

TALES FROM
THE EPICS - VI
The Legend of Karna

Pg. 2

The *Death*
of the Bengalee
Bhodrolok

Pg. 3



“THE NEW
MAGA.”

Donald Trump’s MAGA- “Make America Great Again” has thrust the Arctic landscape, traditionally an area of frozen stillness and careful diplomacy, into a volatile new era. As of January 2026, Greenland has become the epicentre of a threat to dismantle decades of Western alliances. By the aggressive use of economic leverage and military posturing, what began as a widely dismissed suggestion by Donald Trump has now become one of the fastest geopolitical races of all time. “The Race for Greenland.” The tension reached a boiling point

“THEIR LAND IS
NOT A
COMMODITY
TO BE TRADED
BETWEEN
SUPERPOWERS.”

make
America
go away

- Pahel Bajaj, XI

this month when President Trump issued a stark ultimatum to Denmark and its European allies: facilitate the sale of Greenland or face a tiered system of crippling tariffs. This strategy of “economic blackmail” targeted not just Denmark, but Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, and several other European nations.

The proposed tariffs, starting at 10% in February and rising to 25% by June, were designed to force a “complete and total purchase” of the island. While the U.S. administration frames this as a necessity for national security, specifically the integration of Greenland into the “Golden Dome” missile defence shield, leaked correspondence and internal

documents suggest a more complex set of motives, which range from a desire to lock down vast mineral wealth to personal grievances over international rebukes. Trump has openly questioned the legitimacy of Danish sovereignty, arguing that historical “discovery” by boat hundreds of years ago does not equate to a permanent title of property. This rhetorical shift from asking for a sale to questioning the right of ownership has sent shockwaves through Copenhagen and Nuuk. In Greenland, the local population has responded with fierce resistance, asserting that their land is not a commodity to be traded between superpowers. A reprieve emerged during the World Economic Forum in

Davos as a “framework deal” was announced. This was followed by intense lobbying by NATO and European leaders, Trump agreed to suspend the impending tariffs in exchange for what he calls “total access.” This new arrangement appears to move away from the immediate annexation of the island in favour of a “forever deal” that grants unrestricted movement as well as expanded basing rights

to the US and its military. Furthermore, the deal eyes the critical minerals of the island which are essential for the green energy transition, ensuring American firms have primary access to mining sites. However, the crisis is far from over. While the immediate threat of a trade war has receded, the underlying “sovereign struggle” remains. European leaders

continue to debate the “anti-coercion instrument,” a policy designed to protect member states from this exact type of diplomatic pressure. Meanwhile, the locals of Greenland are left in a precarious position, caught between their desire for eventual independence from Denmark as well as the looming shadow of American “protection” as they chant “Make America Go Away”: the new MAGA.

TALES FROM THE EPICS - VI *The Legend of Karna*

- Devansh Agarwal, XII, ISC Batch of '26

Karna, the most intriguing character of the Mahabharata, was son to the Sun God Surya and Princess Kunti, born prior to her marriage. Not being able to retain him for societal reasons, Kunti abandoned baby Karna onto the Ganges in a basket, where he was discovered and adopted by a charioteer couple, Radha and Adhiratha.

Karna was discriminated against in his childhood for being thought of as low-born but turned out to be an accomplished warrior and archer, learning from Parashurama by feigning a Brahmin identity. His dear friend Duryodhana made him king of Anga, and his friendship led Karna to take the side of the Kauravas against the Pandavas. However, it was not a selfless friendship. Duryodhan used him to counter Arjun, while Karna was obligated as Duryodhan had made him the king of Anga. Karna due to unacceptance went towards Kauravas. Despite learning his true parentage prior to the great war, Karna strongly opted for loyalty to Duryodhana rather than acceptance by the Pandavas and his biological

mother. Throughout his life, Karna was known for his generosity, such as giving away his impenetrable armor and earrings to Indra, which exposed him to vulnerability in combat. Though he was noble and powerful, his life was filled with immense ill fate because of curses, fate, and his strict commitment to loyalty and honor.

Karna fought bravely all the five Pandavas in the Kurukshetra War but spared everyone's lives except Arjuna out of a promise to Kunti. In his last battle, the 17th day, despite being equal in prowess to Arjuna, he was finally slain through bad luck, and thus his tale is that of tragic heroism and virtue torn. Karna's legacy remains that of the “flawed good man,” and his legend continues to fuel arguments about duty, destiny, and dharma throughout Indian society

The *Death* of the Bengalee Bhadrolok

What Bengal thinks today,
India thinks tomorrow.

- Adya Rakshit, X

The term Bangali bhadralok literally translates to the Bengali gentleman, but historically it refers to a distinct social and intellectual class that emerged in Bengal during British colonial rule. This group played a pivotal role in shaping modern Bengali identity. Educated, culturally inclined, and socially influential, the bhadralok was central to the Bengal Renaissance, contributing significantly to literature, art, education, and political thought. Their legacy once defined Bengal as the intellectual and cultural capital of India. However, in contemporary times, this legacy appears to exist more in memory than in lived reality. When Bengal is spoken of today, references are often limited to colonial landmarks such as the Victoria Memorial or Park Street. While these symbols are important, they reflect a past that Bengal continues to rely upon rather than a present it is actively building.

Cultural practices such as adda, informal yet intellectually rich conversations over tea and

chop, once animated the social life of the city. Today, such spaces are steadily disappearing, replaced by a sense of stagnation rather than renewal. More concerning is the lack of significant advancement in architecture, economic development, or large-scale cultural production in post-independence Bengal. Unlike several other Indian states that have adapted to changing times, Bengal has struggled to modernise while preserving its cultural ethos. Areas such as College Street, once a symbol

of vibrant intellectual exchange, now reflect haphazard development and neglect rather than thoughtful progress. A deeply ingrained colonial mindset among sections of the intellectual elite has further compounded this stagnation. Reverence for the past often outweighs the willingness to innovate. Many Bengalis with the capacity to contribute meaningfully to the state's progress have migrated elsewhere in India or abroad in search of better opportunities, leaving behind a vacuum of leadership and vision.

Today, Bengal finds itself at a crossroads, culturally and politically. Introspection is necessary. To move forward, Bengal must critically reflect on what it has become and what it aspires to be. The need of the hour is leadership that values Bengal's rich heritage while courageously steering it towards progress which is both meaningful but also contemporary.

Campus Caricature

Showdown*

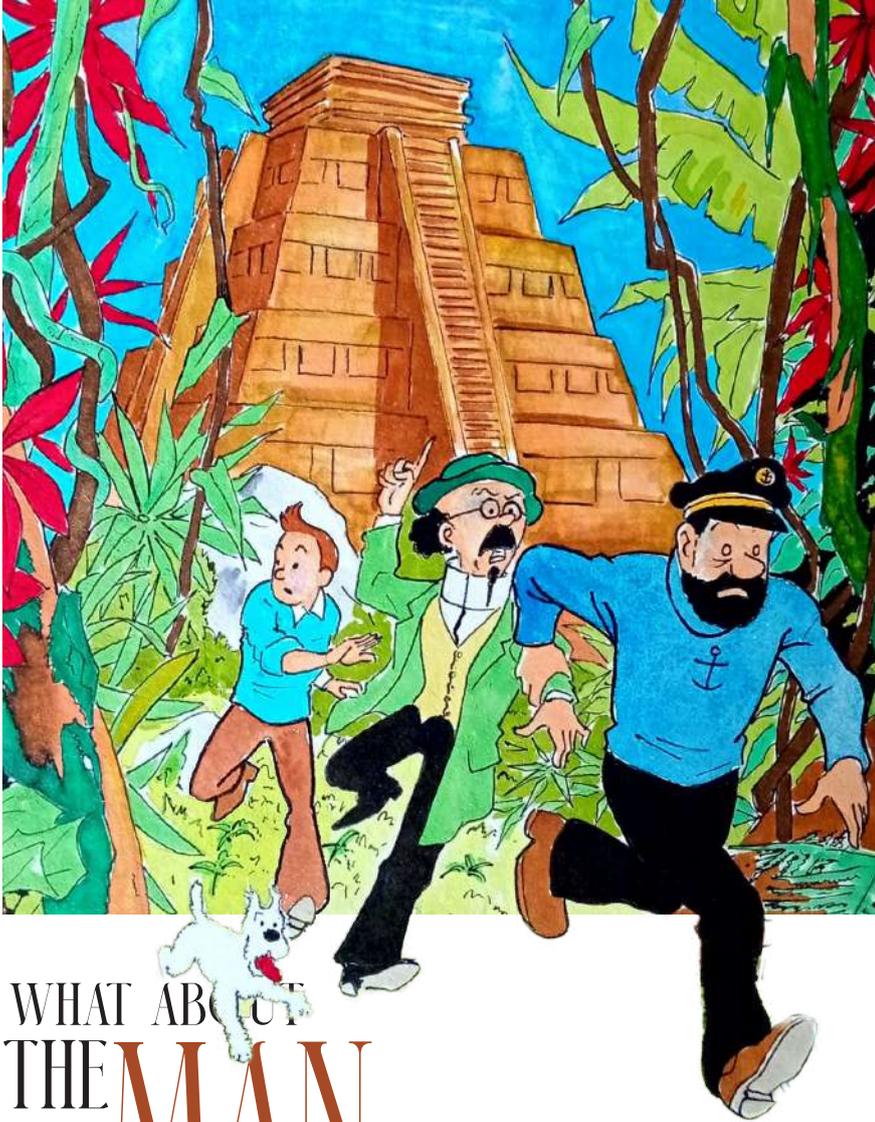
Illustrated by Baibhav Dutta, VII



*A recent event which occurred in the Central Courtyard

A World of Adventure TINTIN

Illustrated by Mashum Singh Keishing, XI



WHAT ABOUT THE MAN BEHIND HIM?

The artist behind Tintin, Hergé (Georges Remi), was a Belgian cartoonist who began drawing his comic series The Adventures of Tintin in 1929 for Le Petit Vingtième. Hergé invented and pioneered ligne claire, the art style used in the

series. Ligne claire is an art style characterised by strong colours and lines, a lack of hatching, and a dynamic of cartoonish characters and realistic background. It went on to become a staple for many comic strips later on.

WHO WAS HE?

Tintin, the titular protagonist of The Adventures of Tintin, a unique saga of a hero that everyone wants to be. He's the friend that everyone wants to have - whether they're 7 or 77. Since his creation in 1929, Tintin has remained a literary figure of extreme popularity, with commemorative murals and statues of the character seen across Belgium. In the comics, Tintin is a young reporter who travels around the world, acting as a detective, constantly seeking the truth and fighting against injustice.

“he's the friend that everyone wants to have - whether 7 they're or 77.”

- Rianna Lingjel Irom, XI, Editor-in-Chief



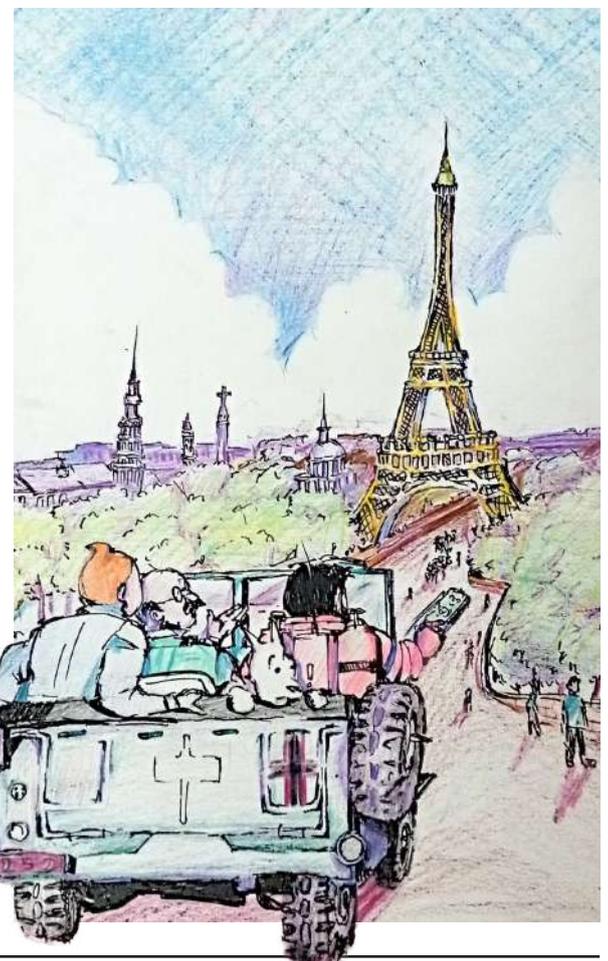
WHO WAS HERGÉ INFLUENCED BY?

As a young artist, Hergé was influenced by his mentors, specifically the abbot Norbert Wallez. Initially, Hergé had been encouraged by Wallez to use Tintin as a tool for Catholic propaganda to impact Belgian children. Consequently, a lot of European right-wing stereotypes can be found in Hergé's early catalogue. A breakthrough came in 1934, when the cartoonist was introduced to Zhang Chongren, a Chinese student, who explained Chinese politics, culture, art, language, and philosophy to him. It was after this encounter that the artist grew ideologically, amidst the collapse of his country and the Second World War, and so did the series, becoming more progressive and more universalist.

WHY IS TINTIN A CULTURAL ICON?

Tintin in Land of the Soviets (1929) combined humour, adventure along with social commentary that would lay down the foundation for the rest of the series. Tintin would go on to become a symbol of resilience and curiosity during the post-war period of international recovery. The series transcended linguistic and cultural

barriers; Tintin grew to be loved by everyone. It is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling. Its cast of characters endears to all audiences, especially the protagonist, Tintin, himself despite being an "everyman" character. He retains a sense of loyalty, noble courage, and a sense of adventure which charm audiences across the ages.



CAMPUS NEWS

CATCHING UP WITH MS. ISHITA KHANNA

From the serene classrooms of Welham Girls' School to the rugged landscapes of Spiti Valley, Ishita Khanna's journey has been nothing short of inspiring. An alumna of Welham Girls', she later found her calling in sustainable development and outdoor ventures, eventually founding Ecosphere and Muse, a social enterprise that works on

sustainable travel in the Himalayas. In this conversation, she reflects on her school days, the pivotal moments that shaped her career, and the challenges and triumphs of working in one of India's most remote regions. Ms. Khanna was the Chief Guest at Graduation 2025, and AVE caught a moment with her during her campus visit.



AVE: We heard you were Ma'am Dutta's student back in the day. Can you share with us what growing up in Welham was like?

ISK: Ma'am Dutta was my housemistress when I was in school, and her residence was a moderate distance from the dormitory where I stayed. She was very strict about lights out, and even when we played music at barely audible volumes in the dorm, she somehow always knew. You'd hear her opening the door and shouting, "Students, turn the music off!", and we were all terrified. But it's incredible to be back now and to continue a relationship with a teacher who transforms over time. After leaving school, the dynamic naturally becomes more friendly, especially after so many years.

AVE: Can you describe your experience at NIM and why it seemed to be a turning point for you?

ISK: I was not particularly focused on my studies as I was more of a backbencher. I gravitated toward outdoor activities, and both my mother

as well as my teachers encouraged me to explore what I enjoyed. That's when I realised my passion for the outdoors, which was what ultimately led me to the career I have now. Today, I work in Spiti Valley and in the travel sector—a direct outcome of those early experiences.

AVE: When did you come up with the concept of Ecosphere? What did you envision back then, and how much has it progressed toward that vision?

ISK: I started working in Spiti around 2002 with an NGO, and gradually, I realised the importance of sustainability for projects and products. That was when I conceived Ecosphere. I envisioned an organisation that could generate its own revenue rather than depending on donations or grants. We wanted to fund our projects independently, which would give us the freedom to pursue them sustainably. Today, both



Ecosphere and our associated initiatives are thriving and moving closer to that vision.

AVE: How did you manage being the Director of Ecosphere while also being the President of Muse?

ISK: There were many challenges. Living and working in Spiti itself was demanding—it takes three full days to travel from Delhi. When I first arrived, there was barely any road transport, floods often closed roads, and communication required sending letters. We only got internet access two years ago! Managing responsibilities in such conditions required patience, perseverance, and a lot of adaptability.



MORNING YOGA

Glimpses from the Morning Yoga Programme for Lower School led by Yoga Instructor Mr. Abhimanyu Sharma



Ripple #263

- Nongthombam Chingkheinganbi,
XI, Associate Editor

*A vast shadow guided the fleet
toward King's Landing.
Daenerys Targaryen rode
Drogon, wind in her
silver hair.*

*The Mother of Dragons
had returned.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "Regancy era." - Sneha Ngangom, XI, Deputy Editor (*Or perhaps the era in which you pick up your dictionary?*)
2. "Honestly saying you." - Nongthombam Chingkheinganbi, XI, Associate Editor (*Honestly, take a look at your Total English. Please.*)
3. "Sip the trees." - SPS (*What are you? A bee?*)
4. "It has went up." - Rianna Lingjel Irom, XI, Editor-in-Chief (*It seems your grammar has gone up too.*)
5. "It's all the art and the craft people." - SGD (*Maybe you should visit the English department first...*)

Keep It Reel!

Family Photo
Anezah Waii, XII



Editor-in-Chief: Rianna Lingjel Irom
Deputy Editor: Sneha Ngangom
Associate Editor: N. Chingkheinganbi
Design & Layout: Rianna

Illustrators: Sneha, Austin, Baibhav
Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

Publisher: The Assam Valley School, P.O. Balipara, Dist. Sonitpur, Asom-784101, India
E-mail: ave@assamvalleyschool.com

Telephone: 09678074320/08812009627 Website: www.assamvalleyschool.com

Patron: Dr. Amit Jugran, The Headmaster of The Assam Valley School

The views expressed in articles printed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of AVE or its editorial policy.