



Is It
The Age of
Asia?

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Caste *out*

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

On the 13th of January, 2026, the University Grants Commission (UGC) notified the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026. According to the new regulations, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) were required to promote equality and prevent (as well as punish) “discrimination”. Caste-based discrimination to be specific. In accordance with the regulations, HEIs, that is, every

“While the UGC Policy sounds good on paper... it is much more complicated in practice.”

college and university, must mandatorily set up an Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC) on campus to serve as a committee that would handle all complaints from students who are a part of the Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories. The provisions of these regulations include mandating every HEI to constitute “equity squads” — smaller bodies who must maintain vigilance and prevent discrimination i.e. serving as some sort of policing squad on campus, setting up monitoring mechanisms (with the inclusion of helplines) and ensure regular reporting to the UGC, etc.

Not a single provision of the new regulations mention any kind of institutional protection for those without reservations, individuals who are a part of the “General” category. Moreover, the regulations do not take

college and university, must mandatorily set up an Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC) on campus to serve as a committee that would handle all complaints

“*India* is more of a *social contract...*”

“false accusations” and their penalisation into account. While the UGC Policy sounds good on paper, catering to the progressive age of 2026, it is much more complicated in practice. To begin with, the issue of “caste-based discrimination” was defined, quite rigidly, as discrimination only against the ST, SC, and OBC communities.

It does not, in any case, take into account people in the “general” or other non-reserved categories which then begs the question: how will discrimination against members of the non-reserved communities be handled? Or do we believe that there can be no discrimination against the general category? The issue of

reservations and caste-based discrimination is much more nuanced than it is portrayed by institutions like the UGC. As mentioned by Arundhati Roy in an interview with Karan Thapar for The Wire nearly four years ago, India is more of a social contract between people of different religions, different castes, different ethnicities, and speakers of over 700 languages.

Given the vast geography and diverse population of the land, issues like discrimination are far more nuanced than they seem on paper. The original intention and duration of reservations were to correct historical injustices and social discrimination, providing a foundation on which members of the ST, SC, and OBC communities could achieve equal opportunities as those of the “General” category with a 10-year limit as per Article 334 of our Constitution. However, these reservations only extend every decade with little change.

While it is true that there remains a need for reservations to remain in place, there is very little official discussion surrounding the fact that the current provisions we have in place need to be readdressed and “churned” in regard to who they cater to. In the context of the North-East, the reservations that the government has in

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place cater to a specific group of people known as the “creamy layer” — the elite, the very cream of the crop. It refers to those who already have money in their pockets, who get away with privilege that hardly comes with any responsibility. For example, Nagaland remains a backward state — as claimed by its own Chief Minister,

“Those at the top continue to grab all the wealth they can claim, leaving very little for their unfortunat counterparts to grasp.”

Neiphiu Rio on the 15th of April, 2025, despite the fact that the man himself stands as the fourth richest Chief Minister in the entire country as of 2025. In fact, most North-eastern states have a very narrow gap between their rich and poor i.e. a very small middle class.

Those at the top continue to grab onto all the wealth they

can claim, leaving very little for their unfortunate counterparts to grasp. Tribal students in this very institution have asserted that they’d rather not give up their possible seats in the future for those who need it more than them: the people in their villages whose houses stand smaller than theirs, the people who don’t own a single vehicle while they take up the space their entire city has to offer with twenty Scorpios.

The only exception to this is the indigenous people of Manipur, the Meiteis. Perhaps the only ethnicity in North-East India to decline reservations, the Meitei population are a physical testament to how nuanced the issue of discrimination can get in India. While classified as part of the “General” category, they face the same discrimination as any other Tribal population but continue to lack institutional protection. In fact, before the conflict erupted in Manipur three years ago, Manipur itself had been thriving — or at least, thriving as much as a state built on drugs, corruption and bloodshed (otherwise built on resilience borne from suffering, depending on who you asked) could thrive. The problem here is not the lack of reservations catering to the other population. It is how rigidly the provisions have been drawn out, and how there is negligible work done for those who continue to suffer in poverty. Corruption, a

“We must look at the issue through every perspective in the prism...”

long-drawn-out infestation in the North-East, remains rampant. Indian Society continues to address the nuances of its problems — caste-based discrimination is just one issue among many.

If the UGC and the country at large really want to push for change, for equity, then the regulations must advocate for something other than rigid segregation. If we truly want to remove caste from our society, then we must strip it from the very soil of our country, layer by layer: starting from ensuring that the population receiving benefits from reservations is churned and turned over, i.e. that the people who truly need help are helped, rather than those who just wish to pocket more wealth and privilege. We must look at the issue through every perspective in the prism, rather than with a single-minded, black-and-white focus. If change needs to happen, it must begin by readdressing and reforming the new UGC regulations, ensuring that they are not so vague and easy to misuse.

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After all, institutional protection against discrimination cannot be discriminatory itself.

The European Union today finds itself facing a rapidly changing and uncertain global order. Geopolitical instability has now become the new normal. Rising tensions, like the growing rivalry between the United States and China, are no longer temporary challenges but permanent features of global politics. These shifts are now shaping Europe’s political, economic, & strategic decisions.

*“Are we truly
entering the
age of Asia?...
The answer
may be yes.”*

Europe, is threatened, caught between dependence on American security as well as the economic pull of Asia. In

Is It The Age of Asia?

- Raisah Hazarika, XI

this changing landscape, Asia’s influence continues to expand, filling the space left by weakening Western dominance.

History offers an interesting perspective. The nineteenth century was shaped by Europe. The twentieth century was dominated by the United States. The twenty-first century, however, appears to be moving decisively towards Asia. In many ways, history has come full circle. Asia led the world for centuries: economically, scientifically, and culturally.

After long and often difficult interactions with Western powers, the continent is once again emerging as the engine of global growth. The numbers reflect this shift clearly. In 2000, Asia accounted for just under 30 per cent of global GDP. Today, nearly 50 per cent of the world’s economic output comes from the region. This sustained momentum has positioned Asia as a serious contender for global leadership. Against this backdrop, the recently concluded Europe-India financial and trade deal, often

described as the “mother of all deals,” carries deep strategic meaning. For Europe, it represents a conscious effort to diversify partnerships and reduce overreliance on the United States. For India, it marks recognition as a key economic and as a political player in the emerging multipolar world. For Russia, increasingly isolated from the West, such realignments signal a shifting balance where Asia, rather than the Atlantic world, becomes central to global affairs. This deal also reflects a slow but visible movement away from American hegemony. While the US remains powerful, its uncontested leadership is fading. Europe is seeking strategic autonomy, India is

asserting itself as an independent pole, and Asia as a whole is becoming indispensable to global growth and stability. China, however, will view all these developments with caution. While Asia’s rise benefits Beijing in principle, India’s growing ties with Europe challenge China’s dominance within the region. A stronger India complicates China’s ambitions to lead Asia single-handedly, pushing Beijing to rethink its economic and diplomatic strategies. Asia is rising across economic, political, and cultural spheres, and it naturally leads to an important question: are we truly entering the Age of Asia? The evidence increasingly suggests that the answer may be yes.

UPS 2976

-Udayveer Singh, VIII

“May the lives lost always be remembered.”

It was a warm sunny evening in Louisville, Kentucky on the 4th of November, 2025. A McDonnell Douglas MD-11F operated by a cargo company named UPS was preparing for a flight to Honolulu, Hawaii. The flight was supposed to be 8.5 hours. Little did anyone know, this flight would last for just 30 seconds. At sometime around 5:13pm EST, the aircraft slowly started picking up speed down the runway. Halfway down the runway, the left engine caught fire, leading to an engine failure. Video footage from a man at the airport who had recorded a video of the aircraft on fire suggested that the aircraft

was struggling to take off. It had barely been a second of the aircraft being in the air when the left engine disconnected from the aircraft.

It was later found on the side of the runway. It was at this moment when the aircraft started rolling to the side and struck the roof of a UPS warehouse and crashed into an auto scrapyard. 14 people lost their lives. The NTSB (National Transport Safety Board) decided to lead the investigation. The left engine and the cockpit voice recorders have been recovered. However, what exactly happened in the cockpit is still unknown, only time will tell. What makes aviation safe is not its technology or training, but it is the ability of finding errors and correcting them, saving thousands in the long run. May the lives lost always be remembered.

“What makes aviation safe is not its technology or training, but it is the ability of finding errors and correcting them.”

Around the World Aboriginal Kinship System

-Timzenla Ozukum,XI

On a recent family gathering, relatives visiting from Australia shared fascinating insights from their experiences. Their parents serve as missionaries in Arnhem Land, a remote region in northern Australia with a rich Aboriginal heritage.

What stood out most was their terminology. They spoke of “Aboriginal brothers and sisters,” “mums and dads,” and described how their parents had “husbands” and “wives” within the community. At first, this complex web of relationships was hard to grasp, the idea of multiple parents, siblings, or spouses piqued my curiosity.

They explained that this is part of the Aboriginal kinship system, a traditional social framework that goes far beyond the nuclear family model.

In this system, relationships aren't just biological, they are shaped by a person's 'skin group' or 'skin name,' which would be assigned at birth. This classification guides interactions, behavioural expectations, marriage customs, and responsibilities within the community. Intrigued, I delved deeper into this cultural practice and discovered its intricate design. In many Aboriginal communities, every individual belonged to a specific skin group, a system that has endured for thousands of years. Through this structure, a person knows their role as mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, or uncle in relation to others, regardless of biological ties. These roles carry clear responsibilities, respect, and social obligations. Terms like “husband” and “wife” don't always reflect marriage in the conventional sense. Instead, they often signify socially prescribed relationships between skin groups, defining appropriate marriage partners and guiding interactions. Even newcomers to the community may be assigned a skin name, seamlessly integrating them into this network and clarifying their social role. This glimpse into Aboriginal kinship reveals a deeply thoughtful social system,

Campus Caricature

The Season To Fare Thee Well*

Illustrated by Nameirakpam Austin, VII



*A viators this week in an endless loop of farewells.

CHEMTOON

On the 3rd of February, 2026, classes 5 to 8 participated in Chemtoon competition held at the Chemistry Lab. The objective of this event was promote creative learning in chemistry. Students presented chemical concepts through cartoons and visual illustrations, making the subject engaging and easy to understand. The competition encouraged conceptual clarity, creativity, and effective scientific communication among students. The event was well received and successfully fostered enthusiasm, innovation, and scientific temper among the participants.



INTERHOUSE CRICKET



The much-anticipated 26th Inter-House Cricket Tournament was conducted from 29th January to 31st January, 2026 with four houses battling it out fiercely. The tournament was a brilliant showcase of teamwork, strategy, and sportsmanship. The matches were marked by some exceptional batting and bowling performances. Results of the competition are as follows:

- 1st Position:** Dhansiri House (6 points)
- 2nd Position:** Manas House (4 points)
- 3rd Position:** Lohit House (2 points)
- 4th Position:** Namdang House

Individual achievements include:

- Best Batter of the tournament:** Mohit Routh, Class 8 (Inn: 03 Runs: 137)
- Second Best Batter of the tournament:** Farhad Mustak, Class 11 (Inn: 03 Runs: 106)
- Best Bowler of the tournament:** Ayan Kumar Saha, Class 11 (Inn: 03 Wickets: 8 Average: 6)
- Second best bowler of the tournament:** Ritwik Mundhra, Class 8 (Inn: 03 Wickets: 08 Average: 4.25)
- Best Fielder:** Ayan Kumar Saha, Class 11
- Most Valuable Player of the tournament:** Kanishk Rathi, Class 9



SCAD WORKSHOP

SCAD workshop held at AVR on 23 January 2026. The SCAD college counsellor conducted an engaging and insightful session and demonstrated a high level of knowledge and professionalism throughout the workshop. Around 45 students attended the session, during which they learned about global challenges and real-world problems, and how Art and Creative Design & Technology (CDT) can help address these issues.

The counsellor shared several real-life examples, including a project where SCAD students collaborated with engineers to design a driver-friendly car. She also highlighted the importance of STEM students and interdisciplinary learning in today's world. The students were highly engaged and thoroughly enjoyed the workshop.

Towards the end of the session, the counsellor explained the application process and scholarship opportunities available at SCAD. She guided students on how to start building their profiles from Grade 9 onwards, which are carefully analysed during the selection process. Additionally, two pre-college summer programmes were introduced: SCAD Rising Star and SCAD Summer Seminars, available for



students from Grades 9 to 11. These programmes help students explore their interests before finalising undergraduate course choices after Grade 12.

ASHOKA UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM

The Ashoka University entrance examination, was organized by the Careers Department in the ICT Lab on 1st February 2026 at 10:00 a.m. A total of four students appeared for the examination—two students from AVS and two students from Tezpur School. The entrance examination was conducted in two phases. The first phase consisted of on-the-spot essay writing (30 minutes). The second phase was a 1 hour 30 minutes MCQ-based test, which included questions on logical reasoning, aptitude, and English.



Ripple #264

- Nongthombam Chingkheinganbi,
XI, Associate Editor

*She twirled in her mother's dress
laughing,
Arms outstretched
to be carried.
Age had clouded her eyes,
not her vision.
Across time, she smiled
and whispered,
Ma.*

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "Prabh-syndrome." - Chayank Haloi, XI
(With it's single patient being you.)
2. "Model MUN" - HMD (That's like saying Assam Valley AVE.)
3. "Tongue of spills." - Prayaash Khakholia, XI, Boys' Academic Captain (That's a gruesome picture.)
4. "I confested." - Sneha Ngangom, XI, Deputy Editor (Your lack of grammar is practically a sin.)
5. "My feminine are too features." - Timzenla Ozukum, XI (Are you planning on studying Gender Theory? Because you shouldn't. At all.)

Keep It Reel!

A Wandering Gaze

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



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



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