

Bridging worlds, celebrating roots

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In an increasingly fragmented world, the ability to build bridges – across borders, disciplines and communities – has become ever more important.

For National University of Singapore (NUS) Class of 2026 graduates Kashvi Raj and Mathivanan Divyaa, that impulse has shaped their undergraduate journeys and earned them two of the university's prestigious prizes.

Carrying the weight of a fractured world

As global conflicts increasingly dominate the headlines, Ms Kashvi, 22, believes true global citizenship lies in confronting that distress and choosing to do good.

"Lately, it feels like the world is fracturing further in spite of the interconnectedness," said the global studies major, who graduated with Highest Distinction. "You read the news, and sometimes all you see is war, destruction, hatred. The weight of history crushes us at times, but I think carrying that weight and still doing good for the world is how we are global citizens."

This conviction earned Kashvi the Batul Izzuddin Global Citizen Prize, donated by NUS College educator Dr Mustafa Izzuddin in honour of his mother.

A self-proclaimed inquisitive "third culture kid" who immigrated to Singa-

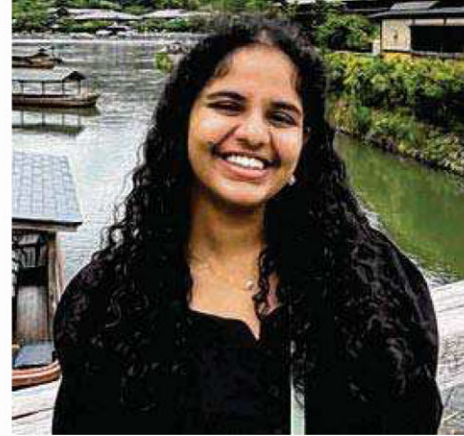


Recipient of the Batul Izzuddin Global Citizen Prize, 22-year-old Kashvi Raj, in Tübingen. (Right) Recipient of the Syed Ahmad Khan AMU Memorial Prize, 23-year-old Mathivanan Divyaa. PHOTOS: KASHVI RAJ, MATHIVANAN DIVYAA

pore from India at age four, Kashvi's academic journey has spanned the globe. From studying in Germany as a Baden-Württemberg scholar to researching the Rights of Nature and the environmental impacts of mining in Ecuador, she has consistently championed an interdisciplinary approach to global issues.

Yet, her deepest grounding remains her family. "Rebuilding a life in a new country is not easy," she reflected on her parents' sacrifices. "These accomplishments belong to them as much as they do to me."

Now part of the Strategy Planning Team at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Kashvi aims to continue making a mea-



ningful difference, carrying forward the lessons learned from her global engagements and mentors.

Unravelling the rich tapestry of South Asian heritage

In Singapore's multicultural landscape, 23-year-old economics graduate Divyaa believes South Asian identities can sometimes be flattened into a single idea of Indian culture, leaving younger generations less connected to the diversity of their own heritage.

"Given that the majority of the Indian population in Singapore is Tamil, I've always felt a lot of people conflate Indians or even South Asian culture as Ta-

mil," said Divyaa, who also graduated with Highest Distinction. "Most Indians who grew up in Singapore are not very connected to or informed about their roots. I wanted to spread awareness and bring youths closer to their heritage."

This drive to address representation gaps earned Divyaa the Syed Ahmad Khan AMU Memorial Prize, an award brokered by Dr Mustafa.

Raised in a Tamil-speaking family, Divyaa's interest in her roots grew during her secondary school days at the Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre and was further shaped by an exchange at the University of Alberta.

As president of the reinstated NUS Hindu Club, she organised major festivals and a university-wide interfaith dialogue. She also facilitated South Asian cinema discussions, translated policy documents for the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, and led intergenerational initiatives like Camp REConnection.

"Tamil and spirituality have always been a big part of my life," she said. "My parents migrated from India and worked incredibly hard to give me a life here in Singapore, and they inspire me to excel."

Now heading to Nanyang Technological University for a Master of Science in applied economics, Divyaa aims to bring her culturally grounded perspectives into Singapore's policymaking sector in the future.

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