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Mr Badal's Views

The Doon School Weekly interviewed *Manpreet Singh Badal (Ex 687-T '81)*, who conducted a talk on 'Building A Modern India' at School on Saturday, February 26

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Considering the number of scams that have occurred lately, to what extent is the Congress party to be blamed for the state of corruption?

Manpreet Singh Badal (MSB): I don't think it is time to enter a blame-game; the time has come when corrupt politicians are to be replaced completely. Nobody has the right to make a quick-buck at the cost of the nation. I am glad the media has exposed these kinds of politicians.

DSW: Speaking of the media, do you think the mass media in India is actually playing the role of keeping a check on the Government or is it simply making ties with politicians?

MSB: Honest journalism has been compromised to a great extent and the media can definitely be bought. However, sometimes newspapers and news channels cannot avoid publishing an important story as their ratings will go down. So, in spite of their loyalty to certain political parties, news agencies have to expose important information due to the intense competition within the media.

DSW: Were there any values instilled in you in The Doon School that encouraged you to take the right path when you opposed other party members as the Finance Minister?

MSB: If it were not for Doon, I would not have been able to stand up for what I believe. Sportsmanship, fair play and the ability to take inspired decisions were values that were instilled in me while I was at School.

DSW: How is a person, without any sort of political background, supposed to join politics?

MSB: You see first you have to take up a career and set a benchmark for yourself in it. Then, when you have reached that standard, you think about joining politics.

DSW: Are there any legislators in particular for whom you have great respect?

MSB: I particularly look upto Bihar's CM, Nitish Kumar, Shushil Modi, Finance Minister of West Bengal (who has been serving as the Finance Minister for 25 years) and even Pranab Mukherjee.

DSW: As an experienced legislator, could you explain how India is supposed to go about its food inflation crisis?

MSB: What India needs to do is shift its policy from food grains; the minimum support price (MSP), which presently encourages farmers to only grow wheat and rice. If the MSP is extended to vegetables, fruits, pulses and milk, farmers will be encouraged to cultivate these

as well and we will not have the kind of food inflation which we have right now. I think Punjab and Haryana should now stop growing food grains. We also need to move the Green Revolution eastwards. The agricultural infrastructure needs to be improved. Food inflation breaks the purchasing power completely.

DSW: Does the trickle-down effect from the rich to the poor actually take place in India?

MSB: You see the growth in tax revenues for the Government of India and state sectors has been phenomenal. Some of the states are doubling their annual plans. VAT (Value Added Tax) has helped a lot and within 6 months, even the GST (Goods and Services Tax) is going to be introduced. Evading tax will also become difficult because the system is becoming more transparent and efficient. In Punjab, our tax revenue has doubled in three years. So the trickle-down effect is there. The challenge is how to protect the tax money and I kept telling my officers (when I was the minister) or even the *Sarpanches* and the municipal authorities, "this is government money, like cow flesh - you can't eat it!"

DSW: You spoke about the danger of setting precedents by misusing position and power. As a member of the Legislative Assembly and Finance minister, have you seen anyone setting such precedents?

MSB: Thousands! I mean I could never get a single night of peaceful sleep because of the way people used to abuse privileges. For instance, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly wrote to me that he would be going to a conference concerned with the Commonwealth Games, so he was entitled to free travel to Malaysia. Enroute, he wanted to visit USA, Canada and Australia as well! When I refused, he hauled up the Finance Secretary and told him that his privileges had been abused; eventually he created a lot of stink. In another instance, the Leader of the Opposition told me that she wanted a Toyota Camry instead of an Ambassador. This is not the true purpose of politics. The true purpose of politics is to serve your country and also to uphold your family's name.



APPOINTMENTS

Aashray Batra has been appointed Editor-in-chief of **The Doon School List**.

Arnav Joshi has been appointed boy-in-charge of **Yoga**.

Suyash Agarwal and Saptarishi Biswas have been appointed boys-in-charge of the **Motor Mechanics STA**.

Piroune Balachandran has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of **The Doon School Information Review**.

We wish them all a fruitful tenure!

BRAZILIAN SOUND

There was a concert of Brazilian guitar music performed by **Zay Kohli** at the Music School Auditorium on Friday, March 25. A report runs in a forthcoming issue.

TALK-TIME

There was a talk by **Dr Brij Mohan Sharma** on the occasion of the National Science Day on Monday, February 28.

BLAZER-WINNERS

The following boys have been awarded the **Scholar's Blazer**: Shoumitra Srivastava, Umang Newatia, Piroune Balanchandran and Vikram Kejriwal.

The following boys have been awarded the **Games Blazer**: Nikhil Narain, Saarthak Singh and Aditya Gupta. Congratulations, all!

ROBOTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Arjun Verma has been selected as one of the five members of **Team Indus**, a team participating in the **Google Lunar X Prize Contest**, a four-year effort to safely land a robot on the surface of the Moon. Arjun will be responsible for creating and writing algorithms that will function as the brain of the robot.

Well done!

VISITING TEACHER

Lyndia Peters from **Edmonton, Canada** will be in School for 20 days. She will be teaching **Yoga** as well as helping out with social service.

We wish her a fruitful stay.

Unquotable Quotes

He fell down while playing table and tennis.

Arnav Matta invents a new game.

I am not staying here for one extra time.

Sumer Sehgal, impatient.

All vegetarians should have veg butter chicken for lunch.

Rishabh Tusnial, ravenous.

Everyone there come there.

Utkarsh Jha orders.

The stunt is dangerfull.

Amartya Bhowmick, the daredevil.

I looking you and you looking me.

ABC, confused about where to look.

Look at to me floater master !

MLJ's attention problem.

It's a great honour to award these scholars the Games Blazer.

PKJ, confused.

Napoleon lost the Battle of Bonaparte.

SNA rewrites history.

| Report | Meerut-Day

Udai Bothra reports on the School's visit to the Meerut Gyanoday Vatika on Saturday, February 26



Vigya Singh, Sparsh Batra, Ritesh Popat Shinde, MIA and I left for Meerut on February 26 to attend the Annual Sports Function of the various *Gyanoday Vatikas*. We were accompanied by the children from *Sapera Basti* and the *Balbair Road Vatika*. After eight hours, we finally reached our destination - the Meerut *Gyanoday Vatika*. We were welcomed by Mrs Alag and after a quick lunch, we took our seats for the sports meet which was to follow. There were eight, enthusiastic *Vatikas* which were competing. The races required competitors to complete diverse tasks such as running a hundred metres race, piggy-back! The Dehradun *Vatikas* danced to some Michael Jackson numbers. MIA and Ritesh competed in the invitational races after this and the day concluded with a speech by Mr Avinash Alag, an ex-Dosco and the founder of the *Gyanoday Vatikas*. Tired from the busy day we made our way to the bus, with a broad smile on our faces and two bronze medals in our bags.

| Poetry |

Trust

Piroune Balachandran

Trust the wind; it always blows in one direction
Trust the sun; it knows when to shine
Trust the grass; it always grows again,
Trust yourself; you've failed yourself too many times,
to fail again.

Movements

Kanishka Malik

A poet never dies: that is old rambling,
Because today he did and I honour the poet for it.
After all, what is to be done when the conscience rests
only on an armchair?

How is a poem meaningful,
when every word, every alphabet moves nothing but
the reader.

How is the reader significant,
when he is only moved and doesn't move that which
has to be moved: the price for reading the poem.

What don't the poet and reader have in common,
when they both move nothing but each other.

How are they or their movements significant?

Compulsory Talks?

Point

Utkarsh Jha

DoscOs, above all other things value good food, free time and friendship. However, they are claiming that these days, talks often rob them of many of the above. This seems to anger mobs of DoscOs and provokes their desire to arrive late or shabbily clad for talks. They claim that talks in School are often “irrelevant” to their interests, “boring” and, put in plain words, a “sheer waste of time”.

However, the students forget that they entered the lush campus of The Doon School in order to acquire a wholesome education that prepares them to step out into the real world. Those who claim that talks are not in their interest do not acknowledge the fact that all talks held at School, be it about the Jasmine Revolution or building a modern India, are about issues of great importance in today’s world. Talks in School usually do not delve into the details of an issue but give a general overview of it. DoscOs, in order to qualify as global citizens, have to be informed about certain events. Hence, talks are instrumental in our acquiring a general perspective on important affairs and indirectly, mould our personality.

Moreover, DoscOs who sleep during talks do not realize that although the styles of the speakers may vary, they are nevertheless, accomplished experts in their respective fields. Rather than the speaker, it is the narrow-mindedness of DoscOs that creates this reluctance to pay attention to the speaker.

Thirdly, DoscOs argue that talks waste a substantial amount of their time. Well, considering that most DoscOs do not read informative magazines or journals that discuss relevant issues, conducting talks is probably the least time-consuming way of gathering knowledge about worldly affairs. Talks, if paid attention to, efficiently serve their purpose of informing us and making us global citizens.

If the School wishes its graduates to be knowledgeable and well-informed about the reasons and causes of various events, it should continue holding compulsory talks. If an alternative is chosen and talks are made optional, the School will witness a lack of audience. While the students may feel content in the short-term, the Speaker, on seeing a small audience, will realize how disinterested DoscOs are when it comes to learning about important affairs. In such a situation, where disinterest is made so explicit, the claim that “Knowledge our Light” becomes a dubious one.

Counterpoint

Kanishka Malik

The *Letter to the Editor* published in the previous issue of the *Weekly* emphasised the adverse effects of having compulsory talks in School. The root cause of students disturbing and missing talks is their reluctance to attend something they are disinterested in. Indeed, the School invites a diverse range of Speakers to address worldly issues. However, no Dosco can be interested in each and every one of these issues. For instance, if a Dosco is only interested in learning about mountaineering, there is no point in sending him for a talk on some historical topic. If DoscOs think a talk would be useful for them, they would certainly attend it. In that case, talks would be like other activities in School where one could attend participate at one’s will. Similarly, forcefully attending a talk would be akin to forcing a Dosco to take part in some STA or SUPW in which he is uninterested.

One of the arguments the supporters of compulsory talks have put forward is that if talks are made optional, very few people will attend them. Well, it is in fact better to have a few interested people attending a talk than having a large group of uninterested people attending it. After all, in both cases, it will be the interested people who will appreciate the talk and make an effort to learn from it. Some supporters of compulsory talks have also said that such diverse talks give students a general perspective about worldly issues. However, forcing students to attend a talk in which most of them do not pay attention does not achieve this goal.

Another critical aspect of these compulsory talks is the time-slots they occupy. Usually, these talks are held during the rest hour or on Saturday evenings. Both these time-slots are probably the only periods in a Dosco’s schedule in which he or she does not have any obliga-

Making talks optional will be another step in the direction of self-determination. Such a step will also give the speakers an enthusiastic audience instead of a large, dull one.

tion to fulfil. After classes, the rest hour is necessary for rejuvenation and forcing someone to attend a talk then is arduous. As for Saturday evenings, they have traditionally been valued by students for being a period when they are void of regulation and have a certain amount of freedom. Jeopardizing this crucial period seems unfair on DoscOs. Also, some students already have tasks planned; tasks which they are probably interested in. Hindering the efforts of such students by making them attend a talk they are disinterested in just causes inconvenience.

Moreover, over the past few years, School has become liberal in many ways and has tried to relax certain rules and regulations. We experimented with deregulation when punishments were cancelled for fifteen days in 2009. Similarly, making talks optional will be another step in the direction of self-determination. Such a step will also give the speakers an enthusiastic audience instead of a large, dull one.

Opinion oll

Do you think attending talks should be compulsory?

 **No 91%**
Yes 9%

(232 members of the community were polled)

Next Week’s Question: Will evening toys in the Main Building improve academic performance?

| Viewpoint |

Oil Shocks

Madhav Dutt elaborates on the economic impact of political unrest in North African and Middle Eastern countries

After the collapse of several Arabic dictatorships, it is evident that several countries in the Middle East and North Africa are knee deep in turmoil. While the political aspects of the Jasmine Revolution have been scrutinized by the mass media, I would like to discuss the economic repercussions of the revolution.

One crucial aspect of the Jasmine Revolution is that it is mostly taking place in oil producing nations. After all, 56% of the world's oil reserves are present in the Middle East. In Libya too, civil unrest has proved to be a direct threat to the oil supply of the country, thus leading to a rise in oil prices. Although Libya supplies only 2% of the world's oil, the turmoil has pushed the price of oil by a significant margin over the last couple of weeks. The price of oil crossed \$100 a few days back and is currently at \$102 per barrel.

Rising oil prices always have a manifold effect on the economies of countries, affecting many sectors of their markets. Crude oil, apart from being used for extracting petrol or kerosene, is also used as an industrial fuel. Consequently, manufacturing costs shoot up, leading to inflation. India, in particular, is heavily affected by the problem in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) as around 70% of India's crude oil is imported. According to several reports, the crises caused the Sensex to fall by 546 points a week ago. Moreover, countries recovering from the recession are in a vulnerable position due to the price rise. Considering that even food inflation is a prevalent problem, rising oil prices will be another strain on their economies.

Another aspect of this crisis is concerned with employment. Many Indian workers and businessmen have been stranded in Middle Eastern countries due to the revolts and unrest. Currently, India is witnessing a large influx of Indian immigrants who were displaced due to the revolts in Libya.

The stability of the countries in the Arab world is necessary, not only for the benefit of its citizens, but also for the world economy. These countries are essential for the fulfilment of energy requirements of the world. Currently, there are possibilities of unrest escalating further in Yemen and Bahrain and members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). While in the long-run, the world might develop forms of renewable energy, in the short-run, rising oil prices will lead to high levels of inflation and act as impediments to economic recovery.

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The Hindu (February 21, 25 and 26)

The Economic Times (February 25)

The Times of India (February 25)



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ERRATA

In Issue No. 2273 of the *Weekly*, dated Saturday, February 26, the wrong *Opinion Polls* results were published. In order to avoid any confusion, the *Weekly* has printed the result of last week's question, which was 'Do you think the installation of cameras will encroach on your privacy?' and has also re-printed the *Votalysis* of this question's results in this issue.

In the same issue, Dr Snedcof's name was misspelt and in the article titled *Notes On Bindal* it was stated that the School visits the *Bindal* slum site for social service every Monday while it actually visits the site every day, from Monday to Friday, every week. The *Weekly* regrets these errors.

| Votalysis |

CAMERA SCARE!

(Re-printed from Issue No. 2273)

As the vote results point out, the installation of security cameras is not a popular decision. Most of those who voted 'yes' were making remarks referring to how the people monitoring students' actions would misinterpret petty antics as serious incidents. The voters probably have a premonition of how the installation of cameras would make their lives "robotic", as one voter commented. The issue of maintaining these cameras and their impact on our privacy probably encouraged the voters to vote against their installation. Someone also pointed out that the regulation of the School was the "job of the prefects and masters and not of the cameras".

On the other hand, security cameras have their merits. They act as deterrents for those intending to vandalise School property. After all, their primary purpose is not to invade our privacy, but to regulate activities and ensure our safety. They provide a certain amount of assurance to the School authorities and our parents. As for the argument that cameras will lead to misinterpretation of events, a counterpoint is that a video recording will not be the only factor while determining disciplinary action.

The installation of cameras, as misconstrued by many, is not to jeopardize the School's conventional way of functioning or invade the privacy of any student.

Opinion oll

Do you think the installation of cameras will encroach upon your privacy?

 **Yes 93%**
 **No 7%**

(346 members of the community were polled)