

Hope

-Naviya Chamariya, School Captain



We were promised that 2021 would be different. Different in a way that it would be better, more planned, happier and definitely far, far away from any mention of a certain CORONAVIRUS. Quite evidently, not everything goes as planned, but I think that's the whole point of it, don't you think?

The one thing I was sure of was that I would get to be a part of the constant hustle at school at least until the 19th of June (with no mention of a lockdown) but just

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as I said, in these times of uncertainty there is little we can be so sure of. So, on the day I was supposed to come back, I just went around the campus. During my walk, while I was taking everything in, every bhaiya and didi that I spoke to asked me, “ Must you really leave? The school didn't feel the same without you children here. Come back soon, we'll be waiting.” I think by then I had given in to all these uncertain times, lost hope to be brutally honest, only to realise after those conversations that we could not lose hope. I was not ready to let this pandemic dim the sparkle in every aviator's eyes. We have been through much worse, and I know we can get

through this, together.

Trust me when I say this, the long corridors in the MSB, the toy-units with our favourite posters, the CDH tables with empty salt dispensers, the deserted roads of the elephant pass; the teachers, the bhaiyas and didis, all await us with just as much eagerness as we wish to be back there. So, if they are trying their best to keep the campus ready to welcome us as soon as they can, the least that we can do is make a conscious effort to not step out, and keep ourselves safe to be able to be back HOME.

The spirit of AVS is the one thing I have always taken a lot of pride in and it's the infallible emotion that holds us together despite the distance. Even during times like these when we are miles away from each other, it is this spirit that we collectively associate ourselves with. This is the ray of hope I see and feel at the end of this long, dark tunnel. I know it's a lot easier said than done, but hope is always stronger than fear. In these uncertain times when we are constantly gripped by the anxiety of what is to come, the constant deluge of negativity that we find ourselves surrounded with, we must hold faith in hope and meet these days with courage. We shall overcome the difficulties that face us, we shall stand strong and face together this onslaught, we shall not give up in the face of loss. I hold strong my faith in my country, in my people like I hold my belief in you AVS. This too shall pass.

WOKE CULTURE

- Anushka Baruah, Cultural Captian

If you frequent social media, you may well have seen posts or tweets about current events that are tagged #staywoke. Woke is a slang term that is easing into the mainstream from some varieties of a dialect called African American Vernacular English. Before 2014, the call to “stay woke” was, for many people, unheard of. But stay woke and woke became part of a wider discussion in 2014, immediately following the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The word woke became entwined with the Black Lives Matter movement and instead of just being a word that signaled awareness of injustice or racial tension, it became a word of action. Activists were woke and called on others to stay woke. “Stay woke” suddenly became the cautionary watchword of Black Lives Matter activists on the streets, used in a chilling and specific context: keeping watch for police brutality and unjust police tactics.

It can be hard to trace slang back to its origins. “Woke” and the phrase “stay woke” had already been a part of Black communities for years, long before Black Lives Matter gained prominence. The earliest known examples of wokeness as a concept revolve around the idea of Black consciousness “waking up” to a new reality or activist framework, dates back to the early 20th century. In 1923, Jamaican philosopher and social activist Marcus Garvey included the summons “Wake up Ethiopia! Wake up Africa!” as a call to global Black citizens to become more socially and politically conscious. Woke’s transformation into a byword of social awareness started in 2008 when Erykah Badu brought it back into mainstream public consciousness when she used ‘I stay woke’ in her song Master Teacher. Woke was officially added into the Oxford English Dictionary as an adjective in June 2017. The dictionary defines it as “originally: well-informed, up-to-date. Now chiefly: alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice”

What sparked the trend for “woke” in recent years are some of these instances. In 2012, unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin was shot dead in Florida by neighbourhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman. The shooting sparked the Black Lives Matter movement amid a public outcry over the gunman’s controversial acquittal.

Many in the black community issued calls to “stay

woke” to the discrimination and injustice black people face in the US, particularly in the form of police brutality. Under the hashtag “#staywoke” on social media, the term took off again in 2014 after the tragic shooting of two other young, unarmed black men by police officers.

Simultaneously a slur and a promise, the label of “wokeness” is especially applied nowadays to social media influencers and activists,

many of whom are embracing the “clicktivist” lifestyle. Former US President Barack Obama has challenged “woke” culture and this “clicktivist lifestyle” telling young people that he gets a sense among certain young people on social media that the way of making change is to be as judgmental as possible about other people and that that is not real activism. He made the comments at the Obama Foundation’s annual summit in Chicago on Tuesday. Saying that calling people out on social media did not bring about change and that change was complex.

Over the years, “woke” activists have received their fair share of criticism for being cheapened by performativity. This sense of performativity is heightened by news outlets and social media platforms (like Twitter) who sought to condemn public figures and influencers for purported un-wokeness. “Canceling,” the sudden social ostracism and shaming of previously influential figures, went hand in hand with wokeness. In some people’s perspective a culture of wokeness allows more daily interaction with civics and motivates people to become more educated and social media makes performative activism easy, but it’s also highly effective for tangible in-the-moment action. Activism comes in many forms. Spreading information is one but there also needs to be an action component, too — donations or setting up events and discussions and sometimes social media activism treats these movements like a trend but though there are a lot of trend-chasers performing wokeness without actually believing in it, social media has moved many more people to take tangible action in the BLM Movement. Young people and even corporations are more vocal than ever on social media about politics and the BLM movement, but are their empowering captions real promises for change, or just empty air?

Perils in the woods

- Raseen M. Shah, XII

Bastar, a district in Chhattisgarh is very well known for its traditional Dussehra festival. It is known for the beautiful forests and tribal culture, because of this it is called as the cultural capital of the state. However Bastar has become infamous for the violent killings that has caused suffering and loss on both sides. This area is known for the attacks on the security forces over the last 15 years. A host of factors like remoteness, jungle terrain, absence of administration and lack of political authority has been blamed for the slow progress there. The key concern is that the security forces are still struggling in this region despite the campaign against the Left-wing extremists that started years ago. 14 of the 27 districts in Bastar are affected by the Left Wing Extremism violence.

According to analyses, this underdevelopment, coupled with long term resentment of the tribals in the region, leads to many locals supporting or joining the Maoists. The Maoists, Communist Party of India (who strictly adhere to the philosophy of Chairman Mao Zedang of China), claim to fight for the rights of the poor tribals and the marginalised. Their ultimate aim is to overthrow the Indian government and establish a communist government. The Maoist cadres have taken away the lives of thousands of innocent civilians by using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and materials. They haven't spared children, women and animals also during their desperate attempts to harm the security forces by using IEDs. They have claimed the lives of more than 175 security force personnel, besides several civilians. A Chintalnar encounter saw 76 CRPF men killed, and the latest encounter in Bijapur led to the death of 22 security personnel. The Maoists have no intentions to stop the unleashing cruelty against innocent tribes of Bastar and let the native population lead a peaceful life.

According to the Indian Express, the Combing Operation by local and central police forces in the Tekulguda region of Bastar, Chhattisgarh, over the Easter weekend

that was mounted to apprehend a Maoist leader went terribly wrong and resulted in the death of 22 security personnel and many more wounded. This tragic incident is a major and embarrassing setback to the IS (internal security) capability of India at many levels and highlights the challenge that Left-wing extremism continues to pose. Media report indicates that this force of police panicked and fled- leaving their dead and wounded behind. This is a very poor reflecting of the leadership that was entrusted with this operation. The Centre formally recognized the gravity of Maoist violence in 2004 when the then P.M. Manmohan Singh called it the "greatest internal security threat for the country". The security forces in Bastar operate within the legal framework with a single objective of protecting life and property of the native population of the region. Only the local police can drive out the Maoists. The reason they are not succeeding in Chhattisgarh is because the local police have not yet taken the leadership position, although things have improved over the years.

'Lon Varratu'- the new campaign has been launched in Bastar's Dntewada district to affect the surrender of Naxals. 'Lon Varratu' means 'Return Home' in Gondi, the native language spoken by the tribals in the region. While this was not the first drive to get the extremists to surrender their weapons, many campaigns have been organized in the past that had resulted in mixed successes. The primary objective of this campaign was to encourage people who are foot soldiers or sympathizers of Naxal in the Left Wing Extremism affected areas to get into the mainstream. Pamphlets containing information about Naxals, with an appeal to lay down their arms, are being pasted outside the homes of the extremists. This resulted in the surrender of more than 68 Naxal officers, most of them being high-ranking commanders. The district administration is doing all that it can within its limit. To help the surrendered officers begin a new life, they are running skill-development programmes for them. They are making efforts to get them enrolled into schemes such as MGNREGA and creating self-help groups for them.



Mr. Hrishikesh Singh recently joined The Assam Valley School in the position of an Administrator. Donovan Figg from AVE caught a short conversation with him between his busy schedule.



AVE: Welcome to AVS sir! We'd like to start this off by asking you about your expectations from The Assam Valley School.

Mr. Singh: Well, as the saying goes, "Have no expectations, and ye shall not be disappointed". I have no particular expectations from AVS, but I do have a few desires.

I would love to see the school grow, along with the people who inhabit it. I would actually like to see AVS become the #1 school in the nation, and with it I would love to be a part of this journey.

AVE: Well, that's quite a refreshing take on things! Next, how has your experience at AVS been so far?

Mr. Singh: Oh that's an interesting question.

The campus is lovely, lush, and green – something that I love. I look forward to being a part of this famous school. One thing that impressed me here is that the senior leadership team actually takes an active interest in running the school, even outside of their duties.

I arrived here on the 27th of April, and following Covid norms, I was under isolation quarantine for a few days. After my quarantine period was over, I was given a campus tour and was introduced to the staff, whom I loved instantly – they were all so warm.

Unfortunately, I was unable to meet the students as they have been sent home, but I look forward to meeting them when things clear up a bit.

AVE: That's lovely to know sir – and people say that first impressions are the last impressions. So, what was your first impression of The Assam Valley School?

Mr. Singh: Well, I have worked with the Williamson Magor Tea Group in the past, and I've also grown up in the northeast, so obviously I have heard about AVS. But now I have seen AVS from two perspectives: that of a planter, and that of an educator here.

It is truly a wonderful place. Growing up in these places, one does hear about AVS, and my favorite pastime so far

has been matching the stories I have heard from various people with my actual experiences here.

I have seen children who have been students at AVS pass out from here and do great things, and I only hope that this trend keeps increasing.

Another thing that I have noticed is that many of our students continue their extracurricular activities even after leaving school – something that I recommend that everyone should do.

AVE: We're lucky to have you on board sir! And now, could you tell us about what has been your favorite experience at AVS, so far?

Mr. Singh: My favorite thing so far has been experiencing the campus itself – its huge! 95 hectares! Adding to that, I have seen that the facilities provided to the students here are absolutely top-notch.

The day that I arrived here, I visited the hospital, and I must say, I am impressed. They are taking every precaution, following every protocol and they honestly seem to be the most professional staff I have met.

The campus has been kept as a "green-zone", and I can see that every attempt has been made to make life easy and enjoyable for the students. Really, the staff here spare no effort – or expense.

AVE: Thank you so much for your valuable time sir, we'll end on this question: Could you name one thing at AVS that just caught your eye or grabbed your fancy?

Mr. Singh: This is my third day at AVS, so I haven't gone around the campus in too much detail you see. As on now, the things that caught my fancy were the three bent, metallic structures that you see on the way from the gate to the academic block.

I presume that these have been installed by your very active art department, and even the other sculptures around the school are absolutely gorgeous.

I'd love to see more sculptures come up, as they beautify the place up no end.

HOMEWARDS

- Tanisha Bhadra, Editor-in-Chief

Our country is diverse. From Kargil to Kanniyakumari. From Maitheeyes to Mewaris. From children beginning their day with Theravada chants and reading Tibetan textbooks with their teacher dressed in Zuighui to people ignorant about our true neighbor on the North. As unprecedented it may sound: China never shared a common border with India, it has always been Tibet.

Tibet was still minting its own coins in its free provinces. Tibetan was still spoken proudly in public, as it should be. Postcards were still exchanged with Dalai Llama stamps on them. It was all peaceful and lowkey, until 1951 happened. The five starred red flag then began its conquest to make it to the roof of the world.

The sparsely populated mountains became home to the Han(s) as cities emerged like lego. As the wave of anti-religion communism hit, monasteries became debris and the Dalai Llama had to flee in 1959. How would the community save its age old traditions? How would this civilization not perish? History showed the way, and internationalism paved it. Seven decades later, India today has the largest Tibet Exile Community in the world. Dalai Llama still runs his government-in-exile and engages with the heads of India. The third generation

of Tibetan refugees are growing up in parts of Delhi in India with the hope they'll return home someday. They still preserve their culture in form of traditional attires, native tongue and stories. As an oppressive occupying power curtails their freedom in their own homeland, the Tibetans here declare loyalty to the current Dalai Llama. At 85, the fourteenth Dalai Lama knows China is breathing down his neck. After him, the Panchen Lama is set to take over as the Dalai Lama's successor, marking an end to the centuries-old institution of the Dalai Lama. More often than not, India has been tight lipped about her engagement with the Dalai Llama, considering its sensitive relationship with the celestial empire today. As for

the ones 'settled' in India, daily life isn't a cake walk either. Indian government doesn't officially recognize them as refugees, and hence doesn't guarantee protection against expulsion to return to situations where their life and freedom would be under threat. Since the Tibetans are labeled 'migrants', UNHCR cannot pay much heed to them either. The question however is, do they really see light at the end of the tunnel or is this going to be just another bunch of foreigners trying to settle in their home away from home?



Illustration: Elozini Senachena

THE OUTPOST

Farmer's protests continue to rumble at the borders of Delhi posing an ominous threat to Modi's popularity. Erdogan's ambition of establishing a Caliphate takes a beating as America sets sanctions against Turkey. The Nigerian rebel group Boko Haram claims responsibility of kidnapping over 300 students from a school rekindling horrors it inflicted three years ago. India celebrates the achievement of the Indian Armed Forces in the 49th Vijay Diwas. It commemorates the 13-day war against Pakistan in 1971 which saw the formation of Bangladesh. Post- 2nd World War it was the swiftest war to charter mass surrender and victory.

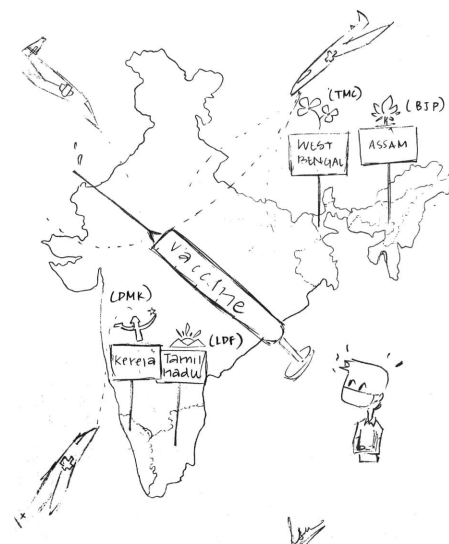


Illustration: Ssara Jha

The Quarantine Watchlist

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

ANNE WITH AN E: Anne with an E is as a coming-of-age story about a young orphaned girl who fights for acceptance, for her place in the world and for love. It all starts when she is mistakenly sent to live with Matthew Cuthbert and his sister, Marilla.

THE EASTRAIL 177 TRILOGY: An American superhero thriller and psychological horror trilogy that consists of the movies Unbreakable, Spilt and Glass. With an amazing storyline and award winning actors, this trilogy will not dissappoint.

THE CALL(KOREAN): A thriller where Seo-yeon finds an old cordless phone, and through it she receives calls from a distressed woman who says she's being tortured by her mother. Seo-yeon goes out to help her however it doesn't turn out to be the best decision.

PRINCESS MONONOKE: This movie follows the journey of the last Emishi prince, Ashitaka, and his attempts to make peace between the human settlement, Irontown, and the creatures living in the forest that surrounds it.

Ripple #160

-Moom Lego, XII

*And under the moonlight
Where it felt warm
She breathed her final
breath,
As the bullet pierced
through her skin
"At least my son will be
safe now"*

Keep It Reel!

Home away from Home

-Mahita Jindal, X



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