



## Celebrating the 76th Republic Day

*"I want all people to be Indians first, Indian last and nothing else but Indians" - Dr B. R. Ambedkar*



Our junior school students presented a colourful cultural program on the eve of Republic Day. It began with the 'Nanhe Sipahi', (little soldiers) of classes I to V and Navjeevan performing a march past. Students of classes IV and V smartly executed a dumbbell drill, followed by an enlightening speech reiterating the importance of the day by Swastika of class VIII. A play on Khudiram Bose, the young freedom fighter, was presented through yoga postures, ending with a dance performance paying tributes to Bhagat Singh, another freedom fighter. Tanvi of class VI appraised the audience about the contribution of Dr B.R. Ambedkar in drafting our constitution.

Complementing the theme of the day, a street play outlining the importance of the fundamental rights and duties of every Indian was enacted. The program concluded on a cheerful note with an energetic group dance on a medley of nationalistic songs.

Republic Day was celebrated in a traditional manner on our sports field. The School Principal, Ms Diana Luji, was escorted to the stage by the School Captains, where she unfurled the National Flag and returned the salute of marching students. Thereafter, she addressed the students and staff, emphasising that with rights come responsibilities and that we must be mindful of our duties as citizens of India. Laddoos were distributed to students to mark the proud occasion.



## **Inter School Youth Competition**

*“Every child is a born optimist; he dreams golden dreams”*

*- Swami Vivekananda*



As part of their National Youth Day celebrations, our students were invited by Ramakrishna Mission, Dehradun, to participate in an Inter School Youth Competition

The competition was organized to inspire fearlessness, self-discipline, willpower and nurture the latent potential in students. The competition had three sections: drawing, speech and recitation. The topic for the drawing competition was informed beforehand and reference material for the speech and recitation were provided by the organisers. Five of our students from class V registered for this event. Som appeared in the drawing competition for the topic 'Save Nature, Save Future'. Pavani gave a speech in Hindi on '*Shanti*', while Aradhya made an English speech titled, 'Peace'. In the recitation category, Ansh gave a rendition of '*Vivekananda Rashtra ko Avahan*' in Hindi and Aliya orated on 'Faith and Strength' in English.

A cultural programme and prize distribution ceremony was held on 26th January in which winners were awarded and all participants received certificates.

We are happy to advise that among students from 14 participating schools, Pavani bagged the second position in Hindi speech and Ansh was placed third in Hindi recitation. Both of them received a certificate, a book on Vivekananda and a packet of incense sticks, as prizes.

## Expanding the Horizon

*"The world is a classroom, with every step taken, a new horizon appears"*



As is our practice, at the end of the winter vacation, staff returned to campus two days before the students and undertook a series of activities. The intent was to set goals for the upcoming term as well as attend development workshops conducted by guest trainers. The Secretary wished everyone for the New Year and briefly spoke about implementation of the school principles. Dr Sugandha Gupta, the guest trainer for the day, was introduced by our Principal.

Dr Sugandha is a Ph. D in Behavioral Finance and an Assistant Professor at Jagan Institute of Management Studies, Delhi. The core aim of her workshop was to make the participants better aware of their personality traits, thus enhancing their emotional quotient. They were taken through a series of activities that encouraged them to ruminate, step out of their comfort zone and interact with colleagues. Participants enjoyed tackling group assignments that tested their creative skills, agility and coordination. Time flew by and it was only when the evening tea arrived that everyone realised it was time to close for the day.

The next morning, a teacher from the Vipassana Meditation Centre introduced

Vipassana Meditation to all staff members. He explained both the concept and process with the help of audio-visuals. Attendees were asked to close their eyes and meditate by focusing on their breathing. The objective was to calm the mind and be in the moment. He suggested that this simple exercise could bring down anxiety levels and increase work efficiency. Even those who could not sit still for long felt peaceful; while others were intrigued and enquired about how they could enrol for a vipassana retreat.

The next part of the day was led by the members of the Outward Bound India Himalaya' (OBIH) organisation. OBIH was started in 1941 by a German educator, who believed, "We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything else". The team conducted interesting exercises for the staff including 'Tell your birth date', Trust Walk, Micro Lab, Magic Mats and PYDS Cafe. These were designed to promote leadership qualities, build trust, innovate solutions, develop good communication in fun filled ways. The aim was to hone leadership qualities among teachers and motivate them to integrate subjects with the outdoors.

Both days were enjoyed by the staff making them enthusiastic to welcome students back.

## Careers of the Future Summit 2025

*"The great growling engine of change technology" - Alvin Toffler*



Amazon's Future Engineer (AFE) Program was launched in 2021, with a mission to bridge the digital divide and promote computer science education in underserved communities. At the Careers of the Future Summit 2025, held at Taj Palace, New Delhi on 21st January, Amazon announced scholarships for 500 girl students pursuing undergraduate degrees in Computer Science or related fields. These scholarships are for ₹2 lakhs each and include additional support such as mentorship, coding boot camps and personal laptops. The summit began with a short film by Amazon introducing initiatives under the AFE program in India. Mr Akashdeep Thapa, our Tinkering Lab facilitator, represented our school at this event. He interacted with participants and saw their projects on robotics and physical computing. Several topics were discussed during the summit such as: Careers of the Future: What Does It Mean for Students, Computer Science in Schools: Reaching the Last Mile, Mind to Market: Stories of Trailblazers, Bridging the Gaps Between Education and Industry for a Future-Ready Workforce.

Towards the end of the program, AFE partners were felicitated and participating students were recognised. Mr Akashdeep found the event insightful and is keen that our students apply for the scholarships. This will be pursued.

## Jagar the Folklore of Uttarakhand

*"Uttarakhand is not just a place, it is a feeling that touches your soul and captivates you"- Dheeraj Bisht*



At PYDS, we encourage experiential learning and education beyond the classroom at all levels. To educate our students about the culture and tradition of Uttarakhand, the Jagar Program was introduced during the academic year 2024-25. The roots of Jagar can be found embedded in the ancient practices and folklore of Uttarakhand. The term Jagar translates to rousing the gods from their slumber to invoke divine blessings in the lives of devotees. Its practices demonstrate a fine blend of devotion, tradition and community spirit of the region.

The program was conducted for the 50 students of class VII, under the guidance of Ms Khushboo Bharti, Assistant Professor at UPES School of Design. This was done with the help of two teachers, Shri Uttam Das, an award-winning Jagar performer who has been honoured with the President's Award, and Shri Harish Sharma, a teacher of regional songs and musical instruments of Uttarakhand.

The Jagar teachers taught students the various aspects related to the culture, tradition, heritage, folklore, dance, music, and attire of Jagar. Teachers attended these sessions with students and integrated them with their class lessons.

**Hindi:** Teachers connected literature with Jagar through lessons on rivers, puppets and the sweet vendor. Inspired by Jagar songs, students created new characters.

**English:** Class discussions were held on the essence of Jagar. The students read Jagar stories and identified adverbs in them. They wrote about the attire of Jagar artists and summarized the lyrics of Achari Jagar.

**Science:** Students researched the names and materials used for Jagar instruments, fabrics and costumes. They prepared a report on the climatic conditions and flora and fauna of the different areas of Uttarakhand where Jagar is practised.

**Social Studies:** Students researched the history of Jagar and discussed equality, kings, kingdoms, caste taboo, architecture and similar.

**Tinkering:** Innovative working prototypes of the Dhol and Damau were created in the Tinkering Lab, using arduino-based automation.

**Art:** Students drew folk paintings inspired by Jagar traditions and crafted traditional jewellery of Uttarakhand. They made Pichodi dupattas by the tie and dye process.

**Music:** The importance of classical folk music and the method of correct operation of notes were taught. Children learned to play different kinds of Jagar taals and song notations on the tabla and harmonium. Students assembled a set of the Dhol

and Damau instruments on campus under the guidance of Harish Sir.

**Dance:** Students were made aware of the connection between classical and folk dance with Jagar storytelling; teaching them about hand movements, body posture, footsteps etc. They were taught to dance to the beats of the Dhol Damau instruments.

### **Jagar Trip to Chandrabadni Temple:**

With a view to providing first hand exposure to the students of the program, a two day trip to Chandrabadni Temple and nearby villages in district Tehri Garhwal was undertaken. The temple is popular among devotees and seekers of adventure alike; as a pilgrimage destination and the mesmerising views of the Himalayas it offers.

The final stretch to the temple is approachable only on foot. The students and 12 accompanying teachers enjoyed trekking to the top, absorbing the serene atmosphere and breathtaking views. Along the way, they learned about the local flora, taking note of the names and benefits of various shrubs and trees. On reaching the temple entrance, our group was met by two Jagar musicians playing the Dhol and Damau, to which the students danced spontaneously. Harish Sir appraised our group with the history and significance of the temple and its surroundings.

The next stop was at Pujar village, 10 kilometers away from the temple. Here our students met Shri Sohan Lal, a renowned Dhol and Achari dance maestro. He, along with 8 local artists, gave a presentation of the Dhol, Damau, Masak Been, Binai and Ransingha instruments. The artists spoke about the history of their instruments while explaining the various taals of Jagar. They also talked about the storytelling traditions of Jagar and its role in shaping the socio-cultural landscape of Uttarakhand. The session concluded with a lively performance of Mandan beats, which had everyone up and dancing. Warmed up, students freely mingled with villagers inquiring about them, demographics of the area and migration issues.

As a part of the trip, the students also visited the Central Sanskrit University at Devprayag, where they were welcomed with the chanting of traditional benedictory Sanskrit verses. Their staff gave a brief introduction about the University and Devprayag's history. Our Principal Ms Diana Luji told them about our school and the Jagar Program and how the initiative plays a role in preserving the folk music and culture of Uttarakhand. Harish Sir played the Masak Been and spoke about its history. Our group was given a tour of various labs where they learned about scientific instruments and their names in Sanskrit. Our students then presented a song and dance performance in gratitude for the opportunity to visit the university.



Thereafter, the PYDS group visited the confluence of the holy rivers, Alaknanda and Bhagirathi, that flow on as the Ganga river. They observed the different colours and patterns of the two rivers and attended the Ganga Aarti at dusk.



### **The Finale:**

The year long program had its finale on the 31st of January with an exhibition and stage performances by class VII students.

Friends and well wishers of PYDS were invited to grace the show. The program commenced with a grand procession of students marching perfectly synchronised to the beats of Dhol, Damau, Ransingha and Mashakbeen. The guests were then escorted to the exhibitions, displaying the varied aspects of Uttarakhand's Jagar heritage.

The exhibition presented a vivid display of models, artwork, charts and photographs of the Jagar Project. Presenters, dressed up in traditional attires to emphasize the context of exhibits, which they explained in detail. The working model of the Dhol created by students was attached to a human model, playing in automation. A large map of Uttarakhand highlighting the regions and important landmarks along with a village model showcased the typical rural setup of the State. The guests viewed the exhibits with interest and generously appreciated the efforts of our children before moving on to the auditorium.

After the lighting of the lamp by guests, students presented the opening song and dance performance, transporting the attendees to the scene of Holi celebrations.

Thereafter, Arti of grade VII introduced Jagar, explaining its rich cultural significance in Uttarakhand, while a video on the journey of the Jagar Program through the year was shown. Manvi, Priyanshi and Aryan went on stage, dressed in traditional Uttarakhand attires and elaborated on the attributes of regional costumes and jewellery of the Kumaon and Garhwal regions. A video film followed in which Shri Harish Sharma, the Jagar music performer, spoke about the significance of the Ghughuti bird (Eurasian Collared Dove) in the ecosystem of Uttarakhand and its role in Jagar rituals and folklore.

The highlight of the event was the performance, written and composed by Shri Uttam Das, where students sang "*Furr Udhh Ghughuti*", a call to the birds of Uttarakhand, symbolizing the harmonious relationship between humans and the environment. Garima narrated a story that reiterated the importance of the Ghughuti bird, appealing to all to preserve the biodiversity and culture of Uttarakhand.

As dance is the soul of cultural expression, Jagar folk songs, "Hey Nanda, hey Gaura" and "Pandav Jagar" were performed by seven students, concluding the event on a pleasant, energetic note.

The Guest of Honour, Mr Upendra Dutt Tripathi of Orbis Financial Corporation Limited, addressed the audience, appreciating the students' efforts in presenting Uttarakhand's kaleidoscopic culture in such a delightful manner. The smiles that our guests wore, testified that the efforts of our students had crossed the boundaries of our school.



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