KALEIDOSCOPE

THE VARIOUS HUES OF DEEPANAM

Adventure
Hello everyone! We’re back with a new kaleidoscope, this issues topic is “Adventure”, as we recently went to Yercaud for our last class trip. We invite you to join us on a journey through our experiences of adventure in general. We’re back at it with our Movie, Book and Album review trio and our monthly podcast excerpt, where we spoke to Auromira about consent. We are also incredibly sorry of how late this issue is, our class never really agreed on anything and it took awhile for us to settle on any one thing. Lets just say there was a lot of screaming and arguing. Anyhow, the magazine is finally ready and we hope you enjoy it!
As a celebration of our play, and perseverance through the year, my class took a trip. Three nights and four days of chaotic and fired up teenagers living in a dorm up in the mountains experiencing boating, trekking, lots of walking and no sleep. Aside from the people and noise, Yercaud was beautiful. My intentions going into the trip was to just have fun with my friends and scream until I lost my vocal chords but, I was just left in awe as I looked at the scenery. The purple trees, lakes, waterfall, and forests were stunning and left me to look forward to something other than talking. Just walking, as the cool mountain air flew by, was far enough for me to enjoy the trip. Just taking a break from the exhausting, hot and sweaty life of Auroville was such a relief and a great joy.

Most of the activities we did were going to viewpoints, and I loved it. We went to three viewpoints in total, and there was one that was amazing. By now we had walked to one viewpoint and we were heading toward somewhere called “Lady seat”. We walked 3km to get there. As we reached we realized that the mountains were completely hidden by mist and clouds. As we waited for the view to clear up, we started watching the local monkeys. They were all doing this amazing and hilarious parkour and fights. All of us who went, were just so entertained by these silly monkeys but the more we waited we realized that the monkeys were getting closer to us. Many people jumped aside when they got closer, but me being stupid invited them to come closer. Two monkeys were just to the side of me and right when I looked at them it punched me, twice! Of course it wasn't funny but it was just crazy for me that it happened.

Unfortunately not all went the greatest on the trip. And unfortunately I lost a part of myself that will forever remain at the lakes of Yercaud. Earlier in the trip we all decided to go boating, and while we modeled on the half broken, leaking boat a classmate’s life jacket swatted my hat into the river, we soon realized the issue but as we tried to retrieve it, it sank. You might think, “uhh it’s just a hat right?” and you’re right, but I wore that hat for 5 months straight and started to get a connection and it became my identity. Yes I know I get attached to materialistic things easily but sadly you can’t have it all.

Overall it was an amazing, crazy, trip and I would say it was worthy of a trip to be my last year in Deepanam. Thank you Bhakti and Mahavir!

-Aadi
When I first heard about this trip to Yercaud the main things I was worried about were bad food, and not being prepared for something but both of the things went well. We also had to take pictures for our photography class at school which I really enjoyed doing. On the first day we went paddle boating and that was fun even though the boat was not very good, and it went slow. The next day we went to this viewpoint and the hills were beautiful to look at from there. On the third day we went to a waterfall place where there was not much water but there were lots of rocks and that was quite fun to climb up and climb down. On the last day we left the place we were staying at after breakfast, and we went on this coffee walk thing where we walked up a hill and we were shown all the coffee that they were growing. They also grew pepper, so I guess it was a coffee and pepper walk. At the end of the walk, we saw a big house in that place and Mahavir liked it so much that we stayed there drinking coffee longer than we planned. And just like that our trip was over and it didn't even feel like four days to me, but I guess that means that I enjoyed my time there. The trip coming back somehow felt shorter than the trip going there even though I think it was longer.

- Jsha

So this time we went to Yercaud for a trip for 4 days. At first I thought it wouldn't be that great because it's a hill station and we had already gone to Yelagiri last year but I was still excited because this would be our last trip in Deepanam. When we were on our way to Yercaud, the amount of nonsensical songs that people were playing was just oof. When we arrived there, the room was much better than I expected, especially the bathrooms. Later in the day, we went to a nearby lake and went paddle boating.

In the evening we went for what felt like a really long walk to the nearby village and ate ice cream. (We had ice-cream almost every evening:)
The next day we went to a few viewpoints and there was a really cute dog there. We also went to a place called “Lady’s Seat”. We went there to see the view of the mountains but we ended up watching the monkeys there for an hour. I also got around 140 photos of the monkeys so that’s nice. The next few days we went sightseeing, boating etc. We also went to a waterfall and even though there wasn’t a lot of water it was still fun.

On the last day, we went to this really nice cafe where we drank cold coffee and ate a soft, warm, melt in your mouth brownie. Also, it was 150 rupees and I would say it was completely value for money because it was delicious.

Afterwards, we went to this coffee trail place, which was supposed to be a walk and have an informative talk about coffee. Anyway, that’s not what happened. The “trail” turned out to be a long trek down the mountain and we didn’t talk about coffee except learning names of two types of coffees. But in the end the trek was pretty fun considering I don’t like them at all. After the trek we just hung out in the property of the coffee trail people and drank some black coffee which was really good and kept me awake for the next 11 hours. The way back to Auroville felt like forever and this time the bus was pretty quiet (thankfully).

Overall, I loved the trip and everything about it and am happy that this is how we ended our year in Deepanam.

- Aneeka
It was truly fascinating. One of my favourite parts was the view from this one point where we went trekking. On the way there, (naturally) I was kicking a rock like a football. When it rolled left, one of my friends kicked it, and if it went right, my other friend kicked it. We did that for a few hundred metres when I decided I liked that rock. And that I was going to bring it back home. So I swore I would bring that rock back to Auroville unless it fell into bushes while kicking it or fell off a cliff.

You may ask, where is that rock now? It is in my bag. I didn’t lose it. But it cost my friend’s pinky toe. As goofy as it sounds, while on the way to that viewpoint, he tried to kick it from left to right, but there was a big rock in the way, and he missed and hit the big rock instead and got a big cut. And he had to put on a bandaid and wear a shoe the next day, which was hell for him.

But anyways, I have to give a standing ovation to the cooks there. The food there was so awesome. I’d definitely rate it a 9.3 out of 10. The dorms were pretty neat too. Oh, and the blankets were so nice there. One downside this time was the park. It was a bit too bland for me. But otherwise, the rest of the trip was fascinating.

Oh, and one last thing. A hat of my friends fell into the water while we were pedal boating. And since we were moving pretty fast, we couldn’t stop the boat in time to reach for it. So to that beautiful hat; R.I.P. You will be remembered in the lakes of Yercaud. And will always be the best hat my friend ever wore.

- Kishore

I went on a school trip to Yercaud. I was really looking forward for the trip. I think it was a really good chance for me to get close with my class. All the viewpoints we went was really nice and beautiful, especially the Lady’s seat. I really liked it because the sun set was amazing and there were a lot of monkeys playing around and it was fun to watch them play. And all the trekking was fun too. And I made a lot memories with my friends, I am really happy that I could be on this trip.

- Lea
So we talked about consent with Auromira. We started by understanding what consent means and why it is an important concept to know.

1. What is consent and why is it important to know?

Consent basically just means asking for permission. But I think what you’re asking about is the topic of consent that’s been widely spoken about recently, which is consent in relationships and intimate contact. This is a topic that’s really important because it allows for safe connection between people, so asking for consent is making sure that two people who are in a relationship or becoming closer together are both very happy to be doing whatever it is that they are doing together.

Consent can be taken back. It means that you can give consent but then you can change your mind and that’s perfectly okay. Consent does not mean “yes, sure go ahead”. There’s always been things that, you know in life, we have decided that perhaps we want to try and then when we come up to it we’re like “well maybe not”.

2. How do you suggest to have good communication regarding consent?

This is a brilliant question. I think that we all need to work on this, children, teens and adults. Communication is so fundamental in good relationships, not just intimate relationships but friendships too. One of the key things for good communication is listening, so being able to really listen to the other person and being really present and hearing you give each other space to really see how the other person is seeing a situation or feeling. This takes practice, before you’re even dealing with something that is more intimate.

3. What can someone do if they feel their boundaries have been violated?

This is a really important question. Often, if something like that happens we get scared, we get frozen, we’re not sure what to do, we don’t know who to reach out to. One of the things that we feel strongly about in our program is making sure that everybody that we teach in all of the schools has a person that they can contact in such a situation. I would also ask them to think of somebody they have, in that moment, whom they can go to in a situation of panic. So if you have a person in mind, and you know that that person is a safe person, then you can talk to them. It can be a parent, often it’s a parent, sometimes it’s the parent of a friend of yours, it can be a teacher or it can be someone else.

4. What should be the role of the community in promoting the education of consent in schools?

There are programs that are happening within the community around harassment and awareness in general by YouthLink in collaboration with Chrysalis. Matram and Child protection (AVCP) also provide support.

5. What are a few common misunderstandings about consent?

If someone has had alcohol or drugs, they cannot give consent. If you’re under the influence technically, whereas they say well but you know it happens and sometimes it isn’t clear but actually you cannot. Of course it varies someone could have like you know a small drink and you know be aware and be able to make eye contact and walk in a straight line and think logically they’re not so much under the influence of someone who’s fully drunk.
Geography through Gastronomy!

This semester the Light Group did a project on States of India. In addition to learning the geographical and historical facts, we thought it would be fun to explore together the cuisines of different states. We invited the parents coming from different Indian states to cook some popular foods with the children. The children were enthusiastic and had a lot of fun cooking and co-creating yummy recipes.

Children helped with everything: From vegetable cutting to rolling parathas and ladoos

Visit to Maroma by Megha from Grace Group

We went to Maroma on a field trip today. Maroma is a shop which produces multiple different types of products. First we saw how they made incense, their best selling product. They use thin, small and short bamboo sticks made and imported from Vietnam. Then they use a machine to put a scented powder on the sticks. When they didn’t have a machine, they would do it by hand which made about six kilos per day.

Now, with the machine, they make up to 50 kilos a day. Big upgrade! Then they would put them in a dehumidifier for one or two days to dry. After they dry, the workers would go through the batch and check if there were any damaged products. Though I loved learning about the process of making incense sticks, the strong, pungent smell gave me a headache! Next we saw how they made their clay incense holders.

Next we saw how they make their famous soaps. They don’t use palm oil due to its negative environmental impact. They make the soap mixture into macaroni looking things and (I think) mold them into soap bars. Again, the smell was too strong for me. I must have a very weak nose! We then made our way to the candle making area where we got to make our own! We made three different types: sand, dia and floating candle. Sand candle is where we would take some sand, and take an item to push into the sand to make a mold. We would then pour the melted, coloured wax in. Then we would add the wick at wait for it to settle. Dia candle is when we had an empty dia and poured the wax in and added the wick. Lastly, the floating candle is when we took a small ceramic cup, added small coloured wax bits and then poured the wax in and then added a wick. We waited for it to dry and took it out of the cup. The reason it’s called a floating candle is because you are supposed to get a glass of water, let the candle float on it and carefully light it. After we made candles we went to get some snacks and asked more questions. Overall very fun trip, 10/10!
STEAM FEST 2023

STEAM Fest 2023 was a celebration of the STEAM program’s 2nd year at Deepanam, run in collaboration with the youth at Yuvabe, an Auroville unit. The goal of this event was to showcase the projects done by children during the course of the year and also give the visitors a taste of how children learn through STEAM.

The event was organised as a series of 10 activities that were a combination games/creative activities as well as solving quiz questions based on an exhibit. In the end, the visitors could get relief from the April heat by having delicious ice cream!

In addition to the 10 activities, there were 4 stations where visitors could compete for special challenges and were rewarded with a geeky certificate and championship coffee mug! The final winners were from all age groups-preschoolers to high schoolers!

-Anupama

We could see the effort put in the programme amazing job!

Nicely done! Adults could enjoy it too!

The STEAM Fest was good! Next time I want more gifts!
- 6 years old, future Deepanam student

If I were a student at Deepanam where such interesting classes were there, I would go there with pleasure!

J want this to happen in every school in Auroville! I love it!
The reason I say that is because, by calling someone a failure you confine the person to think that they can never strive to be better. And often it’s the people you care about that call you a failure or non verbally say it. I have already said this but, I think failing is needed and a part of life. However, I don’t think failure exists. So in conclusion my definition is non-existent. The reason I say that, is because there is never a point where you can do absolutely nothing. Even in solitary confinement you can meditate, self reflect, make stories in your mind, so many small things that could make a difference. Is it easy? Absolutely not, but I think there is always a chance to try and make your life better. Of course I still have intrusive failure thoughts about my future, like not going to college, working at a 9 to 5 to make a living, but it’s not my place to dictate if someone else is a failure or not. On a personal level, I feel like I would even be alright if I worked at a low paying job but I would be extremely disappointed if I didn’t put an effort to get out of the situation. Fine, stay poor for a long time, but try your very best to get out of it.

Overall, this is my conclusion. It is a very broad topic so the beauty is that it can be looked at from many ways, but one thing you should do is to believe in yourself.

- Aadi
What Defines Success, For Me

As a child, we’ve always wanted to be something. It could’ve been an astronaut, a firefighter, a police officer, a doctor, a teacher, a lawyer, a businessman, you name it. For me defining success, in terms of career, is achieving what you wanted as a kid. Of course, unless you wanted to deal drugs, never do that guys! Or if you wanted to be a dinosaur riding a spaceship to the core of the sun! I mean, I don’t know, maybe you can prove me wrong. But what exactly do I mean when I say “as a kid”? Most of us, as kids, are very open and creative thinkers, we are so pure and innocent, and we know what we want. But as we grow older, we get to know the world. And sometimes, the harsh reality of getting to your dreams. And it’s just not the same as being a kid. Back to the career bit, I’d say that being successful is achieving a self-sustaining lifestyle. With the exception of providing food for yourself, because a good KFC once in a while hits the spot. Being able to provide for yourself without anyone’s help is one of the best achievements in life.

Also, back to being whatever you want to be. Your time on Earth should be, of course, spent enjoyably, but not everybody has that in their life. So I say, become the reason to be the joy of someone else in this world. Make them happy, it doesn’t matter what you say or do. You could gift them a Lamborghini, or say something as simple as “You look nice today.” I think I’ll stick with the second option. So I’m saying, do good stuff, not only do you have to be happy, but you have to be the reason for someone else’s happiness. That is a successful personality.

I also believe that you need a strong mindset to be successful. I saw a clip of this guy who said, “Depression isn’t real” and I was pretty flabbergasted when I heard that. But then explained that it’s only for the people who believe in it. For example, a person who believes in something that makes them feel down will always feel down. Then I understood not to believe in things that make me feel down. Of course, there are sometimes when you do feel extremely sad. Or you’re in a stage of grief. But that will have to be dealt with oneself.

But there are sometimes you feel sad, but it’s actually just you being annoying. Let’s say you’re saying, “Oh, someone said bad stuff about me”; you know you can ignore it. Or “I don’t have any motivation to do anything”, come on, you’re just lazy, and you don’t need the motivation to do something. It’s either you do it, or not. Or you say, “People say I will never succeed”. Well, then it is in your hands to prove them wrong, you have to win over them, and be better than them. If you think of what to do instead of complaining and whining about it, congratulations. You have a successful mindset that has power over your thoughts, and you won’t let anything bring you down. In the same way, if any one of you believes that success isn’t possible, you will not achieve it.

Of course, if you just believe you’re gonna be a billionaire, you won’t magically become one, you need to put in the effort. There has been scientific evidence that on average if anyone practices something for 100 hours in a year, guitar, violin, boxing, running, swimming, singing, or anything which is approximately 17 minutes a day, they will be better at that activity compared to 95% of the world. So you will be in the top 5% of the world if you did that. That is another way of defining success. To be at the top. To be better at something than someone is. No matter what it is. And also, to be making the best of what you like. If you’re successful at doing something you don’t like to do, then you are only partly successful. Enjoying also plays a big role in becoming successful, but that doesn’t mean it is inside your comfort zone. Success, as repeated at least a gazillion times, can and will only be achieved outside your comfort zone. So that’s what I think about success. Now, why don’t you go do something successful after reading this? Have fun and good luck!

- Kishore
This article is a continuation of my last article - "Trekking this summer". I said last time that as a gift for summiting the trek in May last year, I was going to go on a winter trek all alone, with nobody I knew. A solo adventure that I signed up for was at first exciting but as soon as the plans were getting finalised, fear started to seep in. This was the first time I was going to fly alone, without assistance. After getting through the security check, I messaged on our family WhatsApp group, and even before my message must have popped on my granny’s screen, my phone was ringing. The next hour was only about the same old instructions for the umpteenth time!!! As the call was coming to an end they announced the boarding and me being me, instead of boarding, I went and bought a burger. I was sure that the lunch on the flight wouldn’t be that great (which it wasn’t) but I won’t forget the death stares I got on board the flight for being the last one.

My father joined me at Delhi airport. We had a train that same night to Rishikesh and as we were in the rickshaw headed to the train station, we got a surprise gift. Guess what? WE GOT an UPGRADE!! From third AC train tickets, we were upgraded to first-class tickets. This was another of my ‘first-time experiences’. The next morning, as we got off the train at Rishikesh, the first sight of the mountains, the cold weather and the beautiful sunrise colours brought a smile to my face. At the hostel, I met the group of people I was going to be with for the next 6 days. When the actual moment came to say goodbye to my father, I was really emotional. This was actually happening, I was all alone amongst strangers on a trek! As the bus moved, it felt even more real. I knew I wasn’t feeling scared in an afraid sort of way but more, like a little nervous and excited in a confident sort of way.

I was the youngest on the trek but I was the most experienced trekker in the group (except for the organisers). Soon I was going to experience and realise why my sister loves being the younger one. The amount of pampering I got from these amazing people, it was just absurd! For example, after the tents got allocated six people came to ask me if I needed help and if I was all settled. I wasn’t used to so much attention! By the next day, I felt like I knew all these fellow trekkers from before and we really bonded well. That day we were at a campsite near Deoria Tal Lake. The lake was magnificent, it had a clear reflection of the entire range of the Greater Himalayas. The sight of these great mountains always makes me feel very small. It was all going well until I reached the camp and acted over-smart and didn’t wear my socks on time. I got very cold and suddenly my feet had caught the chill. My legs started hurting very badly and I was shivering like crazy. Fear seeped in again and I was extremely scared and felt all alone. Luckily I had range on my phone so I could call my parents and that was really helpful.
The second day was a long day, it was 10 km of walking uphill so that day we had a lot of breaks and also there was snow on the trail. At the second camp, we saw a lot of wolves and exotic birds. When you are on a trek, very simple things, like hot water or soup give you happiness. So on the second campsite, we basically had hot water and a lot of pepper and what I would have found gross here in Auroville felt like the most amazing drink on the trek. It was a sign that we were all getting settled to the trek as the washroom complaints were also less on the second day.

On the third day, the walk was nothing extraordinary but as we reached the camp and sat down to eat lunch we had a monkey attack. Six of us got scared of one small monkey!!! We picked up our food and pointed out trek poles trying to make it scared, but the monkey on the other hand got more fierce and kept threatening all the more. We started screaming and calling for help. This cycle of events repeated three times and finally, we made our guide sit with us the whole time while we ate.

The summit day started at 2:00 am, in the middle of the night. We started this early because we wanted to catch the sunrise at the summit. The pain of getting up at 1.00 after sleeping at 7 when it is -5 degrees was far more painful than the leg pains I had on the first day. The walk to the summit was in the dark and so we couldn’t see anything, but I am guessing the landscape was beautiful.

We reached the summit and the view was breathtaking! It was nothing compared to any of the other treks I had done. One by one everyone from the group reached the summit and everyone had tears in their eyes, of course, happy tears. We sat there, saw the view, took photos and wrote letters to our loved ones and cried some more as we started walking back. This was my first solo Himalayan summit and this is a priceless achievement for me.

-Sara
When my dad asked me “Hey, wanna go on an adventure?”, I didn’t expect it to be an actual adventure, but oh boy was I wrong. We had absolutely nothing planned other than where we were going. At first I wasn’t very keen on going on this trip, usually the trips I go on are extremely planned out because of my mom (she likes to organise everything), so going on this spontaneous and unplanned trip was a first. Our first destination was Yercaud, (this was before the class Yercaud trip). So we left the house and after an hour of driving, I started to look for places to stay and it was kind of harder than I thought. A place like Yercaud has a lot of tourists so I assumed it had good hotels but all the good hotels were quite expensive. Anyways while struggling to find a place, we finally reached.

We kept driving around just to see if there were any good hotels, but we ended up finding a hotel online that looked pretty good and had a great price. Yercaud was amazing, the moment we started driving up the mountain you could feel the cold wind hit your face. And as a person that is usually in hot climates, being able to see so much fog was amazing. At the start we got a bit lost trying to get to the hotel, but I’m kind of glad we did because we stepped outside of the car to scope out the surroundings, and in that moment I was just really happy, we were outside the Yercaud town area so it was just us in the woods surrounded by fog. The fog was actually getting thicker by the minute and when we got back in the car to get to the hotel, you could only see like 6 metres in front of you which is kind of scary while you’re driving on a hillside.

After we reached the hotel, we stayed there for a few days, went to eat outside a few times, go buy some food, chill and take some photos of the landscape, all in all Yercaud was great.
After that I thought we were just going home, but no, we were going to the border of Kerala to go to a nature reserve called “Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary”. By this time, I had started to feel sick and starting getting a headache, but I didn’t think much of it. Later into the drive it got a lot worse. At this point it was night and we were crossing the border of Kerala. My headache was getting worse as time passed and to add to it, at some point we got lost. But at that time I was too tired to care and just passed out.

When we made it, the first thing I did was jump onto the bed and relax. When I woke up I still had a headache but I couldn’t care less because the scenery in the place we were staying was so gorgeous. It was such a nice atmosphere, the wind blowing in your face, listening to the bells of the cattle while you lay down in the soft meadows. It was a wildlife sanctuary so we did see some animals. On the way to the place we were staying at, we saw some wild elephants and while I was just walking around the place, I saw a wild rabbit and also a few deer. And there was this dog that stayed at the place we were staying. His name was Simba and at the start he just kept barking and jumping at me, actually he never stopped doing that, he just started to like me more and more. He also had a tiny puppy, they were both so adorable and great company.

The place we were staying at also had some other animals, like rabbits and chickens, which I got to pet. After staying there for a few days it was time to leave, and at that point my headache had gotten slightly better but on the trip back home it got so much worse. Overall it was a fun and interesting experience, I’ve never gone on a trip like it, just stepping into the unknown and just going with the flow is pretty fun.

- Ren

My Visit To Kochi

I went to Kochi with my mom for a week. We went by train but I got really sick on the train, I think I ate something weird. We took a rickshaw from the railway station and I felt dizzy during the ride. When we finally arrived at our guest house I threw up outside from the rickshaw window. I felt much better after that but still had no energy to walk so I had to stay at the guest house the whole day. Next day I felt much better so me and my mom went out to explore Fort Kochi and the Biennale. The ocean was very close to where we were staying so the wind was cool and nice. We visited many exhibitions and among them, there were students’ exhibitions too. What they made was really creative and fun to look. The huge goddess figure with all the colorful recycled items was my favorite. In Fort Kochi, there were lots of pretty cafes and restaurants too.

We took a lot of photos and had a great time. Also it was a very artistic place, many hand made products were displayed nicely in shops. Also there were a lot of paintings on the wall, so the street looked very beautiful and alive. Kochi had exported a lot of spices abroad since 15 century and had been colonized by many different countries. We visited many heritage places like Portuguese Cathedral, Dutch Warehouse, Pepper House, Jewish Street, Chinese Fishing Net, etc. Kochi was very different from where I live, there were no cows on the street but only goats and I heard it rains for 6 months during the monsoon. I think since India is such a huge country, it would be very interesting to travel the whole Indian land. Anyway I really enjoyed staying in Kochi.

- Lea
Day 4 was one of the most awaited things on this trip, the Double Decker Living Root Bridge. We thought it would be a nice, happy trek down the mountain but it turned out to be a soul sucking one. The trek however, was definitely worth it!! It was basically 3500 steps to reach down the valley to the tribal root bridges and back the same number of steps. You might think “that’s not much” and I agree, but when it’s on a really steep mountain with tiny steps and you have to walk pretty much like a penguin, it is a LOT. Anyway, even though my legs were crying in pain, the view was soooooooooooo beautiful!!!!! especially the Blue Lagoon enroute that was so pretty, the water was literally crystal clear and also had its own small waterfall!!

Next morning, Day 3, was Sohra exploration. We visited the Nohkalikai Falls which are the tallest plunge waterfall in India. The falls also have a really gruesome backstory, on how they were named, that I would have liked to write, but it will take up a lot of space. We then visited Natural Caves called Arwah and Mawsmai that have a lot of Stalagmite and Stalactite formations.

A place called the Garden of Caves also had a root waterfall, bamboo bridge, healing stone water source and a beautiful forest all around. The people of Meghalaya are really nice and down-to-earth, considering they live in the mountains. That night we stayed in a homestay and the room was really tiny for the three of us but the ambience was really comforting in the cold weather of Meghalaya.

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After 1 and a half hours, we had finally reached the double decker root bridge! It definitely was a lot better than what I expected, it was just WOW! There was a three decker pool and each pool fell into the next one and again the water was really clear. We sat there for around two hours, and while my sister played in the pools my mom and I ate hot Maggi (made on a chulha-wood fire, which makes every kind of food taste a 100x better) while enjoying the whole landscape around us.
The trek back was really hot and we had to walk way too much. When we reached the Blue Lagoon, we decided to swim there. According to the locals, the water was room temperature, but when we entered the water, I thought I was going to die of hypothermia. It was sooo cold, but it was still fun. Once we were done swimming, we climbed back the rest of the way. That night we stayed at Pongtung. At around 1am, it started raining, not cats and dogs, but mammoths and dinosaurs! And for someone who loves rain, I was absolutely terrified. It felt like a cloud burst and I thought the whole place would flood. The next day we talked to some people and when we mentioned how heavy the rain was last night, they were so calm and said “Oh yeah it was just a drizzle, not much rain”. I was so surprised but I guess it makes sense, considering we were in on of the rainiest place on earth (it’s actually a place called Mawsynram, but we were in the same state too...)

Another thing about this river and its banks is that it is divided between two countries; India and Bangladesh - so we were surprised to see that some river rocks served as an imaginary border between people on either side. We camped further downstream in a place called Shnongpdeng. To get to the campsite, we had to cross a metal bridge that was shaky, it took five minutes. Arriving in the dark with a power outage made it a pretty scary adventure. The next day we headed to Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. Enroute, we also saw the Nartiang Monoliths - Rocks cut like huge pillars used as thrones and worshiped as gods of the tribals in ancient times.

The next day, we drove to Kaziranga National Park in Assam and saw the One-horned Rhino, and it turns out they aren’t as big as I thought. We also saw animals like wild water buffaloes, snake birds, wild boar, deers, etc. Our lunch was at an authentic Assamese restaurant where we ate tasty river fish. In the evening we watched a cultural program that portrayed the various instruments and tribal dances of Assam and I loved one particular dance that was dedicated to a snake goddess called Manasa.

The dance was awesome, the lights were red and the lady opened her hair and danced really wildly. Our next destination was Majuli, a river island in the Brahmaputra (which we crossed by a ferry) one of the largest rivers in the world. That night we stayed in a bamboo stilt house, it was the best place we stayed at till now. The island is also famous for its Hindu monasteries that pass on age old skills and knowledge to the next generations. Before we returned back to Guwahati, we visited Charaideo Maidam that has the burial grounds of Ahom Dynasty Kings of Assam.

These large mud mounds look similar to Egyptian Pyramids and were graves for the royals. Next, we went to Sivasagar, where we visited palaces of the Ahom dynasty. On our last day, we visited a River Heritage Museum and crossed the Brahmaputra using a ropeway. We ended the day in Guwahati with a sunset cruise and loads of shopping. This is finally the end of my trip. I have to say, it’s one of the best ones I’ve gone on. Hope you enjoyed this article.

- Aneeka
**The Body: A Guide For Occupants**

So, this book is about the human body. It tells you mostly everything you want to know about our bodies in an appealing way. I also like the sequence of the chapters, it starts from the head, to the heart etc... basically from top to bottom, which I found cool. This book was really interesting and fun to read, especially because of the way it’s written.

While it is very informative, Bill Bryson has kept it chatty and humorous so you don’t get bored of just getting information in every sentence.

One good thing about this book is that you can read it as a story, or as an encyclopedia; whenever you need to know something, just go to that page and learn.

I would give this book a 10/10 simply because it’s easy to understand and straight to the point.

- **Aneeka**

**SHAZAM!**

Shazam 2 was definitely above expectations. I only watched the Shazam movies because I was invited to watch them at the cinema.

Unlike most movies nowadays, this movie has a decent storyline and excellent graphics. What makes the movie even more promising is that it is an action comedy film. It has endless jokes and puns, which lighten the mood and makes the movie more fun.

Billy, the main character not only struggles to defeat the antagonists but also to gain the attention and respect of his friends and companions. So even as the protagonists try to defeat the “bad guys”, they are divided.

All the heroes want to do their own thing, with Billy trying to keep everyone together. But with the help of a wise old man, a herd of angry unicorns, and Shazam, they must undo all the damage that was done to their town.

- **Turiya**
I actually spoiled myself for this album, I listened to most of the songs before listening to the album as a whole, which I usually don’t like doing. I prefer to just experience the album as a whole instead of small bits and pieces of it that don’t add up. But even with that, relistening to the album as a whole was a pretty pleasant experience.

Glass Animals has grown on me quite quickly after I started listening to their albums. They have quite an array of genres under their belt, it actually got me confused on which genre this album was. But mainly their genres are Psychedelic, Indie rock, Alternative, R&B and has been inspired by a lot of Hip Hop. Their production is usually amazing and most definitely their best part. Their lyrics are questionable, not meaning that they’re bad but literally quite odd, but it creates a kind of aesthetic and I do like it. Speaking of aesthetics, Glass Animals are the kings of aesthetics, every album has their own vibe and it’s just amazing. And for this album the aesthetics do not fail, the feel that you get from it is a kind of nostalgic and dreamy, it makes sense they would call it Dreamland.

The album is split into three different parts, Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood, with all the songs representing which section they come from. For example the song “Hot sugar” is about a person who thinks they’re falling in love with another person, when in reality they just find the other person’s personality cool. And in the end nothing happens between the two. Do you see how it works? That story is a story that would most probably happen in your teenage or adolescent years, while watching one of your parents go through a domestic relationship while you are clueless and helpless to do anything (which happens on the song “Domestic Bliss”) is probably something that might happen in your childhood. Or at least these things happened to Dave Bayley (The founder, writer, producer and lead vocalist of the band) at these ages.

I would love to dive into a few more songs but that would take too much time and space. My favourite songs are Hot sugar, Heat waves, Waterfalls coming out your mouth, It’s All So Incredibly Loud, Tangerine and Helium. I basically named all of the songs so that was useless. I would rate it a 6.5/10. WARNING it does include some swearing

-Ren
The streets are filled with life
Colours splashing around, almost alive
Husbands spending time with their wife
Happiness flooding the town, what we all strive
A wave of people dancing on the square
Cold wind flowing through your hair
The blue air leaks out from the sky
Drinking cold lemonade gives a different kind of high

The harmony crafted by the musicians
Creates magic like no magicians
The melody makes the whole world dance
The harmony makes even the stars sing
The music itself would put you in a trance
In here we all live like kings
Confetti swimming with the breeze
Every day is a celebration
The birds chirping happily in the trees
Every day is like imagination
My mind is so full of ideas yet clear
If happiness was a place it would be here

Your wide contagious smile circling in my head
The more I’m with you, the more I start to dread
Your beauty stuns me to my greatest core
Every second that goes by, I love you more and more
Your inside is even more gorgeous than your out
Generous, kind, funny, just amazing throughout
You complete my life, maybe it was fated
Life itself was amazed of what it created
I would even sign a vow
That says if happiness was a time it would be now
And at this moment I knew
That if happiness was a person it would be you

"We'll be back with our next and for some of us last issue... See ya soon!!"