

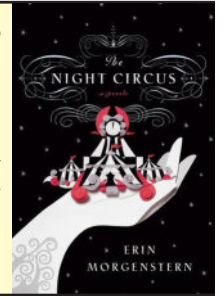
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# Deserted

-Ojas Krish, XI

In recent times, the words ‘World News,’ ‘Taliban,’ and ‘Afghanistan’ have become synonymous. This stems from the abhorrent way newly elected U.S President Biden pulled out the U.S military from the war-torn country. However, to understand the situation, it’s magnitude and how it impacts the future, we must turn the clocks back.

Rewind to the 1970s and 1980s, during some of the worst times of the Cold War.

*“Thus began Operation ‘Enduring Freedom’ in Afghanistan, a long bloody NATO military campaign spanning thirteen years, ending in 2014 with the overthrow of the Taliban.”*

After the Cuban Missile crisis, both countries began de-escalating tensions, but in all reality, it was taking it down from 99% to 90%. Both countries were heavily suspicious of each other, and would do anything to limit the other’s influence in the global sphere.

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the U.S saw an opportunity.

They gave 3 billion dollars in aid to the Mujahideen Anti-Soviet forces who were stationed on the Durand Line; training and equipping them with state-of-the-art weapons. The Soviets eventually backed out for

various reasons; and the U.S welcomed the new Islamist Government.

Anything to defeat Communism.

However, internal stability did not last long without the watchful eye of the United States. The country fell into a civil war which lasted until 1992, after which the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan- The Taliban-came into power.

As with almost every other country in the world, USA refused to recognize the new radical Islamist government established by the Taliban and continued supporting the Northern Alliance as the country’s legitimate government. Relations worsened to the point of sworn enemies after the 9/11 incident; the perpetrator Osama Bin Laden was found to be in Afghanistan and an entire charade of pinning him to the location by covert operation was undertaken.

Thus began Operation ‘Enduring Freedom’ in Afghanistan, a long bloody NATO military campaign spanning thirteen years, ending in 2014 with the overthrow of the Taliban. The U.S instated Hamid Karzai as the new President, and contributed billions of dollars of aid for military and reconstruction.

However, over the years, U.S politics deviated heavily from the war-hungry style of President Bush. The U.S.A gradually began reducing the amount of U.S. Soldiers and aid. The ‘Afghan Papers’, a series of interviews and document discoveries by the Washington Post, revealed

that as much as 40% of U.S aid went into the pockets of corrupt officials, warlords and eventually, the Taliban. This is without taking in the Pakistan nexus which demands a separate article by itself.

As such, top governmental organizations such as the CIA and the Pentagon agreed to end U.S involvement in the unstable region, and in 2020, a series of peace deals were negotiated. Khalizad, the U.S Envoy to the Taliban, was a catalyst in these peace deals. It is remarkable how these deals were agreed upon without taking in the legitimate Afghan government into confidence. Peace

deal or not, violence in the region continued unabated. The Taliban were unrelenting in their campaign; and the debate why Afghan Troops surrendered to the Taliban remains open. The US army left Bagram in the dead of the night leaving behind thousands of advanced weapon technology for the use of the Taliban.

One wonders if this too was part of the 'peace deals' at Doha. While the point of action now centers around the siege of Panjshir, one cannot help but agree with the viral meme that President Biden is best when he is asleep.



**Anandita Ann Luther, Department of English**

AVE- What inspired you to be a teacher?

AAL- During my high school years, I was fortunate enough to have a fantastic English teacher who was both motivational, inspiring, and extremely passionate. That is when I first held an interest in teaching. Ever since I have been utilizing my time teaching the under-privileged children, working with an NGO, and taking up various teaching internships. I love literature and have a passion for learning. I enjoy interacting with children of different age groups, encouraging them and helping them in whatever way possible.

AVE- How would you like to contribute to the Assam Valley School?

AAL- I would encourage the students to read and try to inculcate a habit visiting the library. Along with teaching English, I would also contribute to the art department. I enjoy the various forms of art: painting, sculpture, ceramics, textile and theater, and I would help when required in guiding, encouraging and motivating the students in these areas.



**Nidhi Rathore Shakhawat, Department of Sociology and Geography**

AVE- What inspired you to be a Teacher?

NRS- You can say the way I was taken care of and shown the world around by my teachers was the clicking point for me. I always wondered if I could contribute to someone's life the way I was nurtured by them. Every day is a reminder for me that I could do this because of them. It gave me chills when I saw my middle school teachers just doing wonders with us by just being themselves. All that mattered was being there to show which way to go and not paving the path for me. How wonderful it must be to remembered for what you did was just your happy place and make a difference in someone's life!!

AVE- How would you like to contribute to the Assam Valley School

NRS- My contribution to school will be on daily basis. Along with all the students we shall find the best in our abilities to bring out our best version in all fields to venture and make people turn heads when they hear the school's name presented on different platforms.



AVE- What do you find most frustrating about teaching?

AAL- During my short period of teaching I feel that there is a strict curriculum that needs to be followed along with a rigid timeline. This restricts creativity and diversity in teaching which frustrates not only me as a teacher but also makes it tedious for the students. Thus, the employment of diversified teaching strategies would make school more exciting for both the teachers and the students.

AVE-What is most frustrating about being a Teacher?

NRS- In the present scenario, it is most frustrating to ask “are you able to hear me”, “Are you able to see screen shared”. And most importantly when submissions are not on time!!

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# Covid Times Teacher Musings

- Mr. Thajeb Ali Hazarika, Coordinator of Humanities

“Good Morning Boys and Girls”- banal greeting of the teacher with a stern twist. “There are two rules 1 The Teacher is always right 2 If you are confused consult rule number1”. This was 2014 and the teacher had to be nearly full scale intimidating teaching in a boarding school of repute with the philosophy that education is the greatest adventure in a child’s life. It did not take long for the optics to change and the spoken language of healing to take over as the virtual classroom had to be activated with some sort of response. “Are you there?” If you are present unmute your webcam and type a yes”. The verbal blitzkrieg would continue and the type box response from the student being holed up in one room with his sibling nearby or the housemaid cleaning the house at that opportune time, the room in a mess would reveal the pain of transition not to mention the connectivity issues with a few brave souls learning atop a hillock inside a car. Teaching during Covid times has changed the signpost for learning and the most important role for me as an educator was to empathize the situation the child was in, cramped, slouching and nearly out of connect to be with a subject as vital as the blood circulation of human beings. Political Science did begin and end with the State in classical times, now the teacher in me had to answer on the efficacy of a faltering State with questions galore on why India did not have a social security cushion compared to the North. The classes would start with a warm up on what was happening and me as the teacher would encourage the children to speak their mind out, type. Some of the most candid answers on their performance came from the chat box. Children with their own stress,

trauma and the yearning to be in school physically. The curriculum design had to be overhauled with a three way connect between context, concept and content. From popular culture to Bollywood movies Article 15 made sense for a lifetime as also the gripping screen presence of the actor. The teacher in me had to slow down as I realized that the pace of learning had to be convenient and comfortable for the students. Each concept taught would have a response – Yes, No Maybe and even the thumbs up or thumbs down. Rapid fire questioning making it look random yet selecting the weak ones gave me an insight on how much scaffolding would still be needed. It taught me the golden virtue of patience, empathy as well as perseverance. Classes would end with a free response on the concept. Here, I discovered children open up to you when you as a teacher step into their shoes as a co learner in this new journey. Appreciating skills and seeking help from the young ones was welcoming given the fact that You Tube university has its own limitations. Which software is good for editing a You Tube video came from the student not to mention the place described to find out the adaptor for my wireless mouse in a very smart package. Learning never stops and as the days rolled by one thing was clear that both teacher and the taught need to be partners in progress. The stinging sarcasm of the teacher has come down and the epic one liners continues. To sample one “I was born to teach children, not a blank screen”, even better “If you are done playing hide and seek, make your divine self visible”

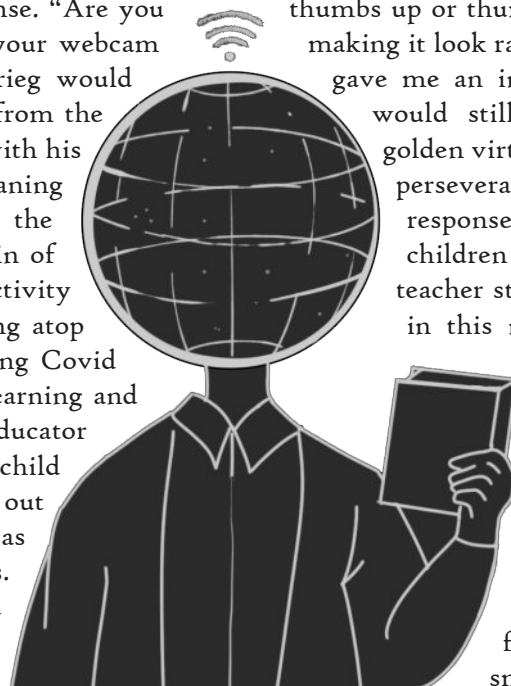


Illustration: Elozimi Senachena



# THE OUTPOST

With 686 million doses of vaccine given to people over age 18, India has now given more vaccine doses to people than all the G7 nations combined. China announces USD 31 million aid for Afghanistan and endorses Taliban's interim government even as Afghans flee the country to escape Taliban and the world watches in mute horror. In a recent interview, Meghalaya government announced it has formed regional panels to resolve boundary disputes with Assam. While British teen Emma Raducanu rolls into semi-finals in the US Open, India celebrates its historic tally of nineteen medals at the Tokyo Paralympics 2021.



## CAMPUS NEWS

### Achievers

The following staff have been awarded 'The Teachers' Day Awards 2021' by Collins Learning India, the world's largest entertainment-to-education publishers with the following titles:



Pathbreaker:  
Ms. Ishita Malhotra



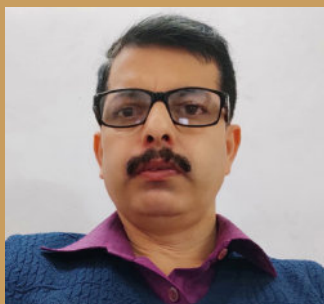
Beacon Of Hope:  
Mr. Rupjyoti Das



Torchbearer:  
Mrs. Joyce Macdonald



Kindness Galore:  
Mr. Anil Kumar Yadav



Out-of-the-box Thinker:  
Mr. Rajen Bharali



Online Teaching Supremo:  
Ms. Pooja Borah

## Kargil Vijay Diwas International Conclave -2021

Kargil Vijay Diwas is commemorated every 26th July in India, to observe India's victory over Pakistan in the Kargil war, where the Indian Army ousted the Pakistani Forces from their occupied positions on the mountain tops of Northern Kargil District in Ladakh in 1999. The Headmaster Dr. Vidhukesh Vimal, Nabadeep Deka, Kavvya Garodia, Arjun Chaliha and Mr. A.S Huidrom attended the Kargil Vijay Diwas International conclave 2021 on 8th August, 2021 held virtually. The panelists were Mr. Anurag Tripathi, Secretary CBSE, Lt.General Ata Hasnain (R), PVSM,UYSM, AVSM,SM,VSM, Maj General G,D Bakshi (R) SM,VSM, Major Guarav Arya, Consulting Editor, Republic Media Network and Col Pieush Agarwal (R) , Chairman Edge Academy. The Edge Academy has been organizing Kargil Vijay Diwas for the last 11 years to inspire the future young leaders of our Nation under the leadership of Col. Pieush Agarwal, Chairman of the Edge Academy, Kota. The big picture of this International conclave was to help build character through education, media and the armed forces. It was an enriching experience for us all.



## Blood Donation Drive

Blood Donation Drive was organised by AVS in collaboration with the Tezpur Medical College (TMCH) Hospital on the 2nd of September to commemorate India's 75th Years of Independence – "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav".

Blood Bank TMCH looks after 5 districts: Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Udalguri and Biswanath. They made a special mention that the Camp held at AVS has by far been the best camp of 2021 with donation of 92 units on a single day. We have also become the organization with the highest number of female donors.

## Covid Vaccination

The Covid Vaccination drive for second shots for AVS staff was successfully completed on the 3rd and 4th of September. The drive was organised by the School Hospital in collaboration with the National Health Mission, Government of Assam. With this everybody on Campus is now double-doze vaccinated.

## Checkmate!

The Chess Department of AVS conducted a workshop "Checkmate" from the 8th to the 13th of August. Initiated

by Mr. Devesh Prajapati and Chess Captain Shripriya Kajaria, the workshop aimed to promote chess in the junior school. Mr. Biswajit Bharadwaj founder of Assam Chess Club, conducted various sessions teaching our young minds various concepts and tactics. Mr. Bharadwaj is Assam's first and only FIDE international arbiter. The workshop was fruitful in paving a way to make online chess more fun and interactive!

## The Great Game

Mr. Tushar Bharadwaj, Dean of Activities, Marketing and Admissions, participated in the popular show Kaun Banega Crorepati, aired on Sony Television and hosted by the iconic Mr. Amitabh Bachchan on the 6th and 7th of September. The episodes showed Mr. Bharadwaj in his element taking on the Quiz with confidence and panache garnered over a years of having been Mi/c Quiz at School. He answered 13 questions and took home the prize money of 25 lakhs.



## Tech VVIZ 2021

The Vasant Valley School organized the annual inter-school competition - Tech VVIZ 2021 on the 2nd and 3rd of September and had various categories. Vasumann Lohia of Class 12 was awarded the third position in Tech O Byte.

### 'Multimedia contest'

The 'Multimedia contest' required the participants to submit an 8-minute long short film. This year the theme proposed by the host School was - SEVA. The School Team reached the finals and made us proud. The students who represented the School's Electronic Media team were -

BORNAM BORA, Class 12  
ADITI BOROOAH THEKEDATH, Class 12  
ANUSHKA BARUA, Class 12  
KAUSTAV BASANTA ARYA, Class 12

### Music-Bytes (Music Composition)

This segment required an original composition on 'Growing up' using any music creating software. The School was represented by:  
ARJYADEEP SHANKAR MRIDHA, Class 12  
ARYA BANDYOPADHYAYA, Class 12  
The team was led by the Master in Charge of Electronic Media, Mr. Tapash Das.



## Ripple #166

-Moom Lego, XII

The wolves howled under  
the moon

Their time had come

She picked up her  
generation-old longbow

The battle had begun

## The Quarantine Readlist

Need help finding a gem amidst a sea of monotony? Grab a cup of coffee or tea and dive into the world of these enthralling stories, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

**SOUTH OF THE BORDER, WEST OF THE SUN BY MURAKAMI:** Growing up, Hajime, being an only child, had a sole companion, Shimamoto. When his family moved away, the two lost touch but after a decade, when he has already settled, Shimamoto reappears, catapulting him into the past.

**THE MARTIAN BY ANDY WEIR:** After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded in Mars and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive.

**THE NIGHT CIRCUS BY ERIC MORGENSTERN:** The circus arrives without warning. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not. But behind the scenes, a competition is underway between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have trained since childhood expressly for this purpose.

## Keep It Reel!

### Sunbeams

-Mr. Tapas Das, Department of Mathematics

Editor-in-Chief: Tanisha Bhadra

Deputy Editor: Moom Lego

Associate Editors: Eloziini Senachena and Neelabh Kashyap

Correspondents: Marwati, Raseen, Donovan, Ojas & Lavanya

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E-mail: ave@assamvalleyschool.com

Telephone: 09678074320/08812009627 Website: www.assamvalleyschool.com

Patron: Dr. Vidhukesh Vimal, The Headmaster of The Assam Valley School