

REGULARS	THE WEEK GONE BY	HINDI PAGE	VANDE MATARAM
2	2	3	4

The Doon School Weekly welcomes all delegates to the Doon School Model United Nations Conference 2013!

INDIA NEEDS MORE MILKHAS

Madhav Dutt comments on the state of sports in our country today

In light of the roaring success the recently released film, ‘Bhaag Milkha Bhaag’ achieved, many Indians are wondering why only a small number of our athletes succeed on the world stage. This medal draught, especially in the track and field events, stems from what appears to be an innate lacuna prevalent in society. Though India is home to more than 1.5 billion people, we have only 26 Olympic medals to our country’s name; which amounts to about one medal per 57 million people. And out of these medals five were won in field hockey, our national sport.

Since playing sports is a crucial part of almost every child’s upbringing, ideally, we should be equally proficient in every sport, but sadly that isn’t the case. Our country first participated in the Olympics in the year 1900, with one athlete travelling to Paris to represent India. Surprisingly he won two silver medals in the 200 meter and 200 meter hurdles event. Fast forward 113 years and those are still the only two track and field medals our country has won in the Olympics. The closest we got to a podium finish since then was with Milkha Singh in the men’s category and P.T Usha in the female category.

The Indian cricket team has reached the upper echelons of fame, but other athletes have been left behind. The Indian

“The Indian cricket team has reached the upper echelons of fame, but other athletes have been left behind.”

issue is inequitable distribution of resources: cricket receives all the funds and glamour while other sports like Soccer and Athletics and even Hockey are neglected.”

At the end of the day, playing a sport at a professional level is also a job, and if a job doesn’t provide the basic necessities of life, why should one pursue it? We need talented up and coming generations to look at all sports as a serious career option. With a nation of our size, award winning athletes should be the norm, not an abnormality. The talent pool definitely exists; we just have to tap it. Today most students who excel in a sport tend to pursue their sport to get into college with the sports quota and then go on to pursue a degree and join the business sector.

Performance in sport is a great social force as well. Scores of people gather round the world to forget their problems and rejoice in their countries’ success when their sportsmen win matches and break records. In India, cricket is undoubtedly the opium of the masses. It is in the haze of this craze that all the other sports are shoved out of the limelight. What we need is attention to every sport. The Sports ministry should

formulate a scheme that provides the appropriate facilities to train our athletes. It’s unfortunate that Milkha Singh had to create a charity for poor sportspeople, and that one

of the most successful sports-schools in India was founded by P.T Usha herself. The former charity shouldn’t have to exist while the latter school should have existed long before it was established.

The Chinese athletic turnaround provides a near perfect example; one that we should emulate. Probably the only country that rivals us in sheer size, China has successfully produced world class athletes across the spectrum (though not in cricket!) This was seen at the London Olympics when Ye Shewin, a 16 year old Chinese girl, won both the 200 Meter medley and the 400 meter medley. Breaking the world swimming record for these events, she even beat men’s medley gold medallist Ryan Lochte’s split time in her last 50 meters. India too can produce athletes of such calibre. All we need to do is believe, and half the battle is already won.

Premier League is another incentive for young Indians to pursue cricket as a career. As Taarini Ravjit, an 18 year old student who has represented our country as a member of the under-19 girls football team says, “ T h e m a i n



“The Sports ministry should formulate a scheme that provides the appropriate facilities to train our athletes.”

TABLE TENNIS

The following are the results of the **IPSC Table Tennis Championships 2013**:

In the **Under 19 Category**, the team comprising Raghav Kothiwal, Shivan Tandon, Rishabh Chaddha and Rishabh Sharma emerged as the top team in their group but unfortunately lost in the **Finals**.

In the **Individual Championship**, Raghav Kothiwal reached the **Semi-finals** of the **Under 19 Category** while Shivan Tandon, Ishan Jhawar, Harshit Bansal and Krishna Goyal lost in the **Quarter-finals** of their respective categories.

Raghav Kothiwal and Shivan Tandon have been selected to represent the **IPSC Team** at the **National School Games**.

Well done!

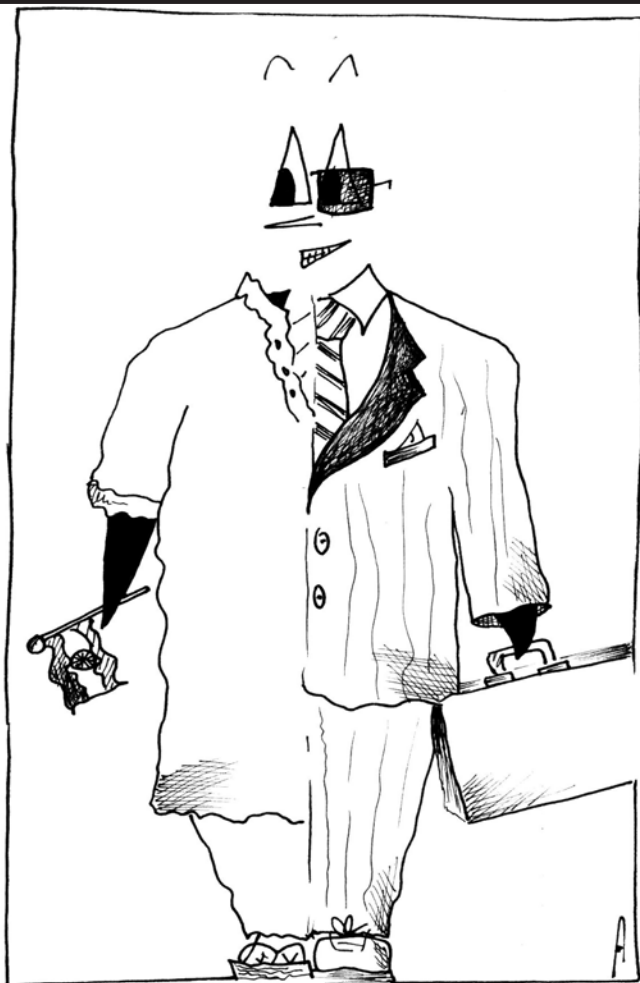
FOOTBALL

The **School Football Team** played the **Staff Team** on August 10. The **School Team** won 6-2.

ROUND SQUARE

The **Regional Round Square Social Service Project** was hosted by **The Doon School** from July 3rd to 13th at **Ganseshpur, Uttarkashi** to help the flash flood victims. 66 students and teachers from nine different Round Square schools participated in this project. Five students and six staff members from the School participated in this event. Participants built a wash room, labeled the field and a wall 100 meters long. Well done!

doontoon *Madhav Dutt*

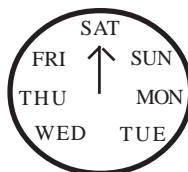


Kurta Pyjama, Suit & Tie



Around the world In 80 Words

A sudden volcano eruption in Indonesia killed six people. Meanwhile; the sand mafia continued its illegal mining in Uttar Pradesh after IAS officer Durga Shakti was suspended. Ceasefire violations continued in the LoC as Pakistani soldiers fired indiscriminately towards the Indian border. Ace shuttler PV Sindhu created history by becoming the first Indian to win a bronze medal since 1983 at this year's World badminton championships. At the IAAF world championships, Usain Bolt retained his title by winning the 100m event.



The Week Gone By...

Vireshwar Sidhu

Since the beginning of the term, the school has been gripped with MUN fever. Doscocs have been working hard to make the 7th DSMUN not only the biggest, but the grandest of all. And it finally kicked off yesterday with the Opening Ceremony, at which the Chief Guest was Salman Khurshid and the Keynote Speaker Habib Ullah.

We also celebrated Independence Day this Thursday. As is tradition, all Doscocs did Social Service for an hour in the morning, following which was the Flag Hoisting Ceremony. While the flag was being unfurled, I thought back to the night Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his 'A Tryst with Destiny' speech. The next morning, India awoke to a new dawn, a new beginning and above all, to freedom. It has been 66 long years since that glorious night, a night on which India became the world's largest democracy. India has endured a lot in the past six and a half decades, but the ride has been in the right direction. The nation has come a long distance and there is no looking back.



Weekly Selects

*The best articles, this week, from
around the world*

The 15 Year Old Layover - GQ

Bloodlines - Texas Observer

J.K. Rowling's Secret - Time

Deconstructing Harry - Grantland

The Snowden Effect - The Economist

Unquotable Quotes

I have gave my test.

Ishaan Jhawar, how much did you get?

He is a very good doubt.

PVD, what's the answer?

You have come after time.

Yashoraj Agarwal, are we on time?

You not being good with me.

Anirudh Popli, we are sorry.

I am facing my wash,

Arpit Chaddha, Is it clean?

स्वतन्त्रता आपके लिए...

हर मनुष्य का मूलभूत अधिकार और इसे बनाए रखना, हर मनुष्य का कर्तव्य।

- **हर्ष वर्धन बंसल**

भारत के महान इतिहास और का प्रतीक और उज्ज्वल भविष्य का द्योतक।

- **यशराज अग्रवाल**

आज़ादी- विचारों की, व्यवहार की और यहाँ तक कि गलती कर उसे सुधारने का मौका पाने की।

- **जय अहुजा**

जहाँ हर मनुष्य दूसरे के विचारों का आदर करता है पर अपने विचारों पर बंधन महसूस नहीं करता।

- **वसीफुल्लाह खान शेरवानी**

एक ऐसा वरदान जिसके बिना मनुष्य और निर्जीव वस्तु में कोई अंतर नहीं।

- **मिहीर किरण**

सभ्यता, संस्कृति और ज़िंदगी का पर्यायवाचक।

- **यश मल्होत्रा**

छात्र और राजनीति

• **वल्लवी शुक्ला**

आजकल एक बड़ा सवाल सभी के सामने है। सवाल यह है कि छात्रों को राजनीति में भाग लेना चाहिए या नहीं। जगह जगह छात्र संघों के चुनावों के दौरान होने वाली परेशानियों को देखते हुए लोग इसका विरोध करते हैं। छात्र नेताओं द्वारा समय समय पर अनुशासनहीनता की जाती है, इस वजह से भी छात्रों के राजनीति में आने को गलत समझा जाता है।

कुछ भी हो, छात्रों की राजनैतिक ताकत को मानने से तो कोई इनकार ही नहीं कर सकता। १९१८ का अर्जेंटीना छात्र आंदोलन, १९६७ का आस्ट्रिया का छात्र विद्रोह, १९८० के दशक में अमरीकी छात्रों का निओलिबरल आंदोलन, पिछली शताब्दी के सातवें दशक में हुआ ब्रिटेन का छात्र आन्दोलन जैसी अनेक घटनाएँ हैं जो छात्रों की शक्ति की जानकारी देती हैं।

आज राजनीति का उद्देश्य आदर्श न होकर किसी भी तरह सत्ता पाने का रास्ता खोजना हो गया है। लेकिन अगर सही तरह से देखें तो राजनीति का लक्ष्य रचनात्मक परिवर्तन लाना है। इसके द्वारा ही जाति, धर्म और वर्ग के बंधनों से रहित समाज बनाया जा सकता है। इस लक्ष्य को पाने के लिए मूलभूत परिवर्तन करना होता है। मेरा मानना है कि यही वह राजनीति है जिसमें भाग लेने के लिए छात्रों को प्रेरित किया जाना चाहिए, न कि प्रतिबंधित। हमारा संविधान अठारह वर्ष के व्यक्ति को वोट देने का अधिकार देता है। इसका कारण यह है कि इस आयु तक आते आते राजनीति की समझ आने लगती है। छात्र से मेरा अर्थ इसी आयुवर्ग के छात्रों से हैं। छात्रों को यह समझने का अधिकार होना चाहिए कि उनके चारों ओर क्या चल रहा है। उन्हें यह

भी अधिकार होना चाहिए कि वे राजनीति में भागीदारी करके अपने देश और अपनी दुनिया को अपनी इच्छा और ज़रूरत के हिसाब से अपने आप बनाएँ।

मेरा मानना है एक अच्छे समाज को बनाने की इच्छा रखने वाले लोगों की यह जिम्मेदारी है कि वे छात्रों के राजनीति में प्रवेश को प्रतिबंधित करने के बजाय उन्हें अच्छे तरीके से और पूरी तैयारी के साथ राजनीति में उतरने के लिए तैयार करें। यही एक तरीका है जिससे छात्र आरंभ से ही अपने लोकतांत्रिक अधिकारों के लिये लड़ना सीखता है।

आज के समय में हर वर्ग केवल अपने लाभ के लिए सोचता है। लोग दूसरों को स्वतंत्रता देने से ज़्यादा उन्हें अपने नियंत्रण में रखने को अच्छा समझते हैं। ऐसे में अपने अधिकारों के प्रति सजग नौजवानों का होना बहुत से लोग अपने लिए खतरा मानते हैं। इसीलिए छात्रों की राजनीति में मुख्यधारा की राजनीति के बढ़ते प्रभाव का आरोप लगाकर छात्रों के राजनीति में प्रवेश पर पाबंदी की वकालत की जाती है। पर क्या इसमें केवल छात्र कुसूरवार है?

छात्र देश का भविष्य होते हैं। राजनीति का सही प्रशिक्षण ही उन्हें राजनैतिक दलों और आदर्शविहीन नेताओं के हाथों की कठपुतली बनने से बचा सकता है। और यह तभी होगा जब छात्रों को सामयिक राजनैतिक गतिविधियों एवं घटनाओं, राजनीति की बारीकियों और राजनीति के बुनियादी सिद्धांतों से परिचित कराया जायेगा। समय की मांग है कि इन छात्रों को जागरूक बनाया जाये। न्यायपालिका, कार्यपालिका, विधायिका, मीडिया और समाज के बाकी लोगों की जिम्मेदारी यह है कि वे छात्रों को राजनीति का पाठ पढ़ाएँ और राजनीति में उनका सही तरह से प्रवेश तय करें, न कि उनके राजनीति में प्रवेश पर पूरी तरह पाबंदी लगा दे। अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी, अरुण जेटली, अजय माकन, सुषमा स्वराज, मुरली मनोहर जोशी जैसे अनेक नाम हैं जिन्होंने छात्र जीवन से ही राजनीति में भाग लिया और आगे चलकर राष्ट्रीय राजनीति के महत्वपूर्ण स्तंभ बने।

हम अक्सर देश की राजनीति में भ्रष्टाचार, अव्यवस्था, असमानता, जातिवाद, अलगाववाद, भाई-भतीजावाद, परिवारवाद और निकम्मेपन के शिकायत करते हैं। इस विकट परिस्थिति से उबरना है तो नए विचारों, नई कल्पनाओं और नए राजनैतिक सिद्धांतों को अपनाना होगा। ऐसे में छात्रों को राजनीति से पूर्ण-प्रतिबंधित करना एक बड़े मौके को खोना है।

आज के समय में सभी वर्गों के लोग राजनीति में आ रहे हैं और बहुत से लोग कहते हैं कि छात्रों के लिए राजनीति प्रतिबंधित होनी चाहिए। लोग चाहते हैं कि परिवर्तन के लाभ तो उन्हें मिलें पर त्याग, संघर्ष और बलिदान उन्हें न करना पड़े। सच्चाई यह है कि छात्रों का योजनाबद्ध तरीके से राजनीति में किया हुआ प्रवेश हमारी राजनीतिक व्यवस्था में गतिशीलता और कुशलता लाएगा।

हम सही मायने में स्वतंत्र हैं।

पक्ष

• कार्तिकेय कर्दम

इस १५ अगस्त की सुबह मैंने तिरंगे को लहराते देखा और मेरा मन विचारों के सागर में गोते खाने लगा। आजादी के इतने सालों के बाद हमारा देश कितना परिवर्तित प्रतीत होता है। कुछ क्षणों के लिए तो मैं यह सोचने लगा कि क्या हमारा देश सही मायने में स्वतंत्र भी है? पर अत्यधिक विचार-विमर्श के पश्चात मैंने अपने को इस विषय के पक्ष में खड़े हुए पाया। भारत न केवल एक शत-प्रतिशत स्वतंत्र देश है बल्कि इस देश का हर नागरिक सही मायने में आज़ाद है।

भारतीय संविधान सन १९५० में लागू हुआ और तत्पश्चात भारत में एक अच्छा बदलाव देखा गया। इस संविधान ने लोगों के बीच किसी भी प्रकार के भेद-भाव पर रोक लगा दी। इक्कीसवीं सदी के भारतवासी गर्व से कह सकते हैं कि आज वे अपने विचारों और व्यवहार में पूरी आज़ादी पाते हैं। आज भारत का हर नागरिक न केवल कोई भी विचारधारा अपना सकता है, बल्कि अपनी मर्जी से किसी भी धर्म का पालन कर सकता है। यह समानता और धर्मनिरपेक्षता इस बात की और संकेत करती हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान आज सही मायने में आज़ाद है।

दूसरी तरफ भारत वर्तमान में दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा लोकतांत्रिक राष्ट्र है और यह सिर्फ इसी लिए संभव है कि हमें अपने प्रतिनिधि और शासक चुनने का पूरा अधिकार है। मतदान का अधिकार हमें अपना भविष्य खुद तय करने की स्वतन्त्रता देता है। जिस देश के नागरिक स्वयं के साथ साथ देश के फैसले लेने के लिए आज़ाद हैं, उस देश को सही मायने में स्वतंत्र मानना तो अनुचित नहीं होगा।

यह सच है कि आज हमारे देश को भ्रष्टाचार, असमानता और बेरोजगारी जैसी कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है पर ये समस्याएँ हमारी स्वतन्त्रता को हमसे नहीं छीन सकतीं। मुश्किलों का तो हर देश, हर समाज को सामना करना पड़ता है, मगर हमारी यह स्वतन्त्रता ही हमें हमारी इन समस्याओं का समाधान ढूँढने में मदद कर पाएगी।

इक्कीसवीं सदी का भारत सकारात्मक रूप से विकास कर रहा है और करता रहेगा। हम अपनी स्वतंत्रता का मूल्य जानते हैं। हमारी स्वतन्त्रता इस विकास का अभिन्न अंग है।

हमारा यह कर्तव्य यह है कि हम अपने पूर्वजों द्वारा इस स्वतन्त्रता के लिए किए त्याग को अच्छी तरह समझें और एक बेहतर भविष्य के लिए जिम्मेदारी से इसका इस्तेमाल और रक्षण करें। इस देश के नागरिक के रूप में हमें इस बात को कभी नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि राष्ट्र से लेना ही नहीं उसे देना भी हमारा कर्तव्य है।

विपक्ष

• पार्थ खन्ना

आज हम सब भारत के स्वतंत्रता दिवस की खुशियाँ मना रहे हैं, पर सवाल वही उठता है, 'क्या हम सही मायने में स्वतंत्र हैं?' यह एक ऐसा सवाल है जिसका जवाब हमें खोजना ही पड़ेगा। यह सच है कि १९४७ में हमारे क्रान्तिकारियों और स्वतंत्रता-सेनानियों के प्रयत्नों से अंग्रेजों को भारतीय भूमि को भूमि को छोड़कर जाना पड़ा था। यह हम सबको भली-भाँति ज्ञात है कि उन्होंने भारतवर्ष को स्वतन्त्रता दिलाने के लिए अपने तन - मन - धन का बलिदान किया था, परन्तु आज देश की स्थिति देखकर क्या हम सच्चे मन से यह कह सकते हैं कि वे समाजवाद की भावना पर आधारित भारत के निर्माण में सही मायने में सफल हुए? मेरी दृष्टि तो से नहीं। १९४७ में स्वतंत्रता पाते समय बस प्रशासक बदले थे - अन्याय, अत्याचार, देश की स्थिति और गुलामी में कोई बदलाव नहीं आया था। शायद आज भी हमारी स्वतन्त्रता उतनी ही सीमित है जितनी आज से सौ या डेढ़ सौ साल पहले थी।

स्वतन्त्रता का मूल उद्देश्य यह साबित करना था कि हिन्दुस्तानी और अन्य देशों के लोगों में कोई अंतर नहीं है; परन्तु आज की स्थिति यह है कि हम विभिन्न भारतीय वर्गों तक को एक सामान नहीं मानते।

जात-पाँत की भावना से आज भी हमारा देश मुक्त नहीं हो पाया है। वास्तविकता देखी जाए तो १९४७ में मिले मतदान के अधिकार को भी हम उचित रूप से इस्तमाल नहीं करते हैं। जहां एक तरफ धर्म और जाति के आधार पर मतदान हो रहा है वहीं दूसरी तरफ भारत की विशाल युवा पीढ़ी मतदान के अपने कर्तव्य से मुकर रही है। यही कारण है कि स्वतन्त्रता के अड़सठ सालों बाद भी हमारा देश उन्नति की सीढ़ी नहीं चढ़ नहीं पा रहा है।

हम स्वतन्त्रता को अंग्रेजों के अत्याचारों का अंत मानते हैं लेकिन महिलाओं पर तो आज भी अत्याचार होते हैं। भारत के कई राज्यों में स्त्रियाँ अपने मूलभूत अधिकारों से वंचित हैं और मात्र पुरुष के हाथ की कठपुतलियाँ बन चुकी हैं। क्या यह कहना अनुचित होगा कि इक्कीसवीं सदी में भी भारतीय औरतों के लिए स्वतन्त्रता महज एक ख्वाब है?

१९४७ में हमने अंग्रेजों से तो आज़ादी पा ली, पर इन सामाजिक कलंकों से नहीं। जिस भारत में आम आदमी भ्रष्टाचार का गुलाम है, सच्चे प्रेमी खाप पंचायतों के गुलाम है, गरीब आदमी अमीर आदमी का गुलाम है और दुर्गा शक्ति नागपाल जैसे इमानदार प्रशासक सत्ताधारी राजनेताओं की गुलामी से इनकार करने पर सजा भुगतते हैं, क्या उस भारत को सही मायने में स्वतंत्र कहा जा सकता है?

VORSTELLUNGSGESPRÄCH

The Doon School Weekly interviews Cord Meier-Klodt and CV Heiko Sievers.

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Could you tell us about your background?

Cord Meier-Klodt (CMK): I am the German ambassador to India and I have been in New Delhi for two years now. I have served in Russia, the United Nations in New York, in Ghana and London. It is a very colourful career for a diplomat.

Heiko Sievers (HKS): I am the Director of Max Muller Bhavan Institute in New Delhi and at the same time I am responsible for the region of South Asia. I have been in India for three years now and have previously worked in Cairo, Brisbane and Munich.

DSW: Where do you think the Indo – German relationship is at and where do you think it is headed?

CMK: I think we are doing very well after sixty years of diplomatic relations in all areas. Germany is India's number one trading partner in Europe. I think that language learning is the future. It is the backbone of a long term relationship. Young kids only get interested in a country due to its language, whether it is to make friends or to understand a song. **(DSW: What do you think are the weaknesses in the relationship?)** While I would say that we have a problem-free relationship, I would also like to point out that we have a difference in strategy. India sees some of the tough issues in the region. Germany, though being a major player, can get more involved in these issues.

DSW: In order to make that relationship perfect what programs do you have in India that can help?

HKS: Our role is to intensify every aspect of our relationship. There is room for improvement in our programs and we are improving slowly.

DSW: Are you seeing an increased interest in the German language in India?

HKS: India now has new clichés like the new software environment. There is more knowledge amongst Indians.

CMK: I think India is headed in the right direction. It is in many ways the gateway to Europe in areas of interest. Traditionally and understandably India was introduced to the English speaking world, but in some areas Indians need higher education and other languages to learn. Obviously we can't cope with the entire population of Indians. We are steadily and slowly receiving more and more Indian students every year. We have about 6000 Indian students this year. Language gives you a completely different insight. The IB diploma program shows that Germany is a very international place. Also, our exchange program is second to none other than perhaps the US. Thanks to my colleague Mr. Zebus and his staff, we are really making headway in language teaching in India as more and more students are pursuing German and that will have a result.

DSW: During the Euro crisis Germany really took a dominant position. Where would Germany want to position itself in the coming years?

CMK: The dominant position was nothing we had asked for. Luckily our economy and our political system were stable at the time of the crisis. Without that I don't know and don't even want to know where we would be at this time. Germany had a role to play, not to be dominant, but because it had to be done and we had the means to do it. Only ten years ago German economy was considered to be the sick man in Europe. Due to some good decisions and understanding between the political parties, we got where we are.

DSW: Can you please tell us something about the programs you offer in India and abroad?

CMK: There is a difference between the programs we run in our institutes, and those that we offer for training and advice to schools. And of course, each section of our program is in-house. In India we run programs from beginners to advanced course. We are overwhelmed by the demand for German amongst students in India. So, today we are very proud of the efforts on both sides to improve the study of this language. We give emphasis on the teaching, which is very important. We believe that we are here to enrich the students as members of the global community. In our National Institutes all over the world, we focus on strengthening the bonds between the countries, and celebrating the cultures of both countries. Whenever we start a program we first make sure that the students are up to the level we are teaching. On the International front, the progress is slightly slower but it too is progressing. We also focus on primary schools around the globe where the language is taught to students. These programs are very special because they were the initiatives of our Minister of External Affairs. In all, the program is a success in India, though I think we can do better.

DSW: There is a new idea to teach languages such as Mandarin and Korean in various schools in the US. Does this put any pressure on the learning of German?

CMK: No, we did not feel any pressure when the US implemented that idea. We know that the demand for French and Spanish is increasing, also because Spanish is a language that is spoken in many parts of the world. German is definitely not dropping, but instead it is increasing. Again I would not feel any pressure from the increasing popularity of languages such as Mandarin and Korean.

HKS: I would like to emphasize that with every language there is a group of people who wish to learn it and those who don't. Over the years the competition between languages has increased. Yet German in the 21st Century is becoming more and more popular amongst students.

| Report | At the Top

Shrey Nagalia reports on the expedition to Dhomdaar Kandi Pass, which took place over the summer vacations

On the first day of the summer break, a ten member party comprising Dr. Arvindanabha Shukla, Mr. Manu Mehrotra, Mr. Shrey Nagalia, Vallavi Shukla, Harsh Bansal, Amaan Kazmi, Paramdeep Singh, Zorawar Singh, Amartya Bhowmik, and Harshvardhan Singh left to do what The Doon School has been doing most successfully for the past 78 years: climbing mountains. To be more precise, our goal was to climb a pass, the Dhomdaar Kandi Pass that stands most majestically in the midst of the Garhwal Himalayas, 5607 meters (18,395 ft.) above sea level. It is called a Pass because it joins two of Garhwal Himalayas' most beautiful peaks – Bandar Poonch and Swargrohini.

If one were to ask the expedition members why they decided to give up 12 days of their holidays, trek for hours on end with heavy rucksacks on their backs, sleep in tents with bugs as companions and hard stones and snow as mattresses, just to climb a mountain, one might not receive any logical answer. But then, why did the first man decide to go into uncharted waters? Why did he leave the secure banks of rivers and cross deserts? Why did he leave everything behind and go into space? The answer lies within us. As a species, we are hardwired to go where others don't want to, where it is difficult, where we know that reaching would require more courage than logic, and more character than comfort. I guess each one of us had his/her own reason to go for this climb, but whatever the reason, one thing was sure, it wasn't going to be easy.

After spending the first night in Harsil, the second day required us to trek for 5 hours before reaching our first camp—a bunch of Gujjar Huts tucked away at the tail end of the mountains that were going to be our friends and foe for the next few days. On the same day the party had its first casualty. Unfortunately, Harshvardhan had picked up a rather bad stomach bug and was forced to return home. Fortunately though, the decision to send an unwell member back turned out to be the correct one, for the third day greeted us with some treacherous scree patches and moraines. Thanks to the expert guidance of Vasudev ji, one

guides and experts for over 25 years, safely and camped next to a same routine was to follow for the have to start early and trek for long treks themselves were full of small whether it be Amaan Kazmi trying the form of rabbits or birds with a despite all his skills of calculating



of School's most trusted mountain and his son Anil, we all reached beautiful stream at Siana Gad. The next four days. Each day we would hours to reach the next camp. The little adventures and funny incidents, to catch some potential dinner in *kukri* in his hands, or Mr. Mehrotra, trajectories and velocities, throwing

his shoe in the middle of the stream rather than the other side.

As we trekked to higher altitudes, we had to be very careful about a few things; the most important being our water intake. We would have to constantly drink water so that the oxygen level in our bodies remained high. Moreover, the process of acclimatization was given due importance and as a result, by the time we reached the base camp on Day 7, we were all in good shape and ready for the ensuing climb. Moreover, Anil, who is an expert climber, taught us some important mountaineering skills that included jumaring, rappelling, river crossing and rope work. Once we set up the base camp at the foot of the pass, we also had important lessons in the art of snow climbing including front point climbing, the use of the ice axe, securing oneself properly and self-arrest. While the activities in themselves were highly enjoyable, we also knew that they could be potentially life saving and we all took them very seriously. It is not easy to climb a mountain, and the last thing one should do is climb one unprepared.

Finally, in the wee hours of Day 8, we all set out, equipped and ready for the final climb. Starting at five in the morning, after a restless night to climb a mountain at an altitude that affords less oxygen requires more perseverance than strength. Every step is a fight to go on. And on we climbed, slowly but surely, digging our toes deep into the snow and telling ourselves that with every step taken we are closer to the top. After much struggle and team work, two masters and five students reached the top of the pass at around nine in the morning.

Needless to say, the view from the top justified every bit of hard work we had done over the past eight days. Standing at the top, sweeping our gaze over the peaks of Bandar Poonch, Black Peak, Yellow Tooth, Swargrohini, Lankhaga and other Indian and Chinese peaks, we felt as if we were in the company of the Gods. The world seemed a vast field of snow with giant mountains stretching out till as far as the eye could see. In those moments of pristine purity, with an azure sky above us and the innocent, unspoiled white earth below, we stood and gave homage to the Mountain for letting us climb it.

Maybe someday someone might mention the Dhomdaar Kandi Pass as one of the places in the Garhwal Himalayas. And we will respond by saying “Oh yes, we were there, at the top, and the world was our oyster”.

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