



India's Neighbours

A collection of articles of India's relations with her neighbours

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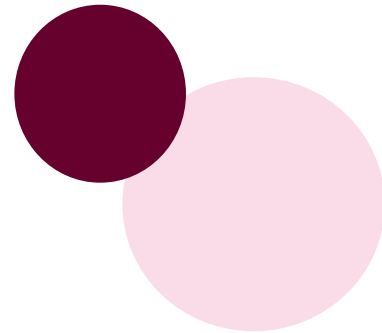
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THE THIRD EYE



-Tasmin Yushra Ahmed, X

We woke up on the 24th of February this year to the news that Russia had hopped over into Ukraine. If anyone was surprised, it's high time to wake up and smell the coffee.

To cut a very long history lesson blissfully short, armed conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in early 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. Theoretically, that was the official beginning of it all. In the plainest words possible, 'deadly escalation' is the only way to put what is happening right now into perspective. The numbers don't lie: 14,200-14,400 killed in the time limit of 6 April 2014 to 31 December 2021.

Possibly the most alarming piece of news is the fact that this is not even a full-fledged war, it is a proxy war, yet, the media is as ablaze as the cities of Ukraine, with a flooding amount of news to cover, articles to write, and news to telecast. The front pages are another battlefield where the war of narratives is being fought over. Nevertheless, the impact on the public is yet to be determined.

Who to believe? Where to move to? Where to go? Today it is Russia-Ukraine at hand, but it comes with a much

heavier sense of déjà vu.

If we set aside the 12-year long Syrian civil war well alone, we have forgotten even about the most recent crisis that had flooded social media last year: The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan — we never hear about it anymore. Nor do we hear any updates about China's treatment of the Uighur Muslims. In no way should the Russia-Ukraine war be the least of our concerns, after all, it has changed the face of geo-politics and will in all likelihood decide the fate of Europe for the next decade.

However, the obsession of the western media to glorify every action it takes as 'just' and 'right' for democracy and the world in general is now a dying theme. While America funds Ukraine and fights its proxy war with Russia to the last dying Ukrainian, the truth is that it is a daily scene in the Middle East. Mass murder, houses set on fire, schools blown up, crime against women, violence against children and list can go on and on. A war does not merely drag in the countries that fight it but in effect, destabilizes the world as we know it- and no number of sanctions help. What does, is the firm belief that dialogues must end conflict or else there would be a Syria, an Afghanistan, an Iraq and a Ukraine in every corner of the world.

India's Neighbours

CHINA

-Zaheen Shah, IX

As soon as you saw the word 'China', you most probably already had a not-so-sweet opinion in your mind. I don't blame you. China is one of the world's fastest growing countries and is the 10th largest exporter. It's a significant recipient of foreign aid and a major borrower on international capital markets. For China to have stepped out of the shadow it calls its 'century of humiliation' when it was subjugated by western powers, it is set to grow double of that of USA. Despite these advancements, China's methods of dealing with issues in human rights and politics remain largely contested. China's rise as a global power in the eastern hemisphere would have been a cause of celebration had its aggression with neighbouring countries not created a cause of major geopolitical concern. China has seen to it that it is in a dominant position to exert influence or project power on a global scale and bend countries to its will. India is the only country in the subcontinent that has the will

NEPAL

-Pratiti Barua, X

The relationship between Nepal and India is often described as unique. Geographical proximity, an open border, and cultural, civilizational, historical and social bonds have intimately brought together the two sides from ancient times to the present. Barring a few short-lived phases of "hostility," the two countries have been able to overcome the pitfalls of the "familiarity breeds contempt" dictum. There has been a long tradition of free movement of people across the borders. Nepal has an area of 147,181 Sq. Kms. and a population of 29 million. It shares a border of over 1850 Kms in the east, south and west with five Indian States - Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand - and in the north with the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. Over the years its unstable governments with frequent changes of Prime Ministers meant that it has become easier for China to make inroads into the country's economy as well as politics. From the sudden skirmish over border issues at Kalapani to the close relationship with the Gorkhas that the Indian Army recruits. From the creeping Chinese threat across the Himalayas, to Nepali participants in reality TV across Indian channels, Nepal remains a neighbour India must continue to cultivate bilateral ties with.

to take on the dragon. To manifest the ability however, we need to push towards a 5 trillion dollar economy with a single-minded agenda. The strategic location of Southeast Asia makes the region a battleground for geopolitical competition. In Southeast Asia, perhaps the biggest consequence of China's rise is a pressing demand for countries in the region to strategically respond to a new great power in the neighbourhood. The only way to counter the red dragon would be to stare it in the eye as we are in the Himalayas. We will however need far more resources than merely boycotting a few Chinese apps.

BANGLADESH

-Natasha Bilimoria, IX

India and Bangladesh share a long border along with a cultural history that can be traced back to over centuries. This relationship also holds the unique record of having their national anthems written by the same Nobel Laureate, beloved in both countries- Rabindranath Tagore. Bangladesh is a trusted partner to India and both countries have strong bilateral interests. Sheikh Hasina, the country's most successful PM, shares strong ties with India that has led to stability along India's eastern border and has opened up many opportunities for sub-regional partnership for both the countries. These relationships, however, are not without pitfalls. Bangladesh's growing closeness with China and the Islamic radicalism in the country stretch and test this relationship often. While Sheikh Hasina continues to hold fort and keep the Chinese at bay, India has made investments in Bangladesh's infrastructure to ensure that its presence in the country is not diminished. Bangladesh's growth trajectory under Sheikh Hasina has been tremendous and over the last decade and its GDP has recently crossed India's. While all of this is good news for the country, India and Bangladesh both need to worry about the presence of the red dragon in the subcontinent and counter its moves to draw Bangladesh into its Belt and Road initiative. A primary bone of contention between the two countries remains illegal immigration in Eastern India. Bangladesh's increasing population remains an issue for its limited resources. The relationship between the two countries will remain pivotal in India's geopolitical policies in the next decade.

MY CULTURE

- Norzin Lhamu Bhutia, X

One of the first questions I am asked on being introduced is, 'Where are you from?'. 'From Sikkim', I answer. 'So, you're Nepali?' is often the quick assumption. It was no different when I first came to AVS. I had two options. Lie and escape a long tedious explanation or reveal the truth, about kings and lost kingdoms and promises and treaties and thereby begin an altogether impromptu history lesson crushing my unsuspecting listeners with boredom. The reality is that even though I speak Nepali, even though I share many cultural similarities with the Nepalis, I am a Bhutia.

People often mistake Bhutias for the Monpa tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Despite our huge number, my tribe is highly overlooked, even by its people. Very few individuals are fluent in Bhutia and most speak Nepali or English due to the complexity of the Bhutia language.

Originating from Tibet, Bhutias have inhabited Sikkim as early as the 8th century. The original natives of Sikkim were the Lepchas (a major tribe of Sikkim). Different stories have been told about why the Bhutias entered Sikkim but my favourite is the one told to me by my mother. According to her, many years ago, Sikkim was a land of chaos. The Lepcha Chieftains always fought amongst themselves and the people longed for peace. They believed in a prophecy which claimed that a man from Tibet would come and restore harmony and luck on the people. Khye Bumsa was the prince of a small kingdom in Eastern Tibet. His father had a divine vision one night- instructing Khye Bumsa to travel to Sikkim, where his descendants were destined to become rulers. After receiving multiple signals, he travelled to Sikkim, bringing many of his people with him. These are the ancestors of the Bhutias. Khye Bumsa, as legend has it, extended his control over the Lepchas and added Sikkim to his territory. His descendant, Phuntsog Namgyal, became the first Chogyal or King of united Sikkim.

Fast forward to the 21st century, the unfortunate majority of the population has forgotten their culture. Recently though, a newfound emergence of awareness has begun amongst the Bhutias. People have started taking classes to learn their mother tongue, they sit with their families to make momos, and have started to appreciate the culture and heritage the way I am sure our ancestors would have wanted us to.

THE KHLEN

- Bariskhem Pohti, X

Long ago, in the lush green Khasi Hills lied a village. This village was ruled over by a snake called Khlen. This snake loved to eat people as it increased his powers and made him bigger. The entire village was terrified and shivered when they heard his name. The villagers always brought him offerings in the form of meat and people, among other things. The Khlen's favourite treat was women, especially the most beautiful ones. This terror of Khlen continued for generations. Except, one day, when eventually the Khlen's power would diminish- but not completely extinguish.

In the present world, there is a legend about the Khlen, which has been passed down in the Khasi community for a long time. The legend goes that Khlen faced a rebellion against his agitated, angry and anguished people. They successfully killed the Khlen and cooked his meat for their feast. The meat was enjoyed by the villagers, and there was a mother who kept some of the meat for her son who wasn't in the village during the feast. The son did not eat the meat, which now began to rot and so the mother threw it away. The thrown away piece showed

signs of life and eventually the Khlen was resurrected, albeit in a weaker form. This tale was told to scare children to stop them playing late into the evening.

This weaker form of Khlen had one ability- the ability to produce gold. One day, a boy found Khlen and found his abilities to be really useful for himself but the Khlen did not allow him to take the gold. There was a price that had to be paid, the one who wants to take the gold must bring a person for the Khlen to devour. Also, the person must continue to serve the Khlen till the time they possessed all the gold. The only way to be free from the clutches of the Khlen was to burn all the gold and to throw away the Khlen. The people who kidnapped others to feed them to the Khlen were known as Aardang. Once the gold is burned the Khlen becomes as weak as it had been after the mother threw it away. One day, a boy found the Khlen and seemed excited by it, even though his parents told him stay away from snakes. The boy pondered and pondered, finally doing what he believed was right. Now, I leave it up to you to decide what he must have done.



Introducing



Mr Maitreya Rajan Mahanta has joined AVS as an English teacher. Barishkhem K. Pohti representing AVE had the chance to catch up with the new Aviator on what it means to be a teacher.

AVE: What made you choose AVS over any other school? How is the experience different from the previous institution in which you taught?

MRM: Since a very young age, I heard about the wonders associated with AVS. It was my dream to be an aviator! That dream being unfulfilled, the opportunity to teach here was something I dare not have missed. The very thought of working in AVS lit a spark and I followed it! I was teaching in a day school earlier and I have to admit that working in AVS is an entirely different experience. Being associated with the students here almost 24/7 is something that surely sets AVS apart. Besides, I am in love with the serene campus, which I would not have found elsewhere.

AVE: What do you find unique and different in the students of AVS compared to other students you have taught and interacted with?

MRM: It is not a comparison for me because all my students are unique in their own ways. But, I have to mention that the enthusiasm and creativity I have encountered here is not something I had experienced before. Besides, the familial interaction with students here is a new and touching experience.

AVE: How has your experience been in AVS so far?

How do you see yourself contributing to the AVS community?

MRM: In short, my experience with AVS so far has been breathtaking! It is something I would not miss for anything else in the world. I hope to contribute to the AVS community with the best of my abilities, be it in teaching, creative writing, photography and so on. Besides, AVS for me is also a learning ground and I definitely seek to learn new skills as the days go by.

AVE: What are the values that you hold dear and like to see in others?

MRM: For me, staying true to one's work and passion means a lot. I yearn to see kindness, gratitude and honesty in people. These are values I have always tried to inculcate in my own life as well.

AVE: As a young teacher, how do you see yourself different from the other teachers?

MRM: Being young, I feel I can connect to students almost like an elder sibling with whom they can share their day to day life experiences. I had been a student until last year and I hope this fact helps me understand students' issues better. This is true for other young teachers as well.

THE OUTPOST

PM Modi's Europe visit promises bonhomie, trade and better bilateral ties with the Nordic countries. American weapon industry reaps a harvest from the Ukraine- Russia war even as Biden promises to continue to fight the proxy war against Russia till the last standing Ukrainian. America's women's rights abuse surfaces as thousands take to the street to protest against the Supreme Court's decision to reverse the abortion laws. Despite wildfires and the release of Dr. Strange- Multiverse of madness, it is the hysterics and drama unfolding in the divorce proceedings of Johnny Depp and Amber Heard that has even Hollywood riveted.



Illustration: Limeka Ayemi, XII

OPEN MIC POETRY

-Dr Pooja Jain Benjamin

An Open air Open mic Original Poetry recitation event for Upper School was conducted by the English department on 7 May, under the guidance of Dr. Pooja Jain and Ms. Anandita Luther. The event was anchored by Angie Nongthombam and young upcoming musical talents Meman and Drengo on the keyboard to add to the spirit of the afternoon.

20 budding poets along with 4 teachers put their thoughts to verse and shared it with the audience. The event saw a collection of poems read out that brought together a myriad ideas each unique and vibrant. It was an afternoon well enjoyed despite the rising humidity.

TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIP

Achievements by AVS students in SONITPUR DISTRICT TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIP 2022.
Venue: Mission Chariali Girls High School Field
Date: 7th and 8th May 2022.

Kyorugi Participant:

Gold:

1. Eeksha Saikia, Cadet Girls Weight Category (u-33)kg.
2. Saurav Manta, Cadet Boys Weight Category (u-57) kg.
3. Kanyanka Tamuli, Junior Girls Weight Category (u-74)kg.

Silver:

1. Suvechha Borah, Cadet Girls Weight Category (u-37) kg.
2. Tanishk Sharma, Junior Boys Weight Category (u-63)kg.
3. Bhabarnab Pran Nath Sendilya, Junior Boys Weight Category (u-73)kg.

Bronze:

1. Nilav Prajapati, Sub-Junior Boys Weight Category (u-49)kg.
2. Pradenya Kashyap, Sub-Junior Girls Weight Category (u-38)kg.
3. Piyush Paul, Junior Boys Weight Category (u-59)kg.
4. Rishob Ghosh, Junior Boys Weight Category (u-65) kg.
5. Baibhav Sharma, Senior Boys Weight Category (u-63)kg.

POOMSAE PARTICIPANTS:

1. Bhabarnab Pran Nath Sendilya (Gold).

LOWER SCHOOL ENGLISH DEBATES

The much-anticipated finals of the lower school English debates were held on Saturday, between Bhoroli-Lohit and Subansiri-Namdang.

The team for the motion was Subansiri-Namdang, (represented by Natasha Billimoria, Swadheen Banerjee, Pratiksha Das, and Ivanan Shandilya) who suggested that alternate forms of punishment be applied to perpetrators. They gave a brief overview of the barbaric history of the death penalty, and brought up the fact that the right to life outweighs any powers that a court may have.

The team against the motion was Bhoroli-Lohit, (represented by Shabahat Ansari, Siddhant Singh, Aanya Paul Sarkar, and Urvee Rathi), who opened with the statement that executed criminals cannot, under any circumstances, commit further crimes. They also mentioned that the death penalty is a tool of justice, and cannot simply be abolished at will, and brought up the topic of deterrence.

The Most Promising Speaker was Swadheen Banerjee, and there was a tie for the Best Speaker between Aanya Paul Sarkar of Bhoroli and Natasha Billimoria of Subansiri. Lastly, the motion was carried in favour of Subansiri-Namdang.

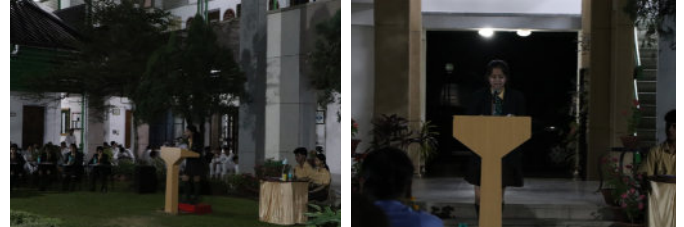


Photo Credits: Suhani Agarwala, XII

AXOM BHAWNA XOMARU

-Abhinashni Baruah, X

On the 30th of April, escorted by the dance Guru Mrs. Rubi Bordoloi, a contingent of six dancers represented AVS at the prestigious Axom Bhawna Xomaru. This is a cultural event that celebrated, promoted and propagated the rich tapestry of Assam's various art forms. The six students Abhinashni Baruah, Urvashi Bora, Swastika Baruah, Trismita Bora, Shirin Jaiswal and Pratiksha Das performed Xattriya for the august gathering and left them mesmerised. It was a memorable experience for the Team.



Ripple #185

-Claudia N. Marak

*Did we lose our parts to a
story that never was?
Foretold for centuries, the
forbidden love.
Whispered by serpents,
sung by trees,
Their roots as old as Adam
and Eve.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "I'll nail it to you."- Kekhriesino Meyase, XII (*I do not wish to be crucified, but thanks.*)
2. "I am telling you."- Dr. Pooja Jain" (*Totally understood what you told us.*)
3. "My dirt became shoes."- Bariskhem Pohti, X (*That's one way to DIY.*)
4. "She said that she said you."- Tanish Hansaria, XII (*Thanks for the new tongue twister.*)
5. "I came out by mistake."- Riiariti Sohliya, XII (*You need a sturdier closet.*)

Keep It Reel!

Thunderstruck

-Mahita Jindal, XII



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