

BEFORE NEERJA THERE WAS GLORIA

- Mrs. Dayita B. Datta, Head of Department, History

In 2023 the journalist Shekhar Gupta pointed to a little noticed item in the Indian Express. The article was about the death of a 105 year old ex-pilot from the early days of Air India, Mr M C Dikshit. Forgotten by the rest of India, Dikshit had been the co-pilot of a historic yet tragic flight on 11th April, 1955: the crash of Air India flight “Kashmir Princess”. With him died the last survivor of a gruesome plot resulting in the death of innocents, and an Indian heroine, whom we have forgotten. The “Kashmir Princess” was among the most advanced aircraft of its day: a Lockheed Super Constellation L749A. In 1955 the great Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung was organized by President Sukarno of Indonesia, with the support of Jawaharlal Nehru. Chou en Lai, the then Chinese Premier had been invited but China, recovering from years of internal turmoil, did not have long range aircraft. As part of the “Hindi-Chini bhai bhai” Nehru offered the Kashmir Princess to the Chinese delegation including Premier Chou en Lai. In-charge were an experienced Captain D K Jatar, Co-Pilot M C Dikshit, Flight

Engineer A S Karnik, Navigator J.C Pathak, and cabin attendant (or air-hostesses as they were then known) Gloria Eva Berry, known for her vivacity and charm. The flight took off from Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong, but without Chou on board (possibly warned of a plot to kill him, the Chinese Premier later took a flight via Rangoon to Bandung) but there was a delegation of Chinese officials and journalists. About five hours into the flight there was an explosion, and smoke began pouring into the cockpit. The crew acted with great calmness, with Captain Jatar looking for a safe place to ditch the aircraft, while Gloria Berry handed out lifejackets to every passenger. Despite all efforts the Kashmir Princess crashed into the sea off Indonesia and broke into three pieces. Co-pilot Dikshit, Karnik and Pathak survived and were washed up on a nearby island. But the other passengers, Captain Jatar, and Gloria Berry did not. The survivors recalled how Gloria had pleaded with him to jump and save his own life, but he remained at the command of his aircraft till

the last. In the words of Anurag Inamdar who has researched this incident “Gloria Berry remained with him till the end”. Captain D.K Jatar and Gloria Berry received the Ashok Chakra posthumously for their steadfastness and courage. Gloria became the first woman to receive this honour in independent India. Her mother received it from President Rajendra Prasad. What made the tragedy more difficult to bear, was that Gloria was engaged to be married and had volunteered to fly on this special flight. Many may remember Sonam Kapoor’s luminous portrayal of Neerja Bhanot, the courageous cabin crew member who died in the hijacking of the Pan Am flight at Karachi airport. Neerja was recognized by the Governments of Pakistan and India for her efforts to protect passengers, particularly children from a group of vicious terrorist. Most newspapers hailed her as the first woman to get the Ashok Chakra. Without in any way belittling Neerja’s sacrifice – we should remember before Neerja there was Gloria.

The People Of Sikkim



Illustration: Gaurish Satkha, X

-Jigme Pao Tamang, XI

A small state, with an equally small population – that’s Sikkim. A state with no native people, a hidden land, if the old stories are to be believed. A Buddhist monk supposedly closed off this small section of the Himalayas and preserved it till its fated inhabitants arrived. This small area, after many centuries, was discovered by the Lepchas. The Lepchas' origins are unknown, however, it is usually assumed that they were members of a nomadic tribe that roamed Tibet. They were nomads who lived off their herds of horses, sheep, or yaks, similar to the Bhutia and Tamang tribes, or Mongolian mercenaries who arrived in the region with the army of Songtsen Gampo, the founder of the Tibetan empire. The former was the Lepchas. They arrived in Sikkim's western districts, close to the Nepal border. Before Songtsen Gampo brought Buddhism to the area, they practiced a Shamanistic religion comparable to the Bon religion of Tibet. They never claimed ownership of the land; it was the Bhutias who did. The Bhutias were a warrior tribe from northern Tibet who occupied the territory as soon as they arrived. Of course, they didn't fight a war to take

over the land - all it had was animals - but instead established small permanent villages, putting a stop to their nomadic lifestyle. They established their capital near Geyzing, and their high priest was known as the Chogyal or King of Denzong (Denzong is Sikkim's historical name). Later, the capital was relocated to Gangtok. They were highly religious, and they brought Buddhism to a previously lawless land. Divided by the primary religion of their ancestors – the Buddhist Yonzon and Moktan clans of the Tamang tribe arrived from Tibet while the Hindu Rai, Gurung, and a few Hindu clans of the Tamang tribe came from Nepal to escape the bloodbath created by the Rana family of Nepal when they took over control of the nation from the Nepali royal family and executed any who disputed their right to rule. We Denzongpa, or Sikkim inhabitants, believe in the celestial spirit of Mt. Kanchenjunga, which looms over our small but diversified state. According to folklore, all children born in its shadow are its children and will be protected for the rest of their lives.

Campus Caricature

Shuffling through wardrobes

Illustration: Ssara Jha, XII



CAMPUS NEWS

TEACHERS CREST

The AVS Departments of Chemistry, Physics, and English participated in the CREST International Teacher's Olympiad and emerged successful with gold medals in their respective fields. The following are the Gold Medalists. Many congratulations to the Teachers and their Departments.

1. Mrs. Debolina C Bakshi - English
2. Ms. Mousumi Talukdar - English
3. Mrs. Rimjhim Ghosh Pyne- English
4. Mr. Taufique Alam Ansari -Physics
5. Mr. Umesh Kumar Singh - Physics
6. Mr. Rajen Bharali - Physics
7. Ms. Debjani Purkayastha - Chemistry
8. Mr. Subhash Chand - Chemistry
9. Mr. Niranjana C Samaddar - Chemistry
10. Dr. Alpana Dey - Chemistry



CRICKET MATCH STAFF VS STUDENTS

Staff team: 90/5 in 15 over match
 Mr. Mohamed Aziz: 30 runs
 Mr Tapash Das: 21 runs
 Dr Jugran: 14 runs

Nishanta Bora: 3 overs 9 runs and 4 wickets

Students won the match by 7 wickets
 Rajjyoti Talukdar: 40 runs
 Krishang Choudhary: 23 runs not out

Man of the Match: Rajjyoti Talukdar, Class 11

RONGALI UTSAV

Rongali Utsav was celebrated on the 20th of May. The AVS Dance School put on performances that ranged from the traditional husori to the traditional folk dance of Manipur which showcased the diversity North-east India. The girls wore mekhela sador while the boys wore white dhotis. The Dance School also paid respects to their elders by adorning them with the traditional Assamese gamusa. It also included a performance put on by forty professional dancers who were a part of the Bihu dance troupe that made it into the Guinness World Records. The evening came to an end with a Traditional Dress Show in which both students and teachers participated.

-Rianna Irom, IX

INTERHOUSE MURALS



Results at a Glance:
 1st Position – Jinari-Manas
 2nd Position – Subansiri-Namdang
 3rd Position – Bhoroli-Lohit
 4th Position – Kopili-Dhansiri



Picture Credits: Rudrayan Haloi, IX

GLIMPSES OF HOUSE

OUTING



INTERHOUSE ARCHERY

Team Results:

1st Position- Jinari-Manas

1. Gaurisha Saikia
2. Yuvraj Thounaojam
3. Bariskhem K. Pohti
4. Hemansh Raj Goianka

2nd Position- Bhoroli-Lohit

1. Gaurish Saikia
2. Athouba Sarangthem
3. Shirin Jaiswal
4. Naisha Nandini Gogoi

3rd Position- Subansiri-Namdang

1. Shuhail Ali Ahmed
2. Yashvi Modi

3. Soumya Agarwal

4. Tenzin Dekie

4th Position- Kopili-Dhansiri

1. Sulimi A. Zhimomi
2. Tanveer A. Chowdhury
3. Piyush Paul
4. Denija Changmai

Individual Results:

1st Position - Yuvraj Thounaojam (Manas)

2nd Position - Athouba Sarangthem (Lohit)

3rd Position - Tanveer A. Chowdhury (Dhansiri)



AC INAUGURATION

We are delighted to inform that air conditioners have been installed in all rooms of the boarding houses. The Headmaster, Dr. Amit Jugran, inaugurated the AC Sub-Station Unit on May 18th, 2023.



THE OUTPOST

Dr. Tedros has again barred Taiwan's entry to WHO despite the latter's tremendous success in curtailing the Covid 19. This has yet again exposed the Director General's close association with China and has kicked up an unhealthy storm. PM Modi's Australian visit has set the circuit abuzz because of his resounding welcome by the Indian diaspora and his camaraderie with the Australian PM Albanese. The meeting between Congress President Kharge and CM Nitish Kumar suggests a possible announcement of Congress's support to the later as the Opposition's Prime Ministerial candidate to challenge Modi in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

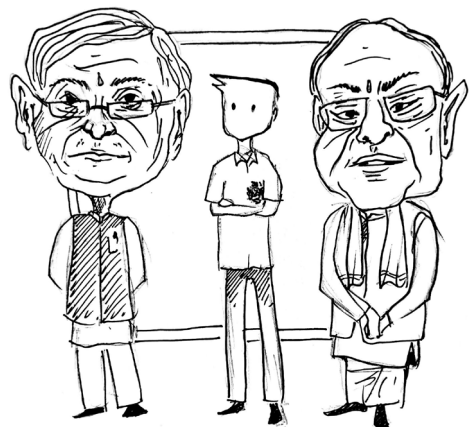


Illustration: Sara Jha, XII

Ripple #207

-Lomika Benjamin, XII

*The sun set aflame his wings and
scorched his skin,
Almost like a star banished beneath
the sea,
She exiled him for his unforgivable
sin.
For Icarus' agonising and boundless
ambition.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "They have to take off their foot." - Anikaith Joshi, XI (And you have taken out your brain.)
2. "My heart been teared." - Nuntluanga, XI (Heartbreak anniversary for real.)
3. "She ate her fry from the chicken." - Karan Ngatey Gam, XII, (And you eat our brains.)
4. "I cannot be feel the heat." - Ila Gupta, X (Melt.)
5. "I got repaired today." - Gungming Phassang, XII (Looks like it didn't work.)

Keep It Reel!

Dancing Queen

-Rudrayan Haloi, IX



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