

# SIXTH SENSE

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A Newsletter by Class 6

December 23, 2007



Copper Workshop



Madhubani Workshop

## Moving towards Mela

The Mela has been held every year in school since the first Mela in January 1999, except in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The planning for this year's Mela started its journey in August, but most of the work has happened since the end of November.

This Mela will have various stalls and events such as art stalls like batik, Madhubani, painting, carpentry, pottery, weaving, tamba and origami, many food stalls, as well as other stalls like the K-books stall and the publications and science stalls. In the theatre, film clips of old songs and some photos of school life will be shown. For this year's Mela, a walk has been planned to show the parents some eco-friendly places on campus. They will see the jhirpee irrigation, the biogas unit, the dry composting, segregation of waste and the vermi bins.

Teachers who are putting their heads together to decide the whole plan for the Mela are Nilesh sir, Neela akka and Vandan akka. One major change they had decided upon was to shift the stage to the throw ball court. Because of this, the tenth stall and the ferris wheel have had to be shifted. This change was planned because earlier, when the stage was in the centre, the sun's rays used to fall directly on the participants' and parents' faces. It was felt that with the stage on one side, it would be possible to put up a shamiana. However, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, by general consent, it was decided that the stage would remain in its usual central location despite the sun, for when the covered side stage was tried, it lacked the charm of the wide open circular stage. The stage was coated with cowdung by students of class six to give it a rural look, to prevent dust from blowing about, and to disinfect the environment and keep it clean. While the cost of construction is likely to be a little higher this year, in the long term it will be more economical, as the school is buying some of the bamboo, and will not need to buy these in future.

Children are participating in various areas, such

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**Moving towards Mela...**

### Guest appearances

Every year, the school invites some visitors who have a deep understanding in some area, so that they can share it with us and we learn something new. The beginning of the second term has brought us rich gleanings from a few visitors.

In November, *Rajesh Dalal* came to Sahyadri to attend the Teachers' Conference, and stayed on to interact with teachers and students. A trustee of the KFI, and an educator who has had a long association with the K-schools, he was the director of the Rajghat Education Centre for the last few years. He is also a member of the Sahyadri Executive Committee.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December, he addressed the school assembly, and talked about how children are brought up and educated in many different ways. He asked us if we are aware of the way we are being brought up and educated, and how this

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### Coming Together

Once a year, in one of the K-schools, the KFI holds a Teachers' Conference, at which teachers from the KFI schools gather to discuss various issues related with education and the intent of the K-schools.

In 2006, the Teachers' Conference was hosted by The Valley School. This year, the Teachers' Conference was held in Sahyadri School from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November. All the KFI schools - Rishi Valley, Rajghat Besant School, The School and The Valley School participated, along with Brockwood Park, the K-school in England and Good Earth School in Chennai. Fifty-seven guest teachers attended the conference.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> morning, Rajesh Dalal talked about self-knowledge and education. The next morning, Kabir Jaithirtha talked about the balance between order and freedom in

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**Coming Together**

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## Guest Appearances...

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is shaping us. With teachers, he discussed the intent of the school and shared his understanding of significant educational questions.

**Gieve Patel**, a poet and painter whose works are well known in India and abroad, has been conducting poetry writing workshops with Rishi Valley School for several years. Sahitya Akademi has recently published a collection of these poems, titled 'Poetry with Young People'. He was in Sahyadri from the 28<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of November.

Addressing students of classes 6 to 9, he spoke about the process by which he has helped students to write poems. He read out a few poems by master poets such as Wang Wei and Arun Kolatkar, pointing out special elements in them. He then read out students' poems based on the master poems.

**Sunil Shanbag**, well-known theatre person and an ex-parent of the school, was in Sahyadri from 28<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December. He worked with a group of students from classes 5, 6 and 7, helping them create a script and enact scenes for the play 'Pinty's Sabun', to be presented at the Mela.

A team of two from **I.I.I.T. (International Institute of Information Technology), Hyderabad** visited Sahyadri on December 9 and 10, to explore avenues for collaborating with the school in creating software and other tools that may be helpful to children with learning difficulties.

**V. Shantaram** from Rishi Valley School is expected to arrive on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to hold a birdwatching workshop.

*Reported by Jigisha and Kerfegar*

the context of the growing child. During the second session on both days, small groups met to explore these themes further. On the 18<sup>th</sup> afternoon, Suchitra Ramakumar presented a talk exploring Developmental Psychology, Counselling and Steiner's Approach to Education. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Murthy Raju talked about safe, responsible and effective use of the internet. Two panel discussions

were held, one focusing on the question 'How can K's insights be part of our approach in the classroom?' and the other on 'Contemporary culture and its impact on the child's mind'. Participants listened to a K-audio extract on all three days.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> evening, a famous classical singer, Aarti Anklikar, presented a beautiful vocal recital. The following evening, at an informal gathering, the participants presented songs, dances and poems.

Amresh sir says that holding the Teachers' Conference enable the schools to discuss important topics related with education. He feels that one or two sessions could have been planned better. The visitors were pleased with hospitality and arrangements. According to Sriparna akka, it would have been better if some of the sessions had been about academic topics, and if more senior teachers had participated in the conference.

*Reported by Tanaya and Ashwin*

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as working in the art department and workshops, participating in various cultural programmes, and giving a helping hand in decorating and manning stalls. Class nine students are contributing to the arrangements by making posters, preparing the games, decorating the stage and undertaking the final checking of materials. The teachers are in a joyous mood, and taking part willingly. Though busy and tired, they are excited. The office staff are also working very hard, doing things such as contacting vendors for food and working for the Mela construction.

In the last one and a half weeks before Mela, students in classes five and six are facing a slight problem. Many children who are participating in the cultural programme for the Mela are called away from class for rehearsals, and the remaining children don't find much to do.

The painting, batik, pottery, carpentry and

weaving exhibits for the Mela were prepared in Art classes over the first term and completed now, in December. Others were prepared in the various workshops held in December – Madhubani, tamba, kantha, origami, chocolate and science models. Here's a brief description of these activities, to help you appreciate the work behind the show:

Shashikalaji and Chandrakalaji have come to our school to conduct the *Madhubani workshop*. The workshop was held from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of December. They have earlier held workshops in Chennai, Hyderabad, Haryana and Japan. They were awarded prizes in recognition of their work in 1980, 1982 and 1993.

In the Madhubani style, paintings are filled with intricate designs, often depicting a fish, water, a lotus, water insects, the sun, a tree, Shiva, Parvati or a married couple. Originally called 'Mithila' art, this form of painting is a tradition handed down from generation to generation in Mithila, North Bihar.

In olden times, the people of Mithila drew with bamboo sticks on walls, but now they work with nibs on paper. However, they continue to use the traditional natural colours. The red colour is made using sindur, the yellow colour using fruits and the black colour using kajal. A painting called 'cobar' is done on walls.

The Madhubani workshop was attended by most students of classes 4 to 10, and was a new experience for students, who were not confident



Preparing Mela stalls

Kantha is a particular style of embroidery. In olden times in West Bengal, people embroidered quilts using Kantha. In the *Kantha workshop*, Rita akka, along with five students of class six, worked on tussar silk and cotton to make beautiful wallets and bags. The embroidery work started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December and took twenty days to finish. The stitches, according to Rita akka, need to be close to

initially because it looked tough. But once they got the hang of it, it was easy. Akshara felt it was easy because it was just like writing on paper. Students had some difficulty communicating with the Madhubani artists, as they speak only Hindi.

The *science models workshop* was conducted by Bipasha akka and Reena akka to help class 7 students learn how to make toys from simple materials. They made some kaleidoscopes, periscopes, sound making toys and friction toys. A few boys of class 6 also participated.

Pruthav and Nishval's response to the workshop was positive, because they got to do things by themselves.

About fifteen students of class 8 joined Suchandra akka in making two kinds of soap over 4-5 days in a *soap-making workshop* held in the Chemistry lab. They made about a hundred cakes of soap. The basic ingredients in both soaps were coconut oil, sesame seed oil, palm oil and castor oil. While one variety has neem and tulsi leaves, orange peel and turmeric powder, the other contains essential oils of sandalwood, lavender, lemon grass and rose, as well as rose water. These soaps contain no artificial colour or fragrance.

A four-day *tamba workshop* was attended by twenty-five students of classes 8 and 10 from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December. Each student made at least five pieces. The artisans who taught this craft are specialists from Shanivarwada and came to us through INTACH. Tamba is an old craft in which a copper sheet layered with wax is hammered to create patterns. Two different kinds of round pots and some flat plaques were created.

The *chocolate-making workshop* was conducted by Seema akka in Torna. Two kinds of chocolates were made. One kind was made using milk powder, cocoa powder, butter and sugar syrup. The other kind was made by melting ready made bars. Students drawn from classes 4 to 7 attended this workshop over two weeks. They made a hundred chocolates a day, making a thousand chocolates in all.

Class 5 had fun working together, but at times there was a big crowd, so many did not get to do anything. They had fun licking the bowl of chocolate at the end. They wanted to add nuts and chips to the chocolate, and wanted more varieties of chocolates.

Purna akka teaches *batik*. Children have made bandannas, dupattas, shirts and bags for the Mela. They have made 140 pieces, working on silk and cotton. Most children took four or five months to complete a whole piece. Most of the children in each class have made a batik piece. Once they finished their own pieces, children helped others too.

The cloth is first washed, then dried and ironed. Then a picture is drawn on it. It is then dipped into a colour and the places where that colour is to be retained are covered with wax. The cloth takes a second dipping in another colour and is again waxed wherever the second colour is to be preserved. After many colours are blocked in this way, the piece is waxed fully and dipped into black, so that when the cloth is then boiled and the wax removed, black cracks appear all over it. The piece is dried, and a beautifully colourful batik piece emerges. As the hot wax is liable to spill and burn one, it is kept at a safe distance. Batik needs lots of concentration. According to Purna akka, when children talk, they don't finish the work on time.

Archit, Nishval and Jai of class seven taught some students of classes four to seven *origami*, the art of folding paper to make models. They have created more than a hundred models for the Mela, such as stars, boxes, dice, rings and so on. Nishval said that it was difficult to explain the process to children, as they were noisy. This workshop was held in Torna during the evenings over more than two weeks.

Manipuri or five-stick loom, and hobby loom are two kinds of *weaving* taught by Ram sir. About twenty-five students, drawn from classes 4 to 10, have been involved in weaving. The thread comes from far-off Kolkata. Two types of thread – fish thread and matt finish colour thread – have been used to create bags, mobile pouches and wall hangings, to adorn the Mela in colourful hues. Ram sir feels that the work has been slowed down by the shortage of tailors.

*Pottery* is conducted by Gaurab sir and Bhanudas dada. About a hundred children across the school have been working with them for the Mela. They have made about two hundred pots and fifty sculptures, using moulding, shaping and cutting

tools. According to Gaurab sir, more juniors are involved in doing pottery than seniors. He feels that children make a lot of noise while working.

Gaurab sir and Bhanudas dada teach *ceramic pottery*, which is being done in school for the first time. More seniors than juniors are working in this area. To make a pot, the methods employed are throwing, slabbing, coiling, pinching, moulding and slip casting. Ceramic pots are non-porous. Once the china clay is given final shape, it is covered with a glaze and baked to a temperature of 1250 °C in the kiln. Quartz and silica provide the glass element for glossiness. Colour glazes are formed using metal oxides: iron oxide for red, chrome oxide for green, copper oxide for black and brown, zinc oxide for yellow, and tin and titanium for white or buff. Gaurab sir and Bhanudas dada are very satisfied with the new kiln, purchased in November 2007 from Sandeep Manjrekar in Mumbai.

*Reported by Yesho, Neeraj, Meera, Prutha, Apoorva and Aastha, with special inputs from Varshneya and Meet*

## Healing our Hilltop

For some time now, the school has been concerned about environmental issues such as waste management and the greening of the campus. This year, the school has taken rapid strides in this direction. Several people on campus, including the estate manager, teachers and students, have taken the initiative to care for our environment by putting a number of ideas into action.

### *Biogas*

In November 2007, the school started using biogas, a mixture of methane, water vapour and carbon dioxide, extracting it from waste food. The gas is used to cook food.

The biogas unit, located at the school kitchen, was bought from an NGO named ARTI (Appropriate Rural Technology Institute). The total cost of the

digester, gas holder, piping and gas stove was Rs. 65,000. It is expected that it will take three and a half years to recover the amount spent on the equipment.

Waste food is put into the digester, where it is broken down by bacteria. Then carbon dioxide, methane and water vapour are extracted to make biogas. Only the right amount of waste should be put in, or the bacteria will have hyper-acidity and will not be effective.

Biogas is a renewable resource, and by using it we reduce our consumption of natural gas, a non-renewable resource. By using biogas for cooking, we reduce the amount of money spent on natural gas. The use of biogas as fuel helps in reducing the level of greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

### *Waste Separation*

Waste separation is the process of separating waste so that it is easy to recycle. In Sahyadri, this process began in the Monsoon term, 2007-'08.

In each dormitory, the waste is separated into different categories: plastic, bio-degradables, glass, medical waste and miscellaneous items. Then the didis collect the waste and it is sent to a recycling unit in Chakan. The waste from the dining hall is divided into two categories: daily food waste (chapati, rice, dal ...) and non-citrus fruit peels. The daily food waste is used to produce biogas; the fruit peels are used for vermi-composting.

Thanks to waste separation, we will have fewer landfills. Recycling waste food gives us humus that can be used to grow plants. When our waste is recycled to meet our daily needs, we reduce our consumption of natural resources.

### *Vermiculture*

Vermiculture is the active feeding of earthworms so as to collect their casings for a nutritious compost. Vermiculture uses food waste as a resource. Earthworms are fed uncooked waste food, and in turn produce compost. The bins for vermiculture were acquired from ARTI last term.

This process began on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007. At present, Chris sir, Shino akka, Prabhat sir, Reena akka and

Nilesh sir, along with some of the middle school children, take care of the worms. Every morning, on weekdays, they collect the waste and take it in a wheelbarrow to the waste bins. They try to feed the worms enough food and to keep their bins damp, cool and shady so they feel comfortable. When the students and teachers turn the top with a rake, they should be careful because it can hurt the worms, and kill them too. Once the compost is harvested, it will be added to the soil to help plants grow.

According to Chris sir, the attitude of the children is very positive, but they are sometimes sleepy or bored. They also get fussy about the stink. Chris sir feels that teachers and students are learning day by day



Kitchen waste for earth-

the ideal conditions for the worms. They learn from their experience what didn't work, and are having a lot of fun.

### *The Jhirpee*

The 'jhirpee' is a terracotta device used for irrigation, which allows water to trickle out slowly into the soil. Jhirpee irrigation was started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 2007. Sharad sir brought the idea to Sahyadri from a village called Zada in Amravati district. It was first designed by the 'Centre of Science' for villages. Because it saves water, requires no electricity and very few labourers, the jhirpee is an ideal mode of irrigation.

Jhirpee irrigation works in a unique way. Water is stored in a tank at a height. A pipe coming out through a hole in the tank carries water to all the plants nearby. Wherever there is a plant, a jhirpee connected to the pipe drips out water slowly, giving the plant just enough water for its needs. A demonstration unit is located near the dining hall.

At present, this system is used to water plants near Amresh sir's house and Bharati akka's old house, as well as in the mango grove, the guava orchard, and behind Indrayani and Shivneri.

### *Environmental Education*

This year, EE has been introduced as a new subject for classes 6 to 10, as the Indian government has made it a compulsory subject. EE tries to show two things. First, that everything in nature is connected, including humans. Second, that our lifestyle impacts the environment and we can create positive alternatives. The EVS teachers of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, Shino akka and Reena akka respectively, try and mix EE with EVS. Classes 6 to 9 are taught by Chris sir, and the tenths by Reena akka.

## In Three Dimensions

The skyline of Sahyadri has changed. The year 2007 has seen two major buildings come up on campus: a new library and a new Medical Unit (M.U.).

### *House of Books*

The new library located behind the Indrayani dorm finds itself facing the old library. This location was chosen because it affords a good view all around and, as it is near the senior dorms, it will be more convenient for them to study in.

The present library being very small, it is difficult to display a large number of books there. In order to accommodate more books, space was needed, and so a bigger library was planned. The new library will accommodate twenty thousand books, twice as many as the old library! Neela akka, the school librarian, is happy about the new library for several reasons. She feels that newspapers and periodicals will find appropriate display space. The new building will provide a separate space for people who want to do serious reading or reference work. It will be less crowded, even if two classes come at a time. It will be free of seepage related problems that affect the present library in the monsoon. Visually pleasant, with better furniture and lighting, it will also be free of the noise and the odour of food that filters in from the dining hall at present. The new library is expected to have an audio visual section, a photocopier and a scanner.

The work started on the eighth of December 2006,

and is likely to get over at the end of March or April 2008. This building, rising to a height of twenty feet above the ground, is the tallest structure in school. Special features of the new library are its partly circular shape, and a mezzanine encircling an atrium. A triple-level building, it is being built at a cost of about twenty-five lakhs. Some delays in the construction occurred because of technical and labour related difficulties. On one occasion, since the quality of the concrete used for the columns in the new library was found to be unsatisfactory, According to Sharad sir, the masons were very good and we could not have finished the work so fast without them. While there were no problems in getting the materials till the school, the challenge was to break an existing structure and to complete the work within two months. The cost of this renovation was six lakhs. The school now plans to construct a bakery and a store room too.

### *Hey, presto!*

The stretch of land adjoining the dining hall was lying uncared for and unused until recently, though it was home to some beautiful shady trees – jacaranda, babul and others. During the October-November vacations, the school tried to make that piece of land more attractive and inviting, by making a lawn there. Sheela akka was the one who came up with this idea. The work was completed before the children arrived.

It happened step by step. The rectangular patch of land was first levelled, and a wall built surrounding it. Muram was filled into this structure, to raise the land, and was topped off with soil. The soil was then watered and rolled. Kota stone was fixed on the top of the wall to give it a better finish, and benches were placed on the platform. A row of plants now adorns the platform, and these are watered by the jhirpee irrigation system.

Navjyot feels the wall that has been built stops him from playing a game of his own, but Ram feel it's a lot of fun to play in that area. He feels there should be two swings instead of just one.

*Reported by Sakshi, Chaitanya, Mehul and Dhruv*

the columns had to be demolished and rebuilt.

Several plans for new constructions are in the pipeline. The pottery room, as well as Indrayani and Alaknanda dorms, are to be extended. Two more dorms are to come up, but that won't happen this year.

### *Get Well Sooner*

The new M.U. is located beside the old Shambhu-Kailash dorm, at a point directly overlooking the Shambhu hill and temple. It is built on low lying ground, so that it will not block the view of the Shambhu temple. It was initially supposed to be built behind the old M.U., but then it would have been too far from the dormitories.

Work on the site started on the sixth of December, 2006, and has been going on for a year now. The building is likely to be completed by late December 2007. This building is much bigger than the old M.U., and has cost the school about twenty-two lakhs already.

The old M.U. was a very congested place. Whenever there were severe outbreaks of infection, there used to be a real problem accommodating patients in the two rooms available. The new building, designed by Nachiket Patwardhan, has eight rooms. It will have a boys' ward and a girls' ward. The old M.U. accommodated only four children at a time, two in each room. However, the new M.U. can accommodate sixteen patients. That is four times more than our old M.U.!

At an early stage of construction, a few problems arose. About a dozen trees were growing at the chosen site. The school wished to save them. They were successfully transplanted to the nearby children's playground. When the workers started excavating the land, they hindered by rocks and sloping ground. Dynamite was blasted to make the surface level.

Bharati akka, the school doctor, has seen the new structure and is extremely happy. She is particularly pleased with the storage space and the fact that there will be place to keep the old medical records. Amresh sir is satisfied with the work so far. He says that problems in actually using the M.U. will only surface when the building starts getting used. Sharad sir says, "If you come to visit

the new M.U., you'll feel like falling ill!"

### *The Kitchen Story*

In April-May 2007, the school kitchen was renovated and extended. According to Amresh sir, the school had been talking about renovating the kitchen for a long time, but the plans had not got off the ground. Sir feels that it turns out more economical when several buildings are built at the same time.

Till last year, the kitchen was dark, small, unhygienic, smelly and suffocating, and the floors were cracked. The cooks say it was difficult for them to prepare special dinners due to shortage of space. One major change has been the demolition of some of the big walls, to make the kitchen more spacious. The new kitchen has better ventilation. The dadas in the kitchen no longer find it as hot as they did before. Sheela akka and Amresh sir are satisfied with the new kitchen.

The kitchen was redesigned by Anita Kulkarni. Around ten masons worked on the renovation. The school had called masons from Uttarkashi.

## **Green to Gold**

We left school green, only to come back and find it becoming golden. Flowers like the hibiscus, jasmine, aster, golden rod, bougainvillea, balsam, raat-raani and many others brighten and sweeten the campus in this golden term. The teak trees along the slopes are shedding their leaves, even as the mango tree by the kitchen flowers.

It's cold enough for us to wear a jacket in the morning. As the day moves on, it gets hotter and hotter. Towards the end of the day, the breeze is cool again. As night comes on, the weather becomes cold once more.

The 20<sup>th</sup> of November was unusually cold. Newspapers reported a cold wave that would last for about two weeks. The temperature in Pune went down as low as 8°C. According to a few

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## Green to Gold...

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teachers, the temperature in school reached a minimum of 9 or 10°C.

Here in Sahyadri you will always find people playing happily in the lap of nature. When it first began, Sahyadri School was barren, rocky and lifeless, but for a few owls. Little by little, the school became what it is now. As you read ahead, you will see how in various ways people enjoy the natural life on campus.

and poisonous insects, and to give a neat look to the residential and academic areas. The cut grass was left in heaps on the ground itself.



Walk to Bheema river

During last year's life skills programme for Class 7, students had grown vegetables in the farming field behind the old M.U. Interestingly, extra plants grew spontaneously, which had not been sown by anyone. The explanation: when seeds of fruits and vegetables have not been eaten, they find their way into the vermicompost.

Reena akka had noticed a plant outside her dorm, which was going to die. So, as a last, desperate measure, she watered it. To her surprise, she found that, after a few days, the plant flowered, like a child who is loved. Nilesh sir finds it interesting to notice the variety that exists in the same species. Prabhat sir feels that we don't need to take care of animals and plants. He says that we should just leave them alone, as they can take care of themselves. Reena akka says that we shouldn't hurt plants, as they too can feel. Chris sir feels that we should keep cows, as they can give milk. Nabha and Saumya of Class 7 feel that the school should stop making more buildings and should instead focus on taking care of species which are dying out every year.

Hope you enjoyed this glimpse into the world of nature in Sahyadri School.

*Reported by Meet, Vasundhara, Ananya, Abhigyan, Khushhal and Varshneya*

Nature walks are meant to help people explore how nature works. Prabhat sir takes a group of ten or fifteen children for nature walks on Sunday mornings at six o'clock. This time was chosen so that only interested nature-watchers would come and a noisy crowd would not be formed. Prabhat sir used to go for walks alone to observe interesting and beautiful trees, plants, animals, birds and insects and take photographs of them. Then he thought that if he took children with him it would be more fun, so he conducts nature walks, taking children near the river and on the slopes of Tiwai hill, Python Hill and Peacock hill.

This year, birdwatchers have spotted the scavenger vulture, the dove, the Tickell's blue flycatcher, the kingfisher, the mynah, the peacock, the kestrel, the drongo, the prinnia, the coucal, the ibis, the serpent eagle, the black-shouldered kite, the river tern, the red vented bulbul, the small green bee-eater, the purple rumped sunbird, the flower pecker, the Indian robin, the jungle babbler, the jungle crow, the coppersmith, the egret, the cormorant, the common iora, the munia, the oriental white eye, the shrike, the spot-billed duck and the pond heron, on or around campus. A few rare butterflies have also been spotted. The world's largest moth, the atlas moth, is found on our campus. The atlas moth can be 15 to 30 cm in size. It is reddish brown, with triangular transparent spots on it. According to Reena akka and Prabhat sir, colourful birds are easy to watch from December to March. Interesting insects are easy to spot in the monsoon term.

According to Prabhat sir, we can find over seventy species of trees, thousands of species of insects, four hundred species of moths, around 150 species of birds and thirty species of animals here on our campus. About thirty species of grass are also found on campus. One of these, the elephant grass, grows to a height of eight feet or more. It grows behind the staff room, on the way to Python Hill, behind the Art room and between the Art room and Himadri. On Astachal hill, normal tall grass had grown over the monsoon season. All this grass was cut because there was danger of snakes, fire

# A Time for Silence

The whole school assembles on the Astachal hill from 5:40 to 6:00 in the evening, to see the sunset in silence. Throughout the day, thoughts constantly come to our mind, and we are engaged in activity. Astachal provides a little space in our day for inner and outer silence, a little time for us to be still and just observe the movement within our minds.

The idea of Astachal appears to have been borrowed from Rishi Valley. The concept of wearing white clothes for Astachal was introduced in 2003. White clothes are a sign of peace and do not draw attention as colourful clothes might. Also, white clothes reflect the state of one's mind during Astachal.



Children during Astachal

Astachal hill is the highest point on campus and one can see the sunset clearly from there, which makes it suitable for the session of silence. However, these days the trees at

the edge of the hill block the view. Prabhat sir suggests that we can have Astachal on Python Hill.

Many children treat Astachal as a time to get refreshed and relaxed, to recollect all the things they have done in the day, and to observe nature. A few children are also found talking or throwing pebbles about. Some feel that it's very difficult to sit in one place, just watching the sunset. For most, it's an enriching experience.

This year Astachal was not observed in the monsoon term in order to minimize washing of clothes and reduce the spread of fungal infections.

*Reported by Sayli and Tanvai*

# The Sound of Music

Dha dhin dhin dha ... Tayyum tatta ... Sa re ga ma ... This is what our school sounds like when classes are over and we attend our hobby classes. Sitar and Bharatnatyam fill our weekends and tabla and Hindustani vocal music occupy our weekdays.

The *sitar*, an instrument of seven strings, gets its name from 'saat taar'. Girish sir, from Pune, teaches sitar in the music room. Sitar classes go on for about an hour for each batch. Five batches attend this hobby class, with eight or nine children in each batch. Of the forty-one sitar students from classes four to eight, nine are boys. In sitar classes, Girish sir teaches students alankar, ragas, and different kinds of strokes. The beginners learn strokes and notes, while other batches are learning Raga Bilaval, Bhupali or Durga. Girish sir says he teaches this hobby class because he likes children and wants to make people aware of this particular instrument.

*Bharat Natyam* is a classical dance form that originated in Tamil Nadu. If you go past the Junior Audi on a Sunday afternoon, you can see children dancing. The class goes on for about an hour. Six batches attend this class, with a maximum of twelve children in any one batch. Interestingly, thirteen boys from classes four and five have joined this hobby class. Adavus and compositions like Alarippu, Jatiswaram and so on are taught in Bharat Natyam classes. Juee akka, who is passionate about Bharat Natyam, feels everyone enjoys learning it, except a few.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, Telang sir teaches *tabla* in the pre-school classroom, devoting half an hour to each batch. Four batches attend the class, with six or seven students in each batch. Tukdas, kaidas and taals like Roopak are taught. Telang sir wants people to know about this brilliant instrument, so he enjoys taking this hobby class.

*Hindustani vocal music* hobby classes were held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday last term. Four boys and fourteen girls across classes five to seven had opted for this hobby class. Nikhil sir taught them alankars, Raga Bhupali, Vrindavani Sarang, Kafi and Bhimpalasi. In the second term, he plans to start the hobby class after the Mela, and wishes to teach Raga Bhagyashree, Desh, Bihag, Durga and Khamaj. He teaches alankars, alaps and ragas in the music room. He says that he feels great satisfaction when he finds students learning and singing correctly. He wants to teach music to children so that the tradition continues.

*Reported by Abanti and Manogjna, with special inputs from Sakshi and Ananya*

## Food Facts

Have you ever wondered where we get our food from and how it is prepared?

We all know that we get our food from the dining hall, but do we know where the dining hall gets the materials to make our food from? We get our milk from Kharde, one of the nearby villages. Our fruits and vegetables come from New Bombay, twice in a week. Our supply of provisions such as wheat and other grains comes from Wada and Rajgurunagar. We have been getting our materials from these sources for one year now. Before that, we used to get our food from other sources, but we were not happy with the quality of food. The oil used in the kitchen is refined sunflower oil.

Sheela akka and the dining hall committee decide the menu, which is planned on a monthly basis. The school would like to use organically grown food, but it is much more expensive. There is a plan to use organic rice, if it is not too expensive.

The dining hall serves four meals, catering to about 325 or 350 people at each meal. This term Sheela akka is experimenting with quite a few new recipes, as she wants children to eat more vegetables. Each day, approximately 25 kgs of food is wasted. The cooks say that they enjoy cooking our meals.

Some students think that the food is good and has improved, and some think that it should improve still more. According to Amresh sir, the food has become better than before and now there is more variety of food items. He feels that some food items can be improved, specifically the new peanut butter which is served with the bread, and the pasta served on Saturdays.

*Reported by Taherali and Karan*

## In-side Story

'Hey dude!' are the words most boys are using to call each other. If you are going to blow up any minute, you'll find people saying 'Cool it!' or 'Chill'. 'Hate' is a very strong word, but is used frequently. If you are irritating people, you're sure to hear 'Shut up!' Apart from common expletives such as 'freak' or 'hell', a word that's much

overused is 'like'. People insert 'like' after every four words, using it like a crutch when they speak.

Most feet are clad in Nike, Adidas or Reebok sports shoes. All Stars is another brand that is slowly becoming common among boys. New Balance, ACG and Sparx are the popular brands of floaters right now. Flipflops are what many girls seem to be wearing these days. Most house slippers are bought in Bata.

Kurta and jeans are what students wear most in Sahyadri. Jeans are from Lee, Lee Cooper, Levi's and Pepe. Many boys wear low pants, and junior boys and girls wear capris or full pants. Senior boys and girls wear only full pants. Most kurtas are from Cottons and Fab India. On weekends, girls and boys wear T-shirts with pants or jeans. Girls from class nine have been seen wearing a lot of striped T-shirts. For sports, most people have clothes from Westside, Nike and Reebok. Girls wear earrings, bracelets and necklaces.

Teenagers listen to rock, heavy metal, Metallica, Linkin Park, Bollywood songs and pop music. The music varies, but everyone listens to it.

Different hair-dos are in evidence. Boys sport side flicks, spikes and mohawk styles; girls have ponytails and 'latts'. Most girls use scrunchies to tie their hair.

*Reported by Abhigyan and Ananya*

## At the Nets

As the monsoon term was rainy and muddy, attendance on the games field was thin. Most students stayed in the dorm, playing indoor games, or took walks. December is cool and sunny, and students flock to the playing fields. One can see them out on the football, cricket, hockey, and softball fields as well as the basketball, volleyball, throwball and handball courts. As usual, we've had two changes in the schedule in the first three weeks of term! The junior games time was shifted from 2:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. because of the cricket camp, and after the camp, it has shifted back to 2 p.m.

As Akshata akka is the only games teacher these days, she finds it very difficult to handle the children by herself. She feels students are more keen to play matches than to learn and work hard. She is always wandering around the fields, whistling and trying her best to get all the children to start playing the games.

### *Cricket Camp and Matches*

A cricket camp is held every year during the second term. This year, the cricket camp started a bit late, as the coaches, Praveen Povar sir, Chetan Kurandale sir and Shreyas Jhadav sir had a match. The camp was held from the 29<sup>th</sup> of November to the 16<sup>th</sup> of December. Sixty-eight boys and twenty-one girls attended the camp this time.

From 6:30 to 7:05 a.m., juniors as well as seniors would do fitness exercises and catching practice. In the afternoons, juniors played matches from 2 to 3 p.m.; seniors practised nets or played matches from 3:00 to 3:45 p.m. While students played, the coaches would help students with their batting, bowling and fielding skills.

The coaches faced difficulties in working with the children, as the students were noisy and would not listen to them. The coaches were forced to shout at the students at times. The junior students say that the coaches are fine, but one of them is rude sometimes. Senior students find the coaches good, but had found last year's coaches more satisfying.

The most exciting part about the weekends are the cricket matches. We have had four cricket matches so far this term.

The first match was played in school between the end of the first innings, sharp words flew back and forth between the two teams. The Deccan Gymkhana team scored 177 runs for 6 wickets. Sahyadri did not bat very well in the first of the innings, losing on their run rate, and later it became very difficult to catch up with the required run rate. Sahyadri was defeated by the Deccan Gymkhana team.



During a cricket match

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### **At the Nets...**

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class 9 boys and the class 10 boys. The Tenth were the first to bat, and by the end of their innings they had scored 163 runs. In the second innings, the Tenth started getting furious when they found the Ninth were very close to victory. Parth Savla, the captain of the Tenth, was given a last warning. When the match was over, the score sheet showed a lot of confusion and the match was declared a draw.

The Ninth felt that the Tenth were not accepting their defeat as they had lost to their juniors. The Tenth felt that the Ninth were excited and so did not mark the runs properly on the score sheet. For this reason, some of the Tenth felt that the Ninth had been unfair.

The second match was played between the Sahyadri junior cricket team and the Deccan junior team, at Sahyadri. The Deccan team were the first to bat. The balls bowled by Arjun for Sahyadri were spot on. He took three wickets and Dhruv and Abhigyan took the other two. At the end of the innings, Deccan Gymkhana had scored 157 runs for five wickets. During the second innings, the openers played for a long time, scoring many runs. The Sahyadri team were successful in making 158 runs, defeating Deccan Gymkhana.

The Sahyadri junior cricket team felt that their bowling hadn't been good enough, as half of the runs made by Deccan were scored by wides. They also felt that playing inter-school matches is fun.

The third match was held on the same day as the second match, but was held in Pune on the grounds of Vikhe Patil School. The match was played between the Sahyadri senior cricket team and the Vikhe Patil senior team. The Vikhe Patil team were the first to bat, scoring 164 runs for four wickets. In the second innings, Sahyadri batted, scoring 165 to win the match. This match was not a fair contest, as Vikhe Patil had an under-13 team, whereas Sahyadri had an under-15 team.

The fourth match was held between the Sahyadri senior cricket team and the Deccan Gymkhana senior cricket team on the Sahyadri grounds. The toss was won by Sahyadri, who chose to bowl and field for the first innings. Before the match, it seemed as if it was going to be a tough competition. The first innings started off at 10:00 a.m. in a friendly manner, but towards the

## Yoga

Yoga classes began in Sahyadri in January 2006, when Vinayak sir joined the school. Until June 2007, only classes 4 to 7 attended yoga. In June 2007, classes 8 and 9 too joined yoga classes. Being unaffected by rainy weather, Yoga classes have happened regularly in the mornings this year. The juniors practise asanas and simple breathing exercises; the seniors do both asanas and pranayama.

Vinayak sir enjoys teaching the children and particularly enjoys facing the challenge of helping students achieve postures they find difficult when doing different asanas. While the juniors have always enjoyed yoga, Vinayak sir finds the ninths also very punctual this term. However, he finds that this term the eighths are quite unpunctual for yoga classes.

*Reported by Rohan P., Lohit, Anuj and Rohan U.*

## Coming up

A school, like a beehive, is always abuzz with activity. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, when we stepped into school, we were sucked into the whirlpool of preparations for Mela. But even after the Mela, there is a lot to look forward to.

Every year, the eighths go from dorm to dorm singing Christmas carols, and receive small gifts from the dorm children. This term, *Christmas* will not be as exciting and colourful, because the Mela is being held earlier than usual and everyone is busy getting ready for it. Still, the eighths will decide the menu for a special dinner on Christmas, and do the decorations in the dining hall.

Last year, we didn't have *Sports Day*. This year, it will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of January, 2008. The usual athletic events like runs, jumps and throws will feature this year too. Each class will wear T-shirts of a different colour. Food stalls on the occasion will serve light snacks and juice. The games committee will decide all the arrangements. The *Cross Country* will happen on 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> January, and may have up to five levels. The distance to be covered for the highest level run is likely to be over 10 km.

On *Makar Sankranti*, which is celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> January, classes will be held only till lunch. After lunch, the whole school will fly kites near the throwball court.

We also look forward to the *Farewell* for Class 10 in February, for which Class 9 will plan the programme.

*Reported by Irikaa and Bhavya*



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