



# RATO BANGALA ONLINE SAMACHAR

MAY 2020

We are on our FIFTH week of remote learning at Rato Bangala, and as we navigate through these unprecedented times, Rato Bangala Samachar is also coming to you digitally to keep you informed and updated on RBS-Online.

This has been a challenging time for all and the transition to working and learning from home is a difficult one. We thank all the parents and guardians who have reached out to provide positive comments, suggestions and ideas. This is a first for everyone and we are so impressed with how the Rato Bangala Family has responded to the changes that we have had to make.

The lockdown began as the academic year 2019-20 ended. Luckily, the break gave the teachers time to get ready to teach online. Thus, after a month of frantic preparation, we began the school year 2020-21 online. Our online school RBS-Online is organised in five phases:

#### **PHASE 1: SURVEYS AND PREPARATION**

**Parent and Teacher Surveys:** We sent out surveys to assess Readiness for Remote Learning to families as well as teachers. The results of the surveys helped us to move ahead since we found out that it was indeed possible to begin remote learning for all RBS students.

**Teacher Preparation:** Teachers and administrators explored different platforms to see which one would be a match for RBS. Together with the school's tech team, the

leadership team started working round the clock and the learning began. Teachers participated in numerous online training sessions both within the school with our ICT team and outside the school with Karkhana and Google Educators Group, Nepal and attended many local and international webinars. The learning platforms were narrowed down and accessible and suitable ones were selected for trial runs. Teachers worked in small groups to practice and learn. Simultaneously, they prepared synchronous and asynchronous lessons to suit online teaching. We have gone through a sharp learning curve as educators during the past few weeks, having to drastically change the way we do things. Teachers have participated in several professional development sessions. We have had interactions with educators from around the world who are in the same situation, and we have all been learning from each other's experiences and our Professional Learning Community has had a big boost.

#### **PHASE 2: ORIENTATION FOR FAMILIES**

Teachers met families on Zoom from 20 April, 2020 to brief them and get ready for online classes. Guidelines were sent to parents and students.

#### **PHASE 3: BUILDING AN ONLINE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

The primary goals of this phase was to connect with students and families using online technology and create a sense of community, introduce and

familiarize students with different technologies and provide assignments to stimulate students and test the waters to get a feel for the days to come.

#### **PHASE 4: COMMENCEMENT OF SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSES**

Official classes began online from 27 April and have been progressing well for all the students from Preschool through A Level.

During this phase, we implemented our Online Learning Schedule, allowing for flexibility as we transitioned. Our main goals were establishing norms and routines with remote learning, providing more synchronous and asynchronous experiences; engaging and sharing work in different subject areas.

#### **PHASE 5: ASSESS, ADAPT AND REFINE**

We fine-tuned the schedule increasing the number of face-to-face classes. Students and teachers are now maintaining a predictable and consistent schedule, ensuring daily contact and inquiry-based learning. We will continue to assess and reassess and refine the schedule, and provide instruction that meets the needs of our students.

In our efforts to fine tune and refine RBS-Online, we are happy that we have acquired the G Suite License which means that the school will be in control of all the activities through one administrator by using the



Grade I Family handprints



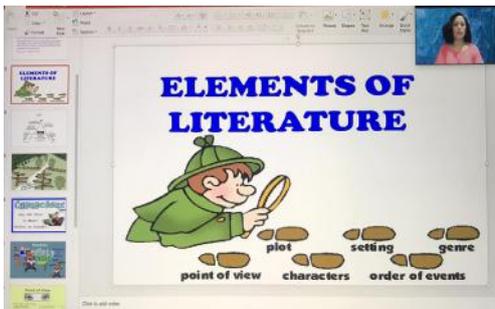
Pareem(GradeII)works on her Design Challenge.



Boat design challenge Grade II



Recreating famous Masterpieces in the virtual art class



Literature with Ms Bilquees



Principal Milan Dixit welcomes Grade I Families to RBS



Shaivi (Grade III) shares the healthy herbal drink she made.



Hridayanth (Grade III) engrossed in the virtual field trip to Urban Farmers Nepal.



Boat Design Challenge by Aarnav (Grade II)



Orientation for Grade II Families on RBS Online



Learning to write virtually

Google Classroom platform. By week four, all the classes till Grade X, will have moved to Google Classroom with Zoom/Meet for the face-to-face sessions. A Level started with Microsoft Teams but will also move to Google Classroom in the days to come. We would like to thank Sushil Uprety, Sagun Dhungana from the Google Educators Group (GEG) Kathmandu for facilitating process of acquiring the G Suite license for RBS.

#### **DESIGNATED OFFICE HOURS FOR TEACHERS**

In addition to the face-to-face sessions, teachers provide office hours/weekly for parent/student communication and individual check-ins through the Google Classroom or other means.

#### **NEWS FROM INSIDE THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS**

The focus of RBS online is primarily on imparting high interest, skill-based, efficiently delivered lessons that cover grade level skills. Overall, the classes are going on very well and we have received positive feedback from parents as well as students. The asynchronous classes on Google Classroom for middle school have been effective in providing time to the students to stay focused and complete their written work within the given time frame with the help of the teacher. We have planned lessons keeping in mind the three primary components of learner engagement, behavioral, cognitive and emotional, so that the students get overall support.

We are focusing on making our classes fun by always starting with a warm up activity and introducing energizers in between. The classes comprise of coaching, sharing videos and discussions making ample use of the breakout rooms for small group discussions. The teachers are

well prepared for the class, and are making use of the wealth of internet resources to make their lessons visual, accessible, interesting and relevant. We are also engaging in virtual field trips and inviting special guests who are accomplished in their fields to the different classes. As per their age levels, the students have been given long-term project-based research assignments. The teachers are also looking at online classroom as an opportunity to teach the students a variety of technical tools and ways of presenting for example the students are taught how to make podcasts, presentations, videos and so on using content that integrate different subject areas.

#### **MAKERSPACE, ART, MUSIC, PE AND DANCE**

RBS Online has scheduled classes for Art, Music, PE and Dance. We have some amazing Art projects that are building up very well. Mirror drawing, recreating painting, personal expression interview, and voice videos are some of the activities done in our fun art classes. In the music classes students get an opportunity to sing, showcase their skills and bring in their favourite music video to share. Learning about history of musical instruments and quizzes will definitely make them musically aware. The Maker-space projects have transitioned well into online learning with young students creating wonderful Design Challenges from home.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Thank you to Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit of Kanti Hospital and Dr Gunjan Dhonju and his team for conducting effective sessions for our teachers and staff members focusing on stress relief and mental well-being. Thank you also to Ms Neeva Pradhan for conducting a session on meditation and wellness.

#### **SPECIAL GUESTS**

In order to make our online learning more productive and engaging we have decided to invite special guests to talk to our students. Thank you to Dr Sameer Dixit, Dr Punam Basnet Dixit, Dr Rajib Subba, Mr Chandan Mandal, Ms Shailee Basnet and to early childhood specialist Kalpana Parajuli for volunteering to read on a regular basis to the preschool classes, conduct sessions and mentor teachers.

#### **ABOUT THE PANDEMIC**

Our very first guest was research scientist Dr Sameer Dixit with grade VIII students. The following week he talked to grade X about the pandemic and highlighted important issues. Students were eager to ask questions and express themselves. Grade X then researched on various elements of the disease and did presentations. Grade VIII wrote about the pandemic.

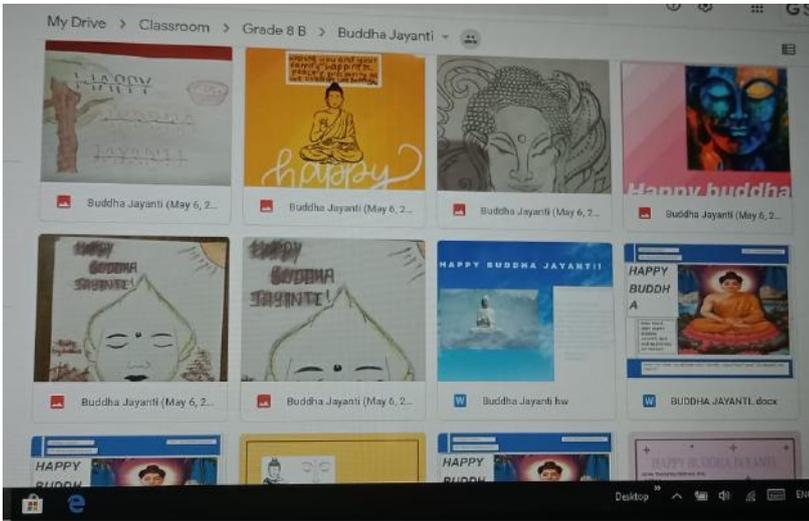
For the General Paper Class, Mr. Chandan Mandal from the Kathmandu Post was invited to speak to the students on Nepal's migrant workers, their current situation and problems brought about by the pandemic.

#### **NUTRITION STUDY**

As part of the Unit on Nutrition, Dr Punam Basnet Dixit visited Grade VII. Dr Dixit stressed on the importance of exercise, discussed the vertical food pyramid and the importance of having a balanced diet. Later, the children cooked healthy meals at home and shared their cooking videos.

#### **BEING SAFE ONLINE AND CYBER CRIME**

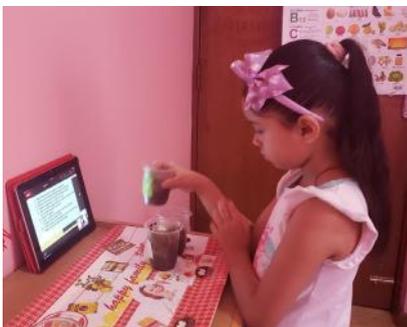
Considering that online safety is so important in our ever-changing world where technology and online



Buddha Jayanti Cards designed by Students of Grade VIII.



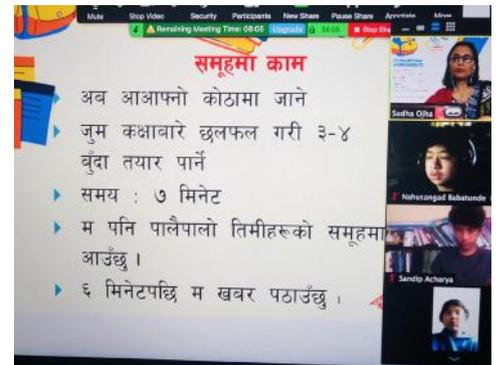
Balancing technology in Grade I



Kashvi (Grade I) learns how to plant.



Dice making



Classroom Instructions



Grade III goes on a Virtual Field Trip to Urban Farmers Nepal.



Grade V student Utkarsh is keen to find out more about Everest Summiteer Shailee Basnet.



Everest Summiteer visits Grade V



Baibhav is learning about Plants and herbs in Grade III.



Kutastha (Grade IV) constructing a Robotic arm.

engagement is so widespread, our third guest was Dr Rajib Subba (Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Communications Directorate of Nepal Police). The session focused on Risks and Threats in Digital Age discussing online safety and cybercrime with grade IX students. The talk was comprehensive with students getting an understanding of cyber bullying; how harassing calls and texts can become a crime, how the law looks at it in the context of Nepal. To quote Dr Subba on digital footprints, "The online act is not anonymous. We leave digital breadcrumbs behind." We urge parents to discuss online safety with their children because it is very important to make children aware of the responsible and safe use of the internet.

#### **EVEREST SUMMITTEER VISITS GRADE V**

Everest summiteer, journalist, public speaker, stand-up comedian and leader of the Seven Summits Women Team which is the world's first female group to climb Mt Everest, Ms Shailee Basnet conducted inspirational sessions for the two Grade V classes. This is in conjunction with the study of geography of Nepal and the two class books that they are currently reading: The Adventures of a Nepali Frog and Jasari Pani Sagarmatha by Mr Kanak Dixit. Ms Shailee Basnet shared her experience of climbing Mt Everest and the other tallest mountains in each continent and described her journey with some very important takeaways for the children. The biggest mountains are climbed with the smallest steps. The bigger your goal, the more time you have to spend at the bottom. Hard work and discipline pays off. Team work and collaboration leads to success. Look at Nepal to find your inspiration, find treasures in your own country and see where you can contribute, find your own Everest and work to climb it.

#### **VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP TO URBAN FARMERS NEPAL**

The highlight for Grade III during RBS-Online was the virtual trip to Urban Farmers Nepal as part of its study of plants. Thank you to Ms Rachel Manandhar for conducting the tour. An accomplished educator showing them around was a treat for the youngsters. They got to learn about new technology in farming like hydroponic and soil-less farming and understood the importance of sustainable farming for the future.

#### **A LEVEL EXAMINATIONS**

On 23 March Cambridge International announced that they would not conduct the May/June 2020 examination series in any country due to the pandemic. Cambridge has provided us with guidelines on how to send the grades based on the students' continuous evaluation with supporting documents after which Cambridge will award the marks and the certificates. Our A2 students had completed their Mock Exams and were getting ready for the final examinations scheduled for May/June 2020.

The A1 students, who had prepared for the final exam of Year 1 were assessed online for the first time at RBS.

#### **SEE UNCERTAIN**

Unlike the decision made by Cambridge, the SEE examination has neither been cancelled nor rescheduled and the students are waiting in limbo. We hope that a decision will be made soon by the government that allows them to move ahead instead of continuing to prepare for the examination and wait for months.

#### **A LEVEL CLUBS**

The A Level Chess Club progressed considerably during the lockdown. On 9 May the club organized an online chess tournament which was open for non-RBS students as well. The Graphic Designing Club made banners and promotional posts for the tournament. There were 24 participants which began at 12 noon and concluded at 4 pm. The winners were Zain Shrestha (First) Aakash Meitanti (Second) and Abhinav Pant who secured Third position.

The Science Club with inquisitive members had many questions pertaining to the present pandemic which were unanswered. So they came up with the idea of introducing a Podcast. The first edition of the RBS Science Club Podcast with Mr. Dibesh Karmacharya got much online engagement. Again with the help of the Graphic Design Club the podcast was posted on 14 May. The TED-Ed Club has been meeting regularly and planning their activities.

#### **COLLEGES NEWS**

We have a very impressive line-up of college placements this year with colleges like Stanford University, Yale University, Rochester University, Tufts University, Smith, Gettysburg, Georgetown, Brandeis, Trinity, NYU Abu Dhabi, Kenyon, Washington and Lee, Lawrence, Bennington, Depauw, Union, IE, Grinnell, Mt Holyoke and many more. Unfortunately we don't know if the students can travel to actually attend these wonderful colleges this year.

#### **PARENT AND SCHOOL CONNECTION**

A strong partnership with families is very important during these times. The only way to move ahead with our shared goals of educating our children is by making the home



Aarya giving a book talk in her online class.



A glimpse of Dr Punam Dixit's session



Ms Kalpana Parajuli online with the Preschool children from their classroom.



Dr Rajib Subba in Grade IX.



A slide from Dr Subba's presentation



Dr Gunjan Dhonju conducting a session for teachers.



Robotic Arm by Atharv



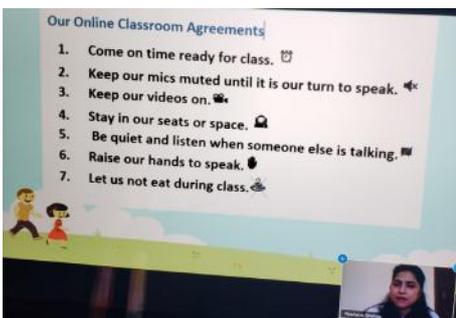
Every moment is a fresh beginning.



Staff Meeting



Guest Lecture in Grade V



We follow the Agreements we make in Grade I.



Megha tests her boat



Thumbs Up in Grade X

school connection more powerful than ever before. We seek the support of parents in the following areas:

Establishing a predictable routine: Traditionally, we have seen routine as very important for children so please encourage your child to follow a predictable schedule at home blended with school work, chores, physical exercises and games.

#### **USING GOOGLE CLASSROOM, ZOOM/MEET**

Parents of younger students are requested to be familiar with Google Classroom, Meet and Zoom so that they can enable their children with the online work. Keeping in mind that parents are also working as they help their children with the technology, we have worked on making the children able to sign in and out of Zoom. While older children can manage their Google Classroom assignments and their asynchronous schedule on Google classroom, younger children will require some help to access and upload their assignments.

#### **HELPING TO DEVELOP READING HABITS**

Developing and maintaining good reading habits is even more important now than ever before. Parents are requested to read aloud to their child every day. Since the individual reading is not possible to do online, we strongly request parents to encourage children to read every day. Please have independent reading on the schedule at home.

#### **SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

We request parents to remind their children to submit assignments on time. At times some students may feel they would rather not do their work as they are not in school. We do not know how long this will go

on. Please help support our online initiative by encouraging the children to do the assignment given as it will help us assess and evaluate their growth. We need to make sure that their transition is smooth.

#### **GRATITUDE**

We thank parents for the appreciation and positive feedback and also for the constructive and valuable suggestions. In addition we thank all families for their support and help during online learning. Thank you for learning to use all the digital platforms that your children are working on. A special thank you to the parents of our youngest students.

Thank you to all the hard working Teachers and Staff members. This is the first experience of teachers transitioning to remote learning in such a short time all over the world. Teachers have the students' best interest in mind and are committed to the difficult but delicate job of providing standards-based curriculum while also balancing the job of not overwhelming the students.

We encourage parents to share any positive comments or words of encouragement with your child's teachers if you feel things are going well! So many of our faculty who are working nights, weekends and many more hours than a traditional day to make this happen for our students. Don't hesitate to give them a "pat on the back" if you feel they deserve it!

We welcome testimonials from parents so that we can keep a good documentation of this unique time in our history. Please email them if you can.

Last but the most important, a very special thank you to the students who we miss a lot. The teachers can't

wait to see you running around the school. We miss you in class, in the playground, in the football field, in the library, the dining room and everywhere else. The school is so silent without you. We hope that this crisis will come to an end and we will see you soon. We thank you for being so amazing in the RBS-Online classes. The teachers are enjoying the teaching experience and so are you! You are learning so much, so fast and adapting and demonstrating resilience. We miss you and love you a lot and can't wait to see you!

#### **RATO BANGALA PARTNERSHIP IN OUTREACH PROGRAM (RBPOP) NEWS**

Rato Bangala Partnership in Outreach Program (RBPOP), together with Rato Bangala Foundation has begun work on a unique radio program for children between the ages of 6 to 10 in collaboration with the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB). As ACORAB's network is nationwide, children all over Nepal will have access to this program. This program will focus on broadcasting meaningful information to children in order to pique their general interest and get them involved and interested in things around them. The program which will be broadcast twice a week and will consist of story telling, recitation in chhanda, involving the children in the planting cycle, cooking and encouraging them to think mathematically and scientifically on a daily basis. They will listen to music, learn to dance, sing and learn some arts and crafts. In addition, the program will encourage children to participate more actively and be helpful and kind around the house and develop life skills.