

Inspiring Minds Through Reading

Tr. Vivena Rodrigues

Don Bosco Senior Secondary School, Nerul, had the privilege of hosting an enriching and interactive session for the students of Classes IX and XI on Wednesday, **24th June 2026**. The distinguished guest for the event was Madam Melody Mortazavi, Director of Times NIE, a native of Sans Francisco, whose dedication to empowering young minds has inspired countless students across the country. She was accompanied by the team from Times of India, Mr. Manish Kukreja, Mumbai NIE head and Mr. Harshit Doshi Navi Mumbai head.

The programme commenced with a warm welcome, acknowledging Ms. Mortazavi's significant contribution through Times NIE and her commitment to fostering academic excellence, critical thinking, and global awareness among students. The school community felt honoured to host such an accomplished education leader and mentor.

During her engaging address, Ms. Mortazavi emphasized the importance of cultivating a regular reading habit. She highlighted how reading serves as a gateway to knowledge, broadens perspectives, enhances creativity, strengthens communication skills, and develops critical thinking abilities. Encouraging students to become lifelong learners, she urged them to stay informed about current events and develop the habit of reading newspapers and quality publications regularly.

One of the key themes of the session was the role of critical thinking in education. Ms. Mortazavi explained how Times NIE encourages students to question, analyse, evaluate, and form independent opinions rather than relying solely on memorization. She stressed that these skills are essential for success in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Drawing comparisons between educational approaches across countries, she noted that the American education system places considerable emphasis on project-based and collaborative learning, enabling students to learn through practical experiences and teamwork. In contrast, she observed that the Indian education system often focuses heavily on outcomes and examination results, sometimes at the expense of enjoying the learning process itself. She encouraged students to embrace learning as a journey of discovery rather than merely a means to achieve academic success.

Sharing her personal journey, Ms. Mortazavi spoke about her early career in the technology sector, where she worked on developing applications and digital solutions. She recounted how a chance interaction with children at a Shiva temple sparked her interest in working with young learners. Through meaningful conversations with them, she discovered her passion for education and eventually dedicated herself to nurturing children's potential and helping them grow into informed and responsible citizens.

The session was highly interactive, with students enthusiastically participating in discussions and asking thoughtful questions. The programme provided valuable insights into personal growth, lifelong learning, and the transformative power of reading and critical thinking.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to Ms. Mortazavi for her inspiring words and valuable guidance. The session left students motivated to cultivate reading habits, think critically, and pursue learning with curiosity and enthusiasm.