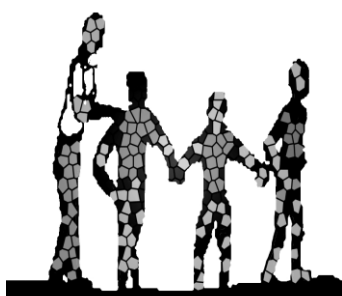


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# The Doon School WEEKLY



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## Critically Appreciative

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Namrata Joshi, Associate Editor of Outlook Magazine and film critic, who recently conducted a film-appreciation workshop in School

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW): What was the driving force behind you entering your profession?**

**Namrata Joshi (NMJ):** I was always interested in movies as a kid, but the exposure to cinema was very limited. I watched more of the usual Hindi films that people got to watch, but I was always interested in writing. So after my graduation, I went in for a course in Journalism and while doing journalism got more and more focused on Cinema, but I write on all issues. It's just that cinema is becoming an identifying factor, and when you decide to start writing seriously about cinema, then you own it by watching more and more movies and doing some specialised courses in Film Appreciation. I decided to take a course in Film Appreciation, which the The Film Archives of India and The Film and Television Institute of India commenced.

**DSW: What are the major skills required to be a successful and well-appreciated film critic?**

**NMJ:** You should be very true to your opinion. Don't get swayed by whether people will like something you write or don't. You should be unbiased in terms of your industry affiliations. If there is a director friend of mine making a film and I feel that my opinion would get biased, then I choose not to review the film. I told the students that Film reviewing in India has changed and critical appreciation is tinged by ratings and connection.. It has turned into a game of ratings, which movie and how many ratings it received. As a person who is reviewing films I find that very demeaning. If you tell me that you are going for film because I have given it three or four stars, it disappoints me. I expect you to say that you are going for the film since you read my review and liked the many ways I reviewed it. For a film to be truly appreciated and well critiqued the whole rating scenario should be done away with. The critic should not be the driving force behind telling a viewer whether he or she wants to watch a film or not. It is just about your perspective, which you put in your own words. When the viewer watches the film, what he feels about it and in turn how he feels that your review has added to his perspective of the film. Then a review writer becomes more appreciative to the film.

**DSW: What are the primary parameters of judging the quality of films?**

**NMJ:** Cinema can be looked at in many ways. There is not a specific criteria to critique a film. You can look at it purely as entertainment, which is what the mainstream movies always do. However, there are a lot of artistic criteria involved, in terms of how the story has been written, how it has been structured and also the way the characters and their relationships are played out. This is the writing part, but cinema is more than just the written word. Otherwise, there is always a book you can read if you want a story. Cinema is also a game of images and sounds. It impacts and brings together all our senses. Ultimately, it is imagery and sound. That is where the camera work and how the scenes are intercut after the shoot, where all the editing comes into the play. There are so many aspects- the song, the choreography, the art direction, the locales- all of it adds to your own appreciation of the film, but as a review writer what I find interesting about films and mainstream movies is I try and bring out the core message and find purpose behind the film, story and production. I appreciate the journey of the film maker and how well the movie has scripted to grip the audience. What is one taking home once they watch a film?

**DSW: Due to you think that on the account of the increasing emphasis on commercial cinema; Indian films are compromising on their purpose?**

**NMJ:** World over, whether it is Bollywood or Hollywood, mainstream cinema will dominate. Even what you get to watch in Hollywood is action thrillers and the best of Hollywood. If you are perhaps living in America, you could be watching a badly made film. Mainstream cinema is here to stay. The thing is that whether in the parameters of the mainstream cinema you are doing some interesting work or not. Last to last week, a film called Queen released which all of us really liked. Now, it is not a film which is path-breaking. It is a very commercial film, but within the commercial format it works beautifully. I think, rather than saying no to commercial films,

(Contd. on Page 3)



## Regulars

### HMUN

The following were awarded prizes at the **Harvard Model United Nations Conference China 2014** held at Beijing between March 20th and 23rd:

**Best Delegate:** Tushaar Sharma and Ishaan Kapoor

**Outstanding Delegate:** Arya Bhadra Khanal, Smayan Sahani, Jayaditya Singh and Rishi Raj Deva

**Honorable Mention:** Dhruv Ahuja Jaivir Puri, Chaitanya Kediya, Kanav Agarwal, Ananay Sethi and Vansh Aggarwal

Congratulations!

### AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WORDS

122 objects in the Indian Ocean have been identified as parts of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 by a satellite. The leaders of the EU and US have united to deal with Russia following its actions in Crimea. Narayanaswami Srinivasan, the President of BCCI has stepped aside to ensure a fair probe into the IPL betting and spot-fixing scandal. Egyptian Army Chief Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has announced that he will resign and declare his candidacy in the forthcoming National Elections.

### UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

*I will take your laugh!*

**Gatik Gupta**, how do you plan on doing that?

*AV is actually much fun!*

**Udayveer Singh Sekhon**, tell us about it.

*I am having your spoon.*

**Sikander Suri**, the honest thief.

*I eat everything on the world.*

**Nehansh Saxena**, accepting a challenge.

*Why are you joking at my laugh?*

**Prabsharan Mamik**, the comedian.

*I would like to propose an 'unmediated' Caucus.*

**Ishaan Kapoor**, still in a MUN Conference.

## The Week Gone By

Yuvan Kumar

Earlier this week, the entire School was diagnosed with a rather severe case of the blues. The 'Autograph Book' coupled with the 'senti meals, maggi sessions and showers', all added to the overall melancholy. With the departure of yet another batch of multi-talented SC Leavers, the School seems to be taking a while to process this emotion and get back on the horse, so to speak.

On a brighter note however, the SCs have been beaming, given the fact that they have now moved into their uber-cool dens. They seem to be spending hours on end setting up their studies (the irony), shaping them into the most presentable (read slimy) positions, not to mention the spacious study units; these will come into use immediately before Trials this term.

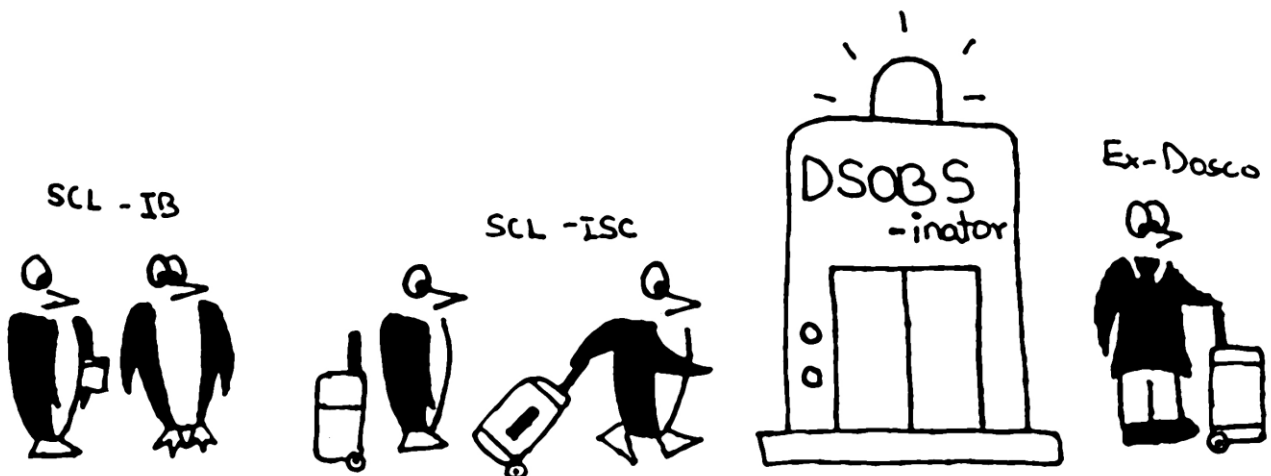
The PT leaders have been pushing their squads, lock, stock and barrel towards perfection: however, the fruit of this effort does not seem to be proportionate to the outcome. Their yells can be heard uninterrupted throughout the concentrated twenty minutes in the morning. This must surely be pleasing for all in favour of the daily struggle.

Recently, the senior cricket competition was wrapped up, with victory in clear sight for two Houses. The ultimate test for the victor comes down to the Junior Competition, which is underway already. There have been some interesting performances to witness from some individuals. It really could go any-way. May the best men win!

We are fast-approaching the half-way checkpoint of this term: mid-terms! After all the action that this term has already witnessed, a break is much in order at this juncture. We wish all a fulfilling and safe mid-term break. The hockey sticks are out, the fans whirring and the sweaters almost off: say hello to the summer!

## Dosco Doodle

The Last of Us  
Madhav Singhal



(contd. from Page 1)

try and be innovative about it. A cinema is appreciated even if it is mainstream but has a novel idea and purpose and manages to rake in at the box office. How does this happen. It happens because it strikes a note with the audience.

**DSW: Taking into consideration the recent success of Queen, do you think that women-centric films are the change Bollywood requires?**

**NMJ:** The thing is that again, it is an unfair world all over, when it comes to the women oriented subject. Cate Blanchett and Meryl Streep spoke about how they found the industry male-dominated. However, interesting roles could be written for them. I feel that in Indian Cinema and its growing appreciation in the world over, film makers have realized that focusing on making films that sensitize the audience on women's issues and creating gender awareness and sensitization. . Queen came as a breath of fresh air because it is based on a girl who asserts herself. The story was an interesting departure from the movie's we have seen. I am not denying the fact that the movies we have seen earlier should not have been made movies are made keeping a global audience in mind and on the lighter side to things, this film was able to create the difference and bring in freshness to the commercial cinema.

## \*\*\* The Question of Varanasi

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**Pulkit Agarwal** *ponders the outcome of the elections at Varanasi*

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I was quite disappointed this past week to know that Kejriwal had postponed his rally from the 23rd to the 25th of the month in Varanasi as I simply couldn't resist knowing if he was indeed going to contest against Modi. Nevertheless, as expected, the activist turned politician did not refrain from the contest, and announced openly to a surprisingly large crowd in the temple town of Uttar Pradesh, that he was up for the challenge, despite the fact that he had an egg or two hurled at him on his visit to the city.

While the decision does not come as a great surprise to me, I do feel it is important to understand the significance of Varanasi as a constituency and as a locus of Hindutva politics. Traditionally, the city has been a BJP stronghold, also the reason why it was chosen as the preferred seat for their Prime Ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi. All the same, apart from it being a safe seat, it also, for the first time, openly gives away the fact that BJP will contest the election, banking on support from the more conservative part of the populace. To be fair to Modi, he has not once made religion an issue in his campaign, but on choosing to contest from the temple town, as it is commonly being referred to in the media, it has provided credence to the fact that BJP still classifies itself as a party that largely promotes the agenda of a particular community. Be it Modi, or the erstwhile candidate from the constituency, Murli Manohar Joshi, Varanasi as a seat has been won by the so-called "greater" leaders of the BJP, for they bank on the strong religious sentiment in the region.

Moreover, due to its geographical location, Varanasi provides Modi with a cache of about 25 seats that he can influence in the area of Eastern UP and Bihar. This can be either through close campaigning in the regions, or even through the prospect of the locals expecting development in the region that the possible PM is elected from. However, the reason I feel this argument is more likely to be the reason for Varanasi as a choice of seat for Modi is because he is still contesting elections from Ahmedabad East which, given his support in Gujarat, would be perceived as a safe seat for him as well. In essence, the BJP has made it clear that they are banking heavily on winning in UP, the state that has in the past led to their very rise. So why is it that Kejriwal would want to challenge Modi in Varanasi, knowing that even if he defeats him there, there is a very good chance he will be elected from his home state still? Doesn't this inherently debunk his proposition that his decision is not merely a symbolic one, but one to realistically prevent Modi from entering the Lok Sabha? Unless he fields a strong candidate from Ahmedabad East also, it does.

The second factor to understand in this contest is the fact that Kejriwal will not have much to lose in this election, in the same way that he had nothing to lose in New Delhi in the Assembly Polls last winter against Sheila Dikshit. He can simply go all guns blazing at Modi, attract all the anti-BJP vote by projecting himself as the only other possible winning candidate, and either cause a massive upset, or still get away with a loss by claiming that the Modi fanaticism was too strong in the region. However, knowing Kejriwal, he wouldn't want to do that, and he might not even have to.

The fact is, that despite the minor diatribes people hurled at him on his visit to Varanasi, and the occasional egg as already mentioned, he would still manage to attract a large support as he would come across as the only other winnable candidate. This, coupled with people's perception of him as a last-minute game changer as already seen in Delhi, could lead him to cause an upset, albeit a symbolic one. This hypothesis does invite a huge question though: can Narendra Modi's rising support in this election be compared to the diminishing support Sheila Dikshit faced in New Delhi when she faced defeat at the hands of Kejriwal?

While Varanasi is sizing up to be a closely watched election, being a constituency that is playing host to Prime Ministerial candidates from two different parties, what cannot be overlooked is the irreverence caused to the Congress through this dramatic contest. It will direct a large chunk of the attention away from Amethi, Rae  
(Continued overleaf)

Bareilly and other such seats, from where senior leaders of the Congress will be contesting. Is this sudden attraction of attention what Kejriwal sought in the first place? Once again, knowing Kejriwal, I wouldn't be surprised if he did!

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| Report |

## Chinese Diplomacy

**Varun Sehgal, Jaivir Puri and Chaitanya Kediya** *report on HMUN China*

The Doon School delegation consisting of eighteen boys escorted by Mr. Piyush Malaviya and Mr. Michael James set out for Beijing on the 18th of March. A sense of nervousness and anxiety prevailed in all of us even though we were prepared and confident that we would do well at this prestigious conference.

During the first two days, we did some sightseeing, and time flew by faster than one could imagine. We visited the Forbidden City right after getting off of a seven hour flight, which left us all bedazzled, 'harmonious' and jet lagged. After much-needed sleep, the next morning we set off for one of the Wonders of the World: The Great Wall of China. After a hearty and strenuous climb, a few of us reached high above the starting point and decided to rest there for some time as it had begun to snow! After a nice Chinese meal, we made a quick stop at

the Temple of Heaven which provided more jaw dropping sights and then we headed out towards Tiananmen Square.

In the days that followed, we were all much more serious and excited. For the majority of us, this was our first MUN and we were eager to join our various committees. There were several committees available to us, like the commonly found Security Council, DISEC, HRC and SOCHUM, as well as unique committees such as the The High Level Meeting on Well-being and Happiness and the Court of the Guangxu Emperor, 1898. We were a little intimidated by the fact that more than 1100 delegates were attending the conference from more than 30



different countries, but we adjusted rather quickly.

After a snappy opening ceremony, a few inspiring speeches and a hasty dinner, we settled down in our first committee session. After an attention-grabbing and swift three hours, I think that each one of us was impressed by the level of debate, and we were confident for the next day.

The next day started with a handful of panel speeches given by the directors of various committees on topics such as 'the importance of happiness' and 'college application'. After an early lunch, we were back in our respective rooms at the Beijing Convention Centre ready for another session. This was the second day at the conference, so we were familiar with the rules of procedure and how the committees functioned. After two exhausting sessions, we left for our hotel and enjoyed a much deserved meal at a famous Chinese restaurant. The third day, unfortunately, started earlier than the other days and it was also the most important day. After two hectic committee sessions and after completing the mammoth task of finishing our draft resolutions, we arrived at the event most eagerly awaited by everyone – the delegate dance. The dance came after the Global Village Performance where delegates performed pieces which was of cultural importance to them. The delegate dance was shortened and was a bit of a letdown but still enjoyable.

The final day of the conference began with a two hour committee session followed by the closing ceremony. We won two Best Delegate awards, four Outstanding Delegate awards and six Honorable Mention awards. Of course there were some let downs, but we were happy for everyone, not just ourselves.

The following day was our departure. No one wanted to leave Beijing. We made so many new friends and got to know ourselves even better. Our experiences in China will never be forgotten.

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