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 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, “The main 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.

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.
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 Ganeshpur, 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!

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.

Since the beginning of the term, the school has been gripped with MUN fever. Doscos 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 Doscos 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.

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?

2. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, August 17
चात्र और राजनीति

- बलवती उत्कृष्ट आजकल एक बड़ा सवाल सभी के सामने है। सवाल यह है कि छात्रों की राजनीति में भाग लेना चाहिए या नहीं? इसके बाद छात्रों के चुनावों के दृष्टिगत होने वाली प्रेरणाएं छोड़ दी जाने की आवश्यकता के हर सहस्र के सामने है। इसलिए आज के समय में सभी वगों के रूप में इसकी प्रेरणा होगी।

- जनता अधिकार आजकल नहीं है जब तक यह प्राप्त नहीं किया गया है कि छात्रों का जीवन तरीका क्या होगा। इसके बाद छात्रों के भाग हुए जनता का अधिकार होगा।

भी अधिकार होना चाहिए कि वे राजनीति में भाग लें। अगर इन छात्रों का अधिकार होना चाहिए तो उन्हें भी ऐसा दिखाता रहना चाहिए। इसलिए आज के समय में सभी वगों के रूप में इसका प्रेम और उनका अधिकार होना चाहिए।
रेना ही नहीं उसे देना बी हभाया कर्त्व्म है।
इस फात को कबी नहीं बूरना चाहए कक याष्ट्र से
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VORSTELLUNGSGESPRÄCH

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, weather 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.
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 unchartered 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 Gujar 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 of School’s most trusted mountain guides and his son Anil, we all reached beautiful stream at Siana Gad. Each day we would have to start early and trek for long hours to reach the next camp. The little adventures and funny incidents, that one encounters on the way, are a lifetime’s worth. 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 the azure sky above us and the innocent, unspoilt white earth below, we stood and gave homage to the Mountain for its magnificence.

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, unspoilt 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”. 

Online Edition: http://www.doonschool.com/publications/the-doon-school-weekly/latest-issue weekly@doonschool.com

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6. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, August 17