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Aatmanirbhar Bharat:

FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY

- Pahal Bajaj, XI

“Aatmanirbhar Bharat.” The slogan rings everywhere — on television, in government campaigns, in political speeches. But is India truly close to becoming self-reliant? Or are we celebrating numbers while ignoring deeper weaknesses? Yes, India is currently the fourth largest economy in the world, yet somehow our per capita income is just \$2,878, ranking 142nd globally (IMF, April 2025).

We have abundant resources and the world’s largest population, but exports remain far below imports, creating a trade deficit. Worse, only 2% of Indians actually pay income tax, supporting the rest. Can such fragile foundations make us “Aatmanirbhar”? Consider China, our favourite rival. Both nations started similarly in the late 1940s — poor, colonized, and underdeveloped. Today, China’s GDP is \$19.3 trillion compared to India’s \$3.91 trillion, and its per capita income is five times higher.

The difference lies in execution. China built a business ecosystem where investors can register companies, secure licenses, and expand swiftly through unified systems. Its Special Economic Zones eliminated bureaucratic delays, enabling it to become the “world’s factory.” India, in contrast, continues to drown businesses in red

tape. Self-reliance cannot simply mean producing goods at home or chasing big GDP targets. It must mean reducing import dependence, empowering MSMEs, and creating an ecosystem where businesses can thrive without having to beg for approvals. The key to this is a genuine Single-Window Clearance System.

Such systems work worldwide. Singapore’s Online Business Licensing Service processes 260 licenses across 30 agencies in a single online transaction, with most SMEs never needing physical visits. South Korea, Japan, and Thailand have similar models. India launched the National Single Window System (NSWS) in 2021, but in practice, it often redirects users to state websites, excludes municipal services, and requires multiple uploads — functioning more as a guidebook rather than a clearance platform.

India needs bold reform. A Business Clearance Guarantee Act should set strict timelines with deemed approvals for delays. The NSWS must integrate central, state, and municipal approvals on a single workflow, backed by unified databases like PAN, GST, and land records. AI tools should track progress, flag delays, and make approval timelines public

to ensure accountability. For MSMEs, forms must be simple, auto-filled, and truly accessible—so that even an entrepreneur from a small town can succeed without resorting to consultants. India has the

talent and resources to surge ahead, but bureaucracy continues to hold it back. “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” will be real only when systems drive growth. Because after all, “Slogans may inspire, but systems build nations.”

bhromon*

Chapter Two:

To Bali

- Nandika Dutta, XI

After a tiring semester, a vacation in Bali was exactly what I needed after months of preparing for exams. Located in the westernmost part of Indonesia near the Sunda Islands, Bali offers a vibrant mix of natural beauty, and a strong spiritual heritage. The welcoming locals and rich traditions made my trip unforgettable.

During my stay, I had the opportunity to witness the Galungan festival, a 10-day Hindu celebration that marks the victory of Dharma over Adharma. On the first day, we visited Ubud, known for its cultural attractions. Our guide shared Bali’s history, including its nickname, the “Island of Gods,” due to its many temples. Ubud is also renowned for its holistic healing practices. We visited the Monkey Forest, where a mischievous monkey snatched my spectacles — only to return them after locals fed it. After that, I was a bit hesitant to continue exploring, so we decided to leave.

From Ubud, we travelled to Uluwatu, where we visited the Garuda Wisnu Kencana



Cultural Park and its iconic statue. The statue represents the myth of Garuda, who agrees to be ridden by Wisnu to free his enslaved mother. It is so large that we could see it from a distance, even from the airport on our way home.

Later, we visited Uluwatu Temple, believed to have been built 10 centuries ago. The combination of the sunset as well as the sight of temple overlooking the beach was breathtaking. We ended the evening watching the Kecak dance, which tells the story of the Ramayana. Next, we went to Nusa Penida by boat. The island was hot, humid, and covered with trees, surrounded by beaches. We spent the day at the beach until sunset before heading back to our hotel, exhausted from the day’s travel. We enjoyed a quiet dinner and rested, though I felt quite sad knowing our trip was coming to an end.

The next day, we visited Seminyak Flea Market for souvenirs before heading back to India. Bali was a truly amazing experience, and I fervently wished I could stay longer.



*translates to voyage in Bangla; is a new feature on travel stories

I Have a Big Heart

- Ananya Das, XI

I have a big heart
And sometimes I hate it.
I overthink,
I over-apologise,
I over-forgive,
And I care too much about people
Who don't really care about me.

I feel guilty
About things I don't have any control over,
And I'm trying to save everyone around me
Before I even think
About saving myself.

I love too deep,
And I feel alone sometimes,
Because I'm not sure if I'll ever find
Someone else who
Thinks likes me,
Or who feels like me,
Or who views the world like me.

I am not conceited by any means
Because I know
I am not perfect,
But I do have a big heart,
And sometimes I hate it...

Campus Caricature

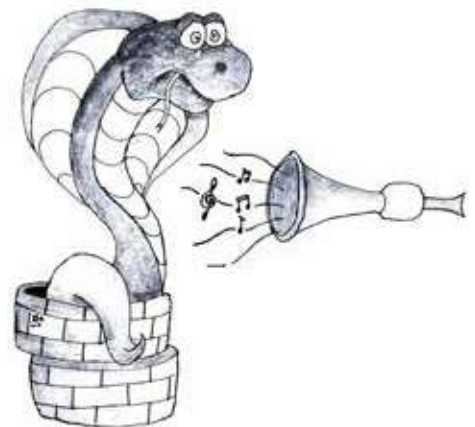
THE HUNT FOR SERVICE*

- Austin Nameirakpam, VII



THE OUTPOST

Trump's tariff tantrums have set the geopolitical stage crackling, with the rule-based order creaking toward fresh alignments and perhaps a new world order. His sidekick Peter Navarro fires off bizarre tweets at one point blaming the Ukraine war on Modi while India's PM attends the SCO meet in China, a forum once cold-shouldered. As India, China, and Russia test tricky waters, New Delhi may need to revive its ancient art of snake-charming for diplomacy with the 'red cobra.' Meanwhile, Trump's 'Make America Great Again' seems more like 'Make Allies Nervous Again,' leaving even friends weary of U.S. unpredictability



Illustrated by Tanveer Ahmed, XII

CAMPUS NEWS

8TH SRIJANYAM, ART AND DESIGN FEST

THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

The Assam Valley School hosted the 8th edition of its annual 'Srijanyam' Art and Design Fest 2025 was organised by the Art and CDT Department—namely, Mr. Andreaspha Kharmawong, Mr. Shiluti Longkumer, Mrs. Mampi Das, Mr. Bijit Das, and Mr. Harinarayan Das. Mr. Bhupenda Singh Matharu, the Head of Event Management, also served as the backbone behind this event. Rokovor Nakhro and Harsita Baral were the student leaders behind the event.

GLIMPSES



AN INTERVIEW WITH RYDINGS COLLEGE, ZIMBABWE

Rydings College is a well-regarded preparatory school in Zimbabwe. This year, they honoured The Assam Valley School with their presence for a cultural exchange programme. Their stay lasted ten days, during which they experienced life at AVS alongside the Aviators.

The school delegation included six students and a teacher. During their visit, they enriched the school community with their bright energy, openness, as well as their enthusiastic participation in various events of our school, including Srijanyam.



AVE: How does it feel to be at an institute in an entirely new country with such a different culture?

Rydings College: It feels really good and exciting. At present, we're having so many impressions, since we're constantly trying to connect what's happening here at AVS with our own school back home. It has truly been eye-opening—we've learned a lot about the infrastructure and what it really means to be part of a school.

AVE: What was it that made you want to apply for this exchange programme?

Rydings College: We've always wanted to visit India, and we saw this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We honestly didn't expect it to be this way — it's such a breathtaking place, with incredibly welcoming people. All of us enjoy trying new things, especially getting to explore different cuisines. In Zimbabwe, there has been a growing trend of students studying abroad, and India in particular has become a major destination — especially for those studying in fields like pharmaceuticals, international relations, and many more.

AVE: Does Zimbabwe have a lot of tribes?

Rydings College: Yes, we do — the largest tribe is Shona. Where our school is located, people speak Khore-Khore, which is closely related to Zambian and Mozambican languages. Like the northeastern part of India, we don't all speak the same language, so most of us are multilingual. You can often tell from a person's accent where they come from.

At school, however, only languages like French and English are allowed to be spoken.

AVE: Lastly, is there any message that you would like to share with AVS?

Rydings College: We would like to thank the school for its incredible hospitality. Everyone here has been so wonderful, and we would love to come back. Everything is just so warm and welcoming — you're all so kind and sweet. We also want to tell the Aviators to keep up their standards. It's inspiring to see staff members who have been here for 30 years, carrying forward the traditions and values of the school.



Ripple #255

- Raisah Yasmin Hazarika, XI

*At 11:55, she boards the silent
train.*

Eyes follow, though no one's there.

*Footsteps chase her into empty
streets. She halts, turns—and
smiles.*

*A grin unfurls, wide and
monstrous,*

*Revealing every one of her
hundred teeth.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "How do you off it?" - Cheansal Agitok Sangma, XII (*Perhaps you should turn on your English first.*)
2. "Two cups of mugs of coffee." - Mr. Bijan Panigrahi (*That ought to wake you up, Sir.*)
3. "How right I am." - Zaheen Rafia Shah, XII (*We don't think so.*)
4. "Why is it so disorientated?" - Urvee Rathi, XII (*Perhaps you're the one who needs orienting.*)
5. "Mayo Girls speak so good Hindi." - Sreestee Paul, IX (*And you ought to be taught English.*)
6. "I used to be very scared of driving diving." - Aanavi Ghosh, IX (*We find your English much more terrifying.*)

Keep It Reel!

Debrief

- Rianna Lingjel Irom, XI



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