

ESTABLISHED IN 1936



# The Doon School WEEKLY

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## Follow-up on the Midterms

**Amaan Kazmi** writes about the second visit to Thatyur village by Doscos as part of the Uttarakhand relief programme

A group of 5 boys escorted by Dr. Joshi and Dr. Dwivedi went to Satagad village on October 24. The team's aim was to conduct a preliminary assessment of the village to determine the possibility of future projects there. The members participated in the re-opening of the government middle school. The school had been utterly devastated due to the Uttarakhand disaster in June this year and had been declared dysfunctional by the school authorities. Work that had been stalled for 3 months by Government officials was completed in a record time of mere 3 days by the boys during the mid-term break this term. After inspecting the school and meeting the students, the boys distributed stationery and chocolates amongst the village students as a token gesture and to signify our solidarity and commitment to their new beginning. The speeches by the various officials, governmental and non-governmental working in the given area were followed by a wonderful traditional dance performance by the school girls accompanied by the tunes of Garhwali folk songs which was followed by a melodious rendition of the same by a school boy. What struck me most in the school was the healthy sex ratio, with much more girls than boys-an encouraging sign of progress in a country such as ours. The school has a severe shortage of furniture, most of it having been destroyed during the disaster. For this reason the children have been reduced to sitting on the floor with insufficiently short threadbare mats, which will prove to be useless against the approaching winters. Also, the school lost its two computers to the floods and these require immediate replacement. The inauguration function was followed by a hearty, and importantly-home cooked lunch. Even though the hamlet is inhabited by around a hundred families it lacks a primary school due to which the villagers have to walk long distances to get their children educated. This however, is the case only with the more affluent members of the village. The villagers without the means to provide for the daily transport of their children fail to provide them with an education. Also, many of these children drop out due to lack of proper facilities. However, the villagers have agreed to donate some land to the school for the setting up of a primary school in the village which will eventually be administered by the villagers.

The present government school administration is, in my view, exceedingly corrupt. The Headmaster of the school had put forth the school as 'not fit for use' and had asked for money grants from the state government for repairs. This sweet scheme was stalled by the work done by Doscos that was done during mid-terms, much to his chagrin. Regrettably, even as of now the man has declared the school as dysfunctional and not fit for use in his report to the government in order to get the school shifted to another area. He claims that the school is not situated in the best of places and that the area is prone to further landslides. But this risk exists almost uniformly in such terrain. The cost of building another school somewhere else would just be an unnecessary drain on the public exchequer. The building of reinforcement walls along with the creation of separate channel for the rain water would be much more cost effective. Leaving aside the costs involved, the shifting of the school would mean that the village children will be cut off from all means of getting an education in and around the village premises, which would also mean more drop-outs and fewer children going to school. Nevertheless, another idea proposed during the team's meeting with the villagers was the setting up of the primary school in the same building, provided that it is abandoned by the government.

Post-lunch, the team visited the family of Ramesh Lal, a cobbler, whose family has been sitting on the route to Nag Tibba for generations, mending shoes. Many a Dosco has passed that route and will continue to do so in the future. The floods completely destroyed the family's humble abode-a tiny shanty, along with a few cattle heads. Although the damaged roof has been covered by a few pieces of broken tin, the family of seven is forced to sleep in other people's homes in the case of even slight rainfall. Although the family has been given Rs. 200,000 as compensation by the state government to cover the damages incurred, it hasn't been sufficient because the family needs to relocate due to the precarious position of their home. The family has bought some new land but is short of funds to start the construction. This, and a plethora of such stories of misery have been created by the unprecedented disaster that struck the state. Stretches of land that once bore the fruits of prosperity for the hill people now lie devastated, strewn with rocks, devoid of the soil that once gave them life.



## Regulars

### COLOURS

The following have been awarded **Football Colours**:

**Half Colours:** Kismat Chopra, Aamir Shah, Anant Mann and Aditya Vir Roy

**Full Colours:** Zahaan Qureshi, Suraj Bishnoi, Ashish Rao, Aahan Menon, Dhruv Prasad

The following have been awarded **Swimming Colours**:

**Half Colours:** Rohan Agarwal and Vinayak Chaudhary

**Full Colours:** Pranjal Bhatt and Divyant Sapra

Well done!

### MUSIC MASTERY

Vihaan Bhatnagar represented the School in the **Virasat Sadhna Cultural Fest** and won the **Best Classical Vocalist Award**.

Congratulations!

### APPOINTMENTS

The following are the appointments for the **Yearbook** for the forthcoming year:

**Editors-in-Chief:** Guruansh Singh and Ritvik Kar

**Editors:** Jai Ahuja, Suhel Karara, Divyansh Goel

**Chief of Production:** Sayuj Dhandhanian

Ishaan Sandhu has been appointed **Secretary General of DSMUN** and Sayuj Dhandhanian has been appointed **President of the MUN Club**.

Ritvik Kar, Guruansh Singh and Shubham Sikaria have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of the Audio-Visual Squad.

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

### ATHLETICS

The following are the results of the **Inter House Athletics Competition**:

#### Juniors

1st: Hyderabad

2nd: Tata

3rd: Oberoi

4th: Jaipur

5th: Kashmir

#### Mediums

1st: Tata

2nd: Hyderabad

3rd: Oberoi

4th: Kashmir

5th: Jaipur

Well done!

#### Seniors

1st: Jaipur

2nd: Hyderabad

3rd: Tata

4th: Oberoi

5th: Kashmir

#### House Cup

1st: Hyderabad

2nd: Tata

3rd: Oberoi

4th: Jaipur

5th: Kashmir

#### AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WORDS

Documents leaked by Edward Snowden show that the National Security Agency and its British counterpart, the GCHQ, are the 'worst offenders' of mass surveillance in the world. In Kenya, five suspects will appear in court over the mall attack. India has finally launched its mission to Mars, called 'Mangalyaan'. A shootout at the Los Angeles International Airport left three injured and one dead. Jihadis are gaining strength on NATO's border in Syria. The Western black rhino has been declared extinct.

### DEBATING

The following are the results of the **Inter House Junior Debating Competition**:

1st: Tata

2nd: Oberoi

3rd: Hyderabad

4th: Jaipur

5th: Kashmir

Congratulations!

### IAYP AWARDEES

The following boys have completed the bronze level of the **International Award for Young People (IAYP)**:

Rudra Srivastava, Raghav Kumar, C.C.Chengappa, Siddharth Goyal and Atrey Bhargava

Kudos!

## THE WHO

Who was Claude Monet?

**A guitarist** - Tanmay Gupta

**A DJ** - Ritvik Kar

**A lawyer** - Pranjalya Shukla

**A pianist** - Harshit Bansal

**A French President** - Vineet Puri

**A poet** - Samrath Singh Bal

**A football player** - Rajkumar Vijay

Claude Monet was a 19th-century French artist who was the founder of the French Impressionist school of art.

## UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

*The breeding of malaria causes mosquitoes.*

**PKN**, all-out!

*I am playing boxing.*

**Sambhav Aggarwal**, player.

*Hindi is more spoken than English.*

**Arth Gupta**, we can see why.

*Italy is the city of romance.*

**Devansh Agarwal**, on a world tour.

*I always say the true!*

**Suryansh Nevatia**, and the whole truth.

*My blood pressure is boiling.*

**Yasharth Goyal** requires medical attention.

*I've never seen a hairless hair.*

**Leonardo Pamei**, nor have we.

*He is a Ruskin Bond writer.*

**Arjun Jai Khanna**, unquotes that kill.

*He said that he don't do it.*

**Rishi Raj Khan**, then who did?

*Don't waste your fouls on him!*

**Suhel Karara**, waste warrior.

*Did you watch Detxer's Laboratory?*

**Dhananjaya Bansal**, we remembered the spelling.

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

This is written in reference to Anshul Tibrewal's LTTE in Issue 2359, dated November 2, 2013. '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.' The very straightforward note on which it began raised my eyebrows the moment I read it. The word 'distasteful' above has been associated with assembly talks as if there has been a consensus observed in the school community as a whole in this regard, or even a weekly poll for that matter. The reactions and comments a talk gets is, after all, a subjective concept. It is not an individual student's job to judge the utility of assembly talks as a forum or the validity of topics such as ego or religion. It can be said that an individual student has freedom enough to comment on the assembly speaker's topic, his tone, and the ways his delivery could have been better. The very fact that after a student is finished with his talk, the announcer says 'thank *you* for the talk', demonstrates that this is an individualistic concept. Saying that assembly talks are not worth being addressed if they 're-establish stereotypes and fail to impress the audience' would have been a valid statement if the School was a utilitarian place where one had to rely on his abilities to keep going; but this is a place where willingness to do something is valued above the quality with which it is done (though I agree that professionalism and practicality might be slow to come in this case). What an assembly speaker says in his talk are first of all, not exactly 'claims' to begin with, so thinking about whether they are already justified or yet to be justified is ridiculous. That is why there is a clear distinction among the three forms of public speaking that happen in school: talks, debates and speeches. Assembly talks are not a competitive event and as far as reviewing and editing the talks is concerned, they do get reviewed by the concerned masters and boys in charge, and on average, an aspiring assembly speaker pays at least two to three visits to the concerned master's house. 'What these S-formers do not understand that re-establishing stereotypes does not serve the purpose of impressing an audience', is an insensitive comment to make as even juniors give assembly talks. The use of this forum as a 'springboard for aspiring SC-form prefects' is an assumption having enough potential to dishearten someone; two out of the many Hindi Talks given this term were in fact for the purpose of an academic oral assignment. Assembly talks are to and will continue to hone confidence and public interaction skills of various DoscOs. The primary purpose will always be to put across one's point of view to the school community at large. For many DoscOs, it is a part of their 'things to do before leaving school' list and such comments will discourage students completely.

Regards,

Rishabh Sharma

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Dear Editor,

"How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" or "H2S" as it came to be known, is an exceedingly sexist drama set in the 1960s. It abounds in sexist stereotypes. Firstly, how can one even consider showing a company with only male bosses and executives, where all the women are secretaries, to a crowd full of teenagers? A few more instances follow.

The women secretaries are either classic 'dumb blondes' who only aspire to hook a husband and stay home, 'happy to keep his dinner warm' or they are manipulative creatures that sleep their way to the top, and are treated by the men in the office as sex objects, an example being the character of Hedy La Rue. The boss is derided contemptuously for enjoying knitting, 'Are you pregnant?!' being the exact words used. The women are referred to as 'broads', a derogatory word. In fact Hedy calls *herself* a broad!

The boss is disrespectful of his wife throughout. When his girlfriend suggests he go home, he answers that he can't go home because he's a married man, implying that it's ridiculous for a man to be faithful.

While one cannot reproach a 1960s play for its sexism, being a reflection of those times, a modern production should be able to use this very '60s sexism to ironic effect. We should be mocking it, not abiding by it.

The most important point I have to make is that the Doon School is not Broadway. This is a play being performed by teenaged boys for an audience that includes another 500 teenaged boys and girls. The School is a small, enclosed community - it is here that we receive our most powerful lessons on society, our role in society and how we view the role of the opposite sex.

Every activity in School life is a medium of instruction, be it sports, debating or drama or anything else. In fact, drama is one of the most powerful tools of instruction. The actor puts himself into the very shoes and skin of the character, imbibing his very essence. The viewers too are caught up in this world. So powerful is Drama that the philosopher Plato deemed it dangerous because it had such an effect on people. It could affect their morality and character. Perhaps we should examine what effect the portrayal of such a gender bias against the female sex will have on the minds of young children, as was portrayed in H2S.

Maybe an adult mind can process this accurately, but a young, unformed mind will treat this negative gender bias as a reality. So the Doon School will send forth young men into the world who have internalized the idea that women in offices are either underlings, neglected wives or are promiscuous. While it may be argued that youngsters are anyway exposed to all sorts of entertainment these days, this fact makes it even more crucial for our social attitudes to be correctly guided by the boarding school where we spend 8 months of each year during the most formative years of our life. *(contd. on next page)*

(Contd. from previous page)

That our social behavior is powerfully influenced by what we learn at an early age is a fact recognized even by the Ministry of Education. All over India, in NCERT and other State Boards, textbooks are being revised to correct gender bias for example, 'Ma kbana banati hai, Papa office jaate hain', has now been changed. If even village children are being taught to think in a more liberal way, then what is wrong with School? Are we so complacent that we no longer question ourselves?

If at all the School should choose a play like H2S, it should at the very least guide the students (actors and student audience) about the context in which to view the sexism in the play. They can be told that that was the way America was in the '60's but now society has changed. But no context was offered to viewers.

Undoubtedly, the play was an excellent watch and we do take it with a pinch of salt, yet it does subconsciously affect the psyche of the young, easily impressionable audience. Isn't this similar to the item songs that we deride so casually?

Today, India has among the world's worst records for gender-based violence against women, worse than even than extremist countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan. We at the Doon School need to think very carefully about the messages we give to the boys.

Regards,

Josh Pasricha

## \*\*\* Roving Eye

Ch. Ed., Ed. and S. Eds.

This year, like every year, the antics of the S-formers have not escaped the inspection of the Board; but a couple of them have been clever enough to use their influence on the Weekly to read this article beforehand, in order to protect themselves from much of the scrutiny. Even so, we will do our best to present you with an intricate account of the 'scoping season.'

Turning our attention to the recent announcements, two S-formers have finally received the accolade for their relentless 'hard work' in the MUN circuit. While they say, a rolling stone gathers no moss, one of them has proved otherwise; he has been turning a few eyeballs, after all he is quite the milestone! The other has found it very difficult to find a seat during school events, for he seems to be going out of his way to ensure that his is the face that is ticked come February. However, as one master had rightly pointed out, with every appointment, there is a dis-appointment. And falling into the latter category, our crushed Eagle has been desperately trying to lift himself from the ground, by shifting his attention from MUNs, to the Housemasters. Our informers have reported that he is often found loitering around the Housemaster's studies.

The founder of the Journalism Expo seems to have run out of fingers to count the feathers in his cap. With his elevated SAT score, it seems as though he has learnt a thing or two from the Americans after all. With his glories at Chucks and DSMUN, coupled with his looks that are strangely reminiscent of the 'Laughing Buddha,' he promises to be a prime contender for the top post. Meanwhile, the blush doesn't seem to have worn off the face of our Chief Editor, who has his eyes firmly set on yet another influential post in school; for who knows, Kashmir might soon be turning into B.O.K. Also on the Board, our recently appointed Editor has been hurdling over all his obstacles. His wild side seems to have caught the attention of many, with an article on him recently being published in the Times of India: so much for publicity! Speaking of wild things, the athlete from the House of Warriors has chosen the discus to be his weapon for the season. There shall be blood, indeed!

Coming back to the milder happenings in Chandbagh, a certain 'non-egoistic' resident of Kashmir may not have managed to prove his oratory skills, but his expertise on the Chess board cannot be downplayed. His competitor in the same House has been knighted as the "King of the Court" and his newly borrowed book on "The Seven Secrets to Confidence" seems to be playing to his advantage. Also, the acne-ridden actor who we often find in the latter's company also seems to be on a roll, bringing an RSC to school. Rumour has it that he has spent many a night awake trying to organize a successful conference: a nocturnal creature no doubt!

Taking a look into the House of the Nizams, a certain someone seems to have made quite a name for himself on the Athletics field, by winning the Best Athlete trophy. His sidekick, who incidentally is a Swan, is desperately trying to make his presence felt too, in the wrong House though! Elsewhere, the 'Silent Crusader,' also from Oberoi House, has been shuffling between productions on Founder's. He eventually proved to be a loyal member of the Music Society.

On the other side of Skinner's, the *sareenala* from the Pagal Gymkhana has been on his best behavior, barring his few failures on the basketball court (which, as we have already pointed out, is being ruled by someone else). Meanwhile, the editors of the recently introduced publication have gone so far as inventing a new forum to *scope* on. However, they must be commended for their publication.

Bringing up the rear, the last and the least, our Hindi debating 'stud,' who has been championing the cause of a Kamla-Jeevan holiday, seems to have encountered diminished popularity by having played a part in the abolishment of a Chucks holiday too in the process. Nevertheless, as the scoping season draws to a close, we wish all the *scopats*, worthy or not, a good and rewarding year ahead. We wish their *scoping* bears good fruit for them.

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