

# ASSAM VALLEY EXPRESS



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Down by the river or up among the trees,  
Wherever you go, you've got a friend in me.

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# Remembering 1971

As the world marks 50 years since the 1971 war that ravaged Bangladesh, it is important to note the many narratives that this war was experienced in. For starters, some call it the Indo-Pakistan War, some, the Bangladesh Liberation War, while many refer to it as the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. In the contemporary times of polarisation, it may be tempting to disregard all these narratives as the mere retelling of a tired event, one that must be tucked away for the sake of development. With all the narratives spun, we must always remember that- above all else- innocent people needlessly suffered in 1971. Indians and Pakistanis alike have remained, for generations, blind to the atrocities faced by the Banglas in East Pakistan. No longer can we remain blind. Their stories deserve attention as we cross 50 years of their inception; and if there is one thing to be learnt from them, it is- never again.

## Mixed Messages

-Ojas Krish, XI

“93,000?”  
“93,000.”  
“Was your army really that bad that 93,000 prisoners were taken?”  
“Pakistan’s army is not the topic of conversation here.”  
Shashank sighed, scratching his beard as he took another sip of the bland, tasteless airport tea. It was a shame when a country ruled over you for 200 years and didn’t have good tea to show for it. “Ah yes, the topic of conversation is the release of Mujibur Rahman, right? So where are you on that?”  
“I think you know perfectly well where I am on that, boss.” Bhutto replied snarkily.  
“So, you are willing to release Rahman in exchange for your captives?” Sashank asked hopefully, trying to direct the conversation onto constructive grounds.  
Bhutto’s fists clenched, his face contorting as he barely managed to stop cursing Indira Gandhi, the State of India and Shashank all in one breath. “I told you before, the only person I’ll speak to regarding this matter is Laila. Maybe if you’d do your job a little better, then-”  
“Shashank! Glad to see you’re such good friends with this old man!” A woman arrived, waving manicured nails at the two. Bhutto swiveled around to see his old friend, and then the triumphant face of Sashank.  
Little did Sashank know what Bhutto was planning.

## Operation Searchlight

-Hiyaneijemmy Das, XI

I lay there, hiding under the bed, watching men in uniform pointing guns at my father. In a flash, he was gone. His body fell with a dull thud, his blood gushing out and drenching my clothes, his unmoving eyes fixed at me. I wanted to cry my voice hoarse, scream at the Gods that let this happen; but I laid there as still as I could. It wasn’t still enough, I suppose, because suddenly I found myself dragged out of the bed. “She’s a pretty one,” a soldier muttered as he stroked my cheek. I flinched, earning myself a kick in the shins. They hurled me into a truck, and I tried to look through the tears, blood, and bruises that obstructed my vision. I knew what happened to girls caught by soldiers, and I had to look at home one last time. What greeted me wasn’t home- it was a battlefield. My body spent months being passed on from soldier to soldier. I felt as though I ceased to exist as a human. I was a mere instrument. Eventually, soldiers in another uniform said they came to free us. I made my way to India, where things could be better, leaving behind a family I presumed dead. How naïve I was. Ten years gone and I still spend my days passing around my body, this time for a small fee. The Pakistanis tried to erase the whole thing and move on, the Indians condemned it with the proud air of victors, while I spend each day of my life with Operation Searchlight embedded in my bones, desperately trying to wash it away.

## Captains Log

- Donovan Figg, XI

Course: NWbN; Winds: SbW; Speed: 22.5 kN, passive sonar engaged.

**16:15** Just received orders from Western command that a submarine has been spotted off the coast. Initial intel is suggestive of it being the PNS Hangor or PNS Mangro.

**17:45** The Master Chief reports no contact on passive sonar. Then again, the submarine is going to get a bearing on us long before we can do the same. Nothing to do except stay frosty.

**18:50** No sighting of the submarine yet. Evidently, Mumbai intercepted a communique from the submarine and triangulated its position. I wonder why the submarine was using high frequency though. I’m beginning to suspect it needs to surface.

**19:25** Submarine sighted, range approximately 12,000m. Confirmed as PNS Hangor. This newfangled sonar restricts speed to 12kN, we will not be able to take evasive maneuvers if attacked. Commenced ship blackout and ordered radio silence.

**19:55** INS Kirpan just avoids sinking due to a faulty torpedo mechanism. Have located the Hangor. Commenced evasive maneuvers, all engines ahead. Preparing to send the Hangor a broadside salvo of torpedoes.

**20:10** The Hangor must have dived back down, now undetectable even by active sonar.

**20:40** Ship hit and unmaneuverable, sinking fast. I suspect the magazine has ignited. I recall a quote, which seems fitting for my last entry in this little book.  
“We of the navy are like islands in the sea; divided on the surface but united in the deep”.  
The crew is evacuating. As for me, it’s time for one last visit to the bridge.

Captain Mulla went down with the INS Khukri, standing on the aft deck. He was awarded the MVC for gallantry in the face of overwhelming enemy odds on 09-12-1971. The location of the Khukri remains a closely guarded naval secret even today, to prevent private divers from disturbing the final resting place of the 194 sailors still on board.



Illustration: Jasbeerat Singh, XI

## The Blood Telegram

-Hiyaneijemmy Das, XI

Archer Blood was an ordinary American with a slightly unordinary job in East Pakistan- a diplomat. He worked in a part of the country separated by miles of enemy Indian territory from the arguably stronger, more influential end called West Pakistan. When the Bangladesh genocide begun, his consulate regularly reported to events to the White House. The response- a deafening silence. Blood knew this was because America was supposed to be Pakistan’s ally. But he also knew that to stand mute to the murders of thousands of innocent people was wrong, terribly wrong. “Our government is a failure. It is morally bankrupt. It has chosen not to intervene even in the face of a genocide. It’s not just disappointing, it’s disgusting!” He cried out to the others in the consulate. Bolstered by that courage that comes with firmly knowing that you are doing the right thing, he sent a telegram of dissent. So strongly was the telegram worded that to this day, classrooms and dining tables alike continue to dissect it with fervour. It was history, that telegram. As for Blood, he was recalled from his position in Dhaka. He continued living an ordinary life, but not before exposing the cruelty of powerful governments and displaying courage and conscience that lives on in the hearts of many.



# Lower School Gala

## ADVENTURE

- Zaheen Shah, VIII

The name of this activity really got the class 8's attention. Going in all curious, excited and scared at the same time, we actually didn't know what to expect. There were 5 activities or "Adventure zones" in and near the pavilion. The first activity was "Friendship Ladder". There were 7 rows of bamboos horizontally tied together with a thick rope that was vertically placed. We had to climb the ladder with a partner. Even though we had full safety harnesses, it felt like one wrong step would lead to a long nasty fall. Cheers and laughter filled the air. The second activity was Zip-lining. A long rope was tied from a tree in the hillock to a tree below. Even though it felt short, the 2-5 seconds felt like flying and we loved it. The third activity was called "Tarzan". A lengthy rope was tied to a tall tree with knots in between. We just had to hang on to the rope with our feet up and swing. Honestly, we did feel like a bunch of Tarzans. The fourth one was known as "Burma Bridge". This was tied high above the ground which gave us a feeling of crossing a bridge. This was also a partner activity. The last one was "Criss Cross" where a duo had to walk on the same rope and cross each other at mid-point. Most of these activities were team activities and it gave us a wonderful feeling of achievement.

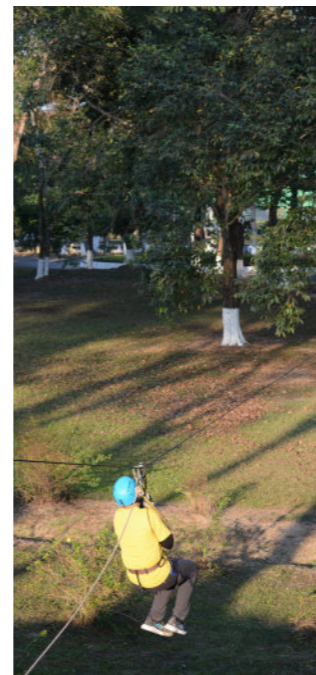


Photo credits: Chinmay Tamuli, XI

## ART

-Aanavi Ghosh, V



An art workshop was organized on the 14th of December to generate interest in art amongst the students and increase their aptitude in it. On the day of the workshops, we engaged not only in traditional art, but also in pottery and clay sculptures. Along with the Art Department senior students of Class 11 helped students in their beautiful drawings. We were divided into 2 groups, with each group having to do a different drawing. When we completed the individual projects they were put together to make one large landscape and it looked stunning. At pottery, we were encouraged to make different things. We made pots, pen stands, plates and much more. Time flew, and much to our dismay we came to the end of the workshop. We experienced what it felt like to do art and pottery and would love to do so again.



Photo credits: Shrey Modi, XI



## CDT

-Zaheen Shah, VIII

CDT has always interested us, so we were naturally curious to see what we would be asked to do for the Winter Gala. As always, we were in awe of how creative Ma'am Priyanka Joshi's idea for the Christmas decoration was and were super excited to start turning it into reality. We were given stars of three different sizes which we had to cover with colorful paper. Two of these was used to make photo booths and one was put on top of the Christmas Tree. Another group was given shafts of bamboo which they had to peel and decorate to put next to the Christmas tree. It was a really fun activity to do and it was even better to see our work paying off on the main day. The decorations were beautiful but nothing beat the joy of seeing the Christmas tree light up with our decorations making it a dazzling evening.



Photo credits: Shrey Modi, XI



# DANCE

-Pratiksha Das, VIII

Amongst many other activities that marked the Lower School Gala, the dance workshop held a special place because it saw the participation and stage time for the entire Lower School. The dance workshop overseen by Mrs Vinita Watts and Mrs Torali Baruah, was a major hit and student engagement was high. This event felt special because it also gave a taste of the cultural circuit to the new students who were super excited for the workshop as well as the exhibition, having never experienced something like this before. The events were a huge success and we all hope to see similar events across the school calendar.

Photo credits: Subham Maheswari, VIII



# MUSIC

-Aanya P. Sarkar, VIII

On the 15th of December, a total of forty-five students of Group 6 under the guidance of Dr. Goswami learnt various songs such as 'the sargam', Assamese folk songs such as 'Shyamorai Kolia', 'Roi Roi Roti' and 'Ohoho Mohoho' as well as beloved nursery rhymes such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little star but with a new twist'. This educated us on the various songs Assam is known for and gave us some insight on the diverse culture and customs of Assam making this experience all the more enriching.



Photo credits: Shrey Modi, XI

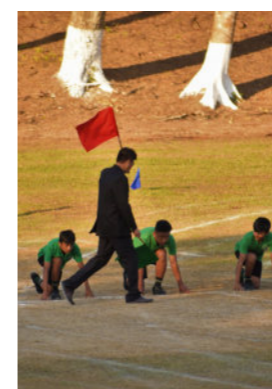


# SPORTS GALA

-Selene Epao, VIII

On a bright and sunny morning of 14th of December, the much awaited sports gala for the Lower School was held. Students were divided into two groups, and post breakfast assembled at the pavilion, where we were briefed about of the day's events. The groups were further divided into smaller sections for a football match that was to be played. Right after the football match, group 5 had their track events and group 6 began with equestrian events at the riding school. Under Mr Jalam Singh's sharp eye, we learned how to ride a horse as well as animal care. For the track events we had several heats, including for 100m, 200m and 400m. Post lunch we had our March-Past practice. On the 16th of December we were given the certificates for the track events. The 17th of December was the main day for the sports gala. We had the finals of the 100m race, 4x100m relay race and March Past. At the end of the day, the winners were announced. Group 5 secured the first position in March Past while Group 3 came in second, and Group 4 came in third position. All in all, it was a very eventful, exciting, and successful event.

Photo credits: Suhani Agarwala, XI & Mahita Jindal, XI





# LITERARY FEST

-Aanya P. Sarkar, VIII

On the 18th of December, a team of teachers with Dr. Pooja Jain at the helm organized a Literary Fest for the Lower School. The students were divided into several groups administered by specific teachers and were educated on various literary characters and books through fun games such as 'Guess the Character', 'Twisted Ending' and 'Why I did what I did'. This was truly an enchanting experience and we hope to do this in the future.



Photo credits: Subham Maheswari, VIII

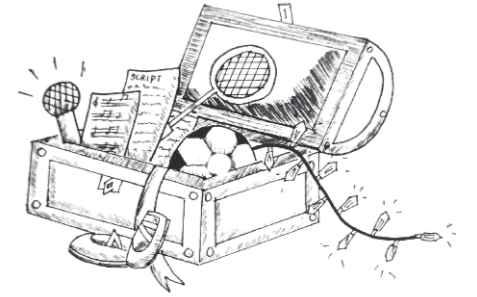


# CAMPING

-Aanya P. Sarkar, VIII

On the 13th of December, Tihu had the pleasure of experiencing the 'Joy of Camping' which would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of all the faculty members. The evening began with a cheerful film called 'The Red Balloon' and led to imaginative plays portraying Fairytales such as 'Snow White and the seven dwarfs' and 'Cinderella' by the class 6's. In the warmth of the bonfire, we danced, sang our hearts out and helped ourselves to the scrumptious food prepared by our teachers.

# Campus News



## AVS PODCAST

The joint partnership of the Cultural Captains Anushka Barua and Kaustav Basanta Arya brought to fruition the AVS Podcast which promises to feature news and entertainment from across the campus once a month. The podcast will also be aired on Youtube on the AVS Radio channel. The first episode of the podcast has been aired and the production team had along with the Cultural Captains, the Headmaster, Dr. Vimal, the DAMA Mr. Bharadwaj and Mr. Arvind Benjamin. We wish the Podcast a successful run and look forward to the second episode to be aired soon.



## GLIMPSES OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION ON CAMPUS



Photo credits: Shrey Modi, XI & Suhani Agarwala, XI

# IPSC DANCE FESTIVAL

The Daly College, Indore organised an IPSC Dance Festival on a virtual platform from October 22nd to 24th, 2021.

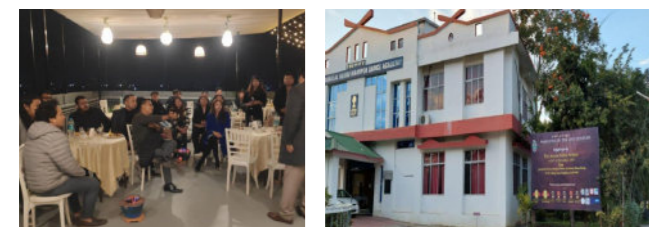
- The Assam Valley School participated in three categories:
1. 'Nrityashakti' - Indian Classical Dance (Solo): Diksha Baruah and Abhinashni Baruah
  2. 'Breakerzz' - Western Dance (Solo): Jyoti Liyak and Baibhav Sharma
  3. 'Mirror'- Duo Semi Classical Dance: Pratiti Barua and Ruhi Kalita

It gives us immense pleasure to know that Abhinashni Baruah of class 9 (performed Sattriya in Indian Classical Dance category) and Diksha Baruah of class 10 (performed Odissi) were recognised for their outstanding performances.

Team AVS in the recently concluded IPSC Music Fest, 2021, hosted by Rajkumar College, Raipur:

1. Jyotishmoyee Charingia – Spotlight Award in Indian Classical Vocal Solo
2. Areeq Imran – Canorous Performance in Western Vocal Solo
3. Veasaj Goswami – Special Mention in Indian Classical Instrumental Solo
4. Jaskeerat Singh – Spotlight Award in Western Instrumental Solo
5. Swaptadeep Paul – Spotlight Award in Indian Percussion (Tabla) Solo
6. Veasaj Goswami & Swaptadeep Paul – Special Mention in Indian Semi - Classical Instrumental Jugalbandi

AVS also received the “Best School Brigade” Award.



## PARENTAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The 3rd chapter of physical parental outreach programme was organised in imphal, manipur on 26th december, 2021. The event gave was organised to draw parents into a positive and meaningful interaction. The foundation was also laid down here for AVSA (Assam Valley School Students' with 31 former students.

## MOVIE MAKING

Alumni and award winning director-producer Bhargav Saikia shot sequences of his upcoming and much anticipated movie Bokshi on campus. A Manas senior, his work has earned innumerable national and international awards across the globe.



## EQUESTRIAN

Arman Abdullah Imdad, Class 11 won Silver Medal in the Junior National Equestrian Championship held at Mumbai.

The 2nd Assam State Equestrian Championship was held under the aegis of the Equestrian Federation of Assam from 7th January to 9th January 2022 at Dibrugarh Assam.

19 riders from AVS Riding school participated in the tournament and won 29 medals in total.

- 11 - Gold
- 06 - Silver
- 12 - Bronze
- Total - 29

Our heartiest congratulations to coach Mr Jalam Singh and his team.



## TAEKWONDO

Bhabarnab Sandilya of Dhansiri House, Class 9 won a Silver Medal in the 5th Kamrup Metro District Taekwondo Championship at Nehru Stadium, Guwahati on 4th- 6th January 2022. Our heartiest congratulations to him.



## BOARDING SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

The Assam Valley School under the leadership of the Headmaster Dr. Vidhukesh Vimal became a founder member of the Boarding School Association of India (BSAI) a pioneer Indian association which aims to promote advocacy, awareness and collaboration amongst boarding schools across the country while contributing to policy formation.





# Introducing



“Home is where the heart is”, the adage goes, and so it is. Ms. Rajlakshmi Sharma is a former Aviator who has found her way back to her alma mater. She first stepped foot into campus as a student, and now the school welcomes her as an English teacher. AVE had the chance to have a chat with her on what it means to be a teacher.

Adella: How does it feel to come back to the alma mater as a teacher?

RLS: Coming back to school after so many years feels great. I would consider myself lucky that I am given this opportunity to work in a place where I have gained the best experiences of my life. I have always felt lucky to be a part of this institution as a alumni. Today as I take on this responsibility, I will try my best to provide the best of whatever I was provided with as student.

Adella: What are your strengths and what challenges do you think you could face as a teacher?

RLS: I am glad I have experienced different things over the years and this experience has made me into a wiser person than I was before. So for my strengths I would say that I am a quick learner. I try to pick up on new ideas provided to me. I am an emotional person, that could be considered as a weakness but I tend to make it a strength as it lets me connect to people and make me into a better team member.

Adella: Tell us about the kind of learning environment that you would like to create in the classroom.

RLS: During this period of online classes due to the pandemic, I would try to make the classes more interesting for the students. For example, be more interactive and engage them in activities so they are involved. Be a friend whenever they need help from me outside academics as well as in academics.

Adella: What made you choose teaching as a profession?

RLS: There are few people that have been an integral part of my life and in a way have given me inspiration to choose this profession. I am a people’s person, I love being around people and helping them whenever possible. So, I think being a teacher has provided me with the opportunity. I am blessed to be around people and students with so much talent, and contribute to their betterment along with mine.



When the moon sings for you, know that when I am lonely, I speak to her of you.



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