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FRIENDSHIP

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# f riends & oes

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- Vidhi Chopra, XII

**"India's rise will not be determined by the mistakes made by other countries, but that it will be determined by Indians themselves."**

In a rapidly shifting global landscape, India has moved beyond the "unipolar moment" of the 1990s into a complex era of multipolarity. This evolution is defined by a decisive pivot from traditional Non-Alignment to a proactive strategy of Multi-Alignment. As India pursues its

"Viksit Bharat" 2047 goal, it no longer seeks to avoid power blocs but rather engages with multiple poles of influence at the same time to secure its national interests.

This pragmatic shift is most visible in India's walk on the tightrope between Israel and Iran; where PM Modi has strengthened ties with Israel through the 'Special Strategic Partnership' whilst also protecting her economic and energy interests in Iran, exemplified by the

'humane assistance' provided to the Iranian naval ship IRIS LAVAN, and the safety of the Indian diaspora across the Gulf.

EAM Jaishanker says that India is a neighbouring region and understandably

has obvious stakes in West Asia remaining stable and peaceful. That is India's main strategic priority - she wants peace and stability across West Asia, adding to her own interests of trade, investment and most importantly the transit corridor of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is far more complicated. Yes, India respects sovereignty and integrity, but in this case, the aggressors are India's close partners - the US and Israel.

What New Delhi would like to see is deescalation and after that a permanent peace. At the same time, a regime change is not in India's interest, especially if it's orchestrated by American troops. Replying to the American Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau comment that America will

**"It no longer seeks to avoid power blocs but rather engages with multiple poles of influence simultaneously to secure its national interests."**

not make the same mistake of supporting or allowing India to rise like it did with China, EAM Jaishanker noted that the direction of India's rise is "clear" and "unstoppable", and that India's rise will not be determined by the mistakes made by other countries, but that it will be determined by Indians themselves. Closer to home, India's strategy of neighbourly alliances is being

tested by the unfolding power dynamics in Bangladesh. New Delhi is working to balance its developmental partnerships with concerns over border security and the safety of minorities, all while navigating the sensitive "Hasina factor."

This regional friction has rendered the resuscitation of SAARC unlikely, leading India to prioritise regional cooperation

through BIMSTEC, provided it can find synergy with Thailand and a stable Dhaka. Ultimately, India's foreign policy is no longer just about maintaining distance from global conflicts, but about leveraging its rising economic and technological weight to command a leading role in a world alarmingly influenced by "the Trump factor" and the erosion of old multilateral structures.

# Secret Treasure

- Raisah Yasmin Hazarika, XII

Long ago, in an old and quiet village, a sage who had travelled far and wide came seeking rest. His feet were sore, his staff worn thin, and dusk had begun to settle over the land. Near the village well, he saw a woman drawing water and asked her for shelter. She listened kindly and agreed to help. The woman took the sage to the village head and explained his plight. The village head was known as a wise and generous man. He welcomed the sage and offered him an empty hut for the night. Yet, before leaving, the village head gave a curious warning. "Rest well," he said, "but do not go near the river after nightfall." The sage agreed, though the warning puzzled him. Weariness overcame curiosity, and he asked no questions. The woman was told to escort him to the hut. As they walked, she spoke in a hushed voice.

"The village head goes to the river at night," she whispered, "to hide his treasures along the far bank. That is why he fears others wandering there." The words settled deep in the sage's mind. After washing his face and laying down to rest, sleep refused to come. Greed crept in where wisdom should have stayed. When he heard footsteps in the dark, he rose quietly and followed the village head toward the river.

Suddenly, a twig snapped beneath his foot. The village head turned, smiling. "It is alright, sage," he said calmly. "I will share my treasure with you, if you promise to tell no one where it lies." Startled, yet tempted, the sage agreed and followed him onward. As they walked, the air grew colder. The village head's skin looked pale in the moonlight, his eyes darker than before. His steps made no sound, and something about him felt wrong. At the riverbank, just as the water began to ripple strangely, a voice cried out from behind. "Sage, stop!" The sage turned and froze. Standing there was the village head, panic-stricken, breathless, very much alive. The figure beside the sage smiled and stepped into the river. And the village has never spoken of treasures since.

# AROUND THE WORLD

## *Taylor Swift*

- Nongthombam  
Chingkheinganbi, Associate  
Editor, XII

**T**aylor Swift is a name synonymous with the music industry. She is not just a pop star who stumbled into fame; her success is the result of years of hard work, sharp instincts, and strategic foresight. Often reduced to the label of “the girl who writes songs about her exes,” Swift has consistently proven herself to be far more: a marketing powerhouse, a corporation in her own right, and a shrewd business leader.

At 15, she was writing songs about heartbreak; at 35, she is rewriting the rules of the global music industry. Every attempt by the media to box her into a narrative, whether as a heartbroken teenager or a cancelled celebrity, has only become material for her to reinvent herself, turning challenges into opportunities worth millions. Her cryptic teasers, perfectly timed announcements, and knack for controlling her own story reflect not only creative genius but corporate mastery.

Her sharpest move came with the battle for her masters. When her former label, Big Machine Records, sold her catalogue to Scooter Braun without consultation, Swift responded with an ingenious workaround: re-recording her albums as “Taylor’s Version.” This decision not only restored ownership of her music but also transformed the business model of modern pop,

proving that the industry itself had to adapt to her. It was a masterclass in strategy, branding, and resilience. Even in her early career, Swift displayed remarkable business acumen. While country music was dominated by adult themes, she entered through a “blue ocean” strategy, crafting songs that reflected the teenage experience, a market few had tapped. With every album since, she has curated tracks that mirror her life’s evolving stages while reserving deeply personal pieces that keep her art authentic.

This balance of universality and intimacy has built an enduring bond with her listeners. Her influence extends beyond music. In 2024, when Universal Music Group clashed with TikTok over royalties, many artists waited for resolution. Swift, however, leveraged her cultural capital to negotiate on her own terms ahead of releasing *The Tortured Poets Department*. Once again, she demonstrated that platforms depend on her, not the other way around. From her Nashville café beginnings to her status as a global icon, Taylor Swift has become more than an artist. She is a visionary, a strategist, and a cultural force—never the naive figure society tried to make her, but a woman who redefined music, business, and power itself.

## TALES FROM THE EPICS - VII *The Unsung Hero*

- Urvashi Bora, XII

**A**bhimanyu, the son of Arjun and Subhadra, was a valiant young warrior whose bravery shone brightly, even in the face of a tragic fate. Born to Arjun, the third of the five Pandava brothers,

and Subhadra, sister of Lord Krishna, his birth was celebrated, and he was raised in Dwarka while the Pandavas remained in exile. Trained by his cousin Pradyumna and his uncles Balarama

and Krishna, Abhimanyu inherited his father's skill in archery and became a formidable fighter.

Remarkably, even in his mother's womb, he absorbed the secrets of warfare, including the technique to enter a chakravyuh, a circular military formation, but he never learned how to exit it. This gap would later seal his destiny.

After Arjun returned from exile, Abhimanyu married Uttara, princess of the Matsya kingdom and daughter of King Virata. Their son, Parikshita, would eventually inherit the throne of Hastinapur. Abhimanyu's courage shone most brightly on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. On the thirteenth day, Dronacharya formed the chakravyuh to trap the Pandavas. Arjun was deliberately kept away, leaving the formation's secret known only to him and Krishna. The remaining Pandavas attempted to break through, but Dronacharya's strategy, along with Jayadrath

blocking their path, made it impossible.

Determined, sixteen-year-old Abhimanyu volunteered to penetrate the chakravyuh, confident that the Pandavas would follow him. Alone, he fought valiantly, demonstrating skill, courage, and unwavering resolve. But trapped by all the Kaurava maharathis, he was attacked unfairly by multiple warriors at once. Despite his bravery, Abhimanyu fell, leaving the battlefield a hero whose death would ignite the Pandavas' determination to avenge him. Watching this scene in the Mahabharata with my parents, I felt a surge of sorrow. A young boy, courageous and righteous, was killed brutally, yet he faced his end without fear. Abhimanyu did not falter; he proved that a true warrior is measured not by the years he lives but by the courage he shows. He was born a hero, and his legacy of bravery and sacrifice will remain eternal.

# THE PRICE OF AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP

- Jael Manya Konyak, XII

The United States often presents itself as a strong and reliable ally. However, its actions over the years sometimes tell a different story. Many countries feel that American friendships can be temporary and based mainly on political interests. When those interests change, the relationship may also change. This creates frustration among nations that once trusted the United States. Countries remember when they feel they have been treated unfairly or blamed for situations that were not entirely their fault. A recent example can be seen during the war in Ukraine. The United States criticized India for continuing to buy oil from Russia. India argued that it needed affordable energy for its growing economy. At the same time, some European countries were still buying Russian energy. To many observers, this seemed unfair and hypocritical. Another concern has appeared with America's actions against

Iran. Military actions and rising tensions in the region have created fears of instability in West Asia. Some countries worry that such decisions are taken without fully considering how they might affect regional partners and allies.

For India, these issues are particularly important. In recent years, India and the United States have become closer strategic partners. However, economic actions such as high tariffs on Indian goods have sometimes caused tension. At the same time, the United States has continued to maintain relations with Pakistan, which often raises questions in India. In the end, nations learn from experience. When countries feel that alliances depend only on short-term interests, trust slowly weakens. Over time, this loss of trust may make it harder for the United States to maintain strong and lasting friendships around the world.

# READER'S *Checklist*

*What members of the school community have been reading this week.*

1. **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban** by **J.K. Rowling** - Parison Langpoklakpam, VI  
Harry Potter's third year at Hogwarts is overshadowed by the escape of Sirius Black, a notorious prisoner believed to be targeting him. Together with Ron and Hermione, Harry discovers the truth about his past and Black's true identity.

2. **Ghost-Eye** by **Amitav Ghosh** - Ma'am Ankita Das  
A three-year-old girl in a strict vegetarian family recalls a past life involving fish, triggering a deep exploration into memory and ecological anxiety.

3. **A Day of Fallen Night** by **Samantha Shanon** - N. Chingkheinganbi, Associate Editor, XII  
Four women across a divided world come together as they confront the return of the ancient, wyrm-led destruction.

4. **Mist Born** by **Brandon Sanderson** - Ma'am Sarmistha Paul Sarkar  
Sanderson creates yet another epic journey in a world where mists talk and gods rule and leaders emerge to create a rebellion that changes worlds.

5. **Blood Meridian** by **Cormac McCarthy** - Austin Nameirakpam, VII  
"The kid," a runaway teenager, joins the Glanton gang, a brutal group of scalp hunters murdering American-Indians and Mexicans along the 1850s borderlands.

6. **The Starless Crown** by **James Rollin** - Sneha Ngangom, Deputy Editor, XII  
A gifted, near-blind student discovers a prophecy of an impending apocalypse caused by the moon crashing into their tidally locked world.

7. **Roger Federer, The Biography** by **Rene Staufer** - Yug Malpani, VI  
The rise of the Swiss maestro from a temperamental junior player to a 20-time Grand Slam champion.

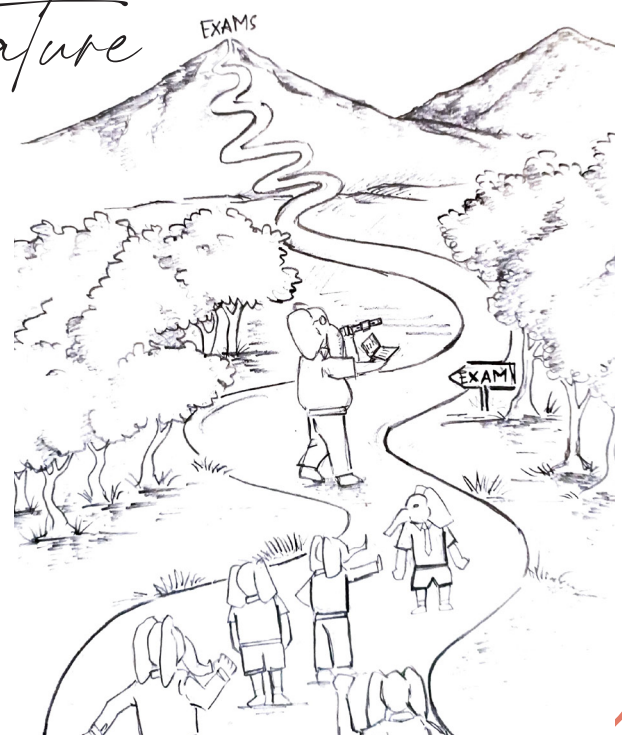
8. **Butter** by **Asako Yuzuki** - Rianna Lingel Irom, Editor-in-Chief, XII  
An appetising analysis of misogyny and human emotions as it follows a journalist interviewing an alleged serial killer.

## *Campus Caricature*

# TO GUIDE PREPARATION\*

Illustrated by Baihav Dutta, VIII

\*In reference to the guided prep for Lowschool Students ahead of their final examinations.



## HINDI KAVITA PATH

On 21st February, 2026 The Assam Valley School hosted a vibrant Individual Hindi Poetry Recitation for Lower School students (Classes 5-8). With 25 talented participants across categories, students dazzled the audience by selecting poems on diverse themes—from nature's beauty and patriotism to humor and life's simple joys.

Results of the competition are as follows:

Class 5

First Position: Vivaan Saha

Second Position: Riyansh Gupta

Third Position: Aarushi Singh

Class 6

First Position: Shirel Dixit

Second Position: Amaira Dhamija

Third Position: Adhiraaj Jugran

Class 7

First Position: Arpit Yadav

Second Position: Sreeja Saha

Third Position: Kavyansh Agarwal

Class 8

First Position: Nilav Prajapati

Second Position: Shveni Sachdev

Third Position: Ryan Dutta



Photographs by Mr. Matharu

# LOWERSCHOOL ENGLISH DEBATES

Lower School Inter-House Debate Competition 2026 was held at AVS from 15th February to 20th February with students discussing ideas around beauty startups across Asia, digital cultures and traditional values, lifeskills and academic excellence among others.

Final results of the debate are:

**First Position:** Kopili-Dhansiri

**Best Speaker:** Anushka Iyer

**Most Promising Speaker:** Lakshyaveer Das Barman



Photographs by Mr. Matharu



# LOWERSCHOOL HINDI DEBATES

Lower School Inter-House Hindi Debate Competition 2026 was held at AVS on the 8th of March. Students delivered passionate speeches on society, social media, and how one cannot blame the tool for how it is used.

Final results of the debate are:

**First Position:** Kopili-Dhansiri

**Best Speaker:** Khushi Bakliwal

**Most Promising Speaker:** Darshit Agarwal & Vritti Agarwal



# Ripple #267

- N. Chingkheinganbi,  
Associate Editor, XII

There lay the blanket  
of darkness,  
Beyond where any hand can reach  
In it sparkles my maa  
In it twinkles my paa  
With all the other lucky people  
They sparkle as I wait  
for my turn  
To feast at the table  
Of the Great Night Sky

# Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "She's not going to get explained." - Vidhi Chopra, XII (*And you're not definitely not getting anything above 10 in your English exam.*)
2. "Zombie acopolypse." - Aanya Paul Sarkar, Deputy Editor, ISC Batch of 2026 (*Well, it's not like you and your brain have anything to worry about.*)
3. "To fulfill your cricketness." - Mr. Bitupan Borah (*Sir, we need to fulfill our English teacher's expectations first.*)
4. "I have tiklish." - Sneha Ngangom, Deputy Editor, XII (*But not a Total English?*)
5. "I didn't saw stuff." - Sneha Ngangom, Deputy Editor, XII (*Yeah, you definitely don't own a Total English.*)



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