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On Culture and Closets

-Aanya Paul Sarkar, IX



Illustration: Hama Ahmed, XI

'When you reduce Life to Black and White, you never see rainbows.'

Contrary to popular belief, homosexuality did exist in ancient India. Therefore, it has always been a part of India's history. It is quite ironic how people belonging to the LGBTQ+ community are criminalized and perceived to be unnatural or against God when they are also represented in several Hindu temples. Although homosexuality was never encouraged back in

the day, it is a shame how the Indian psyche looks down upon homosexuality when Indian mythology has always mentioned it. It was never considered an abnormality, let alone a crime. Well, not until the British colonists arrived in India and gave homosexuality its known criminal perception. The British sense of morality makes its appearance here yet again. Homosexuality was decriminalized and legalized back in 2009. This decision was reverted but yet again upheld in 2018.

However, does legalization equal acceptance? In India, as often in Asia, the problem is not just about the law. A whole culture helps make homosexuality taboo. I find it extremely difficult to understand why somebody's private life should be mandated, or judged upon by this hypocritical society we live in. After all, everybody is entitled to self-expression as long as it is within a professional boundary.

Your sexuality is not what makes you whole. It does not define you. It is funny how we make such a huge deal out of something so minute. Although in today's world people have the legal right to conduct their personal affairs and go about their lives without the fear of persecution lurking in the back of their minds, it is

extremely tragic how they are still denied equality of treatment in various different aspects.

It is imperative to take the conversation forward and take action against the outrageous laws that continue to hold prejudice against the LGBTQ+ community. Laws that do not recognize same-sex marriages nor give the community the right to adopt should not have a place in a furiously evolving world such as ours. Human rights aren't optional. There is but one cure for homophobia: education. Perhaps there will come a day when people won't have to 'come out of the closet'. They'll just say they are in love and that will be all that matters. After all, if Harry Potter taught us anything, it is that no one should live in a closet.

Illustration: Ssara Jha, XI



It isn't pleasant to be hurled into a dream, much less pleasant to be hurled to the wet, mossy ground of a dream too familiar. Around the island she had landed on was a swamp with dark, muddy waters. There was a clustered plantation around the swamp, along with random toy trains, Barbies and books scattered about the place. The place had the feeling of being watched. Among the noise of the swamp, she thought she'd heard her name in little whispers, "Lenny, Lenny, Lenny."

Perhaps if this was her first time, she would have feared for her life. But it wasn't. Lenny had dreamt and grown up with the swamp. It was a part of her being now. Sometime later, she got up and began to look around the place, recognising a nearby tree. Its leaves were made of pages from forgotten books and still bore the mark she'd given it the last time she'd dreamt of this place. She thought of a shovel, of the worn wood and the dirt around the steel. She thought of its dimensions and its heaviness, the tiredness she felt as she dug and dug. There was a soft thud and she saw it had appeared on the ground beside her. She thought again of a boat, and it appeared in the waters behind her.

She hadn't, however, thought of the brunette boy rowing the boat towards her island. He never said a word to

Stolen Dreams

-Deubale Meru, XI

"Lenny knew there were many kinds of thieves. Most stole money and Intel, while some preferred the emotional loots of stealing love, innocence, and respect. It was an immoral act."

her, not when she got on the boat or even on the way to another island, following a number of marked trees. She knew the swamp listened to her, though sometimes there seemed to be a glitch in the place. The other island was just as mossy but it was the only natural-looking place. The boy rowed away as Lenny got off the boat and she spared him a look over her shoulder before walking to her treasure.

She got to the tree and began to dig near its roots, searching for the keys she knew were buried there. Around her, the swamp seemed to grow quieter, and she anxiously began to dig faster. Just as the shovel made contact with the keys, the swamp around her let out a horrible shriek and she found herself underwater. Roots, algae, and insects seemed to capture her limbs as she thrashed around. She could hear the hum of a lullaby in her ears and the growing desperation of her voice. Lenny knew there were many kinds of thieves. Most stole money and Intel, while some preferred the emotional loots of stealing love, innocence, and respect. It was an immoral act. But perhaps the strangest and most cowardly attempt to steal is from a place where no one exists except the dreamer. *'Tis a place where one steals the dreams you grow up with.*



In search

-Emidaka Rapsang, XI

Unrelentless chirping of birds, crunching of age long dried leaves and twigs, squinted eyes, parched throat, and sore limbs. Aside from these pleasantly unpleasant circumstances, I am also accompanied by the scorching sun with its heat seeping into my skin, in search of my campsite- lost in a plethora of looming trees, wild inhabitants, and a placid river.

Trudging my way through the shrub-covered path, I finally find myself on the bank of the still river, glimmering like crystals under the beams of the sun. A walk away is where my official campsite is located; so it says on the dingy, torn guidebook. Starting with the tent I set up, I also take out my fishing rod, looking for a savory dinner. Dunking the rod in the river, I feel the fatigue set in and my eyes lulling themselves to sleep. However, unease sets in when I feel a pair of sinister eyes tracking my movements. In a start, I observe the surroundings and my eyes land on a small magpie with the same soulless eyes, bearing into mine. Paying it no mind, I shut my eyes once more, only to be awoken by the honeysweet hums of a woman. Tranquil and endearing, the hums sound like a woman welcoming her lover into her arms. In my daze, I begin my frantic search for this woman, like a mad dog sniffing for a bone. The sun is hiding behind the hills but I couldn't care less and switch on my flashlight. The voice grew louder, sweat tickled my forehead. I could not find the

woman anywhere. Fear tormented me back to the campsite.

Moving past the shrubs yet again, I reach the river, still glimmering in the near-blinding moonlight. Walking further to my tent, my body stiffens and goosebumps decorate my skin. My tent and supplies are gone. Yet again, I am surrounded by tall trees and deafening silence. Apart from the same haunting hums of the unknown woman which earlier eased my heart, now raising its pace and filling me with utter fear. In that instance, distracted by panic, my only source of light fades into darkness and I am left. Stranded. But not alone. Through my blurred vision the old trees seemed to mock me, swaying as though they were chuckling, as though life returned to those who lived eons ago, whose body- fodder for worms; all finding humor in my horror.

In a crazed manner, I started running anywhere, screaming for help. All seemed hopeless, around in circles is how far I got. That is, until I see an opening, an opening with a light and distant voices. Dashing through it, a humorless chuckle escapes my lips as I am met with the same glimmering river, who crashed into the rocks with the same voices, this time louder, harsher, and pleading for help. The hums would never stop, not when I met with the river, and not when I fell into her arms, embracing it as it engulfs me.



Illustration: Jaskeerat Singh, XII

What exactly is ambition? A aspires to be B, the poor aspire to be wealthy, and the ugly aspire to be attractive. Ambition is the deadliest poison. All other poisons are drawn in by it: greed, violence, competitiveness, strife, and a continual state of conflict with everyone else.

Believe me when I say that no thought is worth investing your entire life in. Teachers and parents start priming youngsters as early as kindergarten - "You must be number one". And this "one" gradually transforms into ambition. . It may assume numerous shapes, but "number one" will always remain in the scheme of things. People take to ambition because they have no

other way of propelling themselves to accomplishment. The key question is how to propel yourself to achievement without setting a goal.

If we want innovation and imagination to drive the human race forward, it is critical that we do not build an ambitious world, but rather, a really pleasant world. This is because we will go to the ends of the earth if we are really happy and completely engaged in whatever we are doing. When we accept ourselves as we are, a transformation occurs. We begin to grow, but the scale is different. Then the dimension is everlasting, not tunnel-visioned. So, don't be limited by your ambitions, because a human being is an infinite possibility. The



Ambition

-Barsha Goel, XII

purpose of life is to investigate that possibility.

"Whatever you are, you are not satisfied with it," as Osho puts it. So, is this what ambition is all about? "Whatever you are, you are," he adds. Accept yourself and let go. And watch the magic happen.

Ambition is one thing. It is the propeller, the accelerator. Push it, and your life moves at a whirlwind- impressive, effective, but unsustainable. In a world where ambition

is glorified, we must learn to pause. To shut off the propellers and take our foot off the accelerator once in a while. Only then, can we feel the true joy of life that ambition helps us be more grateful for. Ambition is the means which compels us to strive for more of the moments that make us feel alive. It is not the end product. I would hate for our world to hold the misbelief that ambition could possibly be the final destination.

Campus Caricature

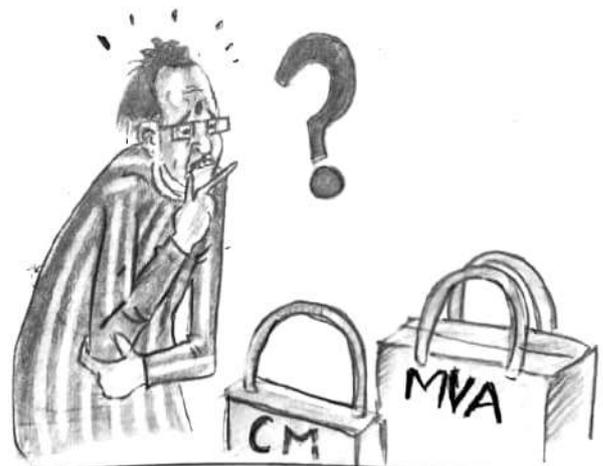
Homecoming

-Siddhi Gupta, X



THE OUTPOST

The Macron-dubbed "braindead" NATO is revitalised after Sweden and Finland are invited to join the alliance, following Turkey's drop of dissent. The Udaipur murder takes a turn as the NIA reveals that the suspects may have links to ISIS. A Texan judge blocks the ban on abortions after the overturning of Roe v. Wade while citizens of other states wait with bated breath. Uddhav Thackeray resigns after lamenting as having been "betrayed by his own people". His replacement? What was believed to be erstwhile CM Devendra Fadnavis now becomes Deputy CM while the top post goes to Eknath Shinde.

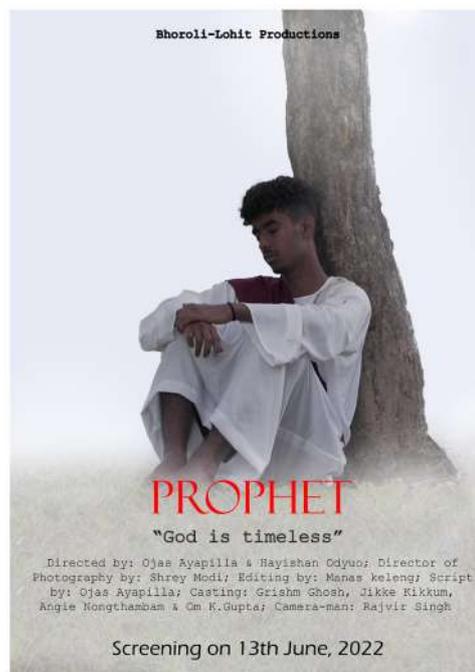


INTER-HOUSE MOVIE MAKING

Bhoroli-Lohit:

Bhoroli-Lohit presented a short film called 'Prophet'. The plot starts by showing how the prophet gets reborn in the present and spreads the message of God among the students of The Assam Valley School who find his way of communicating and clothing extremely peculiar. He crosses paths with students Jikke and Angie who decide to publicize his words of wisdom on social media to gain followers. With fame, however, comes hatred. People on social media start calling him and his morals fake. Also, there's a person who tries copying him just to be popular. When the fake comes to apologise, the Prophet simply forgives and walks out with him as his brother. The Prophet, in the end, would convince people that there is nothing greater than being able to forgive and love.

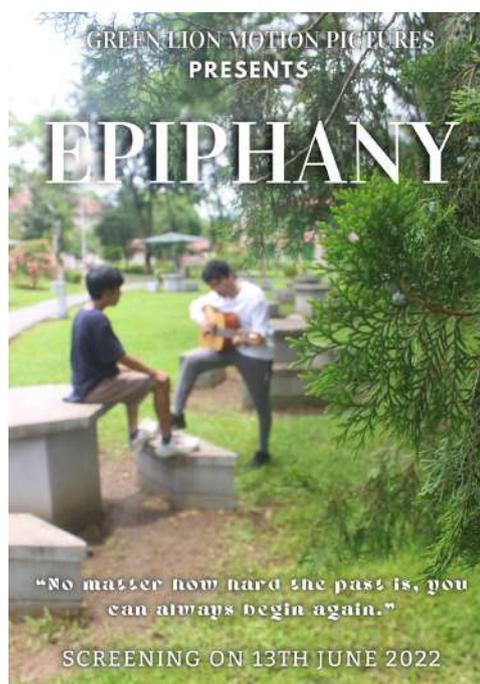
The short film was directed by Ojas Ayapilla and Hayishan Odyuo. The cinematography was done by Shrey Modi with screenplay by Ojas Ayapilla. The editing was done by Manas Keleng. The film was announced winner for the Best Director, Best Sound Quality, Best Editing, Best Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Cinematography but the winners' cup, unfortunately slipped through their fingers and they lifted the Runners-Up trophy.



Covered by: Priyamu Kashyap, XI

Kopili-Dhansiri:

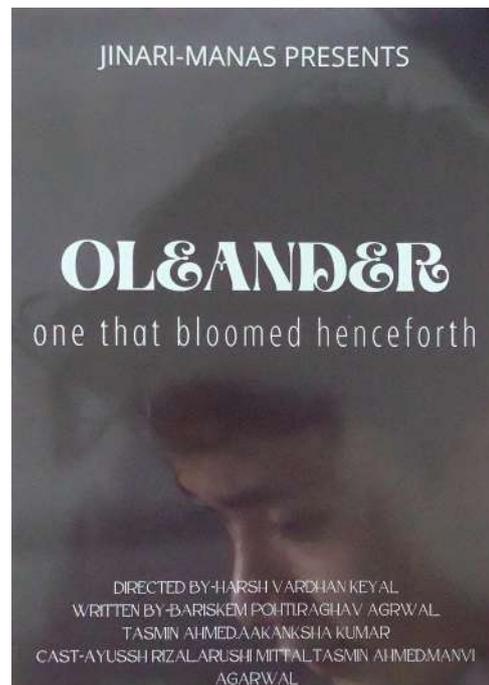
On the event of Inter House Movie Making 2022, Kopili-Dhansiri presented 'Epiphany', a movie on the themes of forgiveness and rebirth. Directed by Varshaa Rajkumari and Hemika Rani Borah, it had Angelica Saikia as narrator. The movie follows the journey of Ethan, acted by Akum, a man living in the shell of his trauma. His trauma stems in time involving the death of his parents in a fatal car accident because of a drunk driver. Years later, Ethan is seen as a depressed teen who has recurring illusions of himself as a child. When followed by a stranger in the dark who tries to harm Ethan, he is saved by the same driver from the accident all those years ago. Through an emotional scene in the hospital, it is revealed by the driver had got drunk on that fateful day all those years ago mourning the death of his daughter who had passed away that very night. Through empathy and forgiveness, they find what they had lost in each other.



Covered by: Debdale Merry, XI

Jinari-Manas:

On the 13th of June, 2022, Jinari Manas presented a short film named 'Oleander: One That Bloomed Henceforth'. With a splendid introduction by Tasmin Ahmed, the movie portrayed the given theme of rebirth. The movie featured Ayush Rizal as the protagonist who was into coma when the movie began. In his state of deep sleep, he saw illusions about how bad a person he was and dreamt of all the mistakes he had made before the accident and reflected upon them. He awoke from his coma and was thus reborn. He was now ready to be a good man. Cinematographed and directed by Harsh Kayal, the film taught us the power of introspection and acceptance.



Covered by: Srishiti Bajaj, XI

Subansiri-Namdang:

Subansiri-Namdang's movie encapsulated the saying 'last but not the least'. With spectacular cinematography by Yashraj Agarwal and directions from Karleen Tok and Krishna Agarwal, they were able to articulate a common problem experienced by plentiful students, especially in India. 'Your Own Place' displayed the monotonous life of Roshan, who lived fulfilling the dreams of his parents while discarding his own. From the tender age of a smiling boy to sorrowful eyes of a man, a husband and a father- he carried the exhausting weight of regret that was lifted only when he saw his daughter pursuing her passions with freedom. However, it all crashed down when she died. His last straw broke and all his hopes were lost. Subansiri-Namdang's cathartic movie of finding solace in death portrayed a message strong enough to win them the cup.



Covered by: Emidaka Rapsang, XI

Results:

Best Cinematography: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Shrey Modi)
Best Editing: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Manas Keleng)
Best Sound Design: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Manas Keleng)
Best Director: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Ojas Ayapilla, Hayishan Odyuo)
Best Screen Play: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Ojas Ayapilla)
Best Actor: BHOROLI - LOHIT (Jikke Kikum)

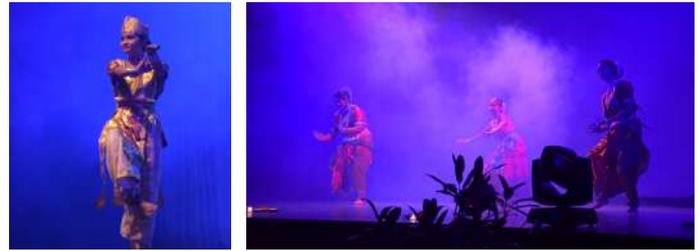
- 4th Position: JINARI - MANAS
- 3rd Position: KOPILI - DHANSIRI
- Runners-Up Trophy: BHOROLI - LOHIT
- Best Movie Trophy: SUBANSIRI - NAMDANG

INTER- HOUSE DANCE

Bhoroli-Lohit:

Covered by: Priyanu Kashyap, XI

The Inter-house dance competition held on the 15th of June, 2022 started with the classical solo dance category where Abhinashni Baruah of Bhoroli portrayed the ten avatars of Vishnu through Sattriya Nritya and did well enough to bring the first position home. This was followed by the semi classical trio dance. Prateeti Ghosh, Tanisha Surana and Abhinashni Baruah did a fusion performance of Odissi and Sattriya dance and won the second position. For the last category which was the western group dance, Bhoroli and Lohit presented before us a performance highlighting feminism through the aspiration of a young pirate girl who wished to become Chief. Bhoroli-Lohit lifted the Runners-up trophy along with the award for Best Costume.



Kopili-Dhansiri:

Covered by: Deubale Meru, XI

The Classical Solo category began with Alda Nongmeikapam of Kopili-Dhansiri, who's mesmerizing Solo Kathak Performance set the tone of the evening. The Semi Classical category of trio dancers began with Diksha, Violina, and Ruhi Kalita. The Trio danced a combination of Guru Vandana Sattriya and Kathak with sharp formations. With the end of the Semi Classical category came the much-awaited Group Category which began with the green house. Their choreography began with an energetic Chinese theme dance which was followed by an energetic fan dance. The last of the routine had beautiful formations which stood out for the audience.



Jinari-Manas:

Covered by: Srishti Bajaj, XI

On the 15th of June, 2022, Interhouse dance competition was held. Jinari-Manas presented wonderful performances in all three categories. The classical solo performed by Swastika Boruah was a tribute to Lord Shiva. For the semi classical trio by Sampada Malpani, Kankana Saikia and Babli Kanwar, they performed the Shiv Tandav. Taking inspiration from The Greatest Show Man, Jinari-Manas presented a routine choreographed and called "The Greatest Show" in the group western dance category. All performances received huge rounds of applause and were well appreciated.



Photo Credits: Alonso Nongthombam, IX & Mahita Jindal, XII

Subansiri-Namdang:

Covered by: Emidaka Rapsang, XI

The soft rattling of the gunghroo on Astha Bora's feet during her solo dance intensified the vividness of the dance which told the tale of the demoness, Putana and her attempt to kill infant Krishna by offering to feed him from her poisoned breast. She performed the dance form, 'Sattriya' with strong and smooth movements. The trio dance routine of Subansiri-Namdang showcased the power of the feminine and depicted the avatars of the Goddesses Durga ending with the depiction of goddess, Kali. The dancers, Astha Bora, Silpi Bora and Prateeti Baruah presented the semi-classical dance with an energetic choreography, use of the symbolic Trishul and powerful movements that enchanted the audience. Subansiri-Namdang's performance ended with the much anticipated group dance. The dance symbolized patriotism and a soldier's sacrifices for the country. The sentimental show sparked pride and gratitude for one's own country with the nationalistic song of 'Vande Mataram' playing. This compilation of dazzling dances earned them the Best Trio, Best Group and Best Choreography Awards, along with the Winners' Cup.

Results at a Glance:

Solo Classical Category:

- 1st Position:-Bhoroli-Lohit
- 2nd Position: Kopili-Dhansiri
- 3rd Position: Subansiri-Namdang
- 4th Position: Jinari- Manas

Trio Semi Classical Category:

- 1st Position: Subansiri- Namdang
- 2nd Position: Bhoroli- Lohit
- 3rd Position: Jinari- Manas
- 4th Position: Kopili- Dhansiri

Group Dance Category:

- 1st Position: Subansiri-Namdang
- 2nd Position: Kopili- Dhansiri
- 3rd Position: Jinari- Manas
- 4th Position: Bhoroli- Lohit

UNIFIED COUNCILS NATIONAL SCIENCE TALENT SEARCH EXAM

-Dr Alpana Dey

It was an online test held on 30th Jan 2022. All the Students of classes 5 to 10 participated. Names of the rankers are as follows:

- Jignasha Bora, V
- Khyaati Borah, V
- Aanavi Ghosh, V
- Adrika Dey, VI
- Ronit Dutta Roy, VI
- Prayash Khakholia, VII
- Kushi Todi, VII



Overall Position:

- 1st Position: Subansiri- Namdang
- 2nd Position: Bhoroli- Lohit
- 3rd Position: Kopili- Dhansiri
- 4th Position: Jinari- Manas

Individual Trophies:

- Best male dancer: Baibhav Sharma
- Best female dancer: Silpi Bora
- Best Costume: Bhoroli-Lohit
- Best Choreography: Subansiri-Namdang

UNIFIED INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH OLYMPIAD

-Dr Alpana Dey

It was an online test held on 12 Dec 2021. All the Students of classes 5 to 10 participated. Names of rankers are as follows:

Aanavi Ghosh, V
Samhita Sarmah, V
Nishika Pathodia, V
Eshan Beria, VI
Twesha Agarwal, VI
N. Myinthy Manchey, VII
Dani Sanyo, VII
Siddhanth Singh, VII
Aanya Paul Sarkar, VIII
Zaheen Rafia Shah, VIII
Natasha Billimoria, VIII
Sampurnam Sarkar, IX
Shreyan Dutta, IX
Anvita Dey, X

FAREWELL

Mrs. Shakila Banu:

Whenever anyone mentions maám Shakila a few words come to mind: Simplicity, sincerity, and honesty. She has been with the school since its inception and her 27 years of service have been impeccable. She is forthright in her approach and I think it was because of that that I could gel with her so well. It is sad to see her leave AVS but we wish her the very best for this new chapter in her life.

May peace and plenty bless your world
With a joy that long endures
And may all life's passing seasons
Bring the best to you and yours.
We shall miss you always.

-Mrs. Joyce MacDonald, Head of Lower School

I had always known Ma'am Shakila Banu as "DOS Ma'am" back in class 5. It was not until class 7 that I had a proper interaction with her and our first interaction was not a friendly one. Someone had sprayed the fire extinguisher near the cooler and I had gone to see what had happened to create such a havoc and unfortunately that was when Ma'am came in and straight away took me to her office and issued me a green card. I, as a class 7 boy, was too scared to speak up and I never cleared it out with Ma'am.

Her story is an interesting one about how she joined 27 years ago as a junior teacher and today she leaves the school as

UPPER SCHOOL INTER-HOUSE QUIZ

The inter-house quiz competition was hosted by our very own Mr. Tushar Bharadwaj and the quizmaster, Mrs. Dayita Datta whose enthusiasm and energy kept this mind sport lively and engaging. Each team from each house comprised of four people. There were five rounds all together; Politics and Current affairs, Culture and Mythology, Science and Technology, Arts and Entertainment and Sports. Each of these rounds tested our general knowledge and kept the audience at the edge of their seats. After five competitive rounds of mind-boggling questions, Bhoroli- Lohit emerged as winners, with Jinari-Manas as runners up and Subansiri-Namdang securing the third position.

AZADI KA AMRIT MOHATSAV



the Deputy Head of Academics. This symbolizes that hard work and dedication will never disappoint you. A chemistry teacher, a sportswoman, a great leader and an endless service is what she has given to The Assam Valley School. The student community will always respect Ma'am for what she has done and for what she is, with the previous batches who have had the honour of being taught by her, bearing witness to this statement. She has given 27 years to this school. 27 years of extreme hard work, tenacity and love which makes it even more difficult for the school to say goodbye to her. She will be dearly missed by all the staff and students as she embarks on a new journey. We wish Ma'am all the best for all her future endeavours.

-Karleen Tok, School Captain

Ripple #189

-Riiariti O.L Sohliya, XII

*She draws in a deep breathe,
As she dances away.
For in the rain she's released
her pain.*

*She welcomes the better
days.*

*Knowing that there will be
warmth,*

*Exhaling her way into a
sturdy care*

*No more the hidden fear
burrowing in her despair.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "Everytime I open the room to my door."
- Abhishree Keshari, XI (*I'd like to keep all my doors shut to you.*)
2. "Don't use your fanbook for singing."
- Hana S. Ahmed, XI (*I need to know what singing is first.*)
3. "My whole lie is a life."
- Hiyaneijemmy Das, XII (*Said like a true pathological liar.*)
4. "My prep copy is my textbook."
- Tanish Hansaria, XII (*We get it, you actually do your prep.*)
5. "My suitcase is in that shoe."
- Kekhriesino Meyase, XII (*Hear me out: IT'S A SHOECASE.*)

Keep It Reel!

Simplicity

-Mahita Jindal, XII



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