



Established in 1936

# The Doon School

# WEEKLY

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## Reflections of an Actor

*Harsh Mall and K P Somaiah interview Karam Puri (ex-655 KB'95), an Old Boy of The Doon School, who conducted a workshop on acting recently*

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us a bit about yourself.**

**Karam Puri (KRP):** Well, I was born in India, but I spent the better part of my childhood abroad. My father was posted to South Korea when I was two years old. South Korea was an interesting place to be in at the time, considering it was still a fledgling democracy. In 1985, my father was posted to America, and I came back to India for my high school.

**DSW: What prompted you and your parents to send you back to India ?**

**KRP:** My parents wanted me to learn more about my homeland and its vast cultural background.

**DSW: Having come back, why did you choose The Doon School?**

**KRP:** Well, for one thing, several generations of my family have been in Doon ; my father was in the batch of '64. I was fascinated by the stories of the 'Junko' that my father used to tell me. I also heard about 'Bond' and the legacy of Doon, all of which made me want to join, more than ever.

**DSW: What do you feel makes a Dosco unique?**

**KRP:** A Dosco always handles highly stressful situations marvellously and is able to shoulder responsibility. DoscOs are also very enterprising, but most of all, they never forget each other and have a unique bond of brotherhood . For example, when my dad's batch had a reunion bash, it was quite unusual to see 60- year old men cavorting around like teenagers!

**DSW: How much do you think Doon has changed since your last visit?**

**KRP:** Well, my last visit was twelve years ago, when I left! (*laughs*). School was a lot different back then. The campus was greener, and the infrastructure has improved tremendously in terms of Internet facilities and the like. I remember that in my time, there was only one computer in the school, which was located in the Main Building. We had a blast learning MS DOS on it! Well, we led a much simpler life those days, there were neither cell phones nor laptops, and the school was much stricter.

**DSW: What do you think about traditions in school?**

**KRP:** I agree to the fact that the school must evolve, at least to a certain degree. If it were to ignore the fast-moving world outside its walls, then it would become redundant as an institution, which it has not. On the other hand, some traditions like self-discipline should be maintained, as they stand a Dosco in good stead in the outside world. Till today, even in a board meeting, I always stand up when a woman enters the room. It's these little things which set a Dosco apart. After all, we must remember that each one of us is a representative of the school.

**DSW: What activities interested you most in the school?**

**KRP:** I enjoyed dramatics and won both best actor and best supporting actor in my time. I was boy-in-charge of motor mechanics, thanks to which I can repair my own car engine on the highway even today. I was involved in sports too, being a member of the school hockey and soccer teams. I was also school senior PT leader.

**DSW: What did you do after passing out?**

**KRP:** I watched the movie *Wall Street* and got inspired by it and became an investment banker; then left the job and became a professional actor.

**DSW: What exactly drew you towards dramatics at a professional level?**

**KRP:** I had come to Paris to close a certain deal and I just thought to myself, what am I doing with my life, and where am I headed? So I quit my job and joined the Lee Strasberg acting school. The acting school teaches the 'method' style of acting. Its alumni include the likes of Marlon Brando and Al Pacino; in fact, Al Pacino was my teacher. After acting school, I joined the Spoon Theatre Company.

**DSW: What made you want to visit India after so long?**

**KRP:** Ever since I became an actor, I have had a yearning to come back to India. However, before coming back I worked with an NGO in Mozambique for a year. After that I came back to India and travelled around the country before coming back to visit Doon.

**DSW: So what are you doing nowadays?**

**KRP:** I have set up my own theatre group called the Actor's Project in Delhi and I am starring in a soon-to-be released film called *Gurur*, which will premiere in New York.

## REGULARS CRICKET NEWS

The school Junior cricket team played the **Pinegrove School** on Sunday, March 25. The school beat the team from Pinegrove by ten wickets. Well done!

On the same day, the Senior team played the team from **LHSE, Pilibhit**. The school lost by four wickets.

The match was followed by the annual dinner hosted at Hotel Madhuban by the Pilibhit family.

## COUNSELLED

The annual career counselling exercise for A formers was conducted from March 20-23. Ninety-two boys were counselled in a group, and individually, by a team of counsellors from the **Institute of Career Studies, Lucknow**. The team consisted of Amrita Dass, Nupur Wali, Anjali Singh and Manisha Gupta. An orientation session was conducted in the AV Room, which was followed by individual sessions which were conducted in the careers' department. Students were counselled on the basis of the various exercises undertaken by them and the results of the aptitude test which was held on February 14 this year. The counselling involved advice on subject options to be selected at +2 level for ISC and the IB diploma programme, keeping in mind higher education and career options to be chosen in future.

## BABY NEWS

We congratulate Ashish Dean (ADN) and his wife on the birth of their baby girl and welcome the new arrival to the Doon family.

## Constructing Classrooms

*Shikhar Singh reports on the beginning of a social service project*

On March 28, a cavalcade exited Chandbagh; this included the Headmaster, MCJ, AKC, MNP, SJB, PKJ and the *Weeklyteam*, AT formers and a media troupe. The event: the inauguration ceremony of a school building in Hassanpur. This rural community, located 20 km from Dehradun, had started work on a school campus over a decade ago. Recently, our boys joined the programme to complete this unfinished task.

While most of the DoscOs were here on a residential project, we visited the site mainly to attend the inaugural ceremony and cultural programme that followed. The school building that has been constructed, accommodates children up to Class 5, from around the area. The teacher, an ex-pupil of the school, whose return to devote herself to the cause of rural education is greatly appreciated, narrated the difficulties the locals had undergone to accomplish this "mammoth task". In the speeches, Dr. Anil Joshi of HESCO, spoke of resource-oriented education and how schools like this could take the lead in creating awareness about the economic potential present in the villages, more than only providing literacy. He also emphasised the need for them to be empowered so that they would not be exploited by middlemen and city folk. The local panchayat, led by the *bal* panchayat, were warm in their appreciation

of the boys for their helping hand. The Headmaster spoke on the need of education for youth and how construction activity can erect structures, but only local participation can make it fruitful. The speeches were followed by tea and a cultural programme.



The local students put up several monologues, poetry pieces and welcome dances for us. Several of them were based on the rhythms of the 70s and traditional welcome songs of the *baraat*. The interactive session made for interesting observations — that most students were girls, given that this area is socially and economically underdeveloped. That the village community had higher aspirations and required quality teaching staff and a further expansion of the school. It was interesting to note that progress had set the wheels of society turning, with a little push from our school. Women are not bound by *purdah*, in fact several even performed dances and many could read the written programme with ease.

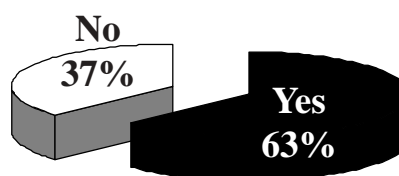
In conclusion, I feel our school has initiated long-standing and valuable social work in Hassanpur. Besides providing material infrastructure, it has boosted the education, perception and understanding of key issues among the villagers. It definitely enriched us, as we familiarized ourselves, even though for a short period of time, with a place we would probably never visit or read about: an area referred to by Gandhiji as "that area which covers 70% of our country".

## CAREER CALL

The careers notice board will focus on **Information Technology** this week. All those interested in knowing more about this field should look up the board.

## Opinion Poll

Is hysteria over sports understandable?



172 students participated in the poll

## The World Cup Fiasco

*S K Vohra* comments on the media's role in the crashing defeat of the Indian Cricket Team in the World Cup

Where are the cricket *pundits* now? What about the experts? Statistics, too, reveal a part of the story. Cricket matches are won or lost in the field and not in studios, boardrooms or on computers. The media had created a tremendous hype. Every channel wanted to outdo the other. Signature campaigns were launched, messages were being solicited and prayers were being offered all over. Songs were written and Bollywood did not lag behind. It only added more pressure on the Indian team.

The aggressive tactics of Bangladesh gave us a jolt. Our overwhelming victory over Bermuda sparked some hope, but here again, our media went overboard. The efficient and clinical way in which Sri Lanka disposed of us shattered the dreams of millions of Indian supporters. Pakistan, too, was shocked by Ireland.

Cricket is a game of glorious uncertainties. A single ball can account for the best batsman, and an obscure tail-ender can frustrate the bowling might of a renowned attack. Cricket history is replete with such instances. It is hazardous to predict in such a game. I think this unprecedented hype has been one of the major factors of our debacle, and we must learn to take cricket as a sport, not a battle. Victory and defeat are very much part of the game.

I am disappointed, no doubt, but not disheartened. The players must be even more dejected. I'm sure a determined effort on their part will bring us back to our position in international cricket. We must have faith in them and give them time to regroup and efface the harsh memory of this debacle.

### Trophy Flash Cricket



The inter-house Senior cricket cup was introduced by the school in the year 2006. The first recipient of this cup was Hyderabad House, on March 31, 2006.

#### Senior Cup

The Foundation Cup, presented by the Board of Management in the year 1936, is given for inter-house cricket. It was first displayed in 1943, when Jaipur House won it.



#### Junior Cup

Presented by Sir Frank Noyce in 1938. The first winner of the cup was Hyderabad House.



#### House Cup

## Heavenly Bodies

*Sharad Gopal* reports on a night spent star-gazing

The 27th of this month saw a group of about twenty-five boys from the Astronomy Society assembling outside the CDH and embarking on a journey to Hathi Pao in an extremely uncomfortable thirty-seater bus. Most of us were in agreement that it should have been retired from service a long time ago. The two-hour-long journey was followed by a dinner break. Our dinner that night consisted of packed food from the CDH. So, obviously, it was not very different from what the rest of you were consuming that night!

A short, five-minute trek down a stony path revealed an open meadow lit by the white light of the moon. This was where we were to set up our telescope. Mr. Subhash, a person who was well acquainted with the Society, helped us set up our equipment. And now, what we were to experience was a scene no one will ever forget. Actually, it was a series of visions of heavenly bodies in the solar system.

First of all, we witnessed the amazing sight of the horse-head nebula, which formed a trapezium of blue stars, and they were blue because these stars were newly-formed. Then, we saw the moon. Yes, I know that most of you will not believe me when I say that the image of the moon, as seen through the telescope, also seemed to be beautiful, but it was. The commonplace moon, as we see it, was now replaced by a gigantic picture of immense craters and mountains that outlined the relief features of this astral body, which lacks atmosphere. Next up was the Orion asterism. Now, some of you are not well versed with what the pattern of stars reveal and also may not be acquainted with the concept of an asterism. Actually, an asterism is an unofficial constellation or, more appropriately, a part of a constellation. The asterism, with its binary stars was even more awe-inspiring. Let me explain, at an elementary level, what binary stars are. According to some of the dimwits in the school, binary stars are stars which are binary! Although, you may not perceive anything amiss in this definition, you will also not perceive a thing from this. Binary stars are stars that revolve around each other. Finally, we came to the grand finale of the programme. We captured a glorious view of Saturn with its various rings. Two rings away, we could see its moon, Titan, the brightest moon of them all. This was the end of our star-gazing session.

We headed back to school, having had an amazing and memorable experience, one that will be savoured over and over again.

### Unquotable Quotes

*There were three of us but not me.*

**Dhruv Mahajan**, the invisible man

*UP is in Lahore.*

**Avanindra Singh** redraws the borders.

*I am at a short of words to describe myself.*

**Dhruv Gupta**, cut short.

*I'm ghost! I'm ghost!*

**Nilesh Aggarwal**, dead man walking.

*Don't burn the water.*

**Shoumitra Srivastava** dreads the fire.

*My chest is painful.*

**Jaiveer Mehra** complains.

## Entries and Exits

*Naman Goel*

Every exit is an entry somewhere else. Harold Kumar was just going to make an exit...

Harold opened his eyes. He still couldn't see anything. He rubbed his eyes. But to no avail. There was nothing wrong with his eyes; there was just nothing to see. He was in a place full of nothing but darkness. Then, he noticed, from the corner of his eye, a distant glimmer. He didn't know what it was but it gave him just enough light to see himself. He looked at his hands. They looked different. His head, too, was full of mysteries, with not enough light to reveal them.

Harold tried to remember something, but his mind went blank. He tried however, and suddenly it all started coming back to him. July 21, 1921. Harold was born in London. He was given an English name by his parents so that he would be accepted by the Britishers. India had been going through turbulent times, and his parents had just taken an 'exit' from India and entered London. Had they no love for their country?

Harold was sent for the best education available, but he was always a shy person. He was considered an outcast by the rest of his classmates. He was, however, a very bright student. In the evening, when everyone would be out playing, he had no one to play with and hence he spent his time with books. Topping his class was not unusual and his classmates became jealous of him and cut him off completely. Who did they think they were? By the time he had passed out of school, Harold had decided that he wanted to be a doctor and he succeeded.

His memories started getting hazy again. Harold noticed that the glowing object had become bigger. Perhaps it was nearer now.

The fog from his memory started to lift again, and he remembered his college days. Those had been, perhaps, the best days of his life. The English still ignored him, but there was a girl from India. Her name was Kamini. She, too, felt neglected, and both of them became great friends or perhaps something more, almost immediately. She told Harold what the British had been doing in India, and it just made him hate them even more. She told him that she had been sent to school by her father, but was to be married right after that. She had run away from home, and had to earn money on her own to come and study to become a doctor. Harold and Kamini both loved each other. Kamini didn't want to lose Harold, but he had to know about her past. So she told him about the difficulties she had faced in raising money for herself. She had tried going home, but she was never let back in. She was taken advantage of, and was even forced into prostitution. But, somehow, she received help from an old Muslim gentleman, who didn't have any family. He gave her all of his savings and died soon after that.

After gaining their degrees, they both practised in London for a while, where they earned a modest income. No Englishman would trust an Indian doctor. It was time for another exit, another entry...back to their own country. They opened a small hospital in Lahore, and did a lot of good work. They would sometimes help the poorer patients free of charge. In the meantime, they got married. In a few years, in the summer of 1947, Kamini got pregnant...

Harold noticed that the glowing object had come very near now. It was actually a doorway. There was a lot of light beyond the doorway. He looked and could see an image of himself on a bed in a hospital...

The summer of 1947. A group of Muslims attacked the hospital and killed all the Hindu patients. Kamini tried to stop them, but she was cut into pieces by swords.

When Harold got to know he was devastated, but he was sent away in a train to the newly created nation of India. He couldn't even cremate his wife...and child. When he reached India, he joined a group who, like him, was filled with people thirsting for revenge. In his anger, he had forgotten all he had ever believed and tried to settle scores mindlessly. One day, during a mob attack, he was wounded grievously by a knife cut in the stomach.

Harold realised that he was at the doorway of death. He saw himself on the bed in the hospital. He was now, apparently, out of danger. He knew that he could either go back to his real life and continue his revenge, or he could stay in this lightless, lifeless place and drift about.

He didn't take a second to decide. He moved towards the doorway. He saw and touched the great door that has only been described in myths. Then he summed up all his energy, heaved the door shut, turned around and closed his eyes...

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