

# Vasant Valley

August 2009

T O D A Y

## SCHOOL WATCH

**Science essay prize competition** : Class 6,7,8 :  
1<sup>st</sup>:Aastha Kamra 2<sup>nd</sup>: Saieesha Sethi & Ojasvi Goel.  
3<sup>rd</sup>:Indraneel Roy

Class 9-12 : 1<sup>st</sup> Meghna Mann 2<sup>nd</sup>: Advika Gupta & Arushi Kumar 3<sup>rd</sup>: Shiksha Kamra

**Inter house science quiz** : Winners were Green house (Kunal Datta, Asmeeta Das Sharma, Pooja kakkar, Noor Singh)

**Inter House Maths Quiz**: Winners were Yellow House (Akhila Khanna, Ashima Bery, Viraj Nanda & Ankita Gupta)

**Inter House Indian Music Competition**: Blue house won the competition, and green house came a close second.

**Logo Design Competition (Class 11 and 12)**  
1<sup>st</sup> Sanjana Mathur, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bhavik Singh

**Zone – 20 Tennis Tournament** : Junior Boys and Girls teams won and Senior Girls team won the 2<sup>nd</sup> place

**Zone 20 Jr Boys Badminton Tournaments** : Madhav Vohra & Rahul Lochab won the 'Runners' Up' place

**Result of Sub-Jr. Boys Badminton Ladder** :  
1<sup>st</sup> Armaan Mehta, 2<sup>nd</sup> Raahil Dhawan.

**Results of Senior Girls Badminton ladder are** :  
1<sup>st</sup> Aishwarya S Iyer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kanika Vohra

**Sub Jr Boys / Girls Table Tennis Ladder** :

Boys : 1<sup>st</sup> Samarth Agarwal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gurbaz Kher

Girls : 1<sup>st</sup> Saumya Goyal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Anya Priya Dalmia

## COUNTRY WATCH: INDIA ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Rs. 1 lakh Tata Nano** - People's Car launched

One of the India's largest car makers, Tata Motors, had brought revolution in the car industry by launching the Tata Nano-The People's Car.

**Arushi Murder Case** - The Biggest Murder Mystery

The Arushi Talwar murder case became the biggest ever murder mystery in India. The case is still unresolved.

**Stock Market Crash in India**

The year 2008 brought bad luck for investors, as the global meltdown took its toll on the Indian stock market.

**India, US sign Nuclear Deal**

India and the USA signed the historic 123 Agreement in Washington.

**Mumbai Terror Attacks: 26/11**

Although the year 2008 witnessed many terror attacks in the country, the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks shook the nation and led to a massive outrage.

**Abhinav Bindra, Sushil Kumar and Vijender win Olympic Medals Chandrayaan I - India's first ever Lunar Mission**

On October 22, 2008, India made history by sending its first ever lunar mission to the moon.

**Gays are Legal**

2009 witnessed a 100 year old rule being altered, as citizens all over the country rejoiced.

**Swine Flu hits the country**

On the 62nd year of independence, look for 62 reasons for why Vasant Valley students love India

## OUR TRYST WITH DESTINY

62 years of freedom. 62 years of joy. 62 years of emotion. 62 years of colour. 62 years. Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Sarojini Naidu, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Lal Bhadur Shastri, Bipin Chandra Pal- not to mention scores of others. All shed their ruby blood, salty sweat and sacrificed their lives to help a young, lost, innocent nation develop into our India.

In the past 62 years, India has revved her engine and roared her way toward development. As John. F. Kennedy aptly said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what *you* can do for your country'. We, the people, have tried to make a difference in various fields, be it in technology, industrial development, science, art, medicine, cinematography, or architecture. There is unity in our diversity. Our work in the various fields is original, unique and vibrant. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, India offers the richest tapestry conceivable: our very own Silicon City-Bangalore, our Nuclear Power Plants in Kaiga, the snow white Taj Mahal, the sweeping deserts in Rajasthan, the pristine beauty of Kashmir, the backwaters of Kerala. Our treasure troves in art and jewellery, and of course, our famous yet clichéd Bollywood films. The list is endless.

However, as Independence Day dawns, I ask: apart from studying about it in thick History textbooks, how often do we reflect on the fierce struggle for our independence? Why is it that only Independence Day and Republic Day make us cherish our freedom? Shouldn't our introspection go beyond 'Chak De India' or a cheesy dialogue from 'Rang De Basanti'? If you look deep inside, you will notice that the answers lie within your soul. Independence to me is 'the freedom of the soul, a perception of the mind, a feeling understood by the heart'. A combination of liberation and patriotism- which when amalgamated, is a huge responsibility.

An LSR student aptly said, "Independence in India is not only a sense of belonging, but a sense of contribution. We constitute our nation. Independence is not about our rights to be expressed but to be heard. Independence is not about smart politics, but being part of a smarter public. It is not about what we feel, but what we make of it. Independence is not about rights, but our duties toward our nation."

So we should make the most of our opportunities, before the sugar melts into goeey caramel. We should make the most of our freedom, before we are encountered by other external threats. We should value every moment and cherish our existence. Each individual has to do their bit to give back to our nation. We need to stop thinking about our own selfish motives and aid our nation at times she needs us the most. So the next time, instead of complaining or whining about nation, *think* and be a part of the solution.



Tara Sen, XI

**THE WORLD OF INDIAN MUSIC**

Let's face it: the idea of Indian music doesn't exactly get our generation bouncing off the walls. That was precisely why I was rather surprised to see the names of so many students on the boards outside the Performing Arts room before this year's Indian Music Competition. The combined efforts of the singers, instrumentalists and music teachers of Vasant Valley School led to an extremely eventful and engaging Competition. With the Junior School steps elegantly decorated with bright orange marigolds and rose petals, and everyone backstage buzzing with excitement, the competition commenced. The participants showed their loyalty to their respective houses by sporting coloured ribbons on their arms and in their hair, ready to put on a great show for the audience and the accomplished judges. Being new to the Vasant Valley family, I didn't really have an idea of what to expect from my first major cultural event in the school. But I was definitely pleasantly surprised watching the performances enthusiastically displayed by my new schoolmates.

The event began with the solo performances. One participant from each house along with an accompanist or two performed melodious *raagas*, which have been composed and written over the years, and form a vital part of Indian



classical music. The next round, which was the instrumental round, delighted me even more as some of my own classmates took the stage and put up stellar performances on the *sitar*, *tabla*, and even the flute. In the duet round, we got to hear Green House's winning performance of the acclaimed Sufi number, *Teri Deewani* along with the rest of the superb performances by the other houses. These included songs from contemporary Bollywood movies, which also helped keep the audience's interest. The duet round was followed by the much anticipated 'Group Song' round, which in my opinion was the most spectacular. Students from the entire senior school participated, sang and played popular songs from Hindi movies and current artists. The round began with red house's energetic performance of a song by the famous band, 'Euphoria'. Blue house won the round with *Junoon* from the recent hit film, 'New York', and also bagged the overall trophy in the competition, with Green finishing close behind, followed by Yellow and finally, Red House. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the help of the brilliant accompanists, both students and teachers, whose music made the songs come alive and echo in our ears even after the event had come to an end.

At the end of the day, the Indian Music Competition was a very successful event in which the participants displayed their faithfulness to their houses and their great love for music. Cheered on by their friends and teachers, they performers were encouraged them to pursue their passion for music and the arts, to recognize our vast culture and heritage, and learn a lot more about the exceptional and advanced field of Indian music.

**Noor Singh, 11-B**

**Ahsaas**

ek eesaa sabbaar Bal h0ijasaa hmaarl AaKkM0Ktl h0l0a0kna hmaara idla nahIM d0Kta. [sa sabbaar nahIlaaga nar narkr jaltohl [sa sabbaar nahIlaagaalKopasa Ct nahIMh0 Kanaa paral nahIM h0 [sa sabbaar kolaaga garal-nahIjalatoh0Aa0 sadl-nahIjanatoh0I yah sabbaar laala bai%yaalAa0 saDkahlpr basata h0 [sa sabbaar ko baccalKopasa k0C saivaQaaMnahIMh0l0a0kna ifr Bal ]nakocabrhlpr hYa najar Aata h0 [sa sabbaar kolaagaalKopasa Qana nahIMh0pr nana ja\$R h0 [sa sabbaar kopasa ikrNa nahIMh0l0a0kna ]mald ja\$R h0 [sa sabbaar nahIivad-yaalaya nahIM l0a0kna ivadyaa ja\$R h0 [sa sabbaar nahIK0al ka ma0ka nahIMl0a0kna K0al ja\$R h0 [sa sabbaar nahIKa0a nahIMh0l0a0kna ka0a ka karNa ja\$R h0 [na laagaalKopasa k0C nahIMh0l0a0kna ifr Bal ]nakopasa saba k0C h0 yah sabbaar AaSaaAa0l ka sapnaalKa sabbaar h0

**svatMta idvasa**

sana sal0ailasa ma0lhiAa Aajaad esaa banaa hmaara saalBaagya, AaAao hma saba kdma baZae0 saba imal akr svatMta idvasa manaae0 gagana sao } Baa sabasao Ac\_a itr0ghaa Pyaara sabasao nyaara, ihndistana Saana hmaara. svatMta idvasa ka hao yahl sal0l0a, hma yahab rh0lyaa d0r pd0a. "ivaSva ivaj ayal rho hmaara d0a" sal0l0anaa j a0ra kxaa 8



: "nahIlaa AarxalVa ]icat h0',  
 : sabasaphla0n0k0C Sab0al0koAqa-batanaa caah0ghal.  
 : 1 nahIlaa-jagat janaral  
 : 2 AarxalVa-iksal ek vaga-kolaagaalKoilae k0C  
 : sal0l0maQaa0rt krnaa.  
 : pa0alna kala saonahIlaaAa0lKa Saal0alVa hat0a Aa rha  
 : h0 dh0ja p0qaa, satl, Aa0 baala ivavaah jabal  
 : kp0qaaAa0lKokarNa hmaarl nahIlaaeMAagaa nahIMbaZ, patl h0I yah Saal0alVa Ca0l  
 : Avasqaa saohl Sa\$ haojaata h0 laDjkyaalKaa0pZnao0l0a0 sk0lla yaa ka0ajja jaanao  
 : Aa0 Apraa f0bal a0svayal0l0anao kl svatMta nahIMhatl h0 ]nakl A0BalaaalAaAa0lKl  
 : Avah0anaa kl jaatl h0 sanaaja kosaama0a ]nh0MApral A0l0r iCpl kl0aAa0lKaa  
 : pst0t krnao ka Avasar nahIMlalata h0  
 : [sal Saal0alVa k0karNa nahIlaaeM0krn0j0a0 vaga-nahIhl0 AarxalVa ka nalla krn0j0a0 vaga  
 : ka0Avasar pdana krnaa h0 Baarl nahIlnahIlaaAa0lAa0 pd0Yaal0Kl sal0lyaa l0a0Baga ek  
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 : yah Aqa-nahIMh00ik hna ]nh0Kaa0-saivaQaa dorhoh0I hna basa ]nh0lek ma0ka dorho  
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**naulaoBaartIya hanaopr gava-ho**

jaba Bal nallraT jait saatI hInaulaoApraoBaart pr bahit gava-hata hOI hmaara Baart Aaja dinayaa nallbahit Aagaaphda gayaa hO yah ek safla raVT hO Baart KI sanaelbahit bahadlr hIAad dGa koilae Apra javana Bal dosaktI hOI Baart ek pirEanal Aad Saaint ipya dGa hO hmaro raT/raM24 rajya k[- jaiityaa va Qana hOI IaiKna hna saba BaartIya banakr saaga rhto hOI hmaro dGa na iva&ana nallbahit ]nait KI hO AiBanava iballla, ivaSvanaaqana Aanand jaaao BaartIya hmaara isar gava-sao }Caa kr dt:ohOI TaTa, ibarllaa, Anbaanal nao Bal Baart komaana pr caar caadI Iagaael hOI naulaoBaartIya hanaopr gava-hOAad Aapkaobal hanaa caaihe @yaaIK - "saarjaha'saoAcCa ihlbatana hmaara!" jaya ihl! iryaa kazzarl palba sa

**POLLUTION**

Pollution pollution,  
Is there any solution?  
We build number of industries,  
And cut away greenery.  
The air is polluted,  
By smoke, dust, clay and pranks.  
Children breathe the air,  
That causes mothers to despair.  
Factories give out smoke,  
That makes people choke.  
Trucks are just useless,  
So why can't they be fumeless.  
Can't we end this pollution,  
Surely we can find a solution.  
*Tarunjit Singh IV- A*

**HEALTHY LIVING**

We should not eat too much junk food,  
Even if we are in a mood.  
A balanced diet we should eat,  
Vegetables, fruits, pulses, cereals and meat.  
Carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, fats and protein.  
Should be a part of our daily routine.  
Healthy body, teeth and bones.  
Good food keeps us away from groans and moans.  
*Viha Sharma IV- A*



Celebrating 62 Years of Independence

**Where Is The Rain?**

Is this the sound of thunder?  
Suddenly I began to wonder!  
Will it rain or will it not  
and here the houses go clickity clop  
Rain rain please come down  
Then the queen will wear her crown.  
*Suhasini Takkar II- C*

Hello, I'm milk,  
As soft as silk.  
Hi! I'm bread  
It's ok if you chew me,  
I don't taste like thread!  
Hah! I'm butter,  
On which you sometimes  
Need to put a shutter!  
Yay! I'm yummy food,  
Which will always  
Change your mood!  
All these are things to eat  
Which you may like  
Or dislike!  
*Pranavi Ahuja IV- C*

**What Freedom Means To Me**

Freedom is a joyful thing for me  
Because that means I can do anything and everything.  
There is no fear  
When I am free.  
That's what freedom means to me.  
*Krishnesh Puri III- B*

**Things I See in the Rain**

I got a train to go to Spain  
When I got out it started to rain.  
I reached home I was really wet  
To sing and dance I was all set.  
I saw a snail going in a lane  
Frogs jumping in the puddles in the lane  
I started jumping and fell in a drain  
Don't ask me I was in a lot of pain.  
Suddenly it stopped to rain  
It was such fun seeing things out there in the rain.  
*Naira Kothari II- C*

**JUNK FOOD**

Jujube bites, candy and drinks should be avoided  
Unless some big day avoid it  
No! Say all the parents and doctors  
Kills all the nutrients in you  
Food with lots of sugar  
Only sometimes should be eaten  
Our body weight rises  
Delicious but dangerous  
*Aditya Chopra IV - A*

I love India because it is large hearted and the best country.  
We have the best doctors and teachers in the world. We have beautiful places in India.  
People from all over the world come to see India. In India people speak many languages.  
*Ashmita Shah II- B*

## TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES

Three very privileged students of Vasant Valley School arrived at TCV School, Gopalpur, on 26<sup>th</sup> July, to a refreshing downpour of rain and a sea of unknown faces. We had stepped out of our comfort zone to understand seemingly different people and their culture, while sharing whatever little knowledge we had of our own. The result of the seven unforgettable days we spent with our Tibetan friends? An experience of a lifetime.

Our brief stay was well-planned to include everything required for a completely absorbing cultural exchange. Visits to religious institutions varying from a local church to the Sherab ling monastery and the Bajjnath Temple, topped off with the numerous talks to make us aware about these religions. We were given the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the audience that interacted with HH the Karmapa, an extremely learned Lama, only around 20 years of age- whose very being was surrounded by an aura of peace and serenity. The Yoga and Meditation sessions at 6 am every morning may have got us out of bed early, but kept us alert throughout the rest of the day. We learnt that to meditate, is not just to sit with eyes closed and sleep. In fact, it involves rigorous training of the mind. But the time we fully opened up to our peers was during the impromptu interactive session on the very relevant topic "Violence is inherent to human nature". Separated from our school mates, each of us openly expressed our views and heard others' as well. The best, though, was saved for last. The cultural programme on the last day was the perfect conclusion to the cultural exchange in the previous days. The participants from each of the 13 schools performed a song or dance that showcased their culture. We were left completely enthralled by the rhythm and energy of the Tibetan dances. So much so, that after the 'ghazal' that we sang, we performed the 'Goshe'- a Tibetan dance we had learnt the previous night with our friends. The audience, made up of the entire student body of the host school, appreciated our honest effort and thorough enjoyment while dancing, wearing their traditional 'chupa' with its matching accessories.

In that one week, we gained knowledge about Tibetan history, Tibetan culture, Buddhism, Christianity and even Hinduism. Yet, this was secondary to the understanding that we are all the same. While swapping stories, sharing experiences and having fun, we could appreciate that despite differences in our culture and lifestyle, we are all teenagers with the same problems, facing the same decisions and choices with the same insatiable curiosity. The 9<sup>th</sup> Interschool Programme organized by the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of HH the Dalai Lama sensitized us to different faiths and cultures; achieving what it set out to do and surpassing our expectations as we gained friends for life.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, the three very privileged students of Vasant Valley School departed from TCV School, Gopalpur, with the sun shining brightly overhead, but a heaviness in our hearts, as we left countless friends behind.

**Ada Grewal & Ramya Ahuja , 10 A**

### DO YOUR PART TO GREEN YOUR COUNTRY

Sitting at home watching VH1, something struck me, as if for the first time. An amazing song had just ended with a caption 'SAVE ENERGY'. Up until that moment, I had not realized that we use power-draining electronic equipment, even when they are idle.

Microsoft estimated that if we allow just one computer to sit idle, it costs \$55 to \$70 per year (the Foreign Policy Magazine multiplied those figures by a 100 million to point out that the world spends at least \$5 billion to \$7 billion every year powering inactive computers). Besides computers, your fax machines, T.Vs, stereos and even DVD players drain large amounts of energy. Microsoft EPA estimates the saving per year to power down your fax machine is \$15, copier: \$10, DVD player: \$7 TV: \$4, and Audio system: \$3. Furthermore, According to the EPA, 40 percent of all electricity used to power electronics in our homes is consumed when the equipment is turned off. That is the equivalent of the annual output of 17 power plants. In the United States of America, there are energy saving equipments which people have now begun turning to. But in India, we students can each become energy managers by simply turning off our computers and printers at night, and whenever they are not in use. When it comes to energy conservation, a little effort can take us a long way. So, be your own energy manager.

**Ashwat Sehgal**

## Which Freedom Fighter Are You?

1. The role that best suits you is that of a ...

- a) Lawyer
- b) Politician
- c) Scholar
- d) Revolutionary
- e) Thief



2. The best way to have ousted the British...

- a) By using non-violence
- b) By empowering minority communities
- c) Through civil disobedience
- d) By forming alliances with Axis Powers
- e) By putting up statues of yourself



3. According to you India's future lies in...

- a) Socialism
- b) Democracy
- c) Federalism
- d) Authoritarianism
- e) Uhhh... umm.... what's in it for me if I answer this question?



4. What personality trait do you immediately relate with?

- a) Dynamic
- b) Humble
- c) Assertive
- d) Rebellious
- e) Manipulative



5. What accessory fits you best?

- a) A well fitted waistcoat
- b) A paisley tie
- c) An elegant white & gold scarf
- d) Tortoiseshell Glasses
- e) An Ambassador (car)

6. Where would you rather live?

- a) Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh (City)
- b) Mhow, Madhya Pradesh (Extinct cantonment)
- c) Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (Township)
- d) Cuttack, Orissa (Military Camp)
- e) Wherever my voters are from (Vote Bank)



If your answers are

Mostly a : Jawahar Lal Nehru

Mostly b : B.R. Ambedkar

Mostly c : Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Mostly d : Subhash Chandra Bose

Mostly e : You are not a freedom fighter, as you have more in common with today's politicians. Good luck with that.

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

19 journalists were killed worldwide in 2009. 336 journalists were exiled world over. 60 of them were killed in crossfire. 277 were murdered in direct reprisal for their work. Of the remainder, the motives behind their murders: *undetermined*.

Young, adventurous and versed in the tools of this internet-age, a courageous new breed of journalists is following stories around the globe, and doing whatever it takes to tell them from an increasingly personalized perspective. But more often than not, their passions lead them into dangerously tricky territory-proving that this can be a hazardous undertaking.

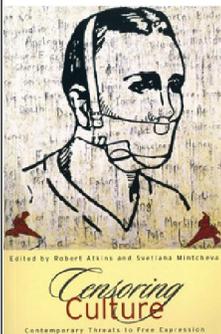
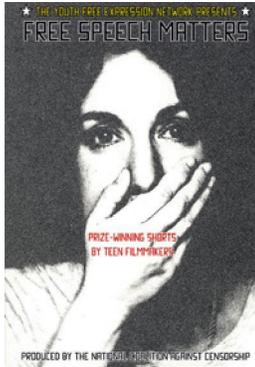
This kind of improvised, headlong journalism has given us a view of the world we wouldn't have had without it. Start up organizations, unconventional assignments, and bolder risks are just part of the parcel. But what these journalism 'newbies' lack, is the very basic perk of *protection* from their governments. And this is what lands these well-meaning storytellers in the hands of unfriendly foreign governments.

Daniel Pearl is possibly the most famous martyr for his cause. The carelessness of his country's government made him easy prey to terrorists in Pakistan; and even though his alleged murderers are behind bars, journalists aren't resting easier. What troubles them more than the atrocities of the murder, is the Pakistani government's complicity in the ordeal. Pearl's death is a lesson to all journalists: it could happen again, because as of now- *no one* is safe.

More recently, American journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee were sentenced to 12 years of hard labour in a North Korean prison, while reportedly working on a piece about North Korean refugees. The Central Court of Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea found the two guilty of entering the country illegally and carrying out 'hostile acts'. They returned safely to their country, shaken up by the 5 month long ordeal.

This raises the question: Just *how* important is freedom of press? Let's just say that without a free press, few other human rights are attainable. Information is equivalent to power- precisely the reason that many governments try to control press in order to come down hard on any kind of opposition. On their quest for transparency and reform, reporters often find themselves facing death, imprisonment or censorship. These aren't just crimes against these individuals and their families, but crimes against millions of people that are denied access to this information.

The world needs new global laws to protect journalists from killers that silence open reporting and still manage to escape. Governments need to fight against impunity. But more importantly, we, as free thinking citizens of this world, need to realise the value of our freedom and the sacrifices those 336 have made in the last decade. Without access to information, we are shackled. Without this information, we are not truly free.



Meghna Mann, xii c

## VVIQ VVIQ VVIQ VVIQ VVIQ

With Independence Day just around the corner, the Newsletter decided to join the likes of the strains of patriotic music coming from the school speakers, the harried announcements for budding solo singer extraordinaire, and the promise of ladoos and school holidays in celebrating it with style. We asked our fellow students a pertinent question for Independence Day – Just who exactly is Dr. Rajendra Prasad? Though most knew, here are a few of the odd answers we got – “Wasn't he the guy who stole kidneys in Nepal?” – Devika Agrawal



“A doctor?” - Yashwardhan Sathe  
 “A musician! Or a doctor! No I think he was a musician!” – Brea Dutt  
 “I think he was a physicist. He sounds like a physicist.” - Bhavik Singh  
 “He's a doctor. Duh.” – Vedika Berry  
 “My dentist.” - Anahita Bakshi  
 “He fought the thingy thing.. I dunno, wasn't he in Lagaan?”-Gurbani Duggal  
 “Isn't he the school doctor?” – Sanjana Jain  
 “My best friend.” – Arjun Chopra

It seems that the students of Vasant Valley still have a lot to learn about our country's past. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the first ever president of the Republic of India. He was the first lawyer to support Mahatma Gandhi in Champaran, and later helped draft the Indian Constitution. He was elected as the president of the Indian National Congress in 1939, after the resignation of Subhash Chandra Bose. Before entering politics, he taught English literature and History. Dr. Prasad even wrote and published a book called 'At The Feet of Mahatma Gandhi' in 1961. He was imprisoned between 1942 and 1945 for opposing the British World War II effort. After a term of twelve years, he retired from service and was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the highest honour a civilian can get.

Ayesha Malik

## AN INDIAN RAILWAY STATION

A bell rings as the PA announces the next arrival. The extended family of each and every passenger going on the train is present, each person having brought *mithai*, *samosas*, *parathas* or some other form of food for the journey. Amidst the crowd stand singers, singing their lungs out, hoping to be the star of a “rags-to-riches” story, while *coolies*, in their red and white uniforms run about, trying to find someone who needs help with their bags.

A mother potty trains her child on the tracks, near the father who decided to take a leak before the train comes and covers what he, like so many others, considers to be a giant urinal. Beggars, ranging in age from two to a hundred, with metal buckets with a picture of their God, plead with every passing person, promising them success in their every endeavor.



Often, if you give them food or clothing, they will throw it down and demand money with an anger that makes you wonder who said that beggars can't be choosers. Booksellers, rattrap vendors, *chaiwallahs*, and vendors who sell things picked up from unattended baggage fill up whatever gaps could have been left. And then of course are the random *junta*, men, in their twenties, with their long, oiled hair, sitting on all the benches meant for passengers and families. They sit and stare, and occasionally whistle at a passing girl, in the bubble of their youth.

Finally, there are the passengers, whose numbers, it is said, make up less than twenty percent of all those on the premises of the regular Indian railway station.

Kunal Datta

## INDEPENDENCE AROUND THE WORLD

Type the term 'independence day' in a Microsoft Word document, and a green squiggly line should immediately underline it. Unless you don't know how to spell "independence day" (then a red squiggly line will appear). If the line is green, right click the phrase (If the line is red, you are a disgrace). The only corrective alternative available will be 'Independence Day'. Independence Day *has* to be written with a capital letter. Any Independence Day *deserves* to be written with a capital letter. Any Independence Day is the holiday equivalent of a V.I.P. If Independence Day were a person, he would be flanked by men in black suits with walkie-talkies. Independence Day is *important*.

So it's only natural that it is celebrated with vigour, festivity and overwhelming patriotism all over the globe.

Celebrants in Greece enjoy an Independence Day (March 25th) coinciding with a religious celebration, the Feast of the Annunciation. The Greeks celebrate their freedom with parades and festivals, both religious and secular, while in Athens, the Feast of the Annunciation is a joyous occasion for pomp and fanfare to mark the visit of the archangel Gabriel on the Greek Orthodox calendar.



In Israel, Independence Day (*Yom Ha'atzmaut*) falls on the 5th of the Jewish month of Iyar and includes an official ceremony on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem with a speech, flag ceremony, a march and the lighting of twelve torches (which represent each of the twelve Tribes of Israel), whose beams of light illuminate the sky. Skywriting is a much loved sensation.

In Peru, local bullfights are a traditional event held on Independence Day (July 28th). Pisco Sours, the traditional brandy drink of Peru, made with grapes, and a variety of dishes prepared from the harvest- Ceviche, Picarones and Papa a la Huanacanana- add to the flavour of the celebration.

Thousands passionately celebrate the Brazilian Independence Day (September 7th). Proud citizens gather in the road celebrating with banners, balloons and streamers; carrying the national flag with dignity. People have a gala time at the all-day carnival and gather in the evening to view the spectacular fireworks in the Amazon sky.



Independence Day (September 16th) in Mexico, marks the day of the Grito de Dolores (Cry of/from Dolores)- the legendary battle cry of the Mexican War of Independence, uttered by the Roman Catholic priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. The remembrance is inaugurated with a bell-ringing re-enactment

ceremony, conducted by the President, who replicates Hidalgo's fateful cry. It is followed by a parade procession comprised of intricate floats, marching bands, traditional dancing troupes and vintage cars.

As Costa Rica developed its own style of calypso unique to that of other Caribbean islands, Calypso music concerts are commonly attended on Independence Day (September 16th). Latin American dance performances of salsa or meringue are also popular festivities.

Elsewhere, in Finland, a flag-raising tradition is performed at a central location, Tähtitorninmäki (Observatory Hill) at dawn on Independence Day (December 6th). The state then broadcasts screenings of the historical movie The Unknown Soldier, and many people mark the day by lighting two candles in their windows, a significant custom as a silent protest against Russia. The Finns celebrate in a sophisticated manner, accentuated by ballroom dancing, orchestras and chandeliers.

The French, unique as always, celebrate Bastille Day (July 14th), a personalized form of Independence Day. It is named such because it celebrates the storming of the Bastille, a famous prison during the French Revolution. With its seizing, the movement to replace a monarchy with a representative government began. On Bastille Day, La Marseillaise, the French National Anthem is sung with much gusto, and celebratory fireworks are lit- red, white, and boom!



**Mallika Pal**

## YOU KNOW YOU'RE INDIAN IF...

You know the climax to all the Bollywood movies even before they're released.

Your parents have told you at least once, "Don't forget your heritage!"

Your "farm-houses" have no signs of "farm animals".

Onions, chilli sauce, turmeric, coriander - food is incomplete without them!

You have 12+ aunts and uncles from both your mother's and your father's side. You call an older person you've never met before "Uncle" or "Aunty".

You have mastered the art of bargaining.

You say you're too cool for Hindi songs, but secretly love them.

You get very upset when airlines refuse to accept your luggage which is just 80 lbs. overweight.

You have a silly nickname like Chotu, Mithoo or Bunty.

You have been caught in traffic jams caused by floods, cows, politicians or a combination of all three.

The family car is stuffed with as many people as possible.

Your family has consulted an astrologer at least once.

Your parents have to know your friends', father's, cousin's, in-laws, and dog's first, middle and last name, as well as complete life history, before they're acceptable.

You have joined dance classes, piano classes and art classes AND given them all up!

You run away from India as soon as school finishes but then miss it to no extent.

"Open the TV!" and "Close the lights!" are accepted grammatical errors.

And lastly you know you're Indian if... the facts above made you smile.



**Suvira Chadha - 10**



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