

Your Purkal Journal

February 2026



"Let's raise star gazing, tree hugging, forest wandering, cloud watching children and watch them change the world"

Pushkin Chandra Memorial Competition

"A reason to read, to speak, to feel, and to be heard"



The Pushkin Chandra Memorial Competition was held on 14 February in the school auditorium. It was initiated by Late Shri Anil Chandra ji, an IAS Officer and author, in the memory of his son, a man who wanted young children to develop the same love for languages that had helped shape his own life.

The participants of Classes I to V, Navjeevan batches 7 and 8, began preparation before the winter break itself. The teachers chose poems written by Indian poets, picked thoughtful words, and sent everything home handwritten for students to practise. Back in school, the focus shifted to pronunciation, eye contact, and voice modulation, with mic rehearsals held two days before the competition. To provide context, the stage was decorated with hand painted trees, paper birds, and wooden boards carrying words like "Thank You" and "Sorry."

The competition moved through poetry and storytelling in Hindi and English. The Hindi poetry round was built around *Navrasa*, the nine emotions of Indian classical tradition. This year, children who had not performed on stage previously were given prominent slots. Two short plays marked the culmination of the program - one on old age homes, the second on social media. To test the message's effectiveness, when the Principal asked how many students planned to remove unnecessary apps, most hands in the audience went up.

One moment stood apart when Lakshmi, from the Navjeevan batch 7, performed on stage in English. Hailing from the remote village of Supi in Nainital, this was something she had never attempted before. Until recently, the mere thought of it would make her cry. However, on this day, she took the stage and performed with

complete confidence. The stage that once felt impossible had, in that moment, truly become hers.

We are proud of our two first time anchors, Divyansh and Manvi, who held the three-hour programme together.



SAKHI

"Dance is the hidden language of the soul" - Martha Graham



Class IX hostellers and Aditi Thapa (Class XI dance elective) had the opportunity to watch SAKHI, a dance theatre performance by the Keelaka Dance Company at DIT University, Dehradun, on 22 February. The performers brought together Bharatanatyam and contemporary dance form, telling old stories with a modern twist.

It wove together the lives of Sita and Draupadi, two women from different ages, separated by time but joined by a shared question about their character, choices, and dignity. The show did not merely retell their stories, it depicted them with honest creativity. Carnatic music provided the backdrop to every scene. At one point, red and yellow light fell on a stretch of cloth to suggest fire. Students who had only read about Sita's agnipariksha watched it become something they could feel.

The performance closed with a quiet thought: that every woman holds both Sita and Draupadi within her. One, a steadiness that does not break. The other, a courage that does not look away. The students did not need it explained. Between watching and wanting to try it themselves, something quietly began to change in them.

Aditi Thapa spoke at length about what she had been watching, how the dancers used their eyes, their hands, and the smallest movement of a wrist to hold the audience. She said she wanted to carry that into her own dance. The performance inspired students to recreate the act and present it at a school event.

Guzheng, Triangle, Ganza, Sitar and the Sounds in Between

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything"

Tender Roots Music Session



The school auditorium came alive on a February morning with the Tender Roots music session for students of Classes VIII, IX, and XI. Two visiting artists, Ms Yip Hei Man, a guzheng player from Hong Kong, and Ms Tais Reganelli, a singer and songwriter from Brazil, introduced the students to musical traditions from their countries.

Ms Reganelli began with a rhythm exercise, asking students to listen to everyday sounds and turn them into beats. The hall soon filled with claps, taps, and simple rhythms created together. She introduced Brazilian instruments such as the ganza and triangle. Aviral Dhiman of Class VIII and Sonali Jadwan of Class XI came on stage and, with guidance, played a short melody. Ms Yip then demonstrated the guzheng, explaining its 21 strings and showing how it could create different moods through varying tunes.

The session ended with a duet of “Amazing Grace,” combining the guzheng with a Brazilian rhythm instrument. The morning became more than a musical performance. It offered the students a glimpse into cultures beyond their own and showed them how art can bring people together without the need for translation. The experience left them with a deeper appreciation for music as a shared human language and a reminder that creativity can connect hearts across the world.



A Sitar Jugalbandi



The evening of 24 February began with a Sitar Jugalbandi in the Hindustani classical tradition. The artists, Dr Murchana Adhikary Barthakur and Pandit Abhishek Adhikary, have taken their music across Indian and international stage. Pandit Abhishek carries a tradition that goes back eight generations. On the tabla was our music teacher, Deepak Bhardwaj Sir, seated alongside them on stage. On taanpura was Mukul Sundriyal from Pauri Garhwal, a student of Pandit Abhishek for three years.

The recital moved through three ragas - Bhimpalasi, Bihag, and a closing Bhairavi Dhun. Bhimpalasi and Bhairavi were the ragas that the Class XI students had already been practising in music sessions. Before the final *dhun*, Dr Murchana asked the audience: "Did you like your own Indian classical music?" She said that classical music, when listened to with patience, becomes a form of meditation.

Then the artists invited eight students, six to sing, two on pakhawaj, on stage with them. They performed "जा जा रे अपने मंदिरवा" in raag Bhimpalasi, the same raag they had just heard on the sitar. Ranu Chauhan of Class IX got the opportunity to perform with such eminent artists for the first time.

Himanshu Kumar of Class XI shared afterwards: "कमी प्रतिभा में नहीं, हिम्मत में थी।" The talent was always there, what the evening gave him was the courage to believe it.

ARTIST SHARING THE STAGE WITH PYDS STUDENTS



Mindfulness in Education Workshop

"When we pause, we begin to see"



For two days, 16 and 17 February, the school auditorium became a classroom for forty one teachers. The Soul Diets Foundation conducted a workshop on Mindfulness in Education, intending to reduce educator's burnout, manage stress,

and enhance classroom management by fostering emotional regulation and presence. Mrs Dimple Mehta, Founder and CEO of Soul Diets Foundation, and Mrs Simran Nagpal, an educational trainer, led the sessions.

The first day commenced with a discussion on honesty. Teachers shared their daily challenges: students losing focus, resisting writing, and behaving differently at home and at school. Mrs Mehta listened attentively and suggested various perspectives on these situations. For instance, a child who spent two developmental years in pandemic induced isolation is not being disrespectful; that is simply what normal came to mean for them. Recognising this, she said, is the first step toward fostering a thoughtful classroom. In another exercise, teachers were asked to say the alphabet with numbers in a single breath. With no one succeeding, they realised that multitasking does not split attention; it reduces it.

On the second day, primary students joined the session. Mrs Mehta instructed them to close their eyes and listen carefully to the sounds around them. When asked what a detective does, one child replied, "*Someone who finds lost clothes.*" Mrs Mehta smiled and replied that the person is called a mother, and the room laughed. Later, two teachers with their eyes closed felt the texture of a stone and a petal, discovering both were softer than expected. Mrs Mehta related this to the classroom, emphasising that students who seem tough often have more tender needs than their behaviour suggests.

The feedback from the teachers' post workshop was sincere and insightful. Our teacher, Manisha Negi, said she would consider her students' perspectives before reacting. Another teacher, Deepika Bishnoi, noted that students are far more mindful than teachers often assume. Overall, the message was clear: since children spend much of their formative years at school, a teacher's inner state directly influences their teaching. This is the first impression students internalise, highlighting the importance of the teacher's mindset in the classroom.

Science Quiz and Change Maker Campaign

"Competing teaches more than winning ever could"



The seventeenth Inter-School Junior Science Quiz 'Quest' and the fourth Change Maker Campaign were held at The Doon Girls' School, Dehradun, on 24 February. Vaishnavi Nautiyal of Class IV, Sonakshi Rawat of Class V and Som Semwal of Class VI represented the school in the quiz. Ten schools competed in total, and our school finished in sixth place.

Som spoke honestly about the result, *"we did not win,"* he said, *"but we learned many things."* The students may not have reached the finals but they returned stronger. Having worked together as a team, presented in front of strangers, and gained insights into how students from other schools tackled similar problems.

Two students from Class VI, Ansh Chauhan and Vishakha Bisht, took part in the Change Maker Campaign. Under the guidance of their Tinkering Lab teacher, Akashdeep Sir, they spent ten days building a Smart Food Container. The device detects gases such as methane and ammonia released by decaying food and triggers a red light to show that the food is no longer safe to eat. They presented their work to the judges and received praise from the panel, along with participation certificates.

National Science Day

"The important thing is to not stop questioning" - Albert Einstein



On the morning of 28 February, students gathered on the sports field to celebrate National Science Day, honouring Sir C. V. Raman's discovery of the Raman Effect in 1928. This year's theme, "Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat," was woven through all of the presentations and activities prepared by the students. Kajal from Navjeevan batch 7 opened the morning assembly with C. V. Raman's life story, what he discovered, and why his work retains its relevance a century later. Shivangi from the same batch shared intriguing science facts like honey never spoils, cockroaches can live without heads, etc., and the young students listened with visible curiosity.

In the afternoon, the sports ground was filled with students taking part in the poster making competition. Classes I and II are themed around nature and its life cycles. Classes III, IV, and Navjeevan batch 8 worked on saving the environment. Class V and Navjeevan batch 7 took up this year's national theme as mentioned above. Somewhere between the colours and the music playing in the background, learning happened with quiet intensity.

In the auditorium, Class XI students began the program with an engaging science quiz. The quiz featured eleven questions, ranging from the chemical symbol for

water to India's "missile woman," Dr Tessy Thomas. Students in the audience called out the answers, and it felt more like a game than a test. Middle school students performed a skit titled "Baba vs Science," which humorously showcased the chemistry behind illusions. They demonstrated how substances like calcium carbide, potassium permanganate, and potassium nitrate can be used to create these illusions.

Class XI then presented "Vigyan Vaibhav: The Eternal Relay," highlighting historical figures such as Aryabhata, Sushruta, Lilavati, and Gargi Vachaknavi. When Ujjwal, portraying Aryabhata, recited his shloka about the moving boat and the stationary shore, the audience fell silent in awe. Students also explored an exhibition of working models created by Class IX students, with the guidance of their Class XI seniors. The models included a DNA structure, a kidney model, a planetarium, a telescope, a periscope, a hydraulic lift, and many others that they had been making since February 10.

In her closing remarks, Archana Ma'am, our science department coordinator, encouraged students to remain curious about the world around them. The Society Secretary emphasised that science is not something to be afraid of and more students should avail themselves of the superior facilities offered by PYDS to pursue careers in science and technology.

The day brought history, chemistry, astronomy, and mathematics together in one place. Ultimately, what resonated most was a simple truth: the questions students ask in class are the same ones that have historically driven discovery. The students gazed at the same sky once observed by Aryabhata. Science is not a distant phenomenon occurring elsewhere; it is present here, every day, all the time.

Welcoming the Class I and VI Admittees

"Every child's journey begins with trust"



After the entrance test in early December, the teachers carefully reviewed each application. They compiled details of all the registered students, simultaneously highlighting the neediest among them. To better understand the background of each applicant, home surveys were scheduled for January. Primary teachers travelled to various villages and neighbourhoods to visit the families. These visits helped verify the information provided during registration and allowed teachers to witness the socio-economic realities of the families firsthand.

During the surveys, practical aspects were also considered. The location of each home was noted to ensure that children would have easy access to school bus routes. Overall route distribution was maintained to avoid overcrowding and ensure smooth transportation for the students. February brought the results of all their efforts. Out of the 107 students who had initially registered, 10 boys and 14 girls were selected for Class I, along with 8 students for Class VI. As every year, having to say no to the unsuccessful was the hardest part of the process.

On February 28, the selected students and their families arrived on campus to complete the admission formalities. The Secretary welcomed them and spoke about the shared responsibility in providing the newly admitted children with good values, quality education and holistic care. He asked parents to comply with the school's principles and requirements at all times, communicate freely with the teachers and build bonds of trust.

Most of the families had come from villages and suburbs around the school. One father had travelled from Sahastradhara, nearly eighteen kilometres away, and sat quietly in the front row with his daughter, a polybag of documents between them.

Among those admitted to Class I was Aakriti, whose mother is partially blind. Each family that morning had made a special effort to be there, and the school welcomed each one and took them all into its little family.

A Day at Cafe Commune

"Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I remember. Involve me, and I will learn"



Forty-two students from Class V and the Navjeevan batch 7 travelled to Cafe Commune in Sinaloa, Dehradun, on February 21 for the FUEL (Forward the Understanding of Every Life Lesson) Wisdom Festival. Project FUEL is dedicated to

the philosophy of learning from every life experience. They work to share life lessons from individuals by converting them into impactful educational and artistic projects that inspire and connect people around the world.

That morning, before the bus left, a few students were quietly applying Vaseline to their black shoes to make them shine. No one had asked them to; they simply understood that this day was worth sprucing up for. The vibrant stalls and an invigorating atmosphere welcomed the students promising a delightful day ahead. From engaging in traditional Garhwali music to participating in hands-on workshops about recycling and creativity, the students had the opportunity to enhance their artistic skills while learning about the importance of sustainability. One of the highlights of the festival was creating art from old clothes, which not only showcased their creativity but also taught them valuable lessons about reusing and repurposing materials.

The festival emphasised the idea that every experience can teach us something meaningful, encouraging students to think outside the box and embrace new challenges with an open mind. They returned with newfound knowledge and inspiration, ready to apply these lessons in their everyday lives. This kind of experiential learning fosters growth and a deeper understanding of the world around them, proving that education extends far beyond the classroom.

We are proud of ... Ankit Naudiyal

"From humble village roots to remarkable success"



Ankit's family moved from the small village of Pauri Garhwal to Dehradun in search of livelihood. His father worked as a grocery store attendant, and his mother was a cook at Mr Swamy's home. In addition to receiving evening tuitions from Mr Swamy, he was financially supported by a generous donor for his studies from Class VI to XII. Ankit completed his schooling at Jaswant Modern School and in 2009, secured admission in DIT University, Dehradun to pursue B.Tech in Computer Science, becoming the first student in our 'On to Life' program designed to support deserving students attain professional qualifications. After graduating, he joined Infosys as a Senior Systems Engineer, then moved to KPMG Global Services in Gurgaon as an Associate Consultant. He has recently moved to Morgan Stanley, a global investment bank in London.

Ankit shares...

"I have always been fascinated by technology and wanted to do something in that

field. Despite the place where I come from, PYDS empowered me to try to build my skills and gave me the strength and courage to think that I could do something in this space. The school has been very supportive and foundational in whatever I do today. It really helped me, and not just me, but many other students. The school also supported me financially for my graduation.

I have been to many places, many schools, and interacted with many people, and I think PYDS is one of the best schools in the world. It provides facilities like tinkering labs, sports and extracurricular activities along with academics. Some of the best teachers, helping staff, and everybody dedicated to this place with their hearts and souls, contribute to the cause of giving back to society.

Coming from a small village like mine, where it is not easy to dream big or think differently from those around you, this school gave me the confidence and strength to look beyond those limits and believe that I could achieve more. I am truly proud to be a part of this society.”

Ankit's story is a great example of what a combination of quality education, steady guidance, opportunity and self belief can achieve. From a small rented home in the foothills to professional roles in large and reputable organisations, his journey reflects the life changing power of education and the courage to dream beyond one's constraints.

Donate to spread smiles!



Each month, these students step a little further into a world that was not always within reach. What pages of this journal record is not just what happened, but what became possible.

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