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The Doon School
WEEKLY



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At The Helm

Bharat Ganju *in conversation with the School Captain, 2010, Arnav Sahu*

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Has the feeling of being School Captain sunk in yet? What do you think of the other appointments?

Arnav Sahu (ANS): No, it hasn't sunk in yet. It has hardly been a couple of weeks and I'm still finding my feet. My first reaction: I was blank. I heard the news at the hotel in Boston, through *Facebook* (ironically!) and it will certainly take some time for the whole meaning of it to sink in. I am confident of heading the students, with our current team of prefects, and though we all portray diverse ideologies and talents, I believe that the current Prefects' Council is competent enough.

DSW: Why do you think you were elected School Captain?

ANS: Well, when I first heard the nominations, I was sure that no matter who the winner would be, it would certainly be a close tally. I believe there were several prominent reasons, behind the decision to elect me as the School Captain. Firstly, I am known for public speaking, debating, and participating in MUNs, and thus I feel that there is faith in me to articulate the voice of the students. I have always played an active role in student organizations such as the School Council and The Vision Statement Steering Committee, hence there is some amount of trust to project the boys' opinion and perspective, without any hesitation. The School Captain must constantly bridge the gap between the faculty and the boys, and I think I possess the skills to communicate well and to take rational decisions. I have also been one to raise concerns pertinent to the School community at large in various fora in the past. However, my role should not and will not be confined to being a mere disciplinarian as a prefect by simply ensuring the School is running punctually or by checking boys' turnout. My role will also incorporate counselling and being constantly approachable.

DSW: What is your game plan for DS-75?

ANS: DS 75 or DS100 or DS76, as School Captain, the significance of the year matters little. I will treat every year the same way, irrespective of its numerical significance. Of course, DS75 is a landmark in School's history, but my commitment and approach would have been the same for any other year.

DSW: Briefly outline the policy you intend to follow during your tenure as School Captain.

ANS: To put it in a nutshell, firstly, I hope to review the decision-making process in organizations like the School Council and the Housemasters' Council. The School Council is the apex democratic institution in the School, and must be far more involved in the 'final' decision process and address more challenging issues, like discipline, conduct, censorship etc. Secondly, I'm looking at further interaction with the opposite sex, in terms of joint collaborations in plays, music performances, debates, quizzes etc. Personally speaking, I disagree with a co-educational system in Doon yet, and I say 'yet', because we must learn how to walk before we can run. Thirdly, I plan to reduce the degree of competition at Doon, which, to a certain extent, could be termed a 'rat race' for awards. Of course, competition is healthy, but the cutthroat competition in School is partly due to an achievement-oriented system. This, unfortunately, is exacerbated by the hype around things such as 'S-form politics'. These are, briefly, some policies, but I'm also looking at further closing the senior-junior hierarchy. Frankly, I believe that respect is earned, not forced. And, of course, I'm looking at forming a less punishment-oriented disciplinary system.

DSW: What, for you, is the perfect balance between idealism and pragmatism?

ANS: Well, this is an ongoing debate yet to be concluded. I believe that in such a school, idealism is not always the right way forward. Idealism must be the Utopian endeavour, but not to a point of irrationality. Of course, it is a difficult balance to maintain, but in terms of role modelling and leading by example, prefects must endeavour to be the ideal. However, we all know that when it comes to execution, a more practical approach is required.

DSW: Where do you think the gap between the School's faculty and student body lies?

ANS: I disagree with this perception. Faculty-student relations at Doon are unlike at any other school, and practices like tutorial meetings, nights-out, sporting events and CDH seating help create a lasting bond in student-teacher relations. Of course, a certain division is deemed necessary for a hierarchical institution to function,
(contd. overleaf)

APPOINTMENTS

Arvind Sharma has been reappointed **Boy-in-Charge** of the **Design and Technology STA** for this year.

Uday Shriram has been appointed **School Chess Captain** for this year.

Pranav Aggarwal has been appointed **Boy-in-Charge** of the **Lost Property Office** for 2010.

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

REPRESENTING STATE

Abhinandan Rajan, Rishabh Chatterjee and Divyam Agarwal represented Uttarakhand in the **Under-19 National Basketball Tournament, 2009**, held during the winter break.

Well done!

ASTRONOMERS

Revant Nayar and Shivam Goyal participated in the '**Be an Integral Astronomer**' competition organised by the European Space Agency. Their work was commended by the Agency and they received certificates of merit. Congratulations!

CHECK MATE

Over the course of the winter break, Ujjwal Dahuja participated in the **National Chess Tournament** organised by the **Chess Association of India** and stood 8th in the **Under-16** category. Congratulations!

Unquotable Quotes

I will throw my threw at you!

SNA throws his weight.

Are you intimated?

Sarvashreshtha Singh, we shall inform you.

What the why?

Siddharth Bidasaria, why, why, why?

Talks mean no fun.

AKM, what does that mean?

The bowlsman hurtled towards the batter.

STB, howzatt!

(contd. from page 1)

and conflicts will always exist, which is but natural.

DSW: Are you planning any 'experiments' on the School community or its system?

ANS: I hope to implement the idea of keynote speakers, from outside, addressing the School at Assembly, rather than making it compulsory only for 'certain' forms. I am also looking at Assembly being taken in Hindi on occasional days; also at free seating in the CDH, at least one meal in a week. Moreover, I want to experiment with a 'Democracy Wall', where boys have the opportunity to post perceptions, views and standpoints on School openly, especially to incorporate the views of junior boys (which of course should be monitored). In reference to a 'No Punishment' week, I couldn't agree more with it and I'm planning to take it forward this year as well.

DSW: In your opinion, what would be your signature as School Captain and what are some of the challenges you might face?

ANS: My signature? I think that's an answer the School community must address and judge at the end of my tenure. But, I do realize that I'm always in a position to be misunderstood, which makes this post so challenging. My only concern is to maintain the right balance as a good friend and an authority, because I must be authoritative and approachable at the same time, and as I said, my role is not simply confined to being a disciplinarian.

| Poetry |

A Writer's Story

Shashank Peshawaria

In only writing, I win and rise,
And suffer in everything otherwise.
In a story of stories painfully sweet,
I am the triumphant author of my defeat.

To the Poet

Abhilaksh Lalwani

Poetry has ever been my bane
To sorrow the swiftsure lane;
Through it, I can not be untrue,
Even to those despised few.

Opinion oll

Is Valentine's Day against Indian culture?



(365 members of the community were polled)

Next Week's Question: Your role model/idol is:
a) a sports star; b) a movie star; c) a political figure?

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Trial blazers

| Reports |

TO SPACE AND BEYOND

Utkarsh Jha and Madhav Dutt report on the NASA Space Camp held over the winter break

Twenty-two eager boys, accompanied by RMR and AKM, headed for the NASA Space School on December 4. Strangely, the first day at Houston saw us playing American football with students of a local school. Even though we were novices at the game, we ended up enjoying the hours on the field.

The Space School started the next day. The major activity was based on creating machines that could reach and work on Mars. The group was divided into five teams and assigned various tasks and projects. These tasks, though tough, tested our creativity and were one of the most enjoyable parts of the trip to NASA. To make our tasks even more challenging, each project was assigned a certain deadline and budget. One of the most interesting activities was designing Mars Rovers which could pick up and analyze rocks in a model of a Martian landscape. This was the most chaotic task as our minds drew a blank when we were told to design Rovers and there was an unusual amount of bickering between us during the project as none of the team members could reach a unanimous decision on any idea. This meant that each team had to change the basic design innumerable times. There were various other interesting and creative challenges which I found exciting. These included designing 'landers' out of eggs and constructing model rockets. Designing the 'landers' was particularly difficult, as just handling the boiled egg was tricky. Some teams, to their dismay, even managed to squash their egg before they could start designing! Our trip also included interactive sessions with various scientists at NASA. The sessions taught us about the various dimensions of space exploration and were real eye-openers.

The group also visited the Johnson Space Centre where we were allowed inside the historic mission control from where the first moon landing was monitored. I was awed by the fact that I was standing in the same room from where many significant lunar missions have been controlled. We also managed to catch a glimpse of the gigantic Saturn V rocket, which even from a distance, looked enormous. The teams also visited the Neutral Buoyancy Lab which is a massive pool in which NASA astronauts train in a simulation of the moon's gravity. Inspired by the Neutral Buoyancy Lab we also attempted to build objects while submerged in water. We had a magnificent time at the pool, because when you are trying to build an object eleven feet underwater, there is a sense of unrealism and disorientation which threw us off balance. Our session at NASA ended with a lavish graduation meal at the Space Centre in Houston.

After the Space School we hopped over to Orlando. During our short stay at Orlando we visited Disney World's Hollywood Studios and Universal Studios. Riding crazy roller coasters and witnessing spectacular shows, including *American Idol*, was the highlight of our stay at Orlando. Our evenings were spent shopping at various malls and thus we ran out of money at a cosmic rate! This was one of the most memorable trips I have been on. Not only did the group have loads of fun but it also taught us a lot about the universe that we are a minute part of.

AT NASIK

Viren Kapoor recounts his experience at an RSIS project in Nasik

The Round Square Project is a unique programme to which most Doscors aspire to represent School as well as the country. By participating in these projects we make bonds of friendship which go beyond our national boundaries as there are participants from round the globe. It is very interesting and educational to interact with students from different backgrounds and lifestyles. These projects also provide us with a platform to serve the poor and the needy, and give us an insight into their difficult lives.

I had heard a lot about the RSIS Projects, and I feel lucky to have been chosen for one. This being my first RSIS Project, I did not know what to expect. The only thing on my mind was that I was in for something new.

Tushar and I were elated as we boarded the train bound for Nasik at Delhi. After an overnight journey, we reached Nasik, from where we drove a further 40 kms to reach Orchid International School, where we would stay for the next two weeks. It is nestled amidst a picturesque valley in the Western Ghats, with its cool, misty breezes and a breathtaking view of the river flowing nearby. Such a beautiful locale and the energetic and fun-loving bunch of fellow participants whom we befriended, very quickly added to our sense of elation.

Our project was to construct a new building which was to house a library and a study room for the orphans living at Adithratha Ashram. Our day used to begin with a yoga session, followed by breakfast, after which a bus would drop us at the construction site. There, amidst the lovely countryside, we all would get down to hard labour. The work consisted of digging the foundation and lasted for roughly three days. Not used to such physical labour and strenuous work, our entire group would be exhausted by the evening. After the digging was complete, we laid the foundation by filling in the mixture of cement, gravel and mortar. It used to be quite messy at times with the mixture spilling and splattering all over us. By the end of the day, we would look as if we had been fished out of a cement mixer! During the breaks, we used to fling empty cement pans like frisbees at each other!

As a reward for our hard work, we were given two days off to visit the city of Aurangabad and the caves at Ajanta and Ellora. As I had never been to this part of India before, the visit to the caves was fascinating. It made me very proud to show our foreign friends India's rich heritage. We took them around the markets, helped them bargain with the shopkeepers, acted as interpreters, and helped them choose from the many souvenirs on display.

As all good things come to an end, so did our trip. It was a very productive one. By giving us exposure to social work, and making us act as young ambassadors of our country, it taught us many valuable lessons.

| Report |

Harvard Bound

Revant Nayar and Uday Shriram report on their trip for the international MUN held at Harvard, USA, in January, 2010

There was only one word to describe how we felt as we entered the Boston Sheraton, bustling with over 3000 students from over 120 schools from all over the world, for what was perhaps the most prestigious conference in the world. Overwhelmed. The opening ceremony was addressed by the Secretary General, Daniel Robinson, and it was inspiring, to say the least. Rather than focusing on the need for reaching a consensus on international issues, he spoke about the need for diplomats to uphold what they felt was right, even if they came across as inflexible at times. Then The Doon School team, consisting of Uday Shriram, Arjun Badal, Vikram Kejriwal, Sachit Taneja, Arnav Sahu, Bharat Ganju, Shoumitra Shrivastav, Dhruv Velloor, and myself, prepared itself to launch into three days of debate, lobbying, resolution-drafting, and of course, socializing with girls. The Doon School represented the United Kingdom in five committees of the ECOSOC. To get into the specifics of what the committees discussed: the UNCSTD deliberated the safety associated with using GM foods, with one party advocating its trade and distribution, and the other believing in a more cautious approach. The Chair commended the committee on the lack of a Resolution because the issue had no solution in real life. The Human Rights Commission had to legislate on 'Female Infanticide,' while the UN Development Programme was faced with the task of 'Poverty Eradication.' The UNEP debated the 'Sustainable use of Tropical Rainforests' and that ended in a near-unanimous resolution.

Little had we known as the committee meetings commenced, that we would be able to make a significant impact in our respective committees, and make our presence felt, which I daresay we did. The first thing we noticed when we walked into the committee room was the absence of tables. It looked more like a seminar room than a committee room. The 'chit-boys', or pages as they were called at HMUN, were delegates who had volunteered for the job! The style of debating was less formal than the one we were used to (no one complained about eye-contact and personal pronouns), and was mainly extempore. The speeches were rarely more than a minute long, most only lasting for thirty seconds. And we found that unlike most conferences in India that we had been to, the delegates did not come across as being aggressive or argumentative, but extremely diplomatic and neutral, as one would expect actual UN delegates to be. Otherwise, the standard of debate was high, and we tried our best to match it. The chairpersons, graduates of the Harvard University, were also extremely approachable, friendly and encouraging, in addition to being extremely well-informed. Most of us, especially the delegations of the UNEP and CSTD, became known for speaking too much. (In fact, the Chair, at one point in time, refused to recognize us because we were over-talkative). All of us were important members in our respective committees, and vigorously involved ourselves in not only debating and lobbying, but also resolution-drafting. In the afternoons and evenings, we enjoyed sumptuous meals from the food court attached to the Sheraton Hotel, when we caught up with each other, talking about the debate, as well as the girls (no harm in that!). Our third night on the conference, the Delegate Dance was organised and it was a bitterly cold evening. We entered the ballroom of the Sheraton smelling like a perfumery and looking our best. To leave out the more explicit details, it was an experience every Dosco would kill for. We went in, guns blazing, and a certain junior member of the team led the way like a gorkha on the battlefield. Even the to-be-appointed School Captain and the Secretary General completely let loose, and we basically 'danced' the night away (to put it euphemistically). Another outing, so to say, that we enjoyed was a visit to the prestigious Harvard University, from where we each got a lot of souvenirs back. Besides, after the committee had ended, we also visited the city, particularly the famed 'Quincy Market', where we exhausted a large proportion of our money.

In the end, we did not receive any awards, but we realized that we had been faced with an exceptionally high standard of debate, and besides, as I have mentioned before, we were perhaps too aggressive in our approach. Our first dent on the Harvard MUN shield was a powerful one, and next year, those of us who will be going again will surely learn from our mistakes. HMUN was where we learnt that three members of our team had been made authorities in School (this was at 4 am). It was where we made friends from different nationalities; Puerto Ricans, French, English, Chinese, Spanish, Americans and other Indians; where we had more food in five days than we had had in the past month. And where we experienced the full force of -20 degrees Celsius, with torturous wind-chill, while walking to the river in the darkness. HMUN 2010 passed by like a dream come true and none of us will ever forget it.

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