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ANNIE THE MUSICAL

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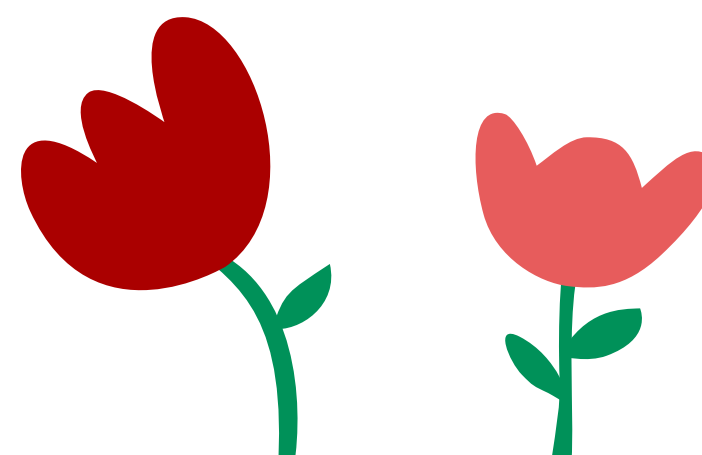
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Significance of Makar Sankranti

Written by Shay Mehta - Y7



Makar Sankranti is a Hindu festival, dedicated to Surya, the Sun God. The significance of the Sun God can be traced to the Vedic texts. Makar Sankranti is also associated with the birth and coming of the final Avatar of the Hindu God Vishnu, Kalki.

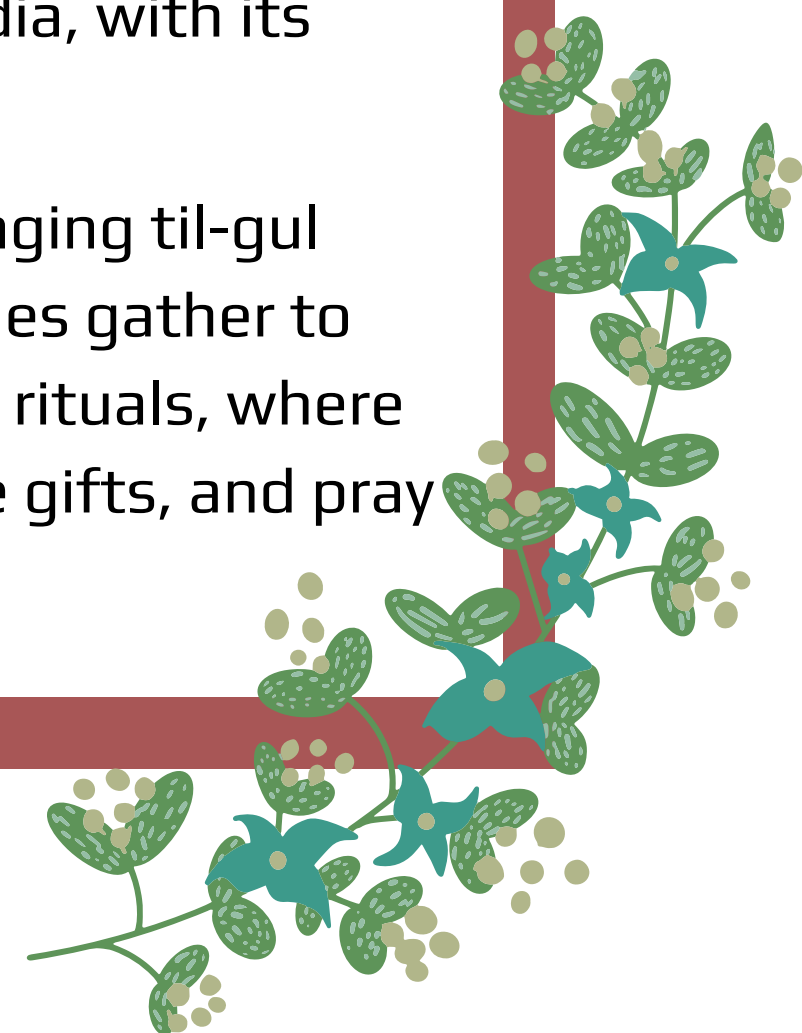
Makar Sankranti is regarded as important for spiritual practices and hence people take holy dips in rivers, especially the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri rivers. The bathing is believed to result in a cleansing of one's past sins. People also pray to the Sun God and give thanks for their prosperity and success, and many people make sweets as well.

Makar Sankranti usually falls between the 14th and 15th of January, the date is decided based on the solar cycle, and marks the start of warmer days with the end of winter.

Sankranti also has regional variations and known with different names and celebrated with different customs in the different states of India.

Here are some of the ways we celebrate Sankranti in a few parts of India, with its regional names:

Maharashtra: Makar Sankranti in Maharashtra is celebrated by exchanging til-gul (sesame-jaggery) sweets, wearing new clothes, and flying kites. Families gather to enjoy special foods like Puran Poli, and women perform haldi-kumkum rituals, where they apply turmeric and vermilion on each other's foreheads, exchange gifts, and pray for family well-being and prosperity.





Gujarat: In Gujarat, Makar Sankranti is called Uttarayan and is celebrated with lively kite flying festivals. People decorate their homes, make special sweets like chikki, and hang out with family and friends. The sky fills with colourful kites as everyone enjoys the fun and competition, welcoming longer days.

Tamil Nadu: In Tamil Nadu, Makar Sankranti is called Pongal and is celebrated as a four-day festival. People cook the first rice harvest in a special dish called Pongal, decorate their homes with colourful kolams (rangoli- designs made on the floor outside the house with coloured powder), and honour cattle with decorations and rituals. Families come together for big feasts and lots of joy to thank the Sun for a good harvest.

Punjab and Rajasthan: Here, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as **Lohri** and **Maghi**, respectively. People light big bonfires, sing and dance around them, and enjoy roasted grains and sweets made from jaggery and sesame. It's a lively time for family and friends to come together, celebrate the harvest, and welcome longer days with warmth and joy.

Makar Sankranti, one of the few Hindu festivals that follows the solar calendar, is an amazing and fun festival in India, where people get together, eat, make special delicacies, and give thanks for a good harvest.



Year 11 Trial Exams

Written by Juha Park - Y11

As part of the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), Year 11 pupils had two trial assessment sessions (mock exams) in preparation for their board exams commencing in April 2026. IGCSE is one of the world's most popular international qualifications for 14 to 16-year-olds, typically taken over two years (Years 10 and 11).

The first trial assessment period was from January 14th to 23rd, in which different subject examinations were scheduled within those 8 days. The second trial assessment session took place in March, from the 5th to the 16th, as a final preparation. The trial exams mirrored the actual exams to give us a feel for the real deal. During times where students didn't have examinations, they were studying independently in the school library.

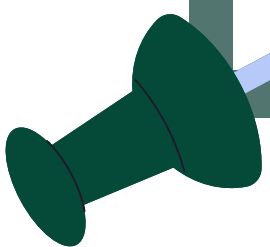
The papers were then carefully examined by the teachers, to give necessary feedback and identify the students' strengths & weaknesses to maximise their progress & potential, and they feel much more confident about the forthcoming exams now.



For instance, in Physics I got to know that I needed to focus more on the waves & themechanics as those were the parts where I lost the most marks. Every Year 11 student benefitted from this personalised feedback.

Personally, for me, I wish we had 3 sets of trial examinations instead of 2 because it helped me a lot in many ways. For example, it helped me identify my weak topics, and the expected grade for IGCSE across all subjects. It was also interesting to get a chance to stay in the new facility in WCIP to sit for the examination.

Maila's (a Y11 pupil) take on the exams: It was strenuous because we had to do a lot of work. Plus we had several exams during the day which was quite exhausting. However, I liked the use of the library as it really helped me to concentrate, and I thought that the trials were a really good practice for the actual exams.





Annie: A Welly production

Written by Maila Hekala - Y11



Set in the 1930s, but remaining a theatre staple in the 2020s, this musical follows the unfortunate life of an optimistic orphan named Annie. Before it came to Broadway, it was a comic strip known as "Little Orphan Annie". The period in which it was set was a difficult time for America during the Great Depression. The portrayal of Annie as a character withstanding her horrible circumstances, gave hope to ordinary Americans and caused the graphic novel to boom with popularity.

Interview: Students



1. What inspired you to join the Musical?

Ananya: I really enjoy singing, dancing and performing on stage with my friends.

Doi: Being able to act and express my feelings.

2. What is the most challenging part of acting in this Musical??

Ananya: Making acting decisions on what suits my character the best.

Doi: The most challenging part of this play is that I have to change and remove my makeup on time.

3. What is your favorite part about being in this Musical?

Ananya: Acting and performing with my friends as well as collaborating with them.

Doi: My favourite part about being in this play is that you can act with many people.

4. What was your experience as part of the cast?

Ananya: I had a really good time however there were instances where I felt quite stressed with the amount of time we had.

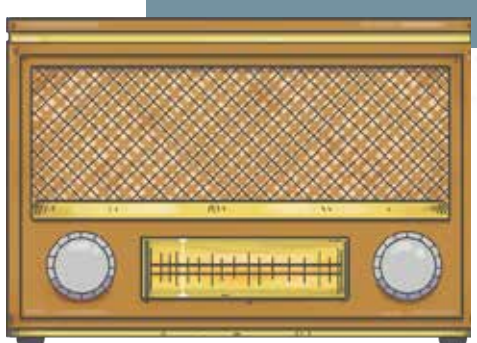
Doi: It was fun, but it was also very busy.

5. Did you learn or experience anything new?

Ananya: I learned how my decisions as a character affected others and ways to interpret the multiple events.

Doi: I would recommend that people should join if they like acting, even though they are not good at it, because no one knows what will happen.

Annie





What strategies do you use to ensure that all elements of a production are in sync?

Mr Mullin (Director): We set a clear vision at the beginning of what we wanted to achieve and then allowed each department to add in its own way to achieving that outcome.

Ms Khoda (Dance teacher): I ensure all elements are in sync by starting with a clear vision and maintaining strong communication between choreography, direction, music, and technical teams. Structured rehearsals, detailed cue planning, and full run-throughs help align timing, spacing, and transitions. Open collaboration and flexibility allow the production to come together cohesively. If it looks smooth on stage, that's because we've already solved the chaos in rehearsal.

Mr Hekala (Producer and Musical Director): Trust. Each person on the Creative Team knows what the deadlines are and has to hold to them. It means everyone needs to show responsibility and remember that their actions impact others. In the end though, we all pitch in to help each other to make the final show a success.

How do you handle creative differences between yourself and other members of the production team?

Mr Mullin: I believe the best way to approach these moments is through open communication, grounded in empathy and respect. That said, I also believe that as a creative team, we ultimately share the same goal: to create meaningful experiences for our pupils. We want to help the cast to develop their skills, nurture a passion for our subjects, and leave them with a strong sense of achievement and ownership over what they have created.

Ms Khoda: In theatre, everyone has brilliant ideas and that's the fun of it! We talk it through, maybe test both versions, and we go with whatever makes the production and the cast look their best.

Mr Hekala: This is always a tough one but decisions are usually pragmatic ones. We all have visions for what could be but even when numbers are cut or scenes altered it is for practical reasons to help the show move forward. A big vision that can't be realized doesn't help anyone.



Which dance number was your favourite to organise? Why?

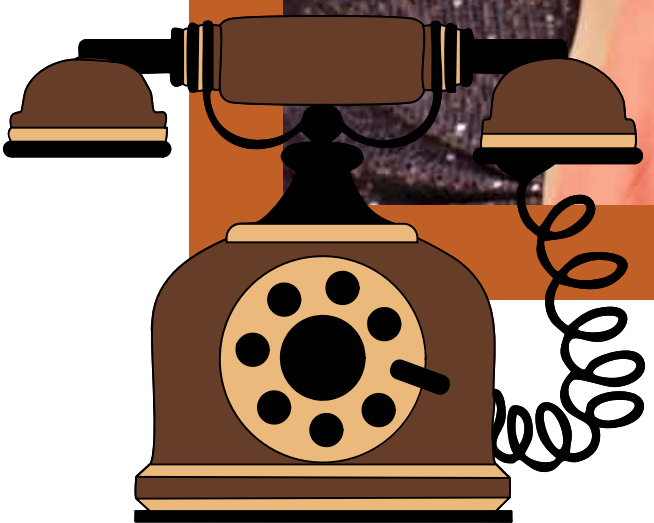
Ms Khoda: Hard Knock Life was definitely my favorite. It was rhythmic chaos with props flying (safely!) and buckets doubling as percussion instruments. The primary pupils brought unstoppable energy, and my job was basically to channel that into something that looked intentional. It was loud, lively, and fun to build.

Were there some cast members with less musical experience? If so, what was done to guide their process on stage?

Mr Hekala: What most people don't know is before the first song was prepared the whole cast had weeks of vocal training to be able to sing the numbers and months of development to sing consistently. I am incredibly proud of the integrity and grit each member of the cast had to the process.

What was the inspiration for the set design?

Mr Mullin: A big influence on the production was the comic strip, 'Little Orphan Annie'. The comic Strip inspired the musical to be written in the first place so as an homage, we wanted the sets costume and elements of the performance to have that comic feel. But, I feel, the sets creating that visual element is where you see that link the most.



Republic Day

Written by Anirudh Biswas - Y10



On January 26th of each year, Republic Day is celebrated throughout India. This day marks the formalised adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India. This is one of the important national holidays in India. On this day, the President of India addresses the nation and unfurls the national flag in New Delhi, India's capital. This is accompanied by the Military Bands from the Navy, Air Force, and Army, as well as floats from all the states, performing tunes that are mainly based on classical Indian tunes. The Prime Minister hosts guests, this year they were from the European Commission.

As is the tradition, this year too on Republic Day, soldiers who displayed acts of sacrifice and bravery were awarded with Bravery Medals such as Param Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra, and Maha Vir Chakra, India's highest awards for valour.

Children from the ages of 5-18 are also honoured with the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar award for their excellence in Bravery, Art & Culture, Environment, Innovation, Science & Technology, Social Service, and Sports. These awards highlighted several values, such as Courage, Service, and Sacrifice. These values form the foundation of the Indian Republic. By honouring both, young citizens and soldiers, the medal distribution on Republic Day shows how patriotism and excellence are recognised at every age.

On Republic Day, the WCI Pune community came together to celebrate the event. The flag was unfurled by Colonel Ravi Rao. Ms Sharma then delivered a Republic Day speech, addressing the significance of Republic Day. This was followed by delicious Indian food, including Chole Bhature, chickpeas with puffed fried bread.

As a nation, we commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India, and, similarly, as a school guided by values and ideals, Wellington College Pune celebrates freedom, equality, and the transformative power of education in shaping global citizens.



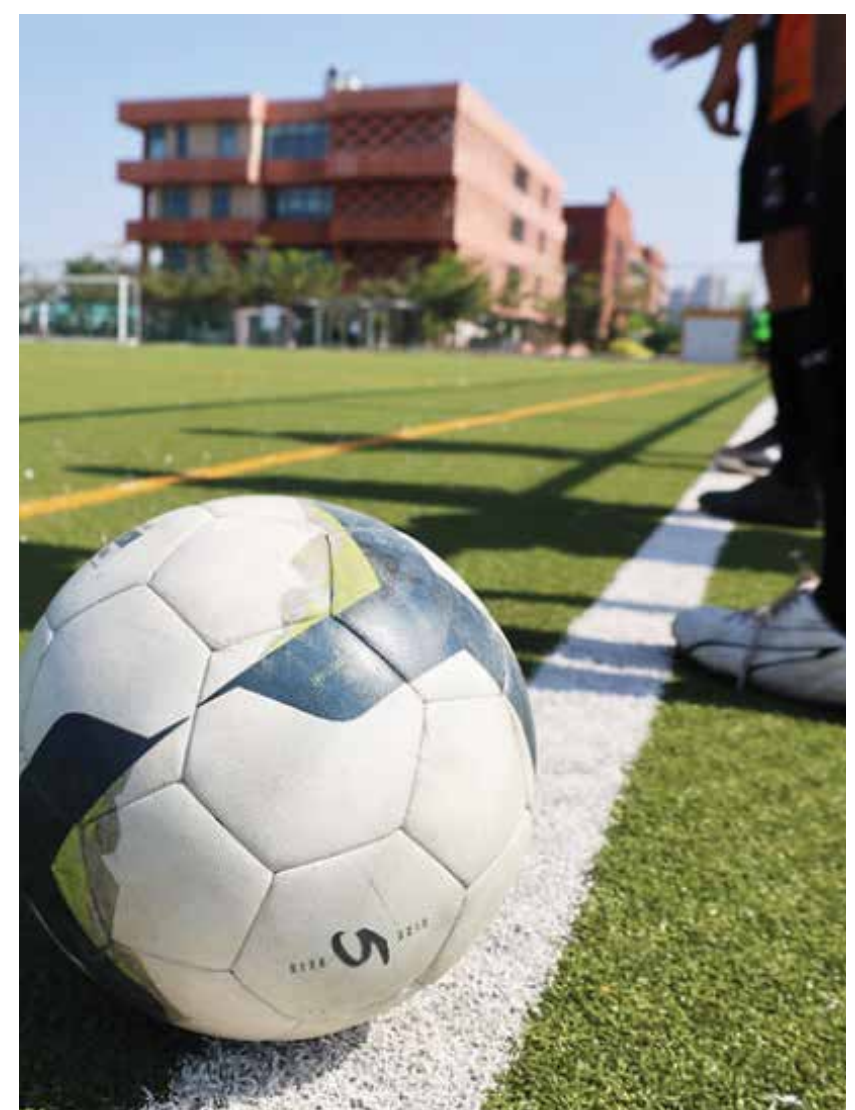
WELLY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Written by Maila Hekala - Y11



In the third week of November 2025, we had the pleasure of watching a series of football matches between Bliss International School, SGIS, TKS, Mahindra International School, Euro School and of course, Wellington; in which our school earned medals for third place overall.

During these matches, each team displayed skill and endurance within their respective tournaments, resulting in many games filled with suspense, success and most importantly, sportsmanship. Well done!



Shivaji Jayanti

Written by Shay Mehta - Yr 7



Shivaji Jayanti, also known as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj festival, is a festival and public holiday in Maharashtra. This festival was celebrated on the 19th of February and celebrates the birth anniversary of Shivaji Maharaj.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was famous for being a visionary and courageous leader who founded the Maratha Empire in Western India during the 17th century. He is commemorated for pioneering the concept of Swarajya (self-rule), establishing a strong and efficient administration by decentralising power and promoting justice, and employing innovative military tactics such as guerrilla warfare, which helped him defeat larger and more powerful enemies.

Shivaji was also notable for his inclusive governance, appointing people from various castes and religions, including Muslims like Siddi Hilal and Daulat Khan, to key positions, which was progressive for his time. He further strengthened regional identity by making Marathi the official language of administration. Additionally, he is regarded as the father of the Indian navy, having built a formidable naval force to protect his kingdom. On his birth anniversary, people take part in educational events that honour his legacy. His legacy as a just ruler and a symbol of resistance against foreign domination has made him an enduring and revered figure in Indian history.

On Shivaji Jayanti, people celebrate with processions and rallies, hoist the Maratha flag, light ceremonial lamps, sing powadas (traditional ballads) and perform folk dances, as well as stage plays and reenactments of Shivaji's life. Many people visit forts associated with him (like Shivneri and Raigad) to pay respects. Many dress up as Shivaji and his warriors, attend cultural programs at schools and community centres, offer prayers, and attend educational events to honour his legacy.



Holi

Written by Anirudh Biswas - Y10



Holi is a festival that celebrates spring, love, and new life. It is a 2 part festival- on the first day, bonfires are lit and offerings of chickpeas, coconuts, and corn are made by all members of the family. These bonfires are lit in the compounds of societies and temples, and people who participate in it make an offering to the fire, called Holika Dahan, or the “burning of Holika”, where the demoness from Hindu mythology, Holika, is destroyed. This ritual symbolises the victory of good over evil. This year, it was celebrated on 2nd March 2026.

The next part of the festival is the fun and games part, where the next morning, this year on the 3rd of March. People usually dressed in white clothes gather in groups where they smear each others' faces with gulal (coloured powder) and use water pistols to drench each other. Entire families participate in these fun and games. The bright colours symbolise new beginnings, while people forgive conflicts and start afresh, uniting everyone.

To add to the joy, families across India prepare gujiya, a fried dumpling-like sweet filled with dried fruits and nuts mixed with cardamom. Countless variations of gujiya can be found all across India, but one thing is for sure: these little pockets are loved by everyone!