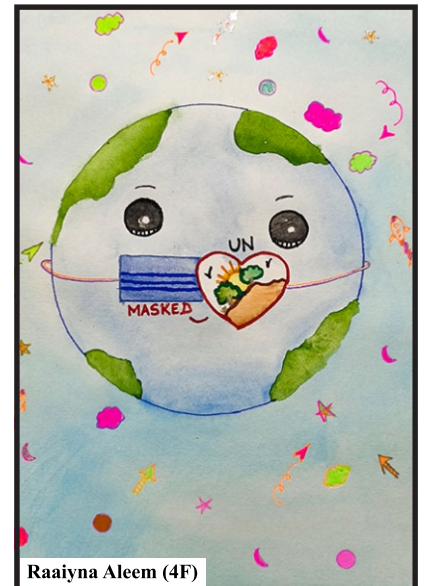
Tithi Agrawal (4C)



Siddhi Saini (7A)



Hashvi Kataria (8B)



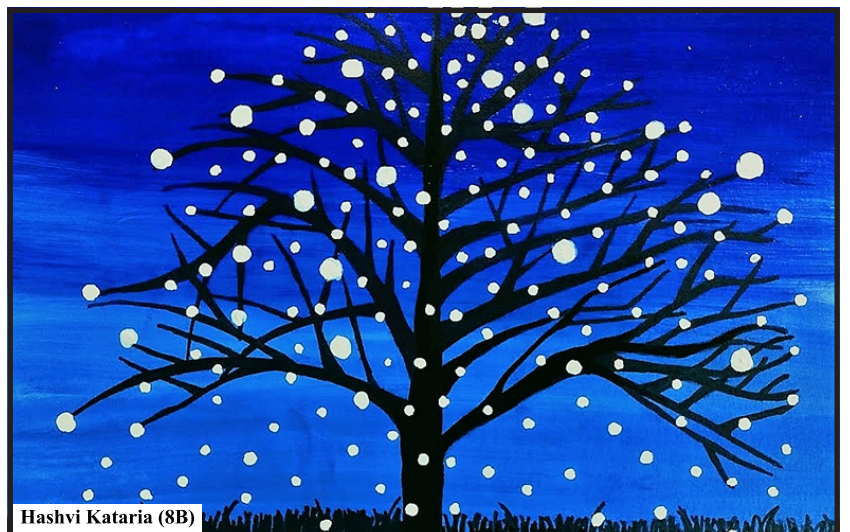
Raaiyna Aleem (4F)



Sanvi Barnwal (9B)



Nilotama Singh (9B)



Hashvi Kataria (8B)