

Special Diwali Edition

SURKHIYAN

सुरखियां

Diwali Fair

PSHCE Programme

Inter-House Dance Competition

Berlin Wall Painting Competition

Mental Health Awareness

Phonics Learning in Early Childhood

* cover photo is of Inter-House Dance Competition

Spirit Of GICLM



Welcome to the third edition of the newsletter. Keeping with the festive spirit, all staff and students at GICLM have strived to keep alight the Diwali spirit – its colours, sights, spirits, warmth and all flavours that make it the popular festival that it is. We've also managed to keep our social media active with the action and splendour of our school events.

The month of October started with the festivities of Navratri, each day a special colour – going on to end with the rhythm and beats of Garba evening. Before anyone could recover fully, it was time for the Diwali Fair – a community evening put together by students, their families, friends and Team Garodia. The evening was truly kept alive through the spirit of

Charity. Aromas of Indonesian food, waffles, and Mumbai Chat competed with one another, even as children and our guests were kept busy with games, art, and shopping. The celebrations only kick-started the Diwali festivities which were to follow.

From celebrations and charity, the school moved in perfect sync keeping learning and Child Welfare at its heart. All teachers and support staff attended Child Protection and Safe-guarding workshops – a commitment we've made to our young learners. And while all this was still happening, Team GICLM ensured that the rigour in learning never lost its emphasis. The school session ended with fun, music, dance, and feedback.

The Inter-House Dance Competition was the icing on the cake as all students danced hard to earn their houses medals and points. As the day progressed, parents and students met with their teachers to discuss students' academic progress and how we could complement each other to enhance their learning.

This month was truly a reflection of all that GICLM epitomises – values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and the verve of life.

Mahalakshmi Anand
Head of Primary



EARLY YEARS



Halloween - Diwali Celebration

Getting into the Halloween spirit, our students in Nursery dived into their favourite art and craft materials. Although a little bit messy, our little students absolutely loved and enjoyed creating pumpkins, bats, ghosts and witches. Through this activity, students were not only able to be creative and expressive through art, but also were able to improve their fine motor skills using coloured pencils, crayons, scissors, and markers.



Diwali was celebrated with fervour at GICLM. To begin the festivities, the Early Years students were given a traditional welcome. They were also informed about the significance of the festival and its importance to Indian culture. Decorated in vibrant hues, the school had an ambience of joy and happiness that shone through our young learners. Students even got a chance to make beautiful Diyas with the help of their tutors. Indeed, it was a very exciting and joyous Diwali in the Early Years with our Nursery students.

Music in the Early Years

Music is an essential part of every child's development. A great song can often light up a child's eyes, encouraging them to move around and dance. Music can also help with language skills and develop fine motor skills. With this in mind, students in our Nursery classes spent time with their music teacher, Mr Abhijit, exploring the feel and sounds of different instruments. As you might imagine, our young learners were full of excitement, especially when given a chance to test out all the instruments themselves.



Having Fun with Phonics

Phonics is the relationship between sounds and the letter combinations that represent those sounds. Understanding the use of phonics is thus a highly essential part of every young learner's education, as it is an important element of learning how to read. Additionally, phonics instruction teaches children how to decode letters into their respective sounds, a skill that is essential, as it allows children to figure out how to read words they have never seen before. Keep in mind that most words are in fact unfamiliar to early readers in print, even if they have spoken knowledge of the word.

With this in mind, our little thinkers in K1 took on the challenge of learning phonics in a fun way. Experimenting with phonics through writing, listening, as well as acting helped to cement the phonetic sounds of each word in the minds of every student. In the classroom students tried hopping, jumping, and other silly movements, all whilst sounding out the word using phonics. The impact of hopping when they did letter 'Hh' was long lasting and kept our young learners engaged and excited about learning.

Kindergarten 1



Inspiring Imagination

This term in K2 started outside with our children gazing up at the sky and noticing the clouds. Students were instantly curious regarding what clouds are made of and why they are of different shapes. They even took turns sparking their creative imaginations by discussing what each cloud looked like and comparing the shapes to common everyday items such as boats, trees, and cars.

From there, our little ones in K2 engrossed themselves in simple science experiments where they learnt that by heating water, it turns into vapour and by cooling it, condensation takes place. They also got a chance to explore clouds and rain in a hands-on and engaging way with an activity: 'rain cloud in a jar', which helped them to understand how rain starts falling when a cloud becomes heavy. Such experiments nurture their intellectual curiosity as they acquire new ways of asking questions and understanding the world.

Kindergarten 2



An Apple a Day Keeps . Disease and Ageing at Bay

Apart from their natural good taste and great crunchy texture, along with wonderful colours and fragrances, eating a large serving of fresh fruits each day can have significant health benefits. To explain this concept practically, students of grade 1 brought in fruits, which when arranged all together, looked like a beautiful and colourful rainbow. Students then shared and tasted all the different fruits, which helped them to understand the taste and relevance of how a combination of different fruits have significant benefits for the human body. This exercised worked to enhance our learner's scientific knowledge while at the same time developing their language and socials skills through demonstrating cooperation and sharing.

Grade I



3D Rainbow making!

'Colours are the smiles of nature.' With this in mind, students in Grade 1 learnt the colours of the rainbow in the French class. They explored all 7 colours of the rainbow with an adorable rainbow craft activity. The final output was an amazing arched 3D constructed paper rainbow that almost looked like a real one. During the task, students also worked to name and remember the colours in French. The activity was a perfect melange of vocabulary, revision, and craft work.

Later, another activity included a variety of classroom objects. The various colours of the rainbow were spread out and kept in specific areas of the class. The teacher then shouted out a particular colour in French, giving students time to run to grab the corresponding coloured object. Students greatly enjoyed listening carefully and dashing to be the first to the objects, showing their enthusiasm for learning. Indeed, the activities in French class this month focusing on identifying colours were beneficial and fun filled for all those involved!

Grade I



Hindi class

Students in Grade 4 learned the types of nouns in their Hindi class during the month of October. Their understanding of the topic was tested by way of an activity. First, a mix of all types of nouns were written and kept on a plate. Then, in groups of 4 or 5, students picked a word and put it in the Common, Proper, or Abstract noun category box. The group that segregated the nouns correctly first in the stipulated time emerged as winners.

Later, the students made sentences with a few of the nouns from the game they had played. This helped cement these new words into their vocabulary. Also, we discussed how to frame correct sentences using these words. Overall, this activity helped students improve their speaking and reasoning skills in their mother tongue.

Grade 4



Bronze to Bio Plastic

In the IPC unit 'Bronze to Bio Plastic', Grade 5 students learnt that it is every individual's responsibility to ensure wise use of the earth's limited resources.

The integration of IPC and language enhances learning in both domains. As a reflection of their learnings, students presented a strong argument based on the issue: 'paper should not be wasted' during their language session. Students came up with relevant facts, quotes, and examples based on their research, observations and personal experiences to convince their readers to accept their viewpoint and act accordingly.

The activity also gave the students an opportunity to discuss and reflect on their personal learning.

Grade 4



Art Club

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.
- Pablo Picasso

Our Grade 4 and 5 learners worked on a new unit entitled Elements of Art in class this term. According to this unit, drawing precise lines is one of the first elements in which students need to bring their full focus and concentration. In the first session of this unit, students explored variations in lines. Next, in the second session they traced their own hand on coloured paper and made lines with black sketch pen on an A4 sized paper and as well as on another A4 coloured paper. After that, students used only colourful sketch pens to create a beautiful landscape with a variety of lines on an A3 sized paper.

This particular set of activities will assist students in developing confidence in their work, as well as helping them expand their knowledge of the skills needed to attempt any kind of drawing.

Grade 4 and 5



Digging Deep



Interested in learning about some unique plants? Come take a look at some of the reports our Grade 2 and 3 students have written about some very peculiar plants! Using their knowledge about writing non-chronological reports, they researched, created and presented some unique information about plants from around the world for our IPC unit “Let's Plant It!” The students were highly inquisitive and keen to learn about not only their own, but also about their peers' distinctive findings about each of these plants! Some of the plants included stinging nettles, the venus fly trap, the jellyfish tree, and more. Many were intrigued to learn one of these plants was believed to have been extinct, but found to be alive later. In the month of October students also had the opportunity to create and test out some of their plant experiments. Students continued their plant investigations by researching some of their earlier questions. During this unit many were able to find answers to some of their inquires such as: “Why do some plants have spikes?”, “Why do plants turn their leaves to face the sun?”, and “What is included in the procedure of photosynthesis?”.

Lately students have also been discussing the impact deforestation can have on biodiversity, relating it to the Amazon Rainforest and the Aarey Forest. Learning about plants and our dependence on them is a crucial topic which is very relevant to the pressing issues of today. This and other opportunities to connect our lives to the world around us through various subjects is imperative and prepares our young learners to take action to ensure a better tomorrow!

Grade 2 and 3

Ringling in Diwali, the festival of lights

Students in the Primary School started their Diwali celebrations in the month of October with a special assembly on the significance of Diwali. Students recalled stories behind the celebration of Diwali, and also how different regions in India celebrate Diwali for different reasons and the variety of ways they do so. Students also delved into the symbolic aspects of Diwali, victory of good over evil and lighting the lamp to eliminate darkness. This then snow-balled into a reflective writing task where every-student reflected on one bad habit of theirs, and how they would claim victory over this. They also wrote about their commitment to light up a lamp in someone's life by their good deeds or charity.

What would Diwali be without lamps and Rangoli? Students painted earthen diyas, a symbol they would carry home to remind them of their pledge. They also added extra glitter to their diyas - a symbol of the sparkle in the smiles in others. The fragrance of Diwali was accentuated with the fragrance of dahlia, rose petals, tube roses, and marigold, which brought together to assemble into a beautiful Rangoli. This became a symbol of how diversity in form and colour, in a consorted and unified pattern, makes up this beautiful Universe.

Diwali without Diwali sweets and savoury snacks would be no fun at all – so our little hands teamed up with experienced ones to whip up some great Diwali snacks. It was a joint venture between the students, their teachers, and the support staff from the Cafeteria. During the celebration, students tossed up some spicy chivda and rolled out Chocolate Swiss rolls with coconut fillings - a truly delectable experience indeed.



Learning Mandarin Through Calligraphy and Group Work



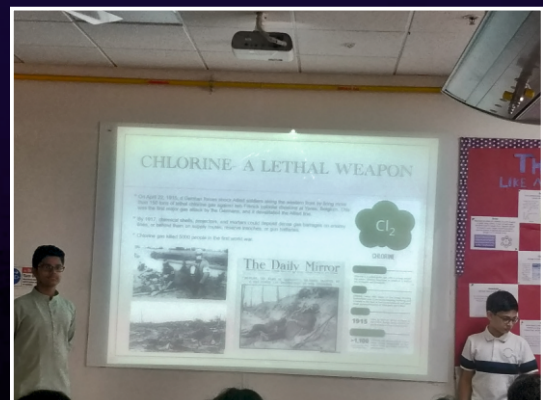
Learning how to recognize and write Chinese characters is really a tough challenge for all beginners learning Mandarin as a foreign language. This month our secondary students practised their abilities in reading and writing Chinese characters by experiencing traditional Chinese calligraphy and playing fun group games.

Chinese calligraphy is one of the most well-known aspects of Chinese culture. As it is helpful in improving focus, patience, and concentration, nowadays a lot of Chinese students do calligraphy as a form of training to improve writing and meditation.

Along with Chinese calligraphy, our Grade 6, 7, and 8 students participated in group games where they had to actually memorize the pronunciation and meanings useful everyday phrases such as 「你叫什么名字? (What's your name?)」、「她姓林 (Her surname is Lin)」、「我叫小月, 你呢? (My name is Xiaoyue. How about you?)」、「他是我的朋友, 他叫李文新。(He is my friend, his name is Liwenxin) . Even students who are new to learning Mandarin were able to participate, and often did much better than they had originally anticipated.

Grade 6, 7 and 8

Chlorinating Water



In one of our chemistry classes during the month of October, during our unit on material properties, our Grade 8 students were able to investigate the topic through a presentation they made based on a halogen called chlorine. The presentation was based on the key components of chlorine. It included how, where, when, and why it is used. During class we were able to go into great depth on the topic, which piqued the interest of many students.

We also learnt that chlorine is used in swimming pools to destroy bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Thus, there are many pros and cons when it comes to the use of chlorine. For example, if we drink chlorinated water, there is a high risk of cancer, but on the other hand chlorinated water reduces the chance of cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and skin infections. This is because when chlorine is added to water, it may react with substances dissolved in the water.

After thorough discussion on the topic, our scientists in Grade 8 collected evidence and suggested an explanation for the effects of chlorinated water. It was a joy to see many students closely examining and considering the task at hand through the use of scientific principles.



Do you trust me? - A PSHCE Approach to Team Work and Empathy

How much do you actually trust your friends? Why is it important to trust them? How is trust connected to your academic achievements?

Ever feel you are different from your friends and don't belong in a group? Or maybe you are wondering how to help a person whom you know feels that way?

You might have one or two questions (or maybe even more!) like those on your mind. No need to search for the answers anywhere else! As our school actually does have a programme to facilitate your search to those questions. Pay a close attention during your PSHCE lesson every Friday period 1.

PSHCE stands for Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education. This programme is originally a school curriculum subject in the UK. It focuses on developing the knowledge, skills and attributes to keep students healthy and safe, as well as to prepare them for life and work. Various activities are available to enable students to reflect on and clarify their own values, attitudes and feelings. GICLM is one of the very few schools in India that has this programme as part of our curriculum. How good is that!



“A team is not a group of people who work together. A team is a group of people who trust each other” --Simon Sinek--

Lesson 7 PSHCE: Building Trust & Empathy

PSHCE Activities

In sync to the Mental Health week, the grade 6-8 students conducted two fun and engaging activities during their PSHCE lesson: Teamwork Chairs and Learn about Empathy. In the first activity, four chosen students sat on four chairs set in a square. The chairs needed to be close enough that a person can lay backwards and have their shoulders rest on another chair. Then, another person, or the tutors, removed the chairs from under these people, one by one.

When you remove the chairs from under your friends, the expectation is for your friends to crumble to the floor in a giggling mass. But instead, they remain stable. What??!! How is that even possible???

Well, the secret is actually the balanced forces. Even though gravity is pulling your friends down, each person is supported by the legs of the person behind them. How clever!

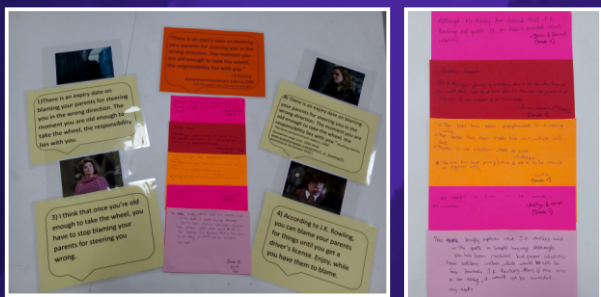
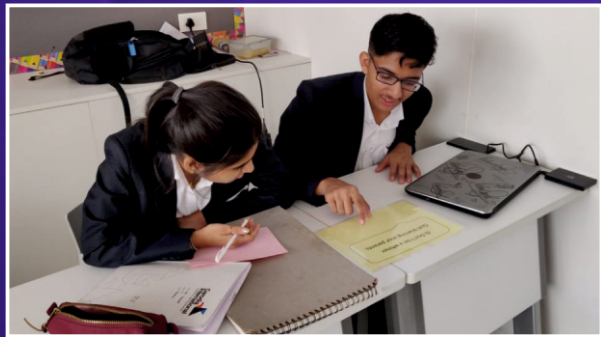
However, the key for you and your friends to reach a balanced force is trust. Without trusting your friends ability to support you, its impossible to remain stable

once the chairs were taken out from under you.

In the second activity, two moving videos about Empathy were played. A discussion about the importance of empathy and its applications in school life were encouraged after watching the videos.

Based on the feedback collected, students find it very closely related to their personal and social issues, especially in school. Well done grades 6, 7 and 8!





Plagiarism and Citations

Academic honesty is an extremely crucial characteristic to have for an IB student. So, to help students imbibe this value in their research essays, to avoid plagiarism and to keep their work's originality intact, Grade 11 had a session on 'How to Cite' workshop with Ms Swarnima Dighe, the teacher-librarian of the school on the 16th of October. This was an extension to the plagiarism session held earlier in the year and also gave students an insight on evaluating websites and other online resources.

To start, a quotation from the famous author J.K. Rowling was presented to students in various versions, and in groups they had to identify whether it was represented honestly, keeping in mind the credit due to the author and sources mentioned accurately. Students also got hands-on practice in evaluating websites and citing different quotes from books and articles on MS Word. The session ended with an enthusiastic discussion and with students writing a reflection of the knowledge they had gained.

Grade 11

Activity On Vectors In Physics

The students in Grade 11 indulged in a riveting activity, wherein they were divided among 2 groups and had to perform experiments. The experiment demanded us to obtain a resultant vector through a practical demonstration.

Group 1 was given the task to understand how vectors can be added using Pythagoras Theorem. To accomplish this, we followed the directions using a navigation compass and masking tape and created a triangle. We then found the resultant displacement by measuring distance between the starting and final points, and also found the angle between the resultant vector and the starting point using trigonometry.

Group 2 on the other hand were provided with 3 dynamic trolleys, a small plank of wood or trolley runway, A3 drawing paper, pins, and a drawing board. In addition to this, we had ink water, a plastic syringe, tubing, blue-tack, a ruler, and a protractor.

Setting up the experiment then took about 15 minutes. Next, one member of the group had to push the connected trolleys along the bench or floor at a constant velocity. The other team member had to produce a constant velocity along the runway. When both of them worked together at a constant speed, the ink filled syringe would leave a trail.

This being a practical demonstration helped us bridge the gap between theory and real life application. The sense of accomplishment motivated us to keep trying and taking various readings. When the readings were not correct, we learned how to develop practical alternative approaches to the same experiment. Having taken a variety of readings ensured our final readings were more precise.

Working together as a team helped us come up with new and innovative ideas. We were able to develop our team chemistry, which ensured the experiment was running smoothly. Also, our communication and leadership skills were honed during this process.

**Aryan Shah
IBDPI**



A Masterpiece set for Victory!



Another feather in the cap for GICLM students as they clinched first place in the Berlin Wall painting competition held on the 13th of October by the Goethe Institute at the Turf Club commemorating 30 years of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This event was a unique platform for the collaboration of Art, History and German, where our students created a beautiful masterpiece depicting important aspects from Germany and India for their future dream cities. Here is what our main artists have to say about their experience at the event:

Preeyansh Bhatia (Grade 12):

Mainly, I wanted to integrate the cities of Berlin and Mumbai as one. Berlin has always captivated me since I started learning about it in German class, and I have spent my entire life in and around Mumbai. Amongst the depicted alternating monuments from Berlin and Mumbai also stands our school building, as it is a place where we learn about values. Later, during the presentation phase of the competition, I explained the intricate details that made up the story behind the piece to the judges. The colours match the aesthetics of the German flag and the monuments are all classic landmarks or architectural wonders in their respective cities.

Dhruv Bangera (Grade 11):

One can find many similarities between Berlin and Mumbai. Hence, we decided to portray important monuments and a small portion of the Berlin Wall and our dream city. I personally was unaware that one could paint the background after the main subjects without the paint getting mixed. We painted the background ombre using sponges and detailed around the corners using brushes and our hands. But by the time we

finished, we were completely drenched in sweat due to standing under the sunlight and our hands were completely covered in acrylic paint. However, we enjoyed every moment of this event.

Aarna Popat (Grade 10):

This painting workshop has definitely been one of the most competitive and fun events I have been a part of. Moreover, since I am a history student, and recently we have been learning about the Cold War and German invasions, this was a really interesting way of learning and expressing in my favourite art form. I will definitely cherish this experience as one of my favourites in my schooling career.

Aaryan Shah (Grade 11):

Being a German event for commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall, using German words was imperative. It showed our understanding of the language and how we could use the words to match the scenario. Along with the artistic skills, we also portrayed our linguistic skills, which helped us win the award.

Hemel Shah (Grade 11):

As students of German, we have always been fascinated by the language and history of Germany. A session on the history of the Berlin Wall in our German class inspired a lot of our ideas and we used this information to brainstorm easily our layout and content. I practiced my part of the rough sketch beforehand, which helped in completing the sketch faster and saved a lot of time. We are also thankful to our Art and German teachers for guiding us during this difficult yet highly enjoyable event!



Inter - House Dance Competition 2019

To round out the term, our students were put through a challenging inter-house dance competition. To begin, our students were categorised according to their grade levels and were given a theme accordingly. It was at this time that students knew that it would take a lot of hard work and determination in order to have a chance of the house points at stake for this competition.

In order to prepare, House Captains and Vice Captains met and discussed their visions for the event. To set students on the path to a successful event, the choreography was done by Mr Gaurav and Mrs Kshama. Additionally, a few of our talented dancers in GICLM, namely Suhaya Krishnamoorthy, Aarna Patel, Aarna Popat, Aryaa Chabbaria, and Aanya Patel helped influence the creative direction of their houses. Knowing that they were going to be judged on criteria such as execution, expression and synchrony, students in all houses made a valiant effort to produce a great show for their classmates.



The GICLM Inter-House Dance Competition, which was held this academic year on the 23rd of October, was undoubtedly one of the most energetic and good spirited events held thus far. The best part of the competition was that the students had to choreograph their dances all by themselves. In the end, the final outputs showed the hard work of all the students involved. Additionally, it highlighted that through determination and grit, students can put together an extraordinary show.

To begin, the dance competition was divided into 3 parts. The primary students had the topic of folk dance, grades from 6 to 8 were assigned to perform to retro music, and finally grades 9-11 were tasked with multi-style.

After all the performances had ended, it was the task of the 3 judges: Mr Patrick Moore, Mrs Garodia, and Ms Simran to score each performance. After a tough decision, the results were ready. In the Primary section, Vayu house was the winner. In the Middle School section and the High School section, Agni house won. Therefore, the winners of the Inter-House Dance Competition for this academic year was Agni.

Congratulations to all students who worked hard and humbly represented their houses in this lively and thrilling event!

Diwali Charity Fair and Diwali Party

In October, The Robin Hood Army, which is an NGO that works towards the eradication of hunger, approached our school with a request. As they carry out educational, recreational, and food drives in slums in Mankhurd on Saturdays consisting of around 165 underprivileged children, the Robin Hood Army wanted to arrange a special Diwali party for the children in their community. Coincidentally, at the time we at GICLM were gearing up for the Diwali Charity Fest, and so we invited them to put up stalls for free. They sold items such as diyas painted by underprivileged children and purses donated by a company. Other NGO's like CRY also participated in this event, raising money for those in need.

From the Diwali Fair, the Robin Hood Army was able to raise a large sum of money for their cause. Additionally, GICLM added a sizeable contribution to ensure these children were able to the Diwali festivities.

At the event itself, a DJ was organized along with gifts and food which were arranged and distributed along with the help of a few of our IB students. This definitely was a memorable day for these kids as well as our students who were touched by the loving smiles of these grateful children.



The Diwali Fair was an opportunity for students from to showcase their unique ideas in the form of games, which were made for the visitors to play and enjoy. Weeks before the event, students brainstormed, planned and prepared for games they thought would get students in to the Diwali spirit. The energy exerted by all classes was noteworthy, as it was explained to students prior to the introduction of the Diwali Fair that all proceeds would go directly to the needy in our community.

As it was a class wise competition, this also increased the enthusiasm of all the students, causing everyone to give their best and collect the greatest amount for charity. In the end, the Grade 7 students managed to collect the most amount and were given a special prize. Overall the event was a hit and was enjoyed by all who attended.

-Shreyas Katkoo

Prithvi House Captain



Mental Health Awareness

We all hear, read and talk about mental health, oftentimes without being aware that we are thinking about it. It is quite frequent and common that we complain of how constantly we experience mental and physical exhaustion, certain situations that trigger our shortcomings, or how we constantly feel embarrassed for our behaviour that comes naturally. Even our children are not immune to such instances. But what do we do?

Do we know what makes us feel great? How long does the effect of the 'feel great' activity last? Why do we again fall back on self-sabotaging behaviour? Are we even mindful of the moment that makes us feel lighter than a feather?

A lot of studies have found that poor mental health in children often hampers learning at critical stages, affecting students' ability to reach their potential. We talk and put a lot of effort into preventing our children from going down the incorrect path; however, little do we know that sound mental health has a larger role to play in their decision making than we ever thought.

With this in mind, we at GICLM took the opportunity to give our students a hands on experience to understand the 'self', which is difficult to explore when left alone. These activities were initiated on World Mental Health Day, which is celebrated across the globe on the 10th of October. During this week, our teachers and counsellors planned and executed activities for our students ranging from grades 1-12. Different grade groups had different activities catering to their respective developmental needs. These activities were planned to give a way for to students' creative expression to be processed. The objective was to make students realise that they are responsible for taking care of their mental health and wellness to an extent. Through these and other activities held throughout this academic year, we at GICLM hope that students come to realize the importance and impact of mental health in their daily lives.



The following article was written by our German teacher, Ms Aarya Phaltankar, about her month long stay in Berlin, Germany and was printed in the Indian Express and Financial Express newspapers.



GERMANY
CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF
THE FALL OF THE WALL

4



A piece of the Wall at Potsdamer Platz



Fernsehturm, Berlin's famous TV tower



Hackesche Höfe

BERLIN, THE BEAUTY THAT IT IS

AARYA PHALTANKAR, WHO RECEIVED A GRANT TO PURSUE A LANGUAGE COURSE IN BERLIN FROM THE GOETHE INSTITUT AND MAX MUELLER BHAVAN IN MUMBAI, WRITES ABOUT HER TRAVELS



Brandenburg Gate



Remains of the Berlin Wall topped



A watchtower in Berlin erected in 1971



Berlin Cathedral

BERLIN IS GERMANY'S CULTURAL MELTING POT. This modern city has a hipster cool vibe to it and mesmerises with its vibrant culture, diverse food, avant-garde architecture and portentous history. The city, which was bombed and destroyed in World War II, has bounced back and resurrected itself with much resilience.

Travel Tip: The best way to explore a city is on foot, and that's how I went about exploring most of Berlin.

I headed to the Goethe Institut – an institution that promotes the study of the German language and encourages international, cultural exchange. I found that the sky-scraping 'Fernsehturm' or Berlin's TV Tower accompanied me everywhere I went. The 368-metre-tall structure was constructed by the government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or East Germany. It was inaugurated on 3rd October 1969, and considered to be a symbol of Communist power. Many were in favour of demolishing the tower with the Fall of the Wall. The Federal Republic of Germany, however, chose to keep the building and overhaul its broadcasting facilities. The edifice now adds much



Where the Wall once stood

colour to the city especially during the Festival of Lights.

Berlin has a lot to offer to people intrigued by history. As you walk down 'Unter den Linden' and 'Pariser Platz', beautifully lined with trees on both sides, one is stunned by the magnitude of the Brandenburg Gate – an important central landmark of Berlin. When Germany was divided, the gate was inaccessible to both, the East and West Germans. However, when the wall opened, people gathered at the gate and rejoiced. Since then, this stately monument has come to symbolise unity and freedom. It is the preferred choice of venue for silent rallies, peaceful protests and demonstrations. The other monuments like the Reichstag, Berliner Dom, and the Synagogue on the Oranienburger Strasse, remind you of Berlin's tumultuous past.

After a long but fruitful day, I found myself on a tram headed home. My home in Berlin was a gorgeous, rustic flat owned by an equally

gorgeous host, 'Frau Waaser', whom I now call a friend. Frau Waaser was warm and a constant source of information.

Travel Tip: The best part of staying with a local is the different perspective with which you look at a new place. You are fed first-hand experiences; it's also an opportunity to be introduced to a new culture; you shed your prejudices and widen your horizons.

Berlin's rather modern architecture is punctuated here and there with remnants of the Wall that once divided it into East and West. The Wall, not only physically but ideologically divided Berlin from 1961 to 1989. I drew a line between communism and capitalism, repression and freedom. The Wall seems to have seen it all; families separated, friends waving at each other from opposite sides, lovers secretly meeting, people trying to jump over it, some digging a tunnel under it – everybody chasing their freedom.

One can only imagine the relief that the people felt on the night of 9th November 1989. They marched towards the Wall, hammer and chisel in hand, to bring down the monstrosity.

Walk along the East Side Gallery, and you see the Wall adorned with murals and graffiti. The Berlin Wall was one of the largest canvases in the world. It was used by people to express their ideas of freedom. Some of the works at the East Side Gallery such as Dmitri Vrubel's 'Fraternal Kiss' and Birgit Kinders' 'Trabant Breaking Through the Wall' are particularly popular. The gallery walls along Friedrichstraße and Zimmerstraße give you information about the various escape attempts of the people from East to West Berlin.

Checkpoint Charlie still remains a busy area in Berlin. Once a prominent crossing point between the two Germanys, tourists swarm there for pictures before entering the 'The Wall Museum'.

Berliners have transformed the originally dreary East Berlin into a place of cafes and restaurants with a bohemian chic vibe.

As I devoured ice cream on a warm sunny day by the Spree river, that runs through the heart of Berlin, it was heartening to observe how the Berliners have at last embraced the good times: sun-bathing, relaxing or picnicking on the banks of the Spree.

This November, the country will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. There will be art installations, open-air exhibits, and a 7-day, city-wide festival that will commemorate the reunification of Berlin.

At the Goethe Institut where I was learning German, I made friends from all over the world: Sweden, Russia, Bucharest, Paris, and Brazil. Our long conversations over German beer, Döner kebabs and Currywurst is something I shall cherish forever, but most of all I shall cherish Berlin, the beauty that it is.



Engaging Minds, Changing Futures

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