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# UNUSUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH TAGORE

-Mrs. Dayita Dutta, Head of Department, History

To ask me to write about Rabindranath Tagore is to engender a sense of profound shame as a Bengali. I know so little – despite my father having studied at Shantiniketan in its glory years – and began reading him sporadically in my teens. I began with his short stories, then moved to some of his poems and songs. But my love for English literature and History and my curiosity about other cultures resulted in some curious encounters with Tagore.

As a teenager, I first encountered Pablo Neruda, the Nobel Prize winner from Chile. His early collection of romantic poems *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* was devoured by my friends and me. Somewhat to my surprise I read that his poem from that collection “In my Sky at Twilight ” was almost a transcreation of “Tumi Sondhyar Meghamala”. Later I came to know that another Spanish poet and fellow Nobel Laureate Juan Ramon Jimenez had begun translating *Gitanjali*. For both poets the medium must have been English since neither knew Bengali.

In my college Elective English class, I was introduced to the poetry of the soldier poets of World War I – Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon among others. Owen’s powerful anti-war poetry and the pathos of his death – just one week before the end of the war – affected me deeply. Therefore it was curious to read about what can only be called a strange meeting of minds (the reference is to Owen’s poem of the same name). While visiting London in 1920, Tagore received an



Illustrated by Itaku Ahozhe, X

emotionally wrenching letter from a certain Susan Owen

“Dear Sir Rabindranath, “I have been trying to find (the) courage to write to you ever since I heard that you were in London,” it went on, “but the desire to tell you something is finding its way into this letter today.”

The writer admitted that though she had no address for him, she was convinced that his illustrious name on the envelope would be sufficient for the epistle to reach him. And she was right. The letter continued:

“It is nearly two years ago, that my dear eldest son went out to the War for the last time and the day he said Goodbye to me—we were looking together across the sun-glorified sea—looking towards France with breaking hearts—when he, my poet son, said these wonderful words of yours... ‘when I leave, let these be my parting words: what my eyes have seen, what my life received, are unsurpassable’. And when his pocket book came back to me—I found these words written in his dear writing—with your name beneath.”

How curious that Owen, who spared nothing in his gritty descriptions of the war, should find solace in the lyricism of Tagore’s only work available to English readers at that time :The Gitanjali.

We move to another war. One far worse than World War I. When the Nazis occupied Poland they herded the Jews of Warsaw into a crowded insanitary ghetto.

The process resulted in a huge number of homeless and orphaned children. The Ghetto orphanage was run by a renowned pediatrician and educator Janusz Korczak. He had dedicated his life to the care and well being of children, and in the midst of all the horrors strived to give the children a sense of responsibility and fun. Korczak was aware of the transport of Jews to “the East” (a euphemism for the death camps). He probably knew that the time was coming for the children. In July 1943, He directed a production of Tagore’s “Dak Ghor” (Post Office). A few days later, the children of the ghetto were transported to Treblinka death camp. Although Dr Korczak was given the opportunity to escape, he stayed with his young charges until gas chamber.

Why did Korczak choose this play? Though the protagonist is a little boy, trapped in a room with an unspecified malady. But his imagination roams far and wide as he converses with all those who pass by his window. He believes that one day a letter will come for him from the king, but when the king’s herald arrives, the boy is dying. But he dies with dignity and at peace. It is possible that Korczak was preparing his little charges for what was to come. His memorial at Treblinka commemorates his supreme sacrifice.

That two very different personalities whose experiences of war and suffering yet did not snuff out their essential humanity could find comfort and inspiration from Rabindranath Tagore – is proof enough of his universality and humanism.

## THE ART OF

# *pretty notes*

-Nuksungla T. Syoah, XI

Studying is super boring, everyone hates it, well unless you’re a philomath. People say if you study regularly and read the textbooks everyday you will basically ‘fall in love with your subjects’ and that my friend, is nothing but pure nonsense. So, let me save you from the void of “oh my gosh! The ceiling looks fun to hang with” kind of studying. There is one way to squirm in happiness when you study and the answer to that is pretty notes! Trust me it works (it’s seriously not just aesthetics...well, maybe a little Pinterest coded. But it seriously helps, I swear.)

Now, what are notes? The answer is: the portrayal of your personality and the way you look at academics. And how do you do that? Pink! Actually, no but yes. The real answer is colours. Colour coding your notes makes your notes super easy and fun to study. Any colour works, but please don’t use monochromatic colours, unless you hate the subject and it does not deserve any colours whatsoever in its unnecessary existence. Colours give you the joy to write and help automatically memorise certain paragraphs. And believe or not it helps you to concentrate and listen to the teacher, even for Math.

That's one point for people with low concentration levels, and not only does it help in memory retention but also makes the review process a visually appealing journey. Pretty notes can save you last minute woes, and help you study the highlighted ones in a whiff. Pretty sticky notes and stickers on certain areas of your study which you find extremely annoying and tedious

can help you remember that particular paragraph or word. In conclusion, pretty notes are the power to romanticise academics and feed our ego by getting complimented for how cute and pretty they look, but yes, it actually helps. So let's all try having organised, colourful, neat notes from today!

# AROUND THE WORLD

-Atoti Zhimomi, Editor-in-Chief, XII

## FORMULA 1

Lights out and away we go! Standing as the greatest motorsport of all time, Formula 1 has generated an audience like no other ever since its inception in the European Motor Racing Championship in the 1920s. With legends like Prost, Senna and Schumacher driving its circuits, the sport is littered with incredible drivers and renowned teams from top to bottom. Standing at the top in the 2024 season is Red Bull Racing with their star driver, the Dutch sensation, Max Verstappen (one with his own theme song) who in 2021, prevented Lewis Hamilton from breaking Michael Schumacher's record of 7 World Championships under his belt, by winning his first F1 Championship at the age of 24. With teams generating and spending billions per year, F1 has become one of the most lucrative motorsports in the world over the years. From the iconic Marlboro-Ferrari collaboration to the infamous Shell logo, each F1 car is plastered with advertisements of every kind, adding onto their billion-dollar revenue that they produce through ticket sales, merchandise and online streaming.

The sport is also filled to the brim with incredibly unexpected twists and storylines. It has everything from long-standing legacies and rivalries like the legacy of Ayrton Senna and the Hunt-Lauda rivalry that belong on the silver screen, and even twists like Lando Norris

winning the Miami 2024 race when absolutely everyone expected Verstappen to win again.

F1 rocketed into everyone's homepages after the release of the popular Netflix show, "Drive to Survive" which has covered each yearly season since 2019. With reality-show-esque filming and editing style, the show has done its fair share of work in popularising the drivers in a popstar type of light, with fangirls and fanboys galore. However though the drivers stand as the

stars of the show, it is important to remember what truly makes the sport what it is and that is the teams behind them. They include not only the million dollar brand names behind them but the engineers, designers, the ones working at the pit stops, the janitors, the managers and everyone who has a love for the sport.

What there is to understand is that F1 is not just about the roar of the million-dollar engines and the adrenaline that comes with the high-speed chase. It is about the passion and zeal that exudes with each turn, the anticipation as the first car races past the chequered flag and the exhilaration you feel as you watch the champagne spray all over the podium, almost feeling it sprinkle onto you.



Illustrated by Italu Ahozhe, X

# ARMCHAIR ACTIVISM

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-Rianna Irom, X

When the world was swept off its feet by the pandemic, (that is, when everybody was stuck at home because of the lockdown), there was nothing for anyone to do other than scroll away on their phone. The only thing you could turn to in those days was social media — there were no longer any lectures or tuitions you could attend, no shifts you had to work at your dreary job and no tasks lined up on your schedule that you had to leave your apartment for. There was no “IRL” event to stress out over, (no matter how inconsequential the actual event might’ve been in the grand scheme of things) and therefore, people turned to other matters in the world, now suddenly interested in happenings across the globe when they could really care less.

Remember Black Lives Matter? The movement trended all over the globe as people changed their profile pictures, put the hashtag in their Instagram and TikTok bios, reposted a simple black screen on their feed and nothing more. Few people did anything more than that, as the masses simply became a part of the movement to be on the safe side — the “good” side, the side where they wouldn’t be hated for being a part of despite their own personal opinions. Comfortable while rotting in their beds, individuals would press a few buttons to reupload a post on their stories on Instagram, or write a comment or a quote-retweet on Twitter to share what they deemed concerning events. There were petitions and other links for certain

fundraisers shared internationally. A thousand reposts of a GoFundMe link, and yet hardly any donations. This kind of activism has extended well into today’s time, even when we’re three years past the pandemic.

It’s what one might call “armchair activism”. While the victims suffer in the cruel conditions they are subject to, these activists are seated comfortably in their sofas, posting a few buttons just to be on the “right” side of things. They will look no further than the current trends of today’s society and once the aforementioned trend passes, you will hardly hear another word regarding it. Take the Russo-Ukrainian War for example. We all saw it on our screens, shared to us by the social warriors on the internet, saying and doing whatever they can (which is hardly much) just to seem morally correct. Now, it’s the Israel-Hamas conflict that seems to die and revive every few years. People jump at the first opportunity to be on the “good side”, skimming through posts and videos and taking the least amount of information they can.

Armchair activists are those who profess their morals while hardly taking any action to support their cause. The ones who are seated comfortably in their figurative sofas, picking subjects they wish to post about and subjects they don’t, as if strife should be censored. They won’t care for it much anymore after it drops out of the trending section in a few weeks — such is the sentiment of our social media soldiers.

# TRUMP CARD

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-Aanya Paul Sarkar, XI

Time Magazine’s cover story ‘If he wins’ features a wide-ranging interview in which Donald Trump tells us what a second term with him could look like should he win his bid to retake the White House. So what is it that Trump says he will do? Well, regarding immigration, he has plans on using the military to carry out a mass deportation of millions of undocumented immigrants and is also willing to sidestep a law that prohibits using American troops against civilians. To quote him, ‘Well, These aren’t civilians, These are people that aren’t legally

in our country. This is an invasion of our country. When asked about political violence, if he were to lose the election to Joe Biden, he said that he was pretty certain that the victory was going to be his, and if he were to lose, it would depend on the ‘fairness of the election’. In addition to this, he also mentioned that the firing of a U.S attorney refusing to prosecute someone upon his orders will be entirely circumstantial. Furthermore, he also states that he would absolutely consider pardoning every single one of the nearly 800 rioters convicted of

attacking the Capitol on January 6th. Why should voters trust him though? Especially when the people who have observed him most closely, do not? As always Trump hits back, disparaging his former advisors. But beneath the typical torrent of insults, there is a bigger lesson he has taken away. He says he is no longer going to let them quit out of the goodness of his heart

but would rather fire them instead. In a second term, Trump's influence on American democracy would not be solely confined to pardoning powers. The groundwork to restructure the presidency in line is being laid down by the allies and the courts should be swept away in the favour of a more powerful commander in chief.

## HINDI DEBATES

*Reported by Siddhi Priyadarshani, X*

On Monday, May 6th, 2024, the school hosted the senior school Inter-House Hindi Debates under the aegis of the ninth edition of the Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Baadh-Vibaadh Competition. The topic for the evening was "Aaj rajneeti janhit tyag kar swahit ki aur badh rahi hai, " The evening saw a round of heated debate over the course politics has taken today. Karan Somani, the first speaker, exuded confidence and knowledge but it was Shuhail Ali Ahmed, the third speaker, for the proposition who made a strong impression on the audience. Drengo Mihi of Class 11 dazzled the audience with his skills on the piano playing first Mozart's Turkish March and then Paul de Senneville's Spring Waltz while the results were being tabulated. The results of the evening were as follows.

Subansiri- Namdang  
Kopili- Dhansiri  
Jinari- Manas  
Bhoroli- Lohit

Best Speaker- Shuhail Ali Ahmed  
Most promising- Arushi Mula  
Best Questioner- Priashi Khakholia



## CAMPUS NEWS

## QUIZZING INTERHOUSE

*Reported by Anjali Pandey, X*

On the 8th of May, 2024 The Inter House Quiz was held in the Williamson Magor Hall of The Assam Valley School. Each house was represented by four participants and the competition was divided into two rounds. The first round consisted of direct questions and the second round was a rapid-fire section where a total of ten questions were asked and the answers were to be given in a matter of 60 seconds. The questions were based on Indian Mythology, Science and Technology, Sports, Cinema, Politics and History. It was an extremely interactive session and we all came out of it, learning something new. The competition ended with Jinari-Manas emerging triumphant.

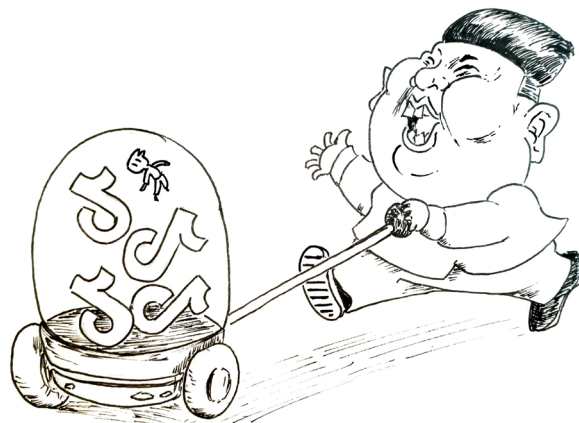
# INTERHOUSE MURALS AND POTTERY

1st: Kopili-Dhansiri  
2nd: Jinari-Manas  
3rd: Subansiri-Namdang  
4th: Bhoroli-Lohit



# THE OUTPOST

In a first after the Second World War Germany sent troops to Lithuania at the behest of the later to keep Russia away. Putin began his fifth term as President with his famous gun-slinger walk down the long corridors of the Kremlin lined with Russian oligarchs and elites. The USA tested its first AI-controlled F-16 successfully. Despite USA warning against it, Israel has moved into Rafah in its bid to wipe out Hamas and free the captives. Americans sway with Kim Jun Un's in "Divine father" making him a Tik-Tok sensation in the USA.

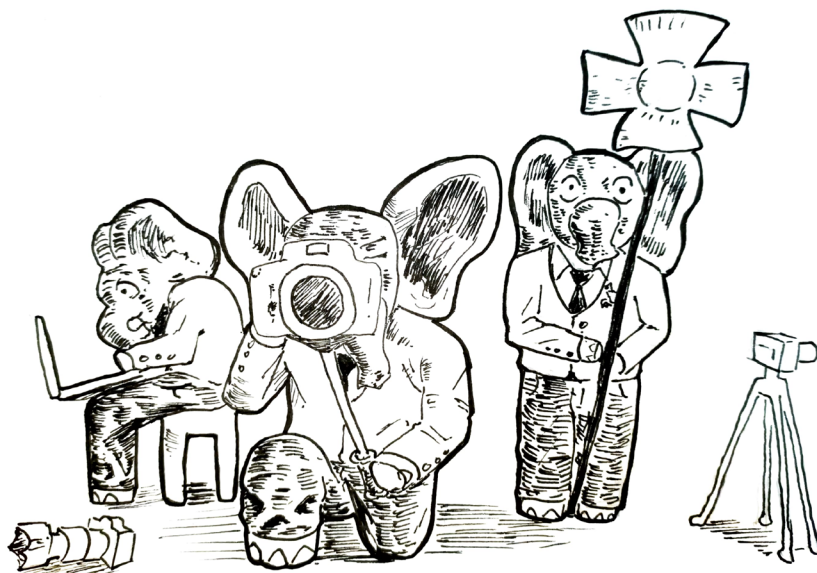


Illustrated by Mashunsing Keishing, X

## *Campus Caricature*

### **...AND ACTION!**

*Illustrated by Mashunsing Keishing, X*



## Ripple #224

-Rianna Irom, X

The Archer remembered his old  
friend well

He remembered the days they spent  
in leisure together,

And now, they stand before each  
other

Boys masquerading as men.

And now, he towers over the other,  
Gazing forlornly at his arrow buried  
in his friend's chest.

## Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "What can I able to do?" - Aaryan Kumar Shullai, XII (*Certainly not speak English.*)
2. "I'm trying to eat it without swallowing it." - Theja Rio, XII (*Discovering new types of ingestion, Lohit must be proud.*)
3. "I am the board rub." - Tivona Narzary, XII (*How convenient!*)
4. "You are speaking me english."- Abhigyan Roy Sarkar, X (*Now all you need is an eye patch and a parrot.*)
5. "You sound like such your mother."- Atoti Zhimomi, XII (*You should've been abandoned by yours.*)



## Keep It Reel!

*A friend in need "You want*

-Dr. Amit Jugran



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Design & Layout: Atoti

Illustrators: Richie, Mashunsing and Ikalu

Photography Credits: AVS Photographic Society and Hardik Poddar

Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

Publisher: The Assam Valley School, P.O. Balipara, Dist. Sonitpur, Asom-784101, India

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