

REGULARS

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VULNERABLE
UPA

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MASTER ON
BOARD

3

JAIPUR LIT

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Khanna's Year

The Doon School Weekly interviewed the newly appointed School Captain, Vihan Khanna

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): As the head of the student disciplinary body, which particular reforms do you have in mind post DS-75?

Vihan Khanna (VHK): Firstly, I think the School needs to adapt itself to the world, considering that it is changing so rapidly. Our School, being a traditional one, now has to integrate its traditions and glories of the past with the future. If we want to be the best school in the country, Doon needs to be ready to implement change. For instance, bullying is one of the major concerns that I want to address. Secondly, I think that the environment at School needs to be more congenial. We need to bridge the gap between masters and students and between seniors and juniors.

DSW: What does being the School Captain mean to you?

VHK: Being a School Captain does not make me different from everyone else. It just means that it is my responsibility to be the big brother to everyone. It does not put me in a position to undermine inputs from juniors, peers or any other community member.

DSW: Speaking about change, over the past five years that you have been in School, do you think the manner of a prefect's functioning has changed?

VHK: I think a prefect's functioning is based entirely on the prefect himself. I don't think the nature of a prefect's functioning has changed. A prefect's manner of functioning is solely individual. I think the greatest prefect is one who is sensitive and is able to criticize himself.

DSW: Can you give us a brief note on your leadership style?

VHK: My leadership style is that I expect the best from you. I am only harsh when I think that a Dosco is not performing to the best of his ability. I don't expect everyone to be exceptional in their field, but I do want them to put in their best effort. I don't want people to loiter and not genuinely work towards achieving their goals.

DSW: Considering that specialization has become important in the twenty-first century, do you advocate specialization for Doscos or do you hold the conventional belief that Doscos should participate in all-round activities?

VHK: I still believe in an all-round education. There are many excellent schools that advocate specialisation but when it comes to leadership, all-round education provides a very wide scope. To imbibe the Doon character, an all-round education is necessary and I don't see any reason for this system to change. I think Arthur Foot was a global thinker and he thought ahead of his time, like all great people did. However, an all-round education does not mean that a student should not be allowed to focus on his particular interests. If a student can write better than he can play cricket, he should be allowed to spend more time writing than on the cricket pitch, but that does not mean he should not visit the cricket pitch at all.

DSW: Is forcing people to participate in activities at par with bullying?

VHK: Yes, it is. You cannot force students to participate. All students who excel in a particular field are able to do so because they enjoy that field. If you are being forced into participating in an event you have no interest in, it is not only at par with bullying, but is also redundant for the participant as he cannot excel in something he dislikes or is uninterested in.

DSW: What are your views about School becoming more academic-oriented?

VHK: I think it's an important leap forward. You often hear comments about sports deteriorating and other remarks concerned with "studliness". Such reactions, in my opinion, do not highlight anything negative about the shift that has taken place. In fact, I have a qualm with the term "stud". One of the main issues in School is that students have a tendency to judge people on the basis of how good they are at a sport or in an activity. You cannot judge a person's leadership or character on such a basis.

DSW: Usually, prefects find themselves in situations in which they have to confront the mob. What advice would you give to a prefect in such situations?

VHK: My advice to the prefect is to follow his upbringing. They should genuinely imbibe what they have been taught at home. The prefect must not make a decision just to appease the mob and fit in. A prefect caught in such a situation must use his values and his principles to steer out of it. Principles are what make a school like ours great.

DSW: We are all taught about Arthur Foot's vision of egalitarianism. How does that vision relate to the discharging of a School Captain's duty?

VHK: Impartiality is an important aspect of Arthur Foot's vision. Prefects have to be impartial. The most difficult task for a prefect would be to send his best friend up to the Headmaster if the reason is valid. Egalitarianism sets in when it comes to treating juniors also. A prefect must be firm with all juniors, regardless of his personal friendship or animosity towards them.

APPOINTMENTS

The following are the appointments of the Prefectorial Body for the forthcoming year:

School Captain: Vihan Khanna

Hyderabad House:

House Captain: Virein Chabra

Prefects: Rohan Shriram, Aashray Batra, Saib Mehboob Ahmed

Jaipur House:

House Captain: Sharan Seth

Prefects: Ashwin Dokania, Varun Gupta, Raghav Puri

Oberoi House:

House Captain: Tushar Khurana

Prefects: Gaurang Ahuja, Karmanya Malhotra, Vikram Singh Gill

Kashmir House:

House Captain: Udai Bothra

Prefects: Anmol Singh Jamwal, Kanishka Malik, Tushar Gupta

Tata House:

House Captain: Kr Avanindra Singh

Prefects: Sagar Singh Karnavat, Sumaer Sandhu

Nitin Chauhan has been appointed **Assistant Housemaster** of Oberoi House.

Vatsal Modi and Shubham Agrawal have been appointed Boys-in-charge of the **Boys' Bank and Tuckshop**.

We wish them all a fruitful tenure!

DEBATING ABROAD

The School was represented by Sachit Taneja and Rohan Shriram at the **Modern International Debate** held at **The Modern School, Dubai** between January 22 and 25.

ROUND SQUARE

Vigya Singh and Aishwarya Karan attended the **Regional Round Square Service Project** at **Dhandapur** organized by the School from December 5 to 15, 2010. 8 students from Vivek High School, Chandigarh and 6 students from Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls School, Jaipur also participated in this project. The team managed to complete 3 classroom walls till the roof level.

Aditya Gupta, Vatsal Modi and Spandan Gopal Agarwal represented the School in the **Round Square International Service Project, Thailand** held between December 7 and 27, 2010.

Dhruv Sirohi and Akshay Sharan represented the School in the **Round Square International Service Project, Kenya** from December 10 to 28, 2010.

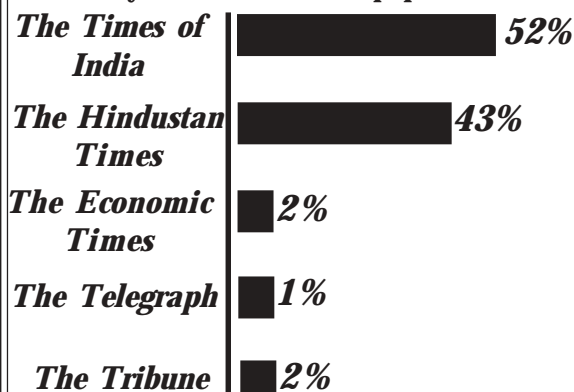
Apurv Agarwal, Sparsh Batra and Nipun Batra represented the School in the **Round Square International Service Project at Daly College, Indore** from December 8 to 22, 2010. Saud Amin Khan, Udit Kapur, Pronoy Bohara, Shourya Sinha, Pranjal Varshney and Prabhjot Singh represented the School in the **Senior Round Square Conference** held at **Kings Academy, Jordan** from December 15 to 22, 2010.

Spandan Gopal Agarwal, Anmol Singh Jamwal, Gursehej Singh Oberoi, Sambuddha Naha, Abhinav Mittal and Karmanya Malhotra represented the School in the **Senior Round Square Conference** held at the **British School, New Delhi** from January 18 to 22, 2011.

Well done, all!

Opinion poll

Which is your favourite newspaper?



Next week's question: Do you think cricket practices take an unfeasible amount of time from your day?
(321 members of the community were polled)

WELCOME ALL!

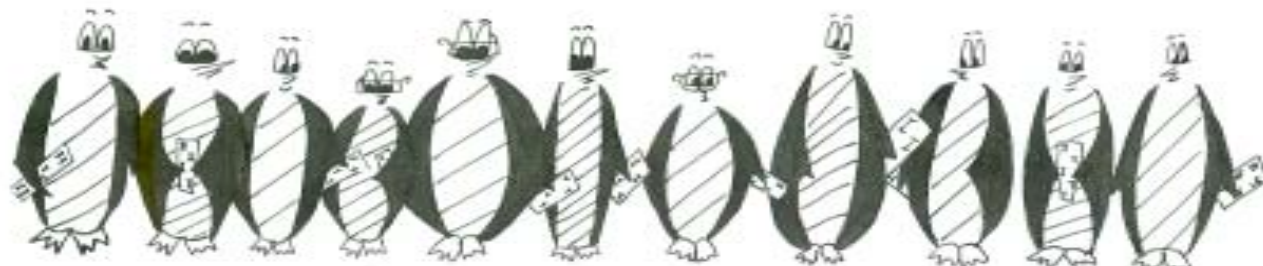
The School would like to welcome, Chit Ranjan Kagdee, a new master on campus. He will be teaching **Biology** and will be associated with Tata House as a tutor.

The School would also like to welcome Benjamin Dawes, a gap-year student from **Pocklington School, Yorkshire UK**, who will be with us for a term. He will reside in Oberoi House as a tutor.

We wish them both a fruitful tenure!

LITERARY MEETING

From January 21 to 25, Vivek Santayana, Shashank Peshawaria, Uday Shriram, Guruansh Singh and Harshvardhan Singh attended the **Jaipur Literary Festival**. A report runs in this issue.



~~NO SURPRISES~~

Prefects, 2011



UPA 2 Alternative?

Kanishka Malik and Kunal Kanodia remark on the UPA government's failures and the difficulty with the opposition's empowerment

independent party has diminished. Unfortunately, Congress cannot cross its partners because of the NCP's strength in Maharashtra and the DMK's strength in the South. Furthermore, the Congress Party's influence in Andhra Pradesh is not at par with that of 2009 after Jaganmohan Reddy's resignation last year and its much disputed approach towards the Telangana issue.

Since 2004, robust economic growth has been one of the positive aspects of the UPA government, but on the other hand, an alarming level of food inflation has overshadowed this aspect. Food inflation reduces a person's purchasing power, even if per capita income doubles within six to seven years. However, food inflation and price rise is prevalent in many countries around the world, including the United States. Nevertheless, by identifying corruption as one of the main driving forces behind food inflation, the opposition parties have an excellent front to attack the UPA government on. Moreover, agricultural growth over the past few years has been stunted, hovering around the 2 percent mark. Another critical issue, that of Farmer suicides, which comes under the agricultural ministry (led by an NCP minister) further emphasizes the failures of the coalition government.

Usually, such a situation can be best exploited by the opposition parties close to the elections. However, elections are three years away and by then, the media will probably bring to light new issues, making the Indian public forget the current ones. The BJP is indeed using corruption as their agenda, but it has its own dubious record to contend with. The Karnataka government, led by BS Yeddyurappa has come under the scanner lately. Its ministers have been exposed in numerous scams over the past one year and the Government's notorious link with the Reddy brothers has tarnished the BJP government's image. The BJP also has to build its secular image in order to counter the generally held belief of it being a party with Hindutva leanings. So the question is not whether the UPA government will fall or not, the question is who should replace it?

| Interview |

Welcome Aboard

The Doon School Weekly interviewed **Benjamin Dawes**, a visiting gap-year student on campus

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us about yourself?

Benjamin Dawes (BND): I am from York and live 20 minutes away from the countryside. I enjoy shooting, playing rugby, squash and tennis and this September I'm going to be reading politics at the University of Bath.

DSW: What were your first thoughts about the School?

BND: When I entered Doon I thought it was a paradise. It's really lush and green. The fields are beautiful. The campus is very quiet compared to the bustling city of Dehradun. I was very relieved when I walked through the gates because of the inner tranquillity.

DSW: How do you perceive India?

BND: That's a tough one. Well, I am enjoying the change of environment and culture. I haven't really been anywhere apart from Dehradun (from the Delhi airport I went directly to the train station and then came to Dehradun). But I did go for a staff workshop where I saw the foothills of the Himalayas. My impression of India is that it is very colourful, the people are friendly and hospitable and I'm finally getting used to the food!

DSW: What made you choose The Doon School as a temporary workplace?

BND: I picked The Doon School because my father knew people here. He taught at the School along with my mother 20 years ago. He was a biology teacher on a teacher exchange program. My father, who is a very good friend of Mr Burret, got in touch with him and set up my visit here as a teacher. So I came to experience the Doon School and try my hand at teaching by getting involved with the School.

DSW: So what are your views on India as it gains economic power?

BND: I think that although India is technologically behind the west, in the next 10-15 years India will grow to be a superpower and be at par with the United States and Western Europe. I think that the leadership and organisation of India is very strong. India has not quite reached its potential and is only halfway there. I can see it going a lot further and flourishing economically.

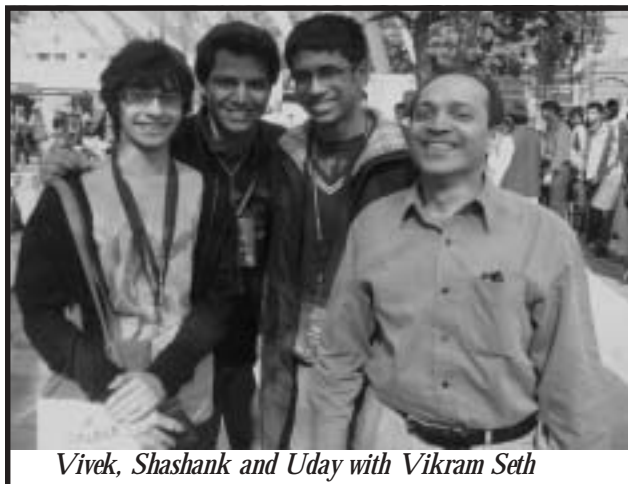
DSW: What were the differences you noticed between the schools that you've seen in England and Doon?

BND: Doscos are well mannered and more polite to the staff as compared to students of schools that I've been to in England. I think it's very well structured and disciplined. The students here are highly occupied. They don't seem to have the time to catch their breath. They are always going from one activity to the next and it seems to work rather well here.

| Report |
Conversing with Novelists

Vivek Santayana reports on the School's visit to the Jaipur Literary Festival, held between January 21 and 25

Nassim Taleb, who wrote tremendously on the notion of uncertainty, also wrote that one's intelligence depends on one's anti-library, or the number of books in one's library that one is yet to read. For every one book one has read, there will always be many books unread and many authors unknown. And this ever-growing pile of the unfamiliar sneers at us and reminds us of how much more we have to learn. When I first signed up for the Jaipur Literature Festival, I did so to meet authors I have read and admired, JM Coetzee, Marina Lewycka, Chimamanda Adichie, et al. Yet the experience was more of the opposite; I was exposed to authors whom I was unacquainted with, Gcina Mhlope or Junot Diaz for instance, each of considerable stature and erudition. Those of us that went with the School contingent (MHF, PCH, DEB, STB,



Vivek, Shashank and Uday with Vikram Seth



Vivek, Shashank and Uday with Nobel Laureate JM Coetzee

SNA, Guruansh, Harsh, Shashank, Uday and myself) attended only the first three days (that is January 21, 22 and 23) of the Festival. In these three days, we witnessed some of the most thought provoking sessions with the most prominent figures in literature, journalism, film or even music.

It was a literature festival, after all, so it was most fitting there was a session with Kiran Desai titled 'Why Books Matter', one with Junot Diaz on 'The Crisis in American Fiction' and one with Orhan Pamuk on the first day, 'Pamuk and the Art of the Novel'. Much like the opening line in Pamuk's *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*, a book is a "second life". Books matter because literature will continue to reflect the human condition. And as Pamuk said, novels have a capacity similar to the human mind to depict ideas that contradict, often antagonise, each other. The world is a similar welter of contradictions, and we saw many stark examples on stage as some elements tended to antagonise others. A number of ancillary issues were also addressed in the many discussions, like issues of provincialisation [sic] of literature, the

threat of globalization, the need for translators, the future of folklore and traditional storytelling and the time available to a readership to read literature for leisure. A recurring issue was an apparent clash between technology and art, as many lamented the advent of the internet and e-books into the realm of literature.

The Festival also had its frequent flirtations with History, with sessions on Mao, Che Guevara, the Partition and its effects on literature (moderated, incidentally, by Urvashi Butalia, author of *The Other Side of Silence*) and a people's history of 1857. There were also discussions on Philosophy with Gurcharan Das speaking on dharma (although he seemed to reiterate a lot of what he had written in *The Difficulty of Being Good*) and a session titled 'The Return of Philosophy' with AC Grayling, which we missed owing to the signing queue for Coetzee and our hasty departure. After such variety, calling it a 'Literature Festival' would be bordering a misnomer. We even had many sessions on music (*Urdu Zubaan* with Javed Akhtar, which was so crowded it had to be reprised during lunch, and Madan Gopal Singh on Bulle Shah) coupled with recitals and concerts in the evening. Despite my unacquaintance with Sufi or Persian music, I was enamoured by the recitals, particularly the different renditions of *Bullah Ki Jaana*. All of us enjoyed the concerts of Pakistani as well as Rajasthani music, all lined up during the evenings. While we missed a number of sessions, we attended a good many enriching ones (although some of us would believe the converse, after having to miss the last two days of the Festival). There were the luckier ones who went by themselves and saw the whole thing (or at least the sessions we missed).

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