

## Tales from the hills:

ECHOES OF THE THLEN:  
THE PRINCE OF POWER

XIV

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“Manipur is on fire.”—this was the headline splashed across news outlets the day insurgency spiraled out of control, targeting an entire community regardless of guilt or innocence. The state’s deepening divisions had finally reached a tipping point.

often-overlooked backdrop of India’s uneasy relationship with China—marked by a mix of cooperation and conflict. One of the least discussed, yet critical, aspects of this relationship is terrorism. Over the years, as diplomatic tensions between India and China have simmered,

in civil war. This border has historically facilitated illegal migration and cross-border movement. Armed groups operating in Myanmar—some believed to act as proxies for Beijing—have reportedly supplied weapons and safe havens to insurgents operating

# MANIPUR

## A CONFLICT BEYOND ETHNIC LINES

—Nongthombam Chingkheinganbi Devi, XI

But is this really just about two communities in conflict? Or is there more beneath the surface? While the ethnic strife between the Kuki and Meitei communities has dominated media coverage, it represents only the surface of a far more complex issue rooted in geopolitics and history. At the heart of the unrest lies the

China has increasingly relied on non-conventional tools to assert influence. Among these is the alleged support for insurgent groups in India’s border regions, aimed at destabilizing internal security. One of the lesser-known fronts in this strategy is India’s Northeast, particularly Manipur. Manipur shares a porous border with Myanmar, a country mired

within Manipur. These activities have significantly worsened the security situation, resulting in the deaths of hundreds and forcing thousands into relief camps. Another contributing factor to the ongoing crisis is the booming cross-border drug trade. The porous India-Myanmar border enables the trafficking of narcotics,

especially poppy products. This trade not only destabilizes the region socially and economically but also provides vital funding to insurgent groups. Efforts by the state government to curb this trade have been met with strong resistance, reflecting the deep entrenchment of these networks. Despite these underlying issues, the immediate trigger cited by most media outlets is the Manipur High Court's recommendation to grant Scheduled Tribe status to the Meitei community. While this

decision did ignite tensions, reducing the conflict to this singular event oversimplifies a far more intricate problem. What is unfolding in Manipur is not merely an ethnic clash. It is the product of a dense web of historical grievances, political missteps, cross-border complications, and external interference. Understanding this broader context is essential—not just to grasp the scale of the crisis, but also to recognize the implications it holds for India's national security.

**Tales from the hills:**

## ECHOES OF THE THLEN: XIV THE PRINCE OF POWER

*a tale originated from the state of Meghalaya*

-Mirianna Baiahun Lamin, XI

In the misty Khasi hills of Meghalaya, the Dain Thlen waterfall in Sohra (Cherrapunji) is named after a mythical tale. The story centers around a giant evil serpent, "U Thlen," who lived in a cave near the falls. The serpent would devour villagers who passed by in odd-numbered groups, sparing those in even-numbered groups.

Disturbed by the mysterious disappearances, the villagers prayed to the god U 'Lei Shyllong for help. He revealed that the serpent was behind the deaths and called upon U Syiem Syrmoh to deal with it. U Syiem Syrmoh heated an iron rod to a glowing red, tricked the serpent into opening its mouth by claiming it was juicy meat, and struck, killing the creature.

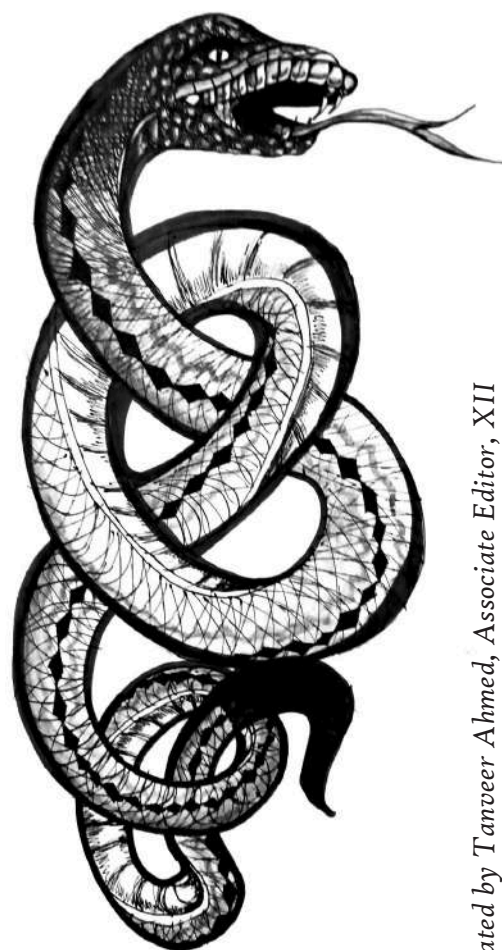
News of the serpent's death spread quickly, and the villagers rejoiced. A grand feast was held, and everyone was instructed to

eat the serpent's meat to prevent it from reviving. But an old woman, having taken some meat home for her granddaughter, forgot about it for several days.

One day, as the woman sat at home, she heard a voice. To her shock, the serpent had come back to life, demanding to be kept. It promised her wealth in exchange for her care and threatened that abandoning it would bring ruin upon her and her future generations. Fearing for her life, the woman reluctantly agreed, hiding the serpent under her bed in a basket.

The serpent soon demanded blood. The woman offered a lamb, but the serpent refused, desiring human flesh instead. Knowing the serpent's true appetite, the woman continued to sacrifice people, growing wealthier with each offering. The woman's wealth became notorious, and she and others like her,

known as "Ki Nongshohnoh," continued to feed the serpent, trading lives for riches.



Illustrated by Tanveer Ahmed, Associate Editor, XII

# beyond appearances

-Archit Phukan, XI

The Assam Valley School, as a co-educational boarding institution, is often perceived as a space where boys and girls coexist with equal opportunities and privileges. However, the reality is more nuanced. Conversations around fairness are frequent—girls contend that boys enjoy unrestricted access to devices, while boys point out that girls benefit from holding their prep sessions within the boarding house, unlike the boys, whose sessions take place in the Main School Building (MSB). Both sides feel disadvantaged, perpetuating a cycle of comparison and discontent.

"FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE, NAVIGATING LIFE ON THE BOYS' SIDE CAN FEEL AS UNPREDICTABLE AND CHALLENGING AS SURVIVING IN A DENSE RAINFOREST..."

From a personal perspective, navigating life on the boys' side can feel as unpredictable and challenging as surviving in a dense rainforest—full of unexpected encounters. Describing the girls' side, however, might be better left to someone more familiar with it.

Interpersonal interactions at AVS are complex. One might face criticism from an overly confrontational peer for a perceived slight or be belittled by someone asserting dominance. Interestingly, while girls often support each other despite underlying tension, boys can sometimes undermine one another to establish superiority. Yet, it is important to reflect not only on peer dynamics but also on perceived institutional biases.

Consider a scenario where a student, while enthusiastically cheering for his house during a badminton match, is accused by a girl from the opposing house of inappropriate conduct. Her emotional response, such as crying, can lead to swift assumptions of guilt on the

"BOYS CAN SOMETIMES UNDERMINE ONE ANOTHER TO ESTABLISH SUPERIORITY. YET, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REFLECT NOT ONLY ON PEER DYNAMICS BUT ALSO ON PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL BIASES."

boy's part—without inquiry or context. The prevailing sentiment becomes, "He must have done something," and the boy is penalized without his version being heard. Such situations are not uncommon. In one instance, a male student was cheering at a WMH event, mirroring the behavior of nearby female students. A girl prefect instructed him to stop, which he did. Later, upon observing the same prefect engaging similarly, he resumed cheering and questioned the inconsistency. He was subsequently reported and disciplined, again without being given an opportunity to explain himself.

Despite the promise of equality inherent in co-education, a notable gender divide persists. I once believed that co-ed schooling fostered fairness and harmony, but the lived experience often contradicts that ideal.

Nevertheless, these differences need not be a source of division. Boys and girls are inherently different in some respects, each enjoying certain advantages. Understanding and accepting these distinctions is essential if we are to build a respectful and equitable community.

"BOYS AND GIRLS ARE INHERENTLY DIFFERENT IN SOME RESPECTS, EACH ENJOYING CERTAIN ADVANTAGES. UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTING THESE DISTINCTIONS IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO BUILD A RESPECTFUL AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY."

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# MY LIFE IN TUNES

-Abigail Linda Kharkongor, XII

For as long as I can remember, music has been a big part of my life. My parents ensured that even before I was born—my mom played their favorite songs, hoping I'd pick up their taste. Honestly, who wouldn't love a mix of Kenny G and Eric Clapton? That was my start. Lullabies came with a pinch of smooth jazz and classic rock—hats off to my parents!

Growing up, music was always around me. My mother kept the radio on while working, and though I don't remember every song, I know those early days shaped my love for music. My surroundings played a huge role too. In Shillong, music isn't just a hobby—it's a way of life. A guitar and a catchy tune can turn any street into a concert.

I wanted to explore everything—rap, rock, pop, jazz. I took lessons on different instruments, but singing became my true passion. I trained myself, grabbed every chance to perform, and if there was no mic, I sang anyway. Some of my best "Grammy-worthy" performances happened in the shower—let's be real, we've all done world tours there! At first, concerts were just fun outings, but

over time, I realized music truly connected us. Looking back, I wasn't naturally good at music. It took patience, practice, and honest feedback (some of it brutally so). I still have a lot to improve, but that's the fun part—music is a journey. It's not just about picking a song and singing it; it's about feeling it, connecting with it, and making memories through it. For me, it wasn't talent but passion that grew over time and taught me everything I know.

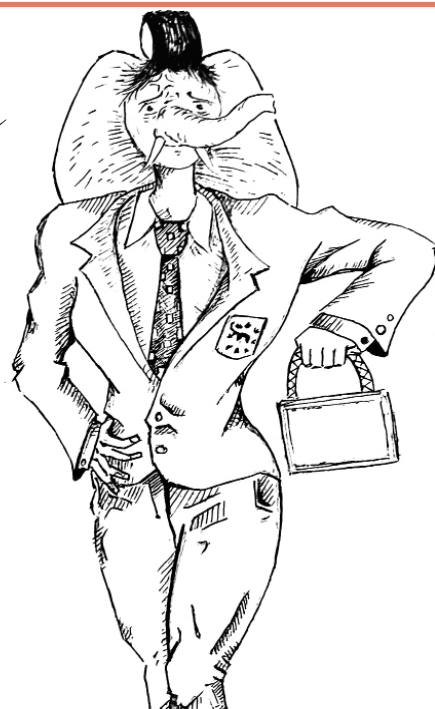
Of course, passion alone isn't enough. It took dedication and effort to improve. But one thing I've learned—one bad moment shouldn't erase all the passion you've built. Think of all those hours replaying a song just to learn the lyrics or chords—if dedication had a theme song, that would be it.

So, that's a little bit of my journey with music. What's yours? It may be different, but if you love a good Eric Clapton song, we already have something in common. I'd suggest starting with "Tears in Heaven." Or, if you're feeling emotional, put it on repeat and let the nostalgia hit you like a truck.

*Campus Caricature*

Illustrated by Bhaibhav Dutta, VIII

*curls  
before  
credentials*



\*A new trend in AVS to wear hair-rollers to class and not to bed.



## Nefertiti

- Aadya Rakshit, X

Nefertiti is a captivating historical novel that brings to life one of ancient Egypt's most legendary beauties. Michelle Moran masterfully blends history and fiction, portraying Nefertiti as the ambitious granddaughter of the Queen of Mitanni, groomed to be the perfect wife of the future pharaoh. Though blessed with intelligence and beauty, her relentless hunger for power leads to her downfall, dragging her family with her. By embracing Aten, the sun god, and banishing Egypt's long-worshipped deities, she sparks unrest among her people, branding her bloodline as heretics. The story is uniquely narrated from the perspective of Nefertiti's younger sister, Mutnodjmet, who remains loyal despite facing immense personal challenges.

What makes Nefertiti truly engaging is its vivid depiction of court politics, betrayal, and intrigue. The tension between Nefertiti and the powerful priests of Amun adds layers of suspense, while her complicated relationship with Pharaoh Akhenaten reflects the delicate balance between love and ambition. Moran's descriptions of lavish palaces, intricate rituals, and the shifting sands of power transport readers straight into the heart of ancient Egypt. The novel also weaves in a touch of romance, especially through Mutnodjmet's own journey, making it an enthralling read for history and fiction lovers alike. Nefertiti is a mesmerizing tale of ambition, loyalty, and the weight of power—one that leaves readers enthralled by the richness of Egypt's past.

## Rukmini

- Shabahat Ansari, X

Saiswaroop Iyer's book Rukmini: Krishna's Wife is an exceptional story about one of history's most radiant and divine women—a resolute figure with profound wisdom and the power of a pure heart. The story brings to life the princess often overshadowed by Krishna. Rukmini, the first queen of Krishna and the princess of Vidarbha, eloped with him because her family did not approve of their union. This book is an amazing retelling of Rukmini's life, transporting us to events that took place 7,000 years ago. It does more than just touch the surface of the epics; it delves deep into their essence. It explores the struggles of women during the Mahabharat period—an era of fierce conflict between what women wished to do and what they were expected to do—a theme that remains relevant even today.

The novel beautifully captures the bold, loving, and innocent relationships Rukmini shares with Krishna, as well as with Sudama, Draupadi, and Arjun, all through her perspective. From her simple life in Vidarbha to meeting Krishna, marrying him, accepting his other wives, becoming his soul companion, and ultimately enduring his death, the story is deeply moving.

It conveys the powerful message that a woman's role in a man's life extends far beyond cooking and cleaning. She is someone who leaves behind her home, her family, and her past to be his companion, friend, and backbone—one who remains steadfast even after the fiercest storms have passed.

## CAMPUS NEWS

### INTERHOUSE DANCE

Results are as follows:

First Position- Bhoroli-Lohit

Second Position- Kopili-Dhansiri

Third Position- Subansiri-Namdang

## SUBANSIRI-NAMDANG

- Ishika Mandal, X

Subansiri-Namdang captivated the audience with a classical performance that celebrated the culture and heritage of Assam, Odisha, and Manipur. Their devotion to Radha and Krishna was expressed through a graceful blend of Manipuri's softness, Bharatanatyam's synchronised footwork, Odissi's elegance, and Satriya's energetic rhythm. In the folk category, they brought to life the vibrant culture of Moirang through the tale of Khamba and Thoibi. Their striking costumes and lively, playful performance earned them first place in this category. Their western dance portrayed the struggles of women and their continued fight for rights. It was a powerful display of emotion and energy. Thanks to the dancers' dedication and the unwavering support of their crew, Subansiri-Namdang secured third place overall. Congratulations to the house.

## BHOROLI-LOHIT

- Adrika Dey, X

Bhoroli-Lohit captivated both the audience and judges with their mesmerising classical performance, a stunning fusion of Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Sattriya, Kathak, and Manipuri. In the folk category, they beautifully showcased the vibrant culture of Assam's Tiwa community through the Tiwa Dance, performed in colourful traditional attire. Their western performance featured a powerful choreography that portrayed the R.G Kar case of brutality, delivering an emotionally charged contemporary dance that touched hearts and ended with a radiant, golden finale. Bhoroli-Lohit earned the runner-up position in all three dance categories—Classical, Folk, and Western—and, with the talent of their young dancers and the dedication of their crew, claimed the overall first position.





# KOPILI-DHANSIRI

- Lendimen, X

Kopili-Dhansiri opened the evening with a graceful classical performance, blending Manipuri, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Satriya into a stunning fusion of cultures that left the audience in awe. Their folk dance showcased the rich heritage of Mizoram through the famous Cheraw, or Bamboo Dance, energising the entire school. Their Western contemporary piece captivated the audience with soulful choreography and a creative storyline of two siblings grappling with grief and addiction, skillfully conveyed through expressive choreography—it was truly ethereal and mesmerising. By the end of the evening, Kopili-Dhansiri proudly secured the runner-up position. Congratulations to the House!

# JINARI-MANAS

- Ngangom Mithoi, X

Jinari-Manas captivated the audience with a classical performance rich in the cultures of Assam, Odisha, and Manipur. In the folk dance category, they performed 'Maruni,' an ancient Nepali folk dance originating from Sikkim. Each dancer shone brightly on stage, entrancing the audience with catchy beats and vibrant costumes. For their final act, Jinari-Manas shared a heart-touching tale of abandonment, loneliness, and hope, drawing their inspiration from The Greatest Showman. This beautiful performance reminded everyone that even in rough times, there is always better days ahead. Through their talent and heartfelt artistry, Jinari-Manas truly left the audience deeply moved.





## Ripple #251

- Rianna Irom, XI

The people cry  
As they run away from turbulent  
tides.

Piers pierce the sea-surface,  
And both men and women arise  
from the water.

"Merpeople?" Someone stops to ask.

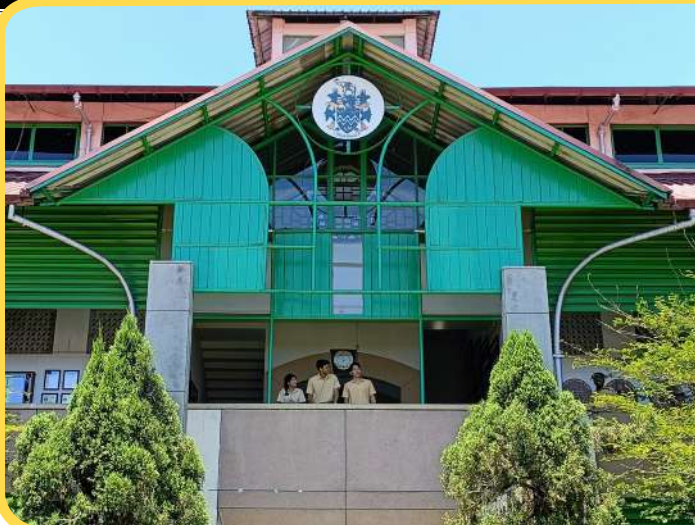
"No, just people." Another answers.

The skies rumble as the lands  
tremble

And **Dwarka** awakes.

## Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "Am I moving rightly?" - Mr. Bijan Panigrahi (*mathematically? maybe. grammatically? you're in the negatives.*)
2. "My one of my slides is missing." - Arushi Jakhmola, XII (*English went missing too, prefect. File a report.*)
3. "Tomorrow there was no class." - Mr. Umesh Singh (*Future perfect? More like future confused.*)
4. "I got non-marketting shoes this time." - Princy Elangbam, XII (*Seems like your grammar is on clearance too.*)



## Keep It Reel!

*eagle-eye'd*



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