

The Great Indian Diplomat

The Doon School Weekly interviewed **Dr Shashi Tharoor**, an ex-diplomat at the UN and currently Minister for Human Resource Development

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Do you feel that Indian politics is depicted unfairly by the media and that this is what is driving well-educated young men away from a prospective career in politics?

Shashi Tharoor (STR): Well-educated young people have always stayed away from Indian politics! When I grew up in the sixties, the attitude of the middle-class parents was that if you can't do well in your exams, then you can enter into politics. I've written about this in many publications before I came back to India. I think the problem is that the middle class alienates itself or distances itself from the political process, abdicates responsibility for the governance of the country, and then criticizes those who come to contest elections. You can't have it both ways. If you want leaders whom you can be proud of, then you need to participate in the process to appoint such leaders. Every democratic electorate will get the leader it deserves. Abstention from the process is not a solution. So that is where the problem lies, and in a country like America, where the middle class is running politics: they are the ones giving the candidates, they are the ones contesting the polls, they are the ones speaking at rallies, they are the ones who campaign for the poll; so their middle class is actively engaged in politics. And in most western democracies that is true. In our case, the middle class is conspicuously absent and you have the extremely powerful and you have the extremely poor who have nothing to lose, and the people who choose are actually not participating. This is a grave disservice to the nation. We all have an obligation to try and make an effort. Some may serve the nation better in other professions, but we should certainly have some educated middle-class urban youths also participating in at least a proportion to their number in our society so that they are not absent from politics. As for the media, yes, I would say that they consistently portrays politics and politicians in a bad light, but then bad news is what the media is all about. This is again not unique to India; the whole theory of journalism studied is that, 'Dog bites man is not news, man bites dog is news.' And it's the same principle for television journalism. So when there is bad news, when there is blood, that's what you highlight, when things are going well, no news is good news. Or rather, in the media, good news is no news, which is the reality. Now compounding them is the fact that our media has become excessively enamored of sensationalism. The quest for TRPs, unfortunately, is the principle obligation of the media in their own profession. Even in the western democracies there are news channels that do the same, and if you want that then you can go and watch Fox News and read The Sun newspaper and many more. But if you want serious journalism, that's also available. Unfortunately for us the television channels are all out-competing each other, and this is influencing the print media to emulate sensationalism. Having myself been a victim of distortion of truth, I think again our democracy and our public and our society are being done a disservice by this trend.

DSW: Do you believe it is fair for a political party to restrict leadership of the party to a few people?

STR: It varies. In fact, there are parties in which one person makes the decision or one family makes the decision, there are parties which have a small base or structure, and there are those in between. There is also at least one party which seems to be run by a shadowy organization that is not officially a part of that party. So, all

(contd. on Page 3)



Regulars

CHESS MAESTROS

Following are the results of the **Inter-House Chess Competition 2013:**

Junior Cup:

1st: Oberoi
2nd: Jaipur
3rd: Hyderabad and Kashmir
5th: Tata

House Cup:

1st: Oberoi
2nd: Kashmir
3rd: Tata
4th: Hyderabad
5th: Jaipur
Well done!

Senior Cup:

1st: Oberoi
2nd: Kashmir
3rd: Tata
4th: Hyderabad
5th: Jaipur

BADMINTON

The **School Badminton Team** participated in **The Dehradun Inter-School Council Tournament** held from October 7-10. The **Senior Team** comprising Kabir Sethi, Sidharth Sethi, Akarsh Tibrewal, Aditya Gandhi and Vansh Agarwal **won** the **Under-19 Team Championship**. The **Junior Team** comprising Jehan Jhaveri, Atrey Guruprasad, Lakshman Santhanam, Kabir Kochar and Ashish Pande came **2nd** in the **Under-14 Team Championship**. Kabir Sethi **won** the **Under-19 Championship**, and Akarsh Tibrewal was awarded **2nd** position in the same event. Atrey Guruprasad reached the **Semi-Final** in the **Under-14 Championship**.

Well Done!

LAMDA

The following have been awarded a distinction in the **LAMDA Examinations:**

Grade 4: Harsh Dewan, Aayush Chowdhry, Tarush Bansal, Shiven Dewan, Aditya Saboo, Darsh Garg, Hamza Hhussain, Devang Laddhah

Grade 5: Pragun Aggarwal, Siddhanth Kumar, Akshat Jha, Jashan Kalra, Harshit Bansal, Devansh Sharma, Atrey Guruprasad, Hitansh Nagdev, Vathsar Gupta, Divij Mullick, Aditya Vardhan Agarwal, Rishank Kalra, Yash Mittal, Raj Sankla, Fateh Raj Khanna, Arhant Khullar, Sumer Vaidya, Deep Dhandhanania

Grade 6(Bronze): Chaitanya Kediya

Grade 8(Gold): Shivam Sharma

Congratulations!

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WORDS

This week, French President Francois Hollande announced that four French hostages held in Niger since 2010 have been released. Investigators have shut down a newly-completed drug tunnel running under the border between San Diego, USA and Tijuana, Mexico. Closer to home, more than 90 people died after their vehicles broke down as they crossed the Sahara Desert. In China, five suspects have been detained in Monday's deadly crash in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, which has been identified as a terrorist attack.

MUSIC MANIA

Naman Jain, Imaan Pariat Mehta and Hamza Khan have been awarded **Music Colours**.

Congratulations!

THE WHO?

Who is Lou Reed?

A Looney toon -Arjun Kamdar
A philosopher -Kanav Ghai
A farmer -Tanay Agarwal
A writer -Azan Brar
Ms. LaRue's husband -Sasyak Pattnaik
A scientist -Atharva Matta
A rugby player -Samrath Singh Bal

Lou Reed was an American musician, singer and songwriter who recently died due to a liver disease.

Errata

In Issue no. 2358, the *Weekly* failed to mention in the Regulars Page that Devesh Sharma was re-awarded Drama Colours for the second time, and that Abhishek Kakkar was re-awarded Dance Colours. The *Weekly* deeply regrets the error.

UNQUOTEABLE QUOTES

It's a quaddi-federal form of government!

Aditya Bhattacharya, in-house Panchayati.

Don't let it make you a burden of beast!

JKA is burdened by a lapses linguae.

The light is used for the CFL.

Tanmay Gupta, AV jam up!

India shining is absolution.

Krishna Lohiya, upcoming Priest.

Did you see what did I did?

Abhinav Kejriwal, yes we did.

It is storming!

Rishi Raj Khan, the meteorologist.

Don't disturb me, I am multi-purposing!

Vibhav Maheshwari, the multi-tasker.



Weekly Selects

Safecracking the Brain

Nautilus

Fire-Eaters

New Yorker

Lou Reed: A Deaf Mute in a Telephone Booth

Let It Rock

What Lies Beneath

Vanity Fair

Is Funeral Home Chain SCI's Growth Coming at the Expense of Mourners?

Businessweek

sorts of things are happening in our country. I'm very much in favour of intra-party democracy and in our party Rahul Gandhi has brought this phenomenon in the Youth Congress where every position at the state level is



being filled by election and it's an interesting attempt. There are certainly those who resisted it saying it causes division in the party and that we're contesting against each other. But even other countries like the US have done it, and they've got the primary system, for example. We should open ourselves up to more contestation. I think it's the right direction to go, and I think it should happen with the national parties as well, but we've begun with the Youth Congress and no other party is doing anything similar.

DSW: What are your views on India's opposition of the abolishment of the death penalty in the United Nations?

STR: I personally--and I stress this as I'm not speaking for the government, I'm not speaking for the party--am not in favour of the death penalty. I'm not in favour of it for all sorts of reasons. It is not moral because human beings do not have the right to take other human beings' lives. I have some concern about the finality of it because once you've hanged somebody you can't really bring him back. And history is full of examples of people who have subsequently turned out to be hanged because of someone else's fault and also there are a large number of studies that have shown that the death penalty is not an effective deterrent. In fact, when we look at cases of such crimes we find that they have been committed by people who are momentarily imbalanced or who are inherently evil and a menace to society. Certainly if one went through the kind of horrors that have taken place in our country he would find that a lot of people have gone unpunished and then the death penalty becomes a very selective exercise. (Photo Credits: Garhwal Post)

| Viewpoint |

#WINNER TAKES EARTH

Vireshwar Sidhu

'They're coming to Earth.' Mysterious biohazard-like symbols with the wording '#WINNERTAKESEARTH' have appeared on several locations across the globe –Rio, London and New York. Dead in the centre of the symbol is what seems to be a football.

The first location to be struck was the Sugarloaf Mountain overlooking Rio. Residents of the area were left bemused as a green laser beam fired the symbol along with the hash tagged text on to the face of the mountain. Next to be targeted were the Santa Maria Hill and the world famous Copacabana beach, both in Rio. On the same day, Hackney Marshes, an amateur football field in London, was seen featuring the same mysterious symbol. The field was left with a gaping hole due to a gigantic football like object. The area was cordoned off with sealed yellow tape, on which was written #WINNERTAKESEARTH. Times Square became the third venue to be struck with mysterious symbols and signs as unidentified images flashed on the billboards.

Even more recently, mysterious figures wearing black robes were spotted at Allianz Arena, home of European heavyweights Bayern Munich, at Stamford Bridge, the home of English giants Chelsea, and also at Juventus Stadium. The viewing of these figures at Stamford Bridge coincided with the unannounced appearance of Franz Beckenbeaur at the Chelsea-City game, with one of the robed men sitting directly behind 'The Kaiser' in the VIP area. Onlookers exclaimed with great curiosity every time the mysterious figures stood up, in unison, made some hand gestures and then sat down. People behind this are yet unknown, but for starters, they are not aliens. Well, that's because they have used the hash tag, something of a recent trend, rather effectively. They also have a website, mysteriouscircles.com.

I was left intrigued when I first saw these mysterious symbols and figures. I thought to myself that one thing was for certain: all this was related to football. It is not difficult to come to that conclusion now. Except for New York City, all other places and venues struck are huge football hubs across the globe. New York too is a viable place to target as it is a commercial centre and anything whacky flashing across the billboards usually gathers a lot of attention. Moreover, exactly 11 mysterious figures were present at each of the football games. All this points directly to the beautiful game. The only website following these developments is Goal.com, a football news website. Even though some of the sightings were on the same day, Goal.com never showed two of these simultaneously. Right now, most of you are probably thinking of yourselves as Sherlock Holmes, believing all this to be a Goal.com promotion event.

Mystery solved? Maybe not. A reputed website would not cause damage to property for promotional reasons, as was the case with Hackney Marshes. Or maybe they had an agreement with the authorities. One can argue continuously over the endless possibilities of what is and what could be without any conclusiveness. As for the mysterious figures and symbols, well, that is to create a stir and catch the attention of people. After all, it caught my attention, didn't it?

A Worthy Investment

The Doon School Weekly *interviewed* **Ashok Banker**, *an eminent author, during his visit to School*

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): What inspired you to begin writing?

Ashok Banker (AKB): I began writing when I was 5 years old and I was very precocious at that time. No one told me to read anything specific so my reading material would range from menus to newspapers and anything I could lay my hands on. Gradually I found out that what I liked best were encyclopaedias and dictionaries. This was because according to me, these types of books contain stories about stories. For e.g. a dictionary contains the meanings of words, but it also gives you the etymology of those words which is a history of language, culture and other related things. So you can find information on anything in a dictionary just by looking up a random word. So that in turn led me to an interest in mythology and mythological parts of encyclopaedias. My first exposure to mythology was through this encyclopaedia called the Book of Knowledge and I found it fascinating reading about the mythology about different cultures and countries like Egypt, Greece, Rome and even India. But I found information on Indian mythology lacking. Everyone knows a lot about Greek mythology but not a lot about our Indian mythology. I wanted to know why no one would take these fantastic stories and series of epics that are a part of Indian mythology and popularise them like the western authors did. So I decided to give it a try.

DSW: How do you do your research and gather information for your books?

AKB: It does take a lot of time and it is done with great difficulty. Unfortunately, we seem to have lost that connect between our store of knowledge and our living culture over the last several hundred years and there have been various reasons for that. We cannot relate to the ancient past as directly as you could relate to modern stores of knowledge and that is neither good nor bad. It is the way culture evolves. So what I did was to first try and understand that era, for e.g. while I was researching for the Ramayana, I read all the versions of it. But that still wasn't enough. I wanted to know simple things like what clothes were worn and whether they were heavily dressed or not. One of the difficulties I have faced is to understand what that era really was like. I had to imagine it and it mattered to me because I wanted to know what it was. All good writing begins with your quest to live that story and to explore it. You can't do your research directly because you have to study everything. If you're going to study mythology, you study maths and sciences too. For e.g. the Aesop's fables which are actually retellings of the famous Panchatantra tales. Research isn't something you do for a book or project; it is done for your own awareness and knowledge.

DSW: If you were given a choice to be born as an avatar of any character that you encounter in your books, who would you, chose and why?

AKB: If I were given a choice I would want to be reborn as a woman. Not that I hate being a man but it's because I feel I'm feminine in the way I feel, think and in my whole make up. As for the character, I would love to know what it would feel like to be Draupadi because according to me, she is the most interesting woman. She is the only warrior without a weapon and faces the mightiest of all warriors of that age even though there is a code of conduct for warriors on the battle field and fights enemies in several different ways. She doesn't even have the right to challenge any enemy because it would be an insult to Bhishma or any other person.

DSW: How did the idea of associating heavenly beings that you have written about with something like the protagonist of a novel come into being?

AKB: I'm not sure that I actually looked at the characters as protagonists or antagonists but what I usually do is to look at the characters that float through the story and then do the judging. I never say that I want to write a story, I say that the story wants to be written. What I found in Valmiki's Ramayana was that even though there were a lot of characters, there was a lot of space and emptiness between the events taking place. For e.g. we aren't told about what the characters looked like or what they wore. In this case there is a lack of detail. The process of imagining for myself about what took place and writing that process down is what the novel becomes.

The Ol' Unemployment Office

The Doon School Weekly *interviewd* **Sanjeev Bhikhchandani**, *founder of Naukri.com*

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Do you think that you would have been in a much happier place had you not chosen the path that you did?

Sanjeev Bhikhchandani (SVB): It is very hard to predict the outcome of a road you did not take, so that is a question which I cannot answer. The question I can answer is am I happy after choosing the path I did? My answer is yes.

DSW: You talked about team management being a very important skill for any entrepreneur. So how do you manage problems you face with colleagues or your juniors?

SVB: Sure, you will face problems with people but in the end it all boils down to trust and faith between colleagues. That is what will fix your problem.

DSW: What is your thought-process while taking risks, like you have taken in the past?

SVB: I had to introspect many aspects when I took a risk, and this happened over a long period of time, for months sometimes. But all decisions were very difficult to make.

DSW: In your world, how important is innovation?

SVB: It is really important. But not any innovation, only relevant and useful innovation. Ultimately, our whole business runs on innovation as we need new products. Innovation is a core factor for any entrepreneur.

DSW: What is the one value that you have always had which has gotten you out of situations?

SVB: I would say truthfulness. You must always face the truth and people will only trust you if you speak the truth.

DSW: What is your advice on how to become an inspiring entrepreneur?

SVB: Act smart and different early on. Don't waste money and keep your cost and revenues in mind.

| Micro-fiction |

DISHONESTY

Anshul Tibrewal

He started giving examinations when he was in Grade 1. Mentally underdeveloped for his age, being born in November and lacking much genetic support, he had never done well in them. As an emerging member of a patriarchal society, he was bound to succumb to the joy of acknowledgment. Eventually, he started cheating. Slowly, with moral questions entering the equation he justified cheating because of conformism. He grew into this process, relying on others instead of himself, always running from the moral questions, running from his own capabilities. Finally, he had to take a college admission test. For a change, he studied hard for the test. On the blessed day, however, anxiety's discouraging grip encumbered his psyche, and he resorted back to the tried and tested method—cheating. He finished the exam, copying every single answer from someone else in the process. He thanked the inhibitor of his self-confidence. Time trotted, suns rose, birds chirped, animals died, and life went on, until ultimately, it was 20 days post the blessed test, twenty days after the dispiriting ordeal. The results came out. He had scored higher than the person he had cheated from. In a truly ephemeral moment, he felt his life transform. Almost immediately, he began to display a sense of self-worth that could only be labeled as chutzpah. From that moment on, he glowed with a verve that only partygoers are known to exhibit. He was finally proud of himself; the pride was to serve as the first paving stone to his untold success. The person who had made him had actually let him down by further cheating from yet another person, changing his initial answers in the process. The entire assumption of self-confidence was actually rooted on a mirage. Perhaps placebos do lend to miracles!

| Creative |

DARKNESS

Husain Haider

There were blood stains everywhere. A foul stench filled my nostrils, an annoying disturbance to my sense of smell. The darkness in the room seemed synonymous to what I felt inside. Nothing was in the preordained place, including the table lamp that had been used in the malicious deed. Jack was lying in front of me, quiet and lifeless. Silence was catalysing the eeriness of the atmosphere. I stood there motionless, physically present, but absent mentally. Standing silently I was, pondering over the sin, my inner greed and jealousy had just provoked me to commit. I had murdered a man, my blood brother. The feeling of guilt was killing me from inside. What would my family think? How would they feel? How will they react? The momentary fit of anger had subsided by now. Constant thinking of possible consequences was worsening my condition. The feeling of jealousy and hatred had transformed into unbearable guilt and pain. I was getting scared, hallucinating, that Jack's soul was somewhere there, mocking and laughing at my imprudence!

Jack was the exact opposite of me, an extrovert, and suave gentleman. Although he was my younger brother, he had seen far wider success and happiness in a relatively short life span. He was a smart, successful and talented young man, well-poised for a bright future ahead. Even though I was the elder son, my parents had always shown more affection towards him. All their expectations and aspirations were banked on Jack. I just remained an unknown and uncared part of the family. Be it in professional or personal life, Jack was always regarded as the enhanced version. He was always projected as the rightful heir to the Smith legacy, stealing my birthright as first born. I started feeling that my personal ambitions will fail to materialise. I lost hope and faith in my abilities, my talents and myself. My mind got plagued with the idea that Jack was responsible for my perilous state. Or perhaps all this was merely a mirage, a consequence of mediocre thinking.

Jack never made any insulting comments towards my tarnished reputation and dignity. He never treated me as someone downtrodden and inferior to himself. On the contrary, he was always willing to care and assist me as a truly loving brother. However, he never seemed to realize that this very 'helpful' temperament of his was the root cause of my jealousy and hatred towards him. Jack's actions were always in positive spirit, sadly misinterpreted by my immaturity. It compelled my mind to accept that I was weaker than him, inferior to him, a 'nobody' in life. The more my family praised his victories, the more I was reminded of my failures. Eventually, I became confined to my jealousy and hatred. Ultimately, under strenuous psychological pressure, I was compelled to perpetrate this gruesome crime.

A sudden banging on the door brought my consciousness back into the room. It was accompanied by a soft voice, probably that of our Mother. She was well aware of our growing rivalry, but always believed that we were mature enough to solve our own disputes. This was meant to be a 'brotherly reunion', which had transited into an irreparable disaster. I wondered how she would react upon seeing all this. I could not take this anymore. All I desired was to be free of this misery. The feeling of culpability was eating me up from inside. However, there seemed to be no end to this desolation. Divine vengeance, I suppose.

Then it suddenly struck me that Jack was an insomniac. I tried to search for the sleeping pills inside the drawers beside his bed. Meanwhile, the banging was getting louder. The soft voice had transited into a loud scream. It was a scream of agony painfully penetrating through the thick wooden door.

Consequent to some hassle, I finally managed to acquire a bottle of pills. Without even thinking for a split second, I emptied the bottle in my mouth. All the tablets were swallowed in one go. The succeeding darkness could only provide a momentarily respite. I was rescued and woke up in my hospital bed the subsequent day. Perhaps, this misery is going to be my companion for the rest of my life. My hands are going to be stained with my brother's blood forever. I will be forced to spend the rest of my life in the darkness of remorse.

| Poetry |

Methamphetamine

Aditya Bhattacharya

He was down and out,
He couldn't go any further.
He was sinking into the sand
And burning with a fever.

He gasped for air
But it was too thin.
He knew he would die,
But someone saved him.

He felt a strange pleasure
Filling his heart and mind.
He looked around for the pit
That he would never find.

Delighted at his survival,
He swelled with pride.
But instead of heading home
He looked for a place to hide.

He saw death following him
Everywhere he went.
His face paled and heart turned;
He knew his mind had been bent.
He tried his best to suppress his joy,
But it left him feeling empty.
There was a sour taste in his mouth,
Not unlike that of a decaying body.

He quickened his pace,
Tried to calm his heart,
But death was approaching,
The paranoia piercing as a dart.

He entered a cave
And covered his ears,
Yet the voices that whispered
Were worse than his worst fears.

He began to convulse
In a fit of madness,
But before he died,
His saviour looked at him with sadness.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I hope you are aware of the distasteful nature of assembly talks which have been inflicted upon our ears for a couple of weeks now (or even months-it is not as if they are memorable ones). As we all know, assembly talks are meant to either serve as a platform for criticism or as an occasion to amuse the entire school by demonstrating extraordinary capabilities of lateral thinking. Sadly, its present use seems to be limited to that of a springboard for aspiring SC-Form prefects to catch the relevant people's eyeballs. What these S-formers do not understand is that reestablishing stereotypes does not serve the purpose of impressing an audience; in fact I am sure that it would leave a diminished image of the aforementioned S-formers in the eyes of the entire school. Harping on the narrowly defined perception and oft misused connotations of a powerful word such as 'ego' does not make for a good talk. Neither does blaming religion (yet again) for the discord in the world and much waste of time and resources of the humankind fulfill the same purpose. These statements are sweeping by the very fact that most people have similar perceptions on such issues, eliminating any need to justify these claims. We need to arrive at a solution to this pressing issue. Maybe all assembly talks can be reviewed beforehand to make sure they are worthy of being addressed to the school community. Perhaps the Editorial Board of the *Weekly* can be involved so as to handle this issue. Whatever course of action is taken, it is required immediately, for else it will not be long before we end up discussing the abolition of assembly talks in the School Council itself. It is not my intention to 'attack' any of the people who have given a talk recently, but the truth is that they have not done justice to their audience.

Regards,
Anshul Tibrewal

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