

Your Purkal Journal

March 2026



"Give them the dirt, the mountain trails, and the wide open sky, and watch them grow roots deep enough to hold the earth together"

POCSO Awareness Workshop

"The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud."

- Coco Chanel



A full day workshop on child safety and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, was conducted by Ms Binu Thomas. She is a Psychologist and Wellbeing leader with over twenty years of experience of working with children and institutions across India and Canada. The schedule for the day was structured into four segments: Classes VI - VIII in the morning, Classes IX - XII before lunch, followed by the POCSO Committee meeting, and finally staff in the afternoon.

Ms Thomas began the morning session by asking the students if anyone had felt sad that day. From this one question, the discussion grew to include topics about the body, comfort, and who is allowed to come close and who is not. She spoke about safe and unsafe touch, about setting limits with everyone, including classmates and familiar adults. Students learned to identify three trusted people they could go to if something felt wrong.

When she asked the girls to practise saying 'No' out loud, the room was quiet at first. She asked again, this time louder, reminding them that their voice should be strong enough to keep them safe. Concluding the morning session, students were given a sheet of paper and asked to write something that had made them uncomfortable. They were told it would not be shared with anyone. This was her way of getting them to open up and yet feel safe.

The session for senior students covered consent, online safety, and what the law says about the rights of anyone under eighteen. Khushi Thapli of Class XII shared afterwards that the session taught her not just about good and bad touch, but *"how to stand up for ourselves."*

Some students had heard the word POCSO before, but most of them had not

thought about what it meant for them personally. By the end of the session, they had learned about boundaries, consent, and the right to say 'No'. Anshika Pundir of Class XII B said: *"Everyone has their limits, and knowing that, is the first step to protecting themselves."*

The afternoon began with Ms Thomas meeting the POCSO Committee, followed by a session for all the teaching staff. She was direct with her message at both meetings: child protection is everyone's responsibility, not only the committee's. Teachers raised real concerns. The yoga teacher enquired about techniques for asana correction during class. Another teacher sought guidance on dealing with students looking for emotional closeness. Each concern raised was addressed carefully. The school's POCSO Committee members were introduced to the entire staff so that everyone knew exactly who to approach in such eventualities.

Teachers had learned that recognising signs of distress is part of the job, and knowing when and how to intervene is not optional. The workshop did not ask anyone to become an expert. It asked them to stay alert, to listen when something feels off, and to know exactly who to reach out to when it does.

By the end of the day, both students and teachers understood that protection does not come from silence, but from awareness.

Artificial Intelligence for Educators

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." - Alvin Toffler



The school's IT Executive, Deepak Sharma, opened his laptop, and the question he posed was simple: What if a machine could write a lesson plan, generate a quiz, or create an illustration in seconds? To address all these questions, a session for the faculty on 'AI for Educators' was organised.

He began by explaining the difference between narrow AI, built for a single task and generative AI, which can produce images, presentations and music from a prompt. The session then moved on to practice. Teachers learned the PARTS framework - Persona, Aim, Recipients, Theme, and Structure and used it to write clear instructions for AI tools. They practised on their laptops, trying to create custom

assistants for lesson planning and student reports. They observed how a well written prompt produced a much better response than a vague one. Several tools for everyday classroom use were introduced, including Teachy for lesson plans, Diffit for age appropriate activities, and Brisk Teaching for presentations and quizzes.

The School Secretary emphasised that since AI tends to write about students in a uniform manner, which ignores individual nuances and progress, the active involvement of teachers remained as essential as in pre AI days.

In the afternoon session, two writing samples were shown on the screen. Teachers had to guess which one was written by AI. To teacher's surprise, both were, and the only difference was the structure of the prompt.

When Suno AI was introduced, a tool that generates music from text, the Hindi teacher opened it on his laptop and generated a version of 'Kabir Das's *dohas*'. The yoga teacher was so keen to learn that he kept inquiring even during the tea break.

Next, image generation tools were introduced. Deepak Sir typed a short description, and within seconds, a picture appeared, ready for use in a science lesson or a sports drill.

The Principal thanked him for his initiative and made one clear request: that teachers continue reading and writing on their own and not rely completely on any AI tool.

In the span of two days, they discovered both the helpful uses of AI and the way AI detectors flag machine produced text. Hence, preserving a human touch in every piece of writing is vital.

Prayag Sangeet Samiti

Instrumental Music Competition

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



The Prayag Sangeet Samiti is one of India's oldest and most respected institutions for classical music. To mark its 100th anniversary, the Samiti organised a multi day instrumental music competition in Prayagraj, Allahabad.

Six students from PYDS participated for the first time: four in Pakhawaj and two in Tabla. They left Dehradun by train on March 17th and reached Prayagraj the next day, leaving behind their familiar hills for a city where they would be tested against talent from across the country. Experiencing a train ride for the very first time, Ansh Rawat from Navjeevan Batch 7 was brimming with excitement.

The Pakhawaj competition was held on the 19th of March. Students competed in

age-based categories and each performed for five to seven minutes in front of a panel of four experienced judges from Kolkata, Haridwar, Chandigarh and Banaras. The competition was intense, but the students held their ground. In Category B, Nishav Rana of Class VII won first place, and Ansh Rawat won second place. In Category C, Deepanshu Gaur of Class VIII won first place, and Suraj of Class VII won third place.

On the following day, the Tabla competition was held, with nearly forty participants taking part. The competition was tough, and PYDS students rose to the occasion. Aarabh Panwar of Class VIII won second place, and Lucky Gaur of Class VIII won third place.

Upon conclusion of the competition, before catching their train for the journey home, the students visited Triveni Sangam, the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati. They travelled to the Sangam by boat and subsequently visited the Bade Hanuman Ji temple.

Each PYDS student who competed brought home a prize. For most of them, it was their first experience of competing outside PYDS, making their achievement even more significant. Their music teacher had assessed that they were prepared for a bigger stage, and they justified his faith in their abilities. Deepanshu explained that the experience had taught him to listen carefully to others and learn from their mistakes instead of making them himself.

Prayag gave the students something deeper: confidence in their own abilities to perform far beyond the limits of a familiar stage.

Adventure Beyond the Classroom



Education at PYDS has always been holistic, to include much more than what happens inside a classroom. In March, three groups of students left the campus for the mountains. Class X went to Kanatal, a small hill town, while Class XI was split between Devalsari, a mid altitude oak forest and Kush Kalyan, an offbeat high-altitude meadow trek. The treks were not just a reward or a break from classroom learning. Students walked trails, set up tents, identified birds, helped each other through difficult sections, and returned with newfound learnings. The mountains asked for attention, stamina, and patience. What the students brought back was not

just experiences, but a clearer sense of what they were capable of when pushed beyond their comfort zones.

Days in the Mountains

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves." - Sir Edmund Hillary



Twenty students of Class XI left for a six-day trek to the bugyal (meadows) of Kush Kalyan, Uttarkashi, before dawn on a March morning. The school bus dropped them

at Kothal gate, where the UTC bus picked them up at quarter to six. Twelve local students had spent the night in the hostel so as to be ready for departure. By the time they reached the starting point, the sun was already up, and spirits were high.

The group reached Uttarkashi by noon and visited the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, where a guide explained the history of climbing, old and new equipment, and expeditions like Mount Everest. After lunch, they travelled to Rawada, their campsite, set up tents, explored the nearby river, and spent the evening around a bonfire before sleeping.

Last year, the school sent students to Kush Kalyan for the first time. Many had arrived without proper clothing and struggled through cold nights in unsuitable clothes. This year, the school provided everything: puffer jackets, rain covers, warm trousers, shoes, and walking sticks. Sizes had been measured weeks earlier to ensure that they were fitted best. As a happy consequence, everyone was warm and comfortable.

The first real test came on the following day. Jumaring on a near vertical rock face. The guide had set the rope at a steep angle, but watching the first few students struggle, he adjusted it slightly. Those afraid of heights were told to look straight ahead, not down, and focus on their movements. One by one, they climbed. Some quickly, some slowly, but everyone made it up. The river crossing that followed felt easier by comparison. It became the favourite part of the day for most.

On the third night, rain fell, and water seeped into the tents. By morning, the group had moved to a shelter in the main village, an under construction house offered by the local family. The students dried themselves, settled in, and slept.

The next morning, the sky cleared. Snow covered peaks appeared, sharp and bright against the azure sky. The trek to Papuda took them through snow that reached one and a half feet in some places. Students learned quickly, supporting one another through the deeper sections of the snow clad path, following in the footsteps of the person ahead.

On the fifth day, fresh snow made it unsafe to reach the Kush Kalyan summit. The guide suggested halting at the Baghu Thatar, a meadow at a lower elevation. The students had lunch there, took photographs, and started the descent.

Back at school, Karan of Class XI B said: *"he had met generous people on that trip"*. A guide and a family in a village who let them stay when it rained. Even some classmates whom he sat beside but never really interacted with. Aashi of Class XI A wrote that she had learned how to manage when things were lacking and how to fix situations without making a fuss.

Others shared that they learned to set up tents, to walk on snow, and to communicate with strangers on a bus. They also understood that proper planning

matters. Some said seeing terrace farming on a hillside and comprehending, for the first time, why the land is shaped that way.

The students from villages in Uttarakhand encountered some new and familiar experiences. Students from urban and semi-urban backgrounds learned to overcome the fear of height and water, and to adjust to situations and the necessity of maintaining physical fitness. These learnings happened in the most natural and picturesque classroom, which was a significant bonus.

Overall, the trek was a mix of adventure, learning, teamwork, and resilience, leaving students with memorable experiences and valuable life lessons that we're confident will stay with them for a long time.

Into the Wild

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks."

- John Muir



During the third week of March, twenty-four Class XI students and eight teachers spent four days trekking in the dense deodar forests near Devalsari Eco Camp in

the Tehri Garhwal district. The trip was under design since October to ensure the students got a wholesome learning and outdoor experience without compromising on safety. In the weeks leading up to their departure, students and teachers undertook walking on slopes after the morning assembly to build their stamina, pushing the boundaries of their comfort zones long before they reached the mountains. A preparatory meeting was also held to make them familiar with the trip design.

By the time they left on the 17th of March, they were physically stronger, and more importantly, they had started learning what it truly meant to prepare for something larger than any classroom assignment.

They left early in the morning by a school bus. Upon reaching Thatyur Almas Bend, from where the road narrows, their luggage was moved into village taxis for transportation to camp, while students began the ten-kilometre walk to the camp. Some walked fast, some slower, but everyone kept moving forward. The walk itself became the first lesson in endurance and cooperation.

That evening, as discussed in the trek preparation presentation made by Col Abhishek Mangain, a volunteer at the preparatory meeting, the students were divided into four teams of six, each led by a girl with a boy as deputy. The facilitator, Arun sir, who is an experienced local naturalist, distributed brochures on and spoke about the moths of Devalsari. The group then walked to an illuminated screen set up in a nearby field; a white sheet stretched between poles with a lamp in front. Moths fluttered in, drawn by the light, and the students identified each specimen with the printed images on the brochure. Among them was the Mimic Leaf Moth, a sighting considered rare. Its wings resembled dried leaves so closely that it was almost indistinguishable from them.

Later, away from city light, the students tried to find constellations in a sky crowded with stars, identifying shapes they had only seen in diagrams and learning their names for the first time. What had once been abstract concepts on a page came alive as real constellations overhead.

The second morning brought two different hiking options. Ten students began the Nag Tibba trek at seven o'clock, as the cold, serene air whispered around them. They covered twenty kilometres to the highest peak in the Lesser Himalayan range of Garhwal at 3,072 metres. Muskaan of Class XI A said that on the Nag Tibba trail, she learned to focus on the destination rather than the difficulty. When her legs began to ache halfway up, she stopped thinking about how far she still had to go and simply kept walking. Though the climb was long and steep in places, students' spirits remained high, and the panoramic mountain and snow views made every bit of effort worthwhile.

The fourteen students on the Lunsu trail walked with Kesar, a local guide and naturalist who set one rule from the start: the group's pace would match the slowest walker. Taniya Kalsi of XI B found the steep path challenging. Her teachers stayed close, guiding her on where to place her feet and helping her complete the walk without rushing. By the end of the day, every student had completed their trail, some with ease and some with effort, but all with the same sense of achievement.

The third morning started with rain, but the downpour soon tapered off. The group headed out on a nature walk along a freshly washed trail. Everything smelled sharper. The students spotted between twenty and twenty-five bird species, including a snake eagle circling high above the valley. Niruta Chaudhary of Class XI A, who studies biology, reflected that watching the guide identify a bird by its call alone, without even seeing it, made her want to know far more. The guide spoke about naturalism as a possible field of work, something most of the students had never considered before. That afternoon, with rain jackets on and garbage bags in hand, the group cleaned the road in the nearby village of Ontar. Wrappers, bottles, plastic scraps and the bags filled quickly. What began as a responsibility became an act of care for a place that had welcomed them.

Back at school, students reflected on what the trip had taught them. Gayatri Rawat of Class XI A said, *"The trek deepened my understanding of nature, from identifying species like moths, butterflies, birds, and plants to learning how ecosystems function in ways we often overlook. It also strengthened my sense of teamwork, responsibility, and environmental care, showing me the importance of observing, protecting, and working together in natural spaces."*

The Devalsari trip became holistic education in its truest form. What the students carried back was new ways of looking at a tree, a trail, or responding to an unfamiliar sound in the forest. Nature offered its own lessons, and they learned that some of them can only be understood by walking through it slowly, paying attention, and not turning back when the path gets steep.

The Lush Coniferous Forests

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness." -

John Muir



The windows were open, and the air was getting colder with every turn as the forty-five students of Class X, accompanied by four teachers, sat in the school bus winding its way uphill to a nature camp in Kanatal, a small, serene and hill village nestled deep in the Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. They went on this expedition from the 10th to the 12th of March, right after completing their CBSE Board exams. The camp is located at an elevation of 2,590 m deep in the forest, run by a local entrepreneur, Sumit Negi. He together with Jitender, a naturalist, guided the group through a range of activities over the next three days.

On the first afternoon, the students went on a jungle walk. The naturalists named trees as they passed them: Deodar, Banjh, Buransh, Thuner, Rasuli. The students walked quickly at first, but then he stopped them. He asked everyone to find a tree, hug it, and stay still for five minutes. No talking and no moving. The trail, which had been full of noise, went quiet. The forest around them seemed to grow louder in the stillness. This small activity taught them the power of mindfulness, observation, patience and listening.

Back at camp that evening, they learned to make seed balls (soil mixed with chilli powder, turmeric, pumpkin seeds, and coriander seeds) by hand. Their hands turned brown and sticky. The balls were set out to dry overnight. Later in the evening, they played a human knot activity, with arms tangled and their voices rising simultaneously. Later, they gathered by a crackling bonfire, quietly tracing constellations across the night sky.

The second day started at five in the morning. They watched the sun rise slowly over the Garhwal range of snow covered peaks such as Bandarpunch and Swargarohini, the peaks slowly turning pink, then gold. Later, the guide pulled out his phone and played recorded bird calls. Within minutes, birds began flying toward them, flitting between branches, closer than they would have otherwise come. The students now stood completely still, necks craned, watching. Gunjan Raturi of Class X A said, *"Bird watching taught me how to identify birds based on their characteristics and voice. This activity also taught me how to be focused, calm, and passionate."* The five groups had collectively spotted thirteen birds.

After breakfast, the group began the two kilometre climb to the Surkanda Devi temple, an old and revered shrine located near Dhanaulti. The trail was steep in places, and they walked in a single file. While on the walk, the guide told the students about Khet Parvat, locally known as *Pariyon ka Desh*, the land of fairies. The students then sighted the Nanda Devi, the second highest peak in India.

The seed balls they had prepared the previous evening were thrown across the trail, where they would eventually take root. The guide took the opportunity to discuss the manner in which trees share nutrients and communicate through underground root networks, supporting saplings that have not yet reached the light themselves.

In the evening, Sumit spoke about entrepreneurship, drawing on his own experience. Then Sabita, a mountaineer, joined on a video call from Sikkim, where she was completing a rescue and retrieval course. She spoke about her work and told how mountaineering can be a career option for them. The intent behind these talks was to expose students to alternative professions as career options for them in the future.

On the third morning, they cleaned their tents and the washroom before leaving, bidding adieu to the mountains, yet carrying fond memories and new learnings.

Back at school, they presented their learning to their peers. Divyansh of Class X B said he had felt underconfident before the trek, but this changed once he completed it. Several others said the storytelling sessions were what they remembered most, sitting around the fire, listening to stories with the mountains softly fading into the night. They had wanted to stay a week longer, learn and experience more.

The forest taught them that trees feed each other underground, that birds respond to human care and hugging a tree can bring complete healing and tranquillity. It was encompassing education in the truest sense, an experience that will stay with them for a long time.

Examinations and the Parent-Teacher Meet

"Education is a shared commitment between the home and the school."

- Malala Yousafzai"



Exams commenced in March as fifty-one Class X students and fifty two Class XII students sat for their board examinations at the external centre, Scholars' Home. The in-house final examinations for Classes I to IX and Class XI were conducted from the 5th to the 14th of March.

The parent teacher meeting was held on the 28th of March, and parents attended in good numbers. The day began in the auditorium, where the new Primary Section Academic Coordinator, Aarti Bailwal, was introduced. Prize distribution followed, class toppers received school bags, and students who had shown significant improvement were recognised separately. Shivansh of Class I, who had improved by twenty-one per cent, was among them. A short act on the effects of social media, the same act from the Pushkin Chandra Competition, was staged again, this time to draw parents' attention to screen time at home. The Principal concluded by urging parents to spend time talking to teachers instead of only picking up the report card. Afterwards, parents spent time with the teachers and engaged in two way discussions on their children's skills, strengths, and areas requiring attention.

We appreciate the effort our school parents made to reach the school. Mrs Meena

Thapa, whose daughter Arti is in Class VII B, arranged a neighbour's lift so she could reach in time for the meeting. With no transport available, Mrs Vineeta Thapli, whose children Tanmay and Tanvi are in Class VII A and B respectively, walked forty-five minutes from her village, Shigally, to attend. The meeting was aimed at not only connecting parents and teachers to enhance the levels of trust and communication between them, but also to demonstrate to children that their progress matters to their parents.

Post Examination Activities

Exams measure knowledge, but experiences shape understanding.



With a view to preparing the students for the responsibilities of the year ahead, students were assigned unfamiliar roles during the final week of the academic year in late March. They stepped out of their comfort zones by arguing hypothetical cases, sitting across interview panels, competing, and playing matches. Educational films were screened in the classrooms, and in the remaining time, students arranged the furniture and cleared the cupboards for the classes that would follow. New uniforms and shoes were also distributed during this period, creating much happiness and excitement, particularly among our younger children.

To strengthen their communication skills, mock interviews for the positions of Head Boy, Head Girl, Cultural Secretary, and Sports Captain were conducted for the

students of Class X. Twenty students submitted handwritten résumés for leadership roles, of whom seven advanced to the final panel. Four of them were eventually selected. For most of them, speaking formally about themselves was an entirely new experience.

Class IX students took part in a Moot Court Competition, which seeks to formulate persuasive arguments, listen to counterpoints, and respond under pressure. They worked in groups as victims, researchers, advocates, and witnesses, and argued hypothetical cases such as freedom of expression versus school discipline.

Classes VIII and IX hosted radio shows, conducting talk shows and podcasts, while in the Advertisement Design activity, students created product designs on the spot. The emphasis throughout was on thinking quickly and speaking clearly.

The basketball team played three matches at DIS City Campus in an Under 16 tournament, losing to Army School 2 - 3 and Gyananda 4 - 5, but defeating APS Birpur 8 - 0. Renu Rana of Class XII A, Anchal of Class XI A, and Himani and Bhawna of Class X represented the school. Even though dehydration and fatigue set in as the day wore on, the team kept playing.

Thus, by the close of the year, students were not only assessed on what they had memorised, but on how they could think, speak, and respond. The emphasis lay on individual engagement through activities and on the understanding that learning does not end with the final answer sheet, and that true preparation is for the moments without a script. Empowered with this dynamic confidence and a vibrant curiosity, they transitioned to their new classes, ready to embrace the academic session of 2026 - 27 with great enthusiasm.

We are proud of Anushka Thapa

“Every milestone in my journey carries the imprint of PYDS”



Anushka Thapa is a 2021 alumna from Rani Pokhari, a semi-urban village on the highways to Dehradun. She comes from a humble family of four. Her father is a farmer, and her mother is a homemaker. With the support of PYDS and its On To Life (OTL) program, she secured admission in B.Tech in Food Technology from Shoolini University and now works as a Manufacturing Executive at ITC Ltd., Kapurthala, since July 2025.

Anushka describes her journey as follows:-

"My time at PYDS shaped who I am today. I was encouraged to explore, participate, and challenge myself. Sports, especially volleyball, played a big role in my journey. I played at the state level twice and learned discipline, teamwork, and leadership. Through the Gavels Club, I also overcame my fear of public speaking, which now helps me in interviews and at work.

After school, I received a 100% scholarship to Shoolini University, which meant a lot to me. I later represented my university as a team captain at the AIU level, building on the leadership skills I had developed at PYDS.

Entering the corporate world has been both exciting and humbling. Everything I

have achieved is because of the support and values I received from PYDS, my teachers, and my mentors. PYDS gave me confidence, direction, and strength, which taught me to always do my best and give back to society. From a nervous Class IX student to a professional today, my journey reflects the impact PYDS has had on my life."

Donate to spread smiles!



With the changing season bringing the bright days of summer, our students are settling into the rhythm of the new academic year. We look forward to sharing more vibrant photographs and stories of our children's journey with you in the coming months. Hearing from you is always a joy, so please do stay in touch. Until next, take care and stay well!

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