

# THE CIRCLE TIMES

SEPT-NOV 23'

# ***Editor's Note***

---

**SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER  
2023**



Dear Vibrant Readers,

Welcome to an electrifying edition of "The Circle Times," encapsulating the pulsating energy that surged through our school between September and November!

Behold the sheer brilliance of *Hamara Manch*— an awe-inspiring extravaganza that unfurled a tapestry of unparalleled talent, showcasing the multifaceted skills and creativity of our phenomenal students. Dive into the resounding laughter and the heartwarming joy echoing from our thrilling school trips, where every moment engraves lasting memories, fortifying the bonds within our close-knit school community. The Literary Festival stands as a testament to the literary prowess of our students. Engaging discussions, soul-stirring poetry recitations, and the magic of creative writing sessions illuminated the festival, reaffirming once again that our students are wordsmiths of the highest order.

And let's not forget our athletes! Their prowess has soared, elevating our pride to new heights through stellar sports triumphs that embody unwavering dedication and teamwork, both on and off the field.

These events are not mere occurrences; they are the heartbeat of our school—a vibrant fusion where academic excellence, cultural richness, and unwavering sportsmanship converge to create an unparalleled environment of brilliance. Join us in celebrating the spirit that defines us—an extraordinary space where passion and achievement know no bounds!

***Samaira Singha Roy***  

---

***- The Literary  
Committee***



*On a warm sunny October afternoon, you step through the gates of Shikshantar, amidst the hubbub of students from grades 1st through 8th, their families and friends. The area surrounding the 'Jupiter' is adorned with lights and buntings and the registration desks are set and ready to greet you. Behind the Baradari and Trinachiketa you find a pair of dragonflies made with huge leaves and rocks on the ground while vibrant colours, lights and sounds invite you to explore the world of insects. As you move ahead you realize that this was just the tip of the iceberg- and that your journey into the Hamara Mela has just begun.*

*The programme started off with the diya lighting ceremony and songs sung by 3rd and 4th grade students. After an enlightening speech by Minoti didi, all the visitors diverged to their choice of stalls and grades, with a large fraction of this group to be found perpetually at the food stalls at later times. The junior block, or I block was a menagerie of colours, sounds and sights as the younger students presented the folk dances and arts of India, with ragas being played and sung with the harmonium, dholak, maracas and tambourine.*

*Guests could, in this certain area, also make their own embroidery pieces, while the front lawns were home to stalls teeming with creativity, inviting people to dabble in sand art, mandala making and water art. And then left to the visitor's choice was to either get lost in the performances of the students of 1st and 2nd grade on the mound or in the puzzling, mathematical maze made by the students of the same classes.*

*The centre of I- block was full of engaging quizzes about India's geography and culture as well as games from olden times.*

*As one moved towards the older classes, in K block, they entered a different world altogether. From a world of tradition, history and culture, we moved to one of modernisation, science and technological advancement, and the perils the latter may hold, as was explained very accurately by the students of middle school through their various dances and skits. While the 6th graders helped us get reacquainted with the world of simple machines through models of primitive machines based on them, quizzes and an interesting animation, the students of 7th grade taught us yet again about the world of chemicals, biology and more in the most enriching ways possible.*

*The eighth grade area was yet another sight to behold, with an awe-inspiring model of the 'Venus Rover', an invention of the eighth graders inspired by the Chandrayan 3. Sounds, sights and the analytical part of our brains now all came together to answer the questions put forth by the students as they put us through rigorous trials of knowledge and, well, in some cases, wild guesses, as trivia about chemistry, and contests comprising of darts and cards were put before some, while others tried to figure out what an 'icosahedron' is. With scrumptious food being sold at the volleyball court (which may, or may not have included gol gappas), and the lights and decorations put up by the art team, the Hamara Mela was a sight to behold and an experience to be a part of, later on to become a memory which none are going to forget easily.*

# “ Hamara Manch 10th & 12th

*It was September 2023, and Shikshantar birthday was looming, it was time for the twelfth graders to take the stage one last time accompanied by none other than the tenth graders excited to share the stage with the Hamara Manch veterans. But as someone who wasn't part of the actual event it feels improper to write about it without understanding the real spirit of it. So here is Hamara Manch 2023 ( tenth and twelfth) in the words of the artists behind the madness.*

*"Presenting... Nakal e Azam"- As soon as I said these words the gravity of the situation hit me. This was our final Hamara Manch, our final performance. No more rehearsals or re-writes. This was it. All the actors had spent the last month perfecting their roles, the teachers and the scriptwriters rewriting scenes from the ground up mere days before the final day. Honestly the TRUE talent of the actors was revealed in this play. No one else could have made the jokes land, or the drama come out. The teachers were very helpful and kind, Ishita didi and Aanchal didi were invaluable in our efforts. It was our honour to perform, and I hope we did well.*

*- Jayesh Gupta, XII*

*“This Hamara Manch for me was one of my favourite ones as it held more thrill and anticipation. Our group did a dance performance which ended up being the highlight of my school experiences. The buzz and excitement around the Hamara Manch is unlike any other feeling. Our weeks of practice and planning certainly paid off as the audience’s palpable energy fueled our adrenaline and their appreciation touched our hearts. The Shikshantar Hamara Manch is unlike any other and each year we’re reminded of its authenticity. I got to participate in photography and got to capture the essence and emotion each child entered the stage with. The dedication, skill and emotion was a challenge to do justice with just a lens but that was another way to marvel at our creativity.”*

*- Aahana Dhar, X*



*Hamara Manch Music is something we look forward to every year. An opportunity to display our skills as musicians and a chance to express our emotions. Song selection is generally one of the biggest hurdles in this process yet this year with limited struggle we settled on "Long Live" by Taylor Swift. Being our last Hamara Manch it seemed fitting as we move on to the next chapter in our lives. We didn't just want to perform the song as is, we added our own flair. Crafting new grooves, inventing solos on instinct, we made the song our own."*

*- Vivaan Lunkad, XII*

*"Over the last 21 years of Shikshantar, this school has constantly grown and evolved to develop into what it is today, much like we have. Despite the inevitability of the cycle of change, however, there are some core elements of this institution that have stayed the same. Our values, beliefs and philosophy; our emphasis on uninhibited expression of ourselves as individuals, and the traditions which Sunil Bhaiya had instilled in the heart of Shikshantar back in 2002 hold as much importance today as they did back then. A prime example of the immortality of these traditions is the Hamara Manch. Keeping in mind the spirit of Hamara Manch, the students of classes X and XII brought new, unique ideas to the table this year. The compering team, consisting of Shruti Sharma Didi, Pavitra Yadav Didi and six comperes with no past experience whatsoever, was tasked with employing a more conversational and less conventional approach to taking the audience through the evening. Through hours and days of brainstorming, writing, debating in a dignified manner (fighting like nine year-olds) and rehearsing in the sweltering September sun, the team was able to come up with some fresh and unique concepts. They came up with characteristics and personas to stick to throughout the event. They fought on stage, talked about their interests and memories, and even sang and danced in order to smoothly transition from one performance to another. They reiterated the importance of Hamara Manch to the Shikshantar family while embracing the changes that come with growing up, finding feet and spreading wings. The evening commemorated the end of the Batch of 2024's journey with Shikshantar. As the outgoing batch, they were able to perform one last dance together in the form of 'Andaaz' and sing the Shikshantar Song to conclude the event and mark a new beginning. The students of Class XII will forever hold this evening close to their hearts, and they were unanimously grateful to have gotten this one night to themselves before months of gruelling rounds of examinations, applications and the challenges of newfound adulthood. The words of the Class XII band 'Swift Desire' echoed through the amphitheatre, "I had the time of my life with you." And the whole school knew they meant every word."*

*- Arav Chablani, XII*

*And there you have it, Hamara Manch 2023, in the words of our very own Shakespeares, Copelands and Steve Perrys.*

*- Natasha Lakkaraju, XI, Emyrean*



# MUKTESHWAR 23'

The twelfth-grade students embarked on their final school trip to Mukteshwar, creating memories that will last a lifetime. Beyond the scenic beauty of the destination, the trip was packed with various activities that brought the class closer together.

Upon reaching their camp, the students were greeted with a delicious lunch before receiving their tent allotments. The group then split into two: one set off for the adventurous "Chauli ki Jaali," a site with religious significance for Hindus. The trek involved rock climbing an 80-foot mountain, rappelling off a cliff, and savouring the iconic Maggi noodles. Meanwhile, the other group indulged in water activities, joyfully swimming and sliding down a natural rock slide at a waterfall.

Over the following days, the students engaged in interactive activities, visiting local villagers' homes, learning traditional folk songs and dances, and participating in a thrilling two-day treasure hunt. These experiences cultivated a deeper connection among the students.

Despite challenges like the terrain and the physically challenging activities, the trip was a rejuvenating escape from the demands of studies and college applications. The nightly bonfires emerged as a highlight for the twelfth graders, with spirited rounds of antakshari, reaching a crescendo on the final day where everyone eagerly participated.

The twelfth-grade trip to Mukteshwar was not just a journey but a celebration of friendship, adventure, and the shared bonds that marked the end of their school days.

**Samaira Singha Roy (XI, Vyom)**



# Hamara Manch

## 9th & 11th

*From the moment our textbooks close after midterms, the only question on everyone's minds is 'When is Hamara Manch?'*

*The Ninth and eleventh grade came together on 18th October 2023 to outdo all their previous year performances. A wide array of talents were showcased. The audience was left in splits as talented actors delivered impeccable timing and wit. From a family drama centered around the theft of a 'pyaari' goat to a near-real portrayal of a country's political front, the plays showcased not only the comedic prowess of the students but also their ability to invoke genuine emotion in themselves and the audience. The musical performances featured a mix of popular tunes and original songs that required weeks of overtime practice to perfect. The singers and musicians blended into a sweet note reverberating in the surroundings. The mesmerizing spins of Kathak, the grace of Odissi, the precise footwork of Bharatanatyam, and the rhythmic energy of Dandiya with the contemporary flair were all energising dance performances that not only enamored the audience but also unfolded stories. The amphitheatre was accessorised with laughter and smiles as well as the beautiful art and decor made by our behind the scenes workers, the props and art team.*

*- Amaya Aadya Gupta, XI, Emphyrean*



---

# THE PATH AHEAD

Our school's "Path Ahead," is a comprehensive programme that works at guiding high school students towards making higher education choices at different milestones of their journey in school. Path Ahead includes reflection exercises, panel discussions, interactive sessions with universities and sessions with the in-house University Admissions Team, led by Garima Didi.

This year we had a mix of in-person as well as online interactions with university representatives. The sessions were opened for different classes depending upon their relevance. The university representation began on 27th July with an interactive session which was organized for interested students and parents of Classes X to XII. The session provided an opportunity to our students who are interested in studying visual arts related courses after Class XII to interact with the representative of School of Visual Arts, New York. More recently, an interactive session was held for interested students of Classes XI and XII with a Mathematics Professor from University of Waterloo, wherein children were introduced to the concepts of game theory, probability and their practical applications in the world of Business and Economics. Additionally, information regarding virtual as well as in-person outreach programs by various universities were also shared like a Meet Up Session on HKU-UCB Dual Degree Programme, Know Your Major sessions by Ahmedabad University, UCLA's information session etc.

On 26th October, we had five presentations. The first was a representative from Education USA. She explained to us how we should go about applying in the USA, the tests we need to take, and the requirements. Next, we met the representative from the UK, who similarly told us about the UK application process. We had a representative from Canada, followed by New Zealand, and lastly from the University of Ahmedabad. These sessions were very informative and will be extremely helpful for us in the college application process.

The next part of the programme is the University representation- an interactive session conducted by colleges and educational institutes from all over the world, exclusively for students in classes IX to XII. Held on 27th October, in this session we learned about and interacted with representatives from various educational institutes and organizations. The session took place in the multipurpose hall, where there were numerous different colleges from all over India as well as abroad. We could go and speak to any representative we wanted and get to know more about the college, the courses it has to offer, how the campus is, tuition fees, scholarships, etc. The parents could also interact with college representatives since this would ideally be a collective decision.

Throughout the year, we have had sessions with Garima Didi, who guides us through the reflection exercises and the college application process for different countries. In these sessions, we are informed about the deadlines for things that the school would issue, such as the letter of recommendation or the predicted scores.

All of us have dreams that we want to achieve, and "Path Ahead" brings us closer to them. Events like these are crucial in a high school student's life, and "Path Ahead" acts as a reality check, reminding us of what we have accomplished and all that is yet to be done before we start college. Overall, 'Path Ahead' is an expounding session that introduces high school students to the higher education processes. It helps the children figure out viable options for their further studies and makes them feel a little less intimidated and overwhelmed by the university admissions procedure.

- Samaira Singha Roy, XI, Vyom



# Iris '23

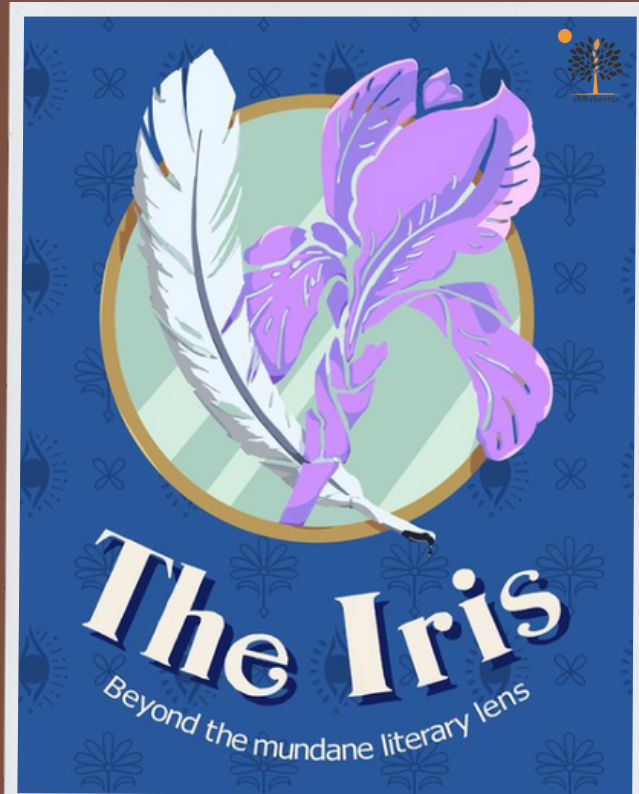
Shikshantar school hosted its first ever edition of The Iris '23 - a literary festival encompassing various inter school events. It took place on the 30th of October, 2023.

## ORIGIN

The name itself - 'The Iris' - is linked to two meanings: the iris of the eye and Iris, the Greek goddess of messages and new endeavors. Just as the tributes to the name suggest, this festival was uniquely marked with its offerings of alternative perspectives and events with unique flairs to them.

At its heart, The Iris '23 was the concoction of its core team composed of Prisha Raj, Tanya Malhotra, Priyaan Singh Vardhan, Sara Pant, and Ekagr Rao.

The idea of this festival started off as a eureka moment. Shikshantar school has an abundance of literary talent, and each student with the artistic spark in them deserved a platform to showcase their work and to demonstrate their might and mettle against students from other schools.



## INCUBATION

The Iris '23 comprised nine events for grades VII to XII including Poetry, Creative writing, Short Film, Book Cover Design and Debate Competitions. However, each event had its own distinctive twist and the special Shikshantar touch to it.

The months leading up to the festival were truly pandemonic. The core team, the event moderators and the teachers involved were hard at work organizing, coordinating and strategising. Preparing the materials for the events, putting up the website, and handling registrations were few of the many tasks which needed to be completed before the big day.

## EMERGENCE

As soon as the participants started arriving and completing their registrations, an ambience of exhilaration and nervousness set in. The opening ceremony, which consisted of a beautiful display of Indian culture through dance, marked the start of the event.

The Iris '23 was honored with the presence of the judges of our events - each a standout in their own domain. We were joined by authors, entrepreneurs, lawyers and even professors. The quality of the event spoke for itself through the plethora of talent and skill exhibited by our judges.



The students of Shikshantar were joined by students from The Shri Ram School Mousari, MatriKiran, GD Goenka, and Scottish High International School. The passion and fervor was apparent in the way the participants presented their work in their individual events. Those who excelled took home awards for their excellence but it was the enthusiasm of all its participants that made The Iris '23 a fruitful event.

The culmination of months of effort proved to be undoubtedly worthwhile not just for the core team and moderators but also for teachers, judges and all those working behind the scenes. With that, the Iris 23' reached its conclusion, leaving behind hope and possibility for a second edition in 2024.

- PRIYAAN SINGH VARDHAN, XI, EMPYREAN



# Sattal 23'



*Sattal, nestled in the serene hills of Uttarakhand, proved to be an unforgettable destination for our students of Class IX on the recent school trip held in the first week of November. This idyllic lake town, surrounded by lush greenery, provided a perfect backdrop for both adventure and learning.*



*The itinerary was packed with adrenaline-pumping activities, ranging from rock climbing and rappelling to the thrill of zooming through the treetops on a zipline.*

*The pristine lakes of Sattal provided the perfect setting for water-centric activities. The students embraced the challenges, conquering fears and building resilience kayaking through the crystal-clear waters, fostering teamwork and coordination. A leisurely swim in the freshwater lakes provided a much-needed break, reinforcing the joy of simple pleasures in nature.*



*Sattal's rich biodiversity became a living classroom for the young adventurers. Guided nature walks allowed them to appreciate the region's flora and fauna. Beyond the adrenaline-fueled escapades, the students engaged with the local villagers, gaining insights into their way of life. Immersed in the vibrant traditions and daily life of Sattal, they formed genuine connections that transcended cultural boundaries which not only broadened their perspectives but also resulted in the formation of meaningful relationships. From shared meals to folk dance performances, the students and villagers bridged cultural gaps, leaving an indelible mark on both.*



*As the sun dipped below the horizon, the students gathered around a bonfire, sharing stories and forging bonds that extended beyond the activities. The trip not only fueled their adventurous spirit but also nurtured friendships, turning the journey into a remarkable chapter in their high school experience. Sattal became more than a destination; it became a catalyst for personal growth and lasting connections.*

*-Samaira Singha Roy, XI, Vyom*

# Camp Kyari, Syatt

*On 8<sup>th</sup> September after a tiring day at school, the students of XI grade were hit with a circular which was titled 'Communication regarding Outstation Curricular Experience'. All student's hearts were filled with joy and excitement. It had been four years since our last school trip and so everyone was very eager to share friendly arguments about who stays in which tent, squabbling over what bus to ride in, intense discussions on the size of their luggage's and most importantly pure moments of joy with their peers.*

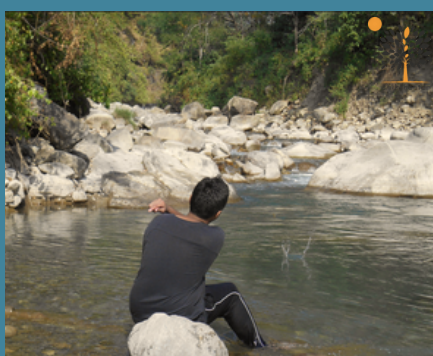
*In an exciting departure from the ordinary, right at 5am on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the students of grade 11 finally embarked on a captivating school trip to the historically rich and naturally enchanting Camp Kyari, Syatt, Corbett, Uttarakhand. Nestled amidst the tranquil landscapes, this expedition promised not just a break from textbooks but an immersive experience into the heart of history and the beauty of the outdoors. After 8 hours of travel, we reached the fascinating campsite where we were briefed on the thoughtful activities that were going to be conducted throughout the trip.*

*Each day started with a warm cup of tea in the pleasantly chilly weather and ended with a sensory symphony of the warm bonfire with countless stars in the misty sky, living in rustic accommodations and participating in adventure activities such as trekking and camping. Throughout the day, the students embraced the spirit of adventure. These activities not only fuelled a sense of camaraderie but also instilled important life skills such as teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving.*

*Our journey wasn't just about exploration; it was an opportunity for cultural exchange. Students interacted with the local community, gaining insights into their traditions, folktales, and daily lives. This cultural immersion fostered a deeper understanding of diversity and the importance of preserving cultural heritage. As a part of our commitment to social responsibility, students engaged in community outreach initiatives. From organizing cleanliness drives to helping the local farmers with harvesting the crop of Arbi, the trip instilled a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of the local community. The youngsters experienced (and relished) the challenge of manual labour. They contributed towards constructing a barricade wall by the roadside for which they dug up the soil, took out the rocks and carried the debris to construct the wall. This hands-on, physical toil was one-of-a-kind of experience for most students.*

*The students were equipped with cameras and journals so they documented their experiences, creating a visual and written record of the journey. This not only captured our fondest memories, enhanced our observation skills but also provided a medium for self-expression and reflection. The school trip to Syatt was more than an excursion; it was a holistic expedition that seamlessly blended history, nature, and cultural exchange. As students returned with a treasure trove of memories, newfound knowledge, and a broader perspective on the world around them, it was evident that this journey had not just enriched their academic understanding but had also contributed to their personal and social development. The echoes of Syatt's history and the rustling leaves in its serene landscapes will linger in the hearts of the students, serving as a testament to the transformative power of experiential learning beyond the classroom.*

*- Ruhin Gulati, XI, Azure*



# SPORTS MANIA



## BASKETBALL: Boys

Shikshantar's boys' basketball team emerged victorious at both zonals and regionals, securing a triumphant journey to nationals. The outstanding efforts of 11th graders Sulabh and Tarun, along with 10th grader Shaurya Tripathi, propelled the team to success. A remarkable trip to Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu culminated in a proud national-level match in which our students played valiantly.



## BASKETBALL: Girls

Shikshantar's girls' basketball squad, led by 11th graders Natasha, Nassia, and Tamanna, alongside 10th grader Yavi, clinched victory at the Tuticorin tournament. Their stellar performance secured a spot in the Quarter-Finals, triumphing over the North-West region by a commanding 36-point margin. The team's unity and valuable lessons learned culminated in a resounding success, as eloquently expressed by Nassia from Class XI.



# NATIONALS

## TABLE TENNIS

Shikshantar school's table tennis dynamo, featuring students from ninth to twelfth in both girls and boys teams, triumphed in Pune, Maharashtra, qualifying for nationals. Despite a narrow loss in the quarter-finals, the team reveled in the trip, savoring the invaluable experience. The journey not only underscored their competitive spirit but also fostered unforgettable bonding and new experiences for the victorious players.

## BADMINTON

In a stellar display at the nationals in Bangalore, Karnataka, Shikshantar's tenth-grade badminton sensation, Samaira Nambiar, clinched a dazzling bronze medal in the Under-19 category. Her exceptional achievement not only highlights individual excellence but also underscores the school's dedication to cultivating talented athletes, bringing immense pride and recognition to Shikshantar.

**Shikshantar radiates exuberance for every student who not only participated but excelled in sports events. Whether triumphing or embodying unmatched sportsmanship, each participant fuels the school's legacy of excellence. Their unwavering dedication pulsates with the spirit of Shikshantar, fostering a vibrant and supportive community that jubilantly celebrates diverse successes.**

EKAGR RAO (XI, VYOM)

TALES FROM THE REALM OF ATHLETIC PROWESS.

## CHESS

Shikshantar's newly introduced mind sport teams excelled at regionals, clinching gold for both girls and boys. Arnav Khanna secured 6th place in the Under-17 category, and Vivaan Lunkad, a 12th grader, claimed 5th place in the Under-19 category. Numerous students stand by for nationals, highlighting the team's remarkable success.

## CRICKET

Shikshantar's boys' cricket team, led by 11th graders Piyush and Aarav, triumphed in Ahmedabad, clinching the 2nd position among 20 teams. In a nail-biting final, in a super over, securing the silver medal in the championship. Aarav's remarkable 174 runs, coupled with Piyush's 80 runs and 12 wickets, propelled them to success. Aarav, advocating for a school sports fund, highlighted the potential to broaden opportunities for players.

## FOOTBALL

Shikshantar's three football prodigies represented North India in the national tournament, dominating the field with exceptional teamwork. Although they narrowly missed the top 3 positions, their outstanding performance and unwavering dedication left an enduring impact, affirming their triumph in the spirit of the sport.

# CREDITS

---

## EDITOR

SAMAIRA SINGHA ROY

## TEAM

SAMAIRA SINGHA ROY

EKAGR RAO

RUHIN GULATI

ARJUN GHOSH

NATASHA LAKKARAJU

PRIYAAN SINGH VARDHAN

AMAYA ADYA GUPTA

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

AADYA RASTOGI

ANIKA RAWAT

KSSHIKA SETHIA

TARINI URVEE NEEAL

AAHANA DHAR

SOHA KRISHNA MURTHY

DHRUVA SENGUPTA

VIVAAN LUNKAD

THANK  
YOU

UNTIL NEXT TIME

*Special Thanks to*  
**AVANI DIDI**