



CHOIZANIA

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
SESSION 2023-24

EDITION 1



BACK TO SCHOOL	1
World Environment Day 2023	2 - 5
READING WEEK	6 - 12
STORIES & POEMS	13 - 15
SUBJECT ACTIVITIES	16 - 19
LET'S LEARN FRENCH & SPANISH	20
RIDDLES	21
EXPRESSIONS	22
A VIEW FROM THE TOP	23 -26



Back to School



And just like that, the summer vacation was over. A mix of emotions swelled within me as I packed my school bag for the first time in two months! I was excited to see my friends and be back at school, but at the same time, I was reminiscing over the amazing summer that had just gone by.

When I entered the doors of the main school, there was an explosion of happy chatter as friends reunited with one another. As I walked up the stairs to my new class, I was met with lots of friendly smiles from old classmates. When I got to my floor, the thrill in the air was undeniable. Everyone was excited to get to know each other, and to see who their teachers would be. Our class teacher came and introduced herself, and we all headed out for the first school assembly of the year.

I'm always amazed by the talent around me, the performances almost never fail to amaze! The dance performance for the morning, was beautifully choreographed, and the costumes were colorful and vibrant. The senior school band was rocking as usual! We were then introduced to our new principal, Ma'am Rachel. Ma'am Rachel was excited to be back with us at Tripunithura. I wish her all the very best, and am rooting for a great year ahead.

Back in class, we tried to get to know each other better through icebreakers suggested by our class teacher. Soon we heard the familiar ring of the break bell through the P.A. system. There was a mass exodus from my class as everyone raced into the hallway in eagerness to meet friends. It was great meeting up with our old teachers and classmates.

Over the last few days, I've met most of my teachers. I'm so happy to learn again from some of the amazing teachers who have thought me in the past, and excited to learn from my new teachers.

I've started the year on a high note, and really look forward to the coming days and months of learning exciting new things, overcoming challenges, making new friends and having an awesome and exciting school year!



By Grace Vally, 8G

Fostering Eco-consciousness for a Sustainable Future: Empowering Students on World Environment Day

“The environment is where creativity thrives, ideas flourish and solutions emerge”



World Environment Day, observed annually on June 5th, served as a reminder of our responsibility to protect and preserve the environment. We explored various ways in which the Middle School could actively engage students in meaningful activities on World Environment Day, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship.

The school organized numerous activities in an effective way to educate students about pressing environmental issues. Topics like climate change, biodiversity, beat plastic pollution and sustainable living were discussed, providing students with a broader understanding of the challenges we face. The sessions held encouraged questions, discussions, and brainstorming for potential solutions.

Students of Grade 6 avidly took the initiative in hands-on sustainability projects that instilled a sense of responsibility and action. We organized activities that were centered on the theme, 'Beat Plastic Pollution'. They designed informative posters and created articles that were best out of waste. Also, the students joined hands together and took an oath for the preservation of the environment as responsible future progeny.



Students of Grade 7 designed self-explanatory posters, created paper pen stands, made wind chimes with coloured papers that displayed slogans, played an environmentally responsible game of charades, watched a video and listened to a song on the theme, 'Beat Plastic Pollution'. They also participated in the activity titled, 'My Earth Is In My Hands', in which students drew pictures of Earth, prepared a cut out of their handprints and created an alluring yet enlightening depiction.



Students of Grade 8 prepared seed pens and pledged to reuse, reduce and recycle available resources. Students were encouraged to carry food in steel containers. These initiatives allowed students to actively participate in sustainable practices, learn about resource management which also proved to be multi-disciplinary. The visual displays were exhibited in the school premises, nurturing a sense of responsibility and appreciation for nature.



By involving students in hands-on projects, the school could enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, all while instilling a deep sense of environmental responsibility.



Together, we emphatically embraced the green revolution and made a difference!



Art Integrated Activities

“Let Us Nurture Nature to Have a Nurturing Future”

The Environment Day celebrations served as an opportune moment to introduce sustainable initiatives within the school. These initiatives included reducing paper usage, implementing energy-saving measures such as turning off lights and electronic devices when not in use and promoting the use of reusable water bottles and lunch boxes. Students were encouraged to embrace these sustainable practices both within the school premises and in their daily lives.

In line with the Environment Day theme, various eco-friendly subject oriented activities were held to engage students creatively. Students showcased their talents while highlighting the inevitability of the day.

Social Science - My Earth in my Hands (Grade 6)



Students drew pictures of Earth, prepared a cut out of their handprints and stuck it on the picture of the Earth. They wrote slogans on how to conserve our Earth on the cut out.

Making Wind Chimes (Grade 7)



Students made wind chimes with colour papers, cotton etc. and stuck paper strips on it. They wrote the ways on how to conserve our Earth on the strips.

How to make a Seed Pen? (Grade 8)



Students prepared seed pens and pledged to reuse, reduce and recycle the available resources.

Science - Biology

Poster Making on the theme - Beat Plastic Pollution

The theme for World Environment Day on 5 June 2023 focussed on solutions to plastic pollution under the campaign #Beat Plastic Pollution. The world is being inundated by plastic. More than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year, half of which is designed to be used only once.

Middle school students participated in various activities planned out for them. The Department of Science/Biology began the new academic session by making them aware of this year's theme and showing them videos related to the same. Brainstorming was done on various environmental issues (Brahmapuram recycling plant firebreak), importance of reduce and recycle etc. Children enjoyed a Hindi song called tik tik plastic based on the theme.



Hindi & French - Poster Making & Slogan Writing



Poster making, slogan writing and discussion on the theme of Environment Preservation and Protection was carried out in Grades 6, 7 and 8 related to the theme of the day.



Posters were designed on the theme of Environment Conservation and discussions were carried out in order to make students aware of the importance of protecting our environment.

Overall, the art integrated multidisciplinary activities during Environment Day Celebrations were a tremendous success in raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting sustainable practices. The event fostered a sense of responsibility and inspired our students to become active agents of change.

READING WEEK REPORT

2023-24



In an era dominated by screens and fleeting distractions, reading endures as an enduring testament to the power of the written word and the profound impact it can have on our lives. Acknowledging the importance of reading, CBSE announced the 28th National Reading Day to be celebrated on 19th June 2023 and the following week, a Celebration of the 'Reading Week'.

The book mania swept through the hallways of The Choice Middle School from 20th June as the Middle School Reading Week Celebrations got in motion. The celebrations kick started with the class-wise and subject-wise activities from the different departments.

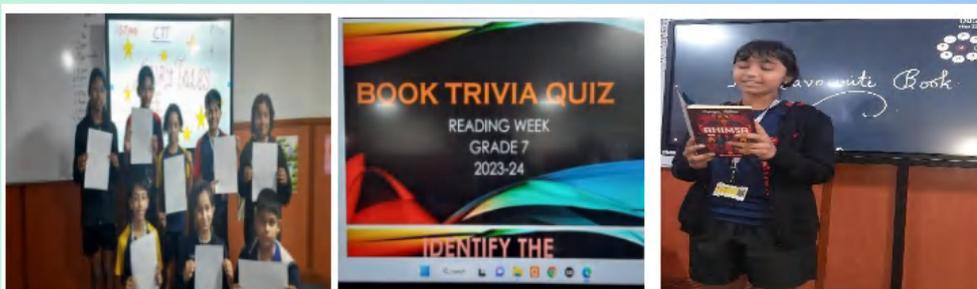
It was a euphoric and merry week for the children of Grades 6 to 8, as they immersed themselves in a plethora of activities to develop an understanding of how books can entertain and inspire all of us. They got a chance to portray their confident selves by dressing themselves up as their favourite character, narrating situations and delivering what they gained from books.



The students of Grade 8 read the abridged version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the first two chapters of Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Letters from a Father to His Daughter' and to illustrate striking incidents from the same. The students engrossed themselves in the comic strip designing activity wherein they articulated and showcased key elements.



The scholars of Grade 7 found profound joy in countless ways through the activities conducted during the Reading Week. They became invested in the lives of the characters, their triumphs and struggles through the activity titled 'A Fresh Take on a Traditional Fairy Tale' in which they reimagined a fairy tale and rewrote it with a twist. 'The Book Trivia Quiz' revealed the biggest book geeks competing with each other to ace the quiz on their favourite reading material.



Puppet Show - Igniting Imagination

One of the highlights of Reading Week in Grade 6 was the students' puppet show. Each student had the opportunity to create their own puppet show based on a book they had read. Students worked diligently to design puppets, develop scripts, and bring the story to life in front of their classmates. The puppet shows not only enhanced their reading comprehension skills but also nurtured their creativity and presentation abilities.





Favourite Book Cover Page - Unleashing Artistic Expression

Another exciting activity during Reading Week was the creation of cover pages for students' favorite books. Each student was encouraged to select their most cherished book and design a captivating cover page to represent it. The display of the cover pages created a vibrant atmosphere that sparked conversations about different genres and authors.



Character Dress Up - Bringing Literature to Life

Imagination took centre stage as students enthusiastically participated in the character dress-up activity. From superheroes to historical figures, the section of Grade 6 was filled with a diverse range of characters, creating a magical ambiance that celebrated the power of literature.



Story Narration - Sharing Tales, Inspiring Others

Reading Week concluded with a heart-warming activity: story narration. Students were invited to share their favorite stories with their classmates and teachers. This activity not only fostered a love for storytelling but also improved students' communication and listening skills. It was a beautiful moment of sharing, inspiring others with the joy of reading, and showcasing the power of storytelling.

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Department focussed on activities which proved to be a valuable initiative for enhancing students' mathematical literacy and vocabulary. Vocabulary Games and Quizzes were organized to make the learning process more engaging.



SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Social Science Department ushered in activities to discover amazing facts about Chhattisgarh. This helped them to learn about their physical features, cultural landscapes, and environmental challenges. The students embraced a holistic perspective in the subject to develop a deep appreciation for the diversity and interconnectedness of the Earth's landscapes and societies.



SCIENCE

The Science Department initiated activities encouraging students to dive into scientific research articles and journals to gain an understanding of living organisms. The students got the chance to explore recent advancements, discoveries, and breakthroughs in the scientific world. They gained insights to deepen their understanding of the fundamental principles and concepts of the physical world.



LANGUAGES

A video of a small Sanskrit story called चतुरः वृद्धः (The Wise Old Man) was shown. The students collated words together to create a Sanskrit-English dictionary. The students enjoyed the beauty and profound wisdom that Sanskrit has to offer.



To explore the rich literary and cultural heritage of the Malayalam language the students of Grade 6 read an interesting story in Malayalam after which they prepared a dictionary using familiar words. This activity helped them expand their vocabulary and deepen their understanding of Malayalam literature.

A Malayalam magazine called 'Balabhumi' was given to each of the students of Grade 7. The children dedicated time to reviewing and presenting the stories that they had read, in the form of pictures in their book.

The children of Grade 8 on the other hand prepared a note on a story that they had read from 'Balarama'. This helped them to strengthen their grasp of the language's structure and expand their vocabulary.



The students were introduced to diverse writing styles to develop their overall proficiency in the Hindi language. The students read a magazine named 'Champak' to make their reading time enjoyable. The students illustrated the vivid imagery of the poem in the form of pictures in their notebook. The teachers shared the heartwarming tale of a child named Pinky with the students of Grade 7, after which the students illustrated what they had read. Grade 8 students read and discussed different stories in the class following it up with a pictorial representation of it.



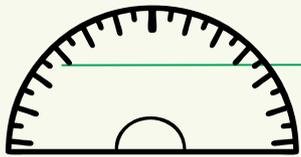
The students covered various topics such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural aspects of the French-speaking world through the reading week activities. The students of Grade 6 enjoyed reading 'L'oiseau vol', a poem that sounded absolutely beautiful in French. The poem had many different vowel sounds that contributed to the sense of flowing musicality. The students of Grade 7 dived into the beauty of the language through the reading of a short story in which a mother teaches her daughter good habits. The Grade 8 students read moral stories with animals as characters in the story. They learnt the identification of new text, verbs, tenses and different grammar functions in sentences from the stories.

The Reading week activities in English focussed on the value of critical reading and effective writing. The students of Grade 6 to 8 selected poems which brought out the richness of literature, past and present. The students of Grade 6 delved into a deeper analysis of poems written by Robert Frost. They illustrated his poems in their English notebook. Grade 7 poetry enthusiasts read and illustrated an inspirational poem which helped them change their perspective and way of thinking. The students of Grade 8 got a free hand to express ideas without constraints. They selected free verse poems which did not tie them to a specific form and gave them room to experiment with structure. The illustration of such poems gave them a feel of the work of contemporary poets.

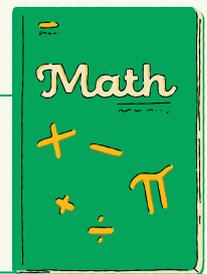


The Reading Week was directed at infusing reading for pleasure in the students from a young age and the activities were a wonderful way to carry on the celebrations. The gusto and fervour among students could be witnessed through their active participation throughout this week of celebrations, and it was a delight to see that the week went in a smooth manner as the promising, young minds participated in different activities with great interest and enthusiasm.





GEOMETRY



Maths has many branches, one is Geometry
Which deals with lines and shapes all around
we see.

There are squares, circles and even more
Let us see a few examples, there are mainly
four.

First is the point, only a dot

But in many places, we can find a lot.

Stars as we know are like the shape of a ball

But from afar are like little dots, very tiny and
small.

Lines are a sequence of dots that stretch far
and wide

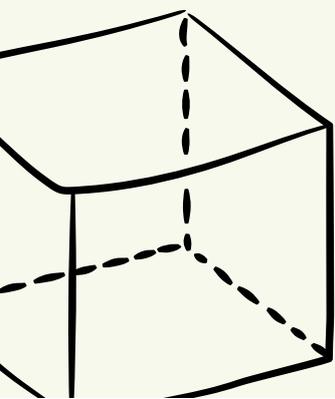
There are no endpoints on either side,

A Line segment is only a piece of a line

Which we can measure and is just like twine.

Ray has a start but has no end

Just like this poem, start over and say it again.



Jaden Skariah V11 F



MAYA CHARLOTTE & THE CARAMEL CAT

The city of Herelde, Mation Islands was a place very far away. It was small, but mighty. There lived all sorts of creatures such as dogs, cats, lions, cheetahs, and even teeny critters such as ants, spiders, and ladybugs. They all lived in unison with humans.

“Ringggggg! Ringggggggg! Ringggggggg!” The bell howled as everyone rushed to their classes.

Hello, there! My name is Maya-Charlotte, or as people call me, Maya. It is my first day at university here in Bottle-Eye. I have taken an art major to study more about art here.

Although it's my first time ever stepping foot into BEU (Bottle-Eye University), I have heard crazy stories of bizarre things that have happened here. I'm currently in my homeroom, sitting through Headmistress Annie Ladybug's boring lecture. I'm here, scribbling far off to another land in my journal.



By: Sarah Celine Anoop, VI F



I graduated top of my high school far off on the East Coast. Being at Bottle-Eye is equivalent to your Harvard. Professor Caramele, more popularly known as Professor Caramel Cat, is a biology professor here at Bottle-Eye. He has been with the school since the beginning. Many people presume that his ever-lasting journey with Bottle-Eye is what has caused him to become so grumpy and unlikeable. BEU is widely known for having Professor Caramel Cat. Rumours say that Professor Caramel Cat was once the king of a long lost country, was held captive and bought to teach BEU students the subject "Biology"- his weakness.

‘Ringggggggggggggggggg!!!

Ringggggggggggggggggg!!!’ The bell cried as it indicated Professor Caramel Cat's class. Fear was stricken in all the hearts of the new freshmen batch of BEU. His horrifying voice was now in the minds of everyone. Maya started writing in her journal. “Now's the time no one has been waiting for-Professor Caramel Cat's Biology Class.” She wrote with fear.

45 minutes later and Maya had never been to such an amazing class. “Huh. Rumours aren't true. I'm looking forward to bio tomorrow.”



The Three Number Brothers

Once there were three brothers whose names were Positive, Zero and Negative. They lived in the number kingdom. Zero, the middle one was always made fun of by Negative his younger brother for having no value.

One day Zero said to his brothers that he was leaving the number kingdom because he didn't have any value.

Then Positive, the elder one suggested that if he and Negative could collide together, they would be like Zero.

Zero was surprised. He exclaimed, "I want to make an army!" "Sorry Zero, but there can be only one hero and that's you".



Joseph Jineesh V99 A

ഓലക്കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളും, ഓമനക്കുട്ടികളും

മഴയും, വെയിലും കണ്ണുപൊത്തിക്കളിക്കുന്ന കേരളത്തിന്റെ കാലവർഷം... ഈ ഇടവപ്പാതിക്കാലത്ത് പോയ്സ് സ്കൂളിലെ ആറാം ക്ലാസ് മലയാളം വിദ്യാർത്ഥികൾ കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളുടെ അത്ഭുത ലോകത്തേക്കൊരു യാത്ര നടത്തി. വെറും കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളല്ല, കേരവൃക്ഷങ്ങളുടെ സ്വന്തം നാടായ കേരളത്തിന്റെ കല്പവൃക്ഷമായ തെങ്ങിന്റെ ഓല കൊണ്ട് ഉണ്ടാക്കിയ കളിപ്പാട്ടലോകത്തേക്ക് ! ശ്രീമതി ബാലാമണിയമ്മ എഴുതിയ ' ബാലലീല' എന്ന കവിതയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടാണ് കുട്ടികൾ തെങ്ങോല കൊണ്ടും, പേപ്പർ കൊണ്ടും പല തരം കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാക്കിയത്. പന്ത്, കാറ്റാടി,പീപ്പി,പമ്പരം, മീൻ, വാച്ച്, കണ്ണട, ഓലപ്പാമ്പ്, മാല, മോതിരം തുടങ്ങി പല തരത്തിലുള്ള കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് അന്നേ ദിവസം ക്ലാസ് നിറഞ്ഞു. കുട്ടികളുടെ കൂടെ കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കാൻ കുടുമ്പോൾ തങ്ങൾ സ്വന്തം ബാല്യത്തിലേക്കൊരു തിരിച്ചു പോക്കിലായിരുന്നെന്നു കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾ പലരും പറയുകയുണ്ടായി. ഓലക്കളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളുടെ ഈ പഠന പ്രവർത്തനം കുട്ടികളും, കുടുംബവും, അധ്യാപകരും ഒരുപോലെ ആസ്വദിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നായി മാറി. കമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ഗെയിമുകളുടെ ലോകം മാത്രമല്ല, പ്രകൃതി എന്ന മഹാപുസ്തകത്തിന്റെ താളുകളും തങ്ങൾക്ക് ഏറെ പ്രിയപ്പെട്ടതാണെന്നു കുട്ടികൾ തെളിയിച്ചു.



AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH – AMAZING LARGE NUMBER FACTS

Students of Grade 6 were asked to gather information on Amazing Large Number Facts. By engaging in this activity, students developed a deeper understanding of large numbers, including their magnitude, place value and properties. They also enhanced their critical thinking skills by analyzing patterns and relationships among large numbers.



Colour, Colour, What Colour Do You See?! – Fun with Indicators

The colours of various substances around us depend on the chemicals that they are made of. An indicator shows or points out something to you. A smile can be an indicator that you are happy. Chemicals can indicate something by changing the colours of substances when they interact with them.

As part of the lesson, 'Acids, Bases & Salts', our Grade 7 students had a fun-filled, hands-on activity that showed how colour changes with indicators can help identify two kinds of chemicals called acids and bases.

Students enthusiastically brought easily available substances from their homes such as turmeric, curd, lemon, vinegar, detergent, baking soda etc. They observed and recorded the colour changes in these substances with indicators.

This activity engaged their visual and tactile senses, making the learning experience more concrete and memorable. It also deepened their understanding by connecting theoretical concepts to real-world applications.





न्यायमन्त्री

“विविधता में एकता” इस सन्देश को मन में रखते हुए कक्षा सात के छात्रों ने न्यायमन्त्री अध्याय पर आधारित “ पगड़ी “ बाँधना सीखा, जो उत्तर भारत में अभिमान तथा मान- सम्मान का प्रतीक है | उसे किस प्रकार अलग - अलग राज्यों में बाँधी जाती है उन तरीकों को सीखकर कक्षा में प्रस्तुत किया | छात्रों ने बड़े ही हर्ष उल्लास के साथ पगड़ी को बाँधना सीखा। इसके साथ ही और एक गतिविधि न्यायमन्त्री पर आधारित अध्याय में बच्चों ने विभिन्न मंत्रियों की भूमिका निभाई। उन्होंने रक्षा मंत्री, गृह मंत्री, पर्यटन मंत्री, शिक्षा मंत्री और वित्त मंत्री की भूमिका निभाई। छात्र हमारे देश के विभिन्न मंत्रियों की वेशभूषा में आए। छात्रों ने कुछ बातें भी कही। संवाद उनकी भूमिकाओं से संबंधित था। छात्रों को हमारे देश के मंत्रियों के नाम और उनके द्वारा निभाई जाने वाली विभिन्न भूमिकाओं के बारे में भी पता चला।





*Spanish
words*

A stylized illustration of a flamenco dancer in a red dress with a ruffled skirt, performing a dance move.

biblioteca

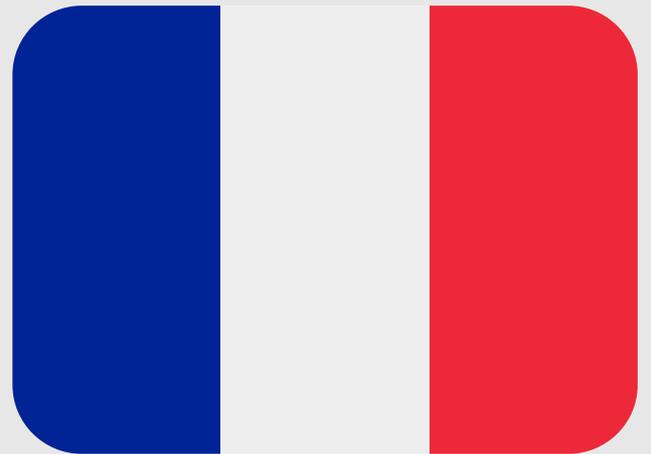
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Library

Escuela

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school



*French
words*



bonjour à tous

/boon-jur-AA tuz/

Good Morning Everyone

crois en toi

/krwa-a-twa

Believe in yourself

Riddles

I am full of holes but still holds water.
What am I?

**WHAT 2 THINGS
CAN YOU NEVER EAT FOR
BREAKFAST?**



കടങ്കഥച്ചെപ്പ്
കാടു വെട്ടി
പാറ കണ്ടു
പാറവെട്ടി
വെള്ളി കണ്ടു
വെള്ളി വെട്ടി
വെള്ളം കണ്ടു
പറയൂ ഞാനാര് ?

Can You Solve the Riddle?

What number is odd until you take away one letter; then it becomes even?

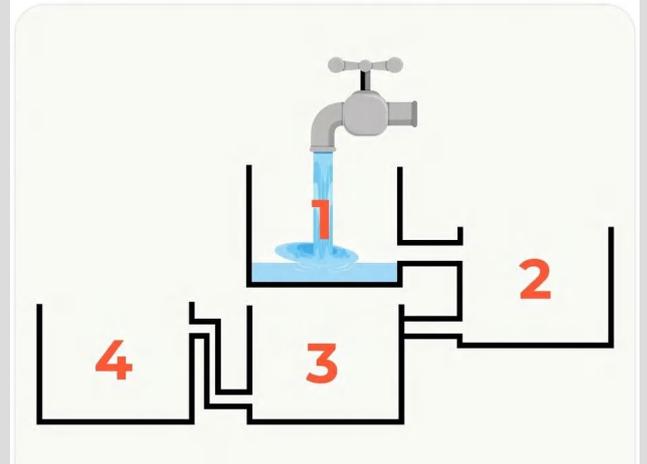
- E - E -

If you are eleventh in a queue of persons starting from either end, then how many persons are there in the queue?

- a) 11
- b) 21
- c) 20
- d) 24



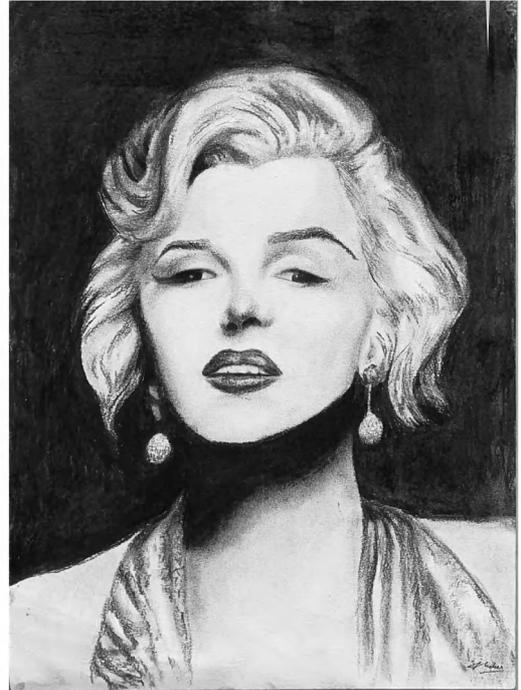
Which Tank Will Be Fill First ?



EXPRESSIONS



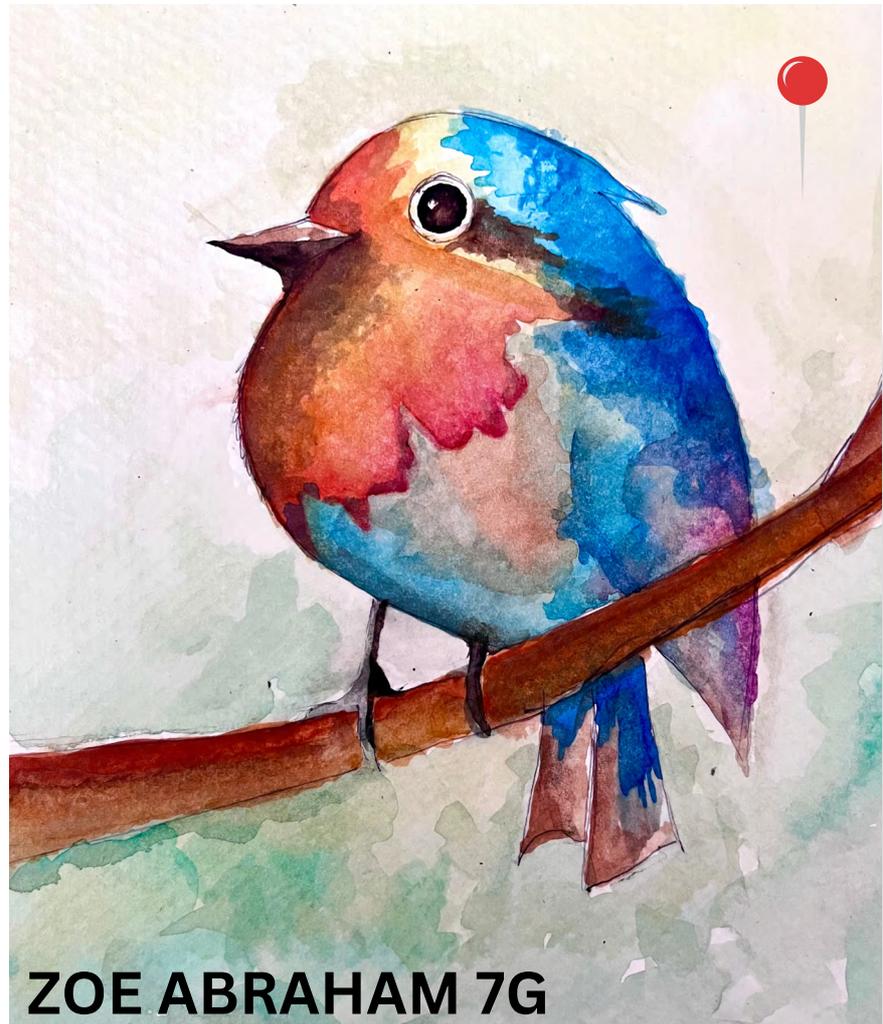
ABHIRAAM NAMBIAR 7B



MEHER SINGH SUDAN 8C



PARTH PRASAN NAIR 6G



ZOE ABRAHAM 7G



A View from the Top



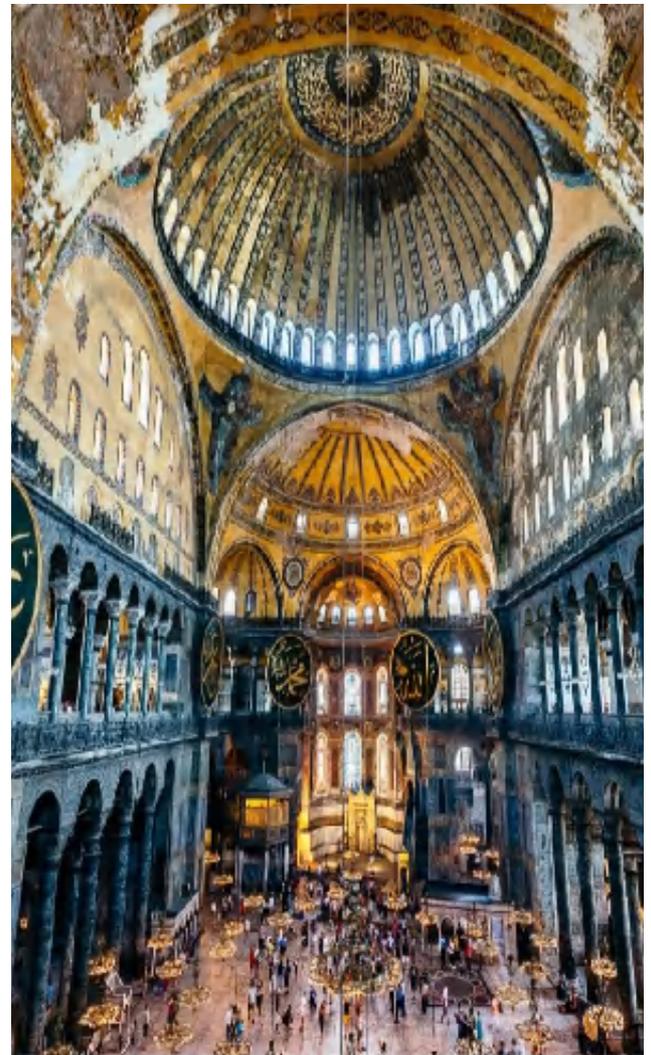
While Bruno Barreto's romedy *View from the Top* follows a young woman's dream as a flight attendant to the top route, "Paris, First Class, International", my dream took flight on a codeshare Turkish Airlines to Istanbul, Turkiye. The long haul from Delhi to Istanbul, interspersed with insipid food did not dampen my buoyant spirit and my interminable inner chant: I am going to visit the Hagia Sophia!!! (Countless hours had been spent studying/reading Byzantine art, architecture, cuisine, and geopolitics).

On the descent to Istanbul, one is struck by the innumerable domes that greet us. In my mind, I have already renamed Turkiye as 'The Land of Innumerable Domes'; definitely more appealing than 'the Sick Man of Europe' - the moniker coined by Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. The drive from the airport to Taksim Square was a plethora of shades of green. Fall colours are oft-touted as mesmerizing, however Nature in her various hues of verdant green did not fail to captivate.

Having completed the check-in to the Occidental Taksim, we stepped out into The Taksim Square after layering ourselves with woollen wear for the weather was biting windy. Eager to explore and fill our growling stomachs, we scoured the numerous taverns. Kebabs, rice cooked perfectly in saffron were polished off with 'raki'. This drink was given the nickname "Lion's milk" due to its white appearance after it is mixed with water, and the lion is a common metaphor for a strong and courageous person in Turkiye. With the distinctive taste of aniseeds, we certainly were if not lions but definitely lion cubs!

What tickled our gustatory senses was Imam bayildi or Imam fainted – a dish in Ottoman cuisine consisting of stuffed aubergines simmered in olive oil. What was even more hilarious was the origin of the name: an imam (priest) married the daughter of a rich olive oil merchant. Her dowry consisted of twelve jars of the finest olive oil, with which she prepared each evening an aubergine dish. On the thirteenth day, there was no aubergine dish at the table. When informed that there was no more olive oil, the imam fainted! (Point of conversation: What caused the imam to faint – the lack of the dish or the fact that the dowry of olive oil lasted only 12 days?)

The evening walk along the Istiklal Street towards the Galata Tower was a visual parade of strikingly well-dressed men and women in haute couture; Turkiye is one of the renowned countries that manufactures leather products with high quality and unique design. It is also no secret that Turkiye is (in)famous for the production and sale of fakes of the world's best brands!

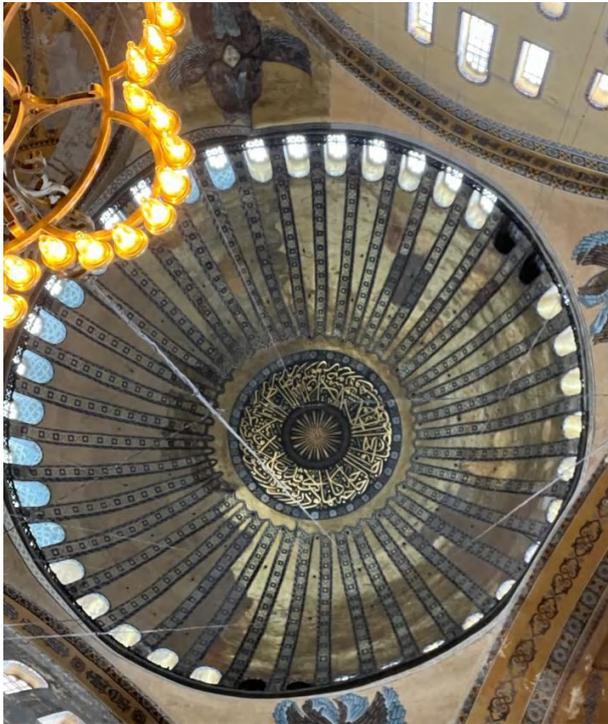


The next day dawned, fresh and pristine. Our first destination was the top on my most bucket list, the Hagia Sophia. Constructed as a church by Emperor Justinian I in the sixth century, the Hagia Sophia has changed ownership – temporal and and spiritual - numerous times from Eastern Orthodox church under the Byzantine rulers of Constantinople to Roman Catholic church under the Vatican to Hagia Sophia mosque during the Ottoman Sultan Fatih Mehmed II's reign to Hagia Sophia museum during the first Turkish President Kemal Attaturk's times to Hagia Sophia mosque during the present president Recep Erdogan's time.

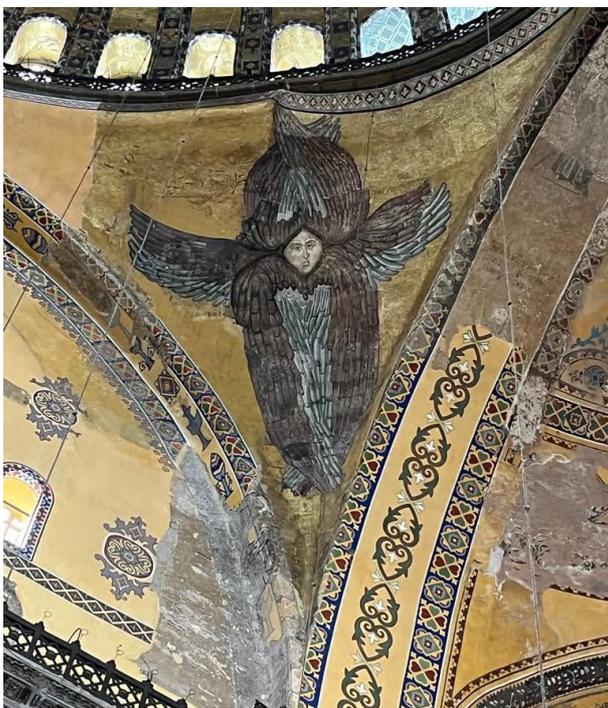




As our guide explained, the real owners of the Hagia Sophia are the cats that make it their abode. In fact, while visiting the Hagia Sophia, President Obama was spotted stroking Gli, the most famous cat on the internet.



Hagia Sophia is a melting pot of cultures, mostly Byzantine Christian and Ottoman Muslim. We see Byzantine Christian art 'peeking out' through Islamic art. The conquering Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II was so taken in by the beauty of the Hagia Sophia that he refused to raze it to the ground (as was the custom at that time) but ordered it to be converted into a mosque! Down came the cross and up went the crescent on the dome! The partly visible Mosaic of the Apse, Theotokos - Mother Mary holding the infant Jesus, albeit covered by a white curtain in accordance with the Islamic tradition of not having any human figures inside a place of worship, was a sight to behold.



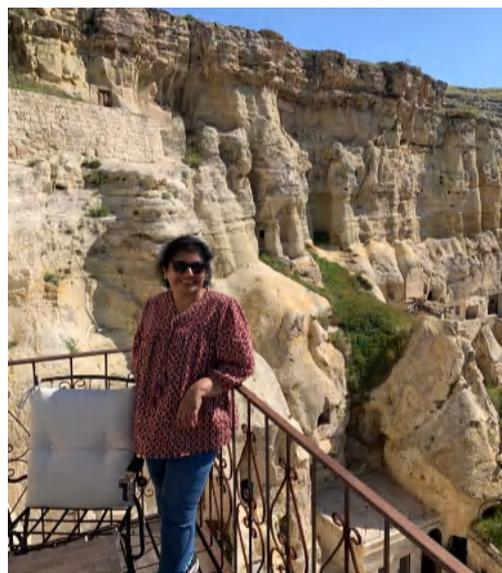
The four seraphim in the central nave praising Christ Pantocrator covered by the inscription of Allah seemed to highlight everything that Turkiye today is - beauty within the tenets of Islamic faith!

Byzantine Art reverberated across not only Europe but all over the world. Imagine my astonishment when I saw it reflected in the Bishop's House in my sleepy nondescript hometown, Muvattupuzha!

The most Instagrammable location in the world, Cappadocia in Central Turkey was nothing but surreal. Our stay at the cave hotel was a stark reminder of the geography of the place and its strategic importance from the time of the European Crusades who wanted to liberate the Holy Land to the Mongols who wanted to conquer Europe to all the other fanatics from East and the West who believed that the world was theirs to conquer and rule! Semi-arid Central Turkey was the conduit for marauding hordes, and the indigenous people living there had no choice but to 'go underground' or 'into the caves' with their livestock! The now dormant snow-capped Mt. Erciyes' lava had thousands of years ago fallen across the landscape and hardened to form tufa rock. Soon the native people realized that they could carve into the rocks using crystallized lava, obsidian, and convert them into caves and churches.

The Goreme Open Air Museum of Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a massive collection of historical monasteries and cave churches. Monastic life saw its birth here during the time of St Paul, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. The frescoes and other artwork found within the buildings are some of the best-preserved examples of Byzantine rock cut architecture and art in the world today!

Travelling by air on a flight is standard, but travelling by air in a hot air balloon was a novel experience. Fear of heights was never a problem for me, and I enjoyed the landscape dotted with unworldly Fairy Chimneys, the other balloons, the magnificent sunrise – all my views from the top!



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