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# DESERT DIARY

*Vikram Kejriwal and Abhinav Mittal report on the Round Square Conference held in Dubai during the winter holidays*



A few decades earlier we would have landed on nothing but rippling sand in the land of sea merchants and pirates. But on the 18th of December in the year gone by, we were greeted by a majestic city. Dubai prides itself as being one of the fastest-growing and most famous cities in the world. In just a decade, it has set many records (three of the best and biggest malls in the world, the tallest tower and two of the best hotels in the world, to name a few). Our junior RSC. team comprising Varun Gupta, Sidhant Dixit, Aashray Batra, Udai Bothra, Rishi Agarwal, Vikram Kejriwal and Abhinav Mittal left the New Delhi International Airport with our teacher escort PKN (who was more of a companion, as we discovered in the next few days or so). The flight touched down, but our hearts leapt in the air. We resided in the host school – The Millenium School, which greeted us with warmth and chocolate brownies! We acquainted ourselves with the surroundings and other representatives from various school of India, Jordan, UAE and Oman. The topic for the Conference was ‘Mosaic, the Colours of Life’. We had to explore this in all its myriad meanings.

After the opening ceremony the next day (which included a fantastic performance of cultural dance), we left for the hugely popular 'Desert Safari Tour'. This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience as we enjoyed the 'bumps and the drifts' in the SUVs, among nature's roller-coasters – the huge sand dunes. Following this, we stayed for a novel dinner in a re-created Arabian desert camp.

Dubai's Dolphinarium was part of the schedule the next day, where we saw dolphins and seals perform unimaginable stunts like dancing, jumping through a suspended ring, etc. Following that memorable performance,

we left for the Deira City Centre - where we were left to ourselves to shop. This was nothing compared to some of the malls we visited later. The Mall of the Emirates (with its very own skiing and snowboarding complex), is deservedly one of the most famous malls in the world. Each mall has its unique quality and 'Dubai Mall' is no exception. This mall has an old-world charm to it, and with its thousand-gallon aquarium, is one of the biggest malls to be built.

Having done a fair amount of touristy things, we turned to more important matters – the conference. There were discussions based on the speeches of a famous television show anchor and the chairman of a non-profit organization, next morning. Each of us was put into separate groups called ‘Barazzas’, and all of us performed well. Within the group, each individual was given the opportunity to express his viewpoint. This discussion with schools from all over turned out to be much more interesting than we envisaged. In the afternoon the same day, we left for the 'Dubai City Tour', where we saw some of the best buildings in the world. The Burj Dubai (the tallest tower in the world), the Burj-Al-Arab (one of the best hotels around the globe and the symbol of international development), the Atlantis Hotel and some very well-maintained old buildings of historical importance, formed a part of this interesting tour.

One must treasure one's past, this holds for people and cities alike. On the final day, we visited the Dubai Museum, which does not have much history to boast of, but the way they treasure the little history they have, is indeed remarkable. The important role spices and pearls played in the history of this region formed a major part of the museum. Following this informative visit, each school gave a presentation. All the schools put on imaginative performances, most of which were dances or plays. We had prepared speeches regarding the topic and then Aashray Batra entertained everyone with an electrifying drum solo performance. In the evening, we danced and socialized. As Christmas was merely three days away, there was also carol-singing around a beautifully decorated Christmas tree.

We left for New Delhi the next morning with hugs and farewells, but our hearts decided to stay. This junior RSC was indeed an unforgettable experience.

## Regulars

### BOGS VISIT

The **Board of Governors** of The Doon School visited Chandbagh on February 25-26. They hosted a farewell dinner for the Headmaster, Dr Kanti Bajpai, on the night of the 25th. They also had interactive meetings with the faculty and the prefectorial body of the School.

### TALKTIME

**Dr S Farooq**, a renowned botanist and entrepreneur, gave a talk on the 'Magic of Common Herbs' on Saturday, February 21 in the AV Room.

### ENTI COMMITTEE

Anuj Bhatia and Abhilaksh Lalwani have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of the **Entertainment Committee** for the forthcoming year. Congratulations!

### APPOINTMENTS '09

Jaywardhan Singh and Sumer Boparai have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of the **Chair Squad**.

Vishnu Malik has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of the **Child Education SUPW**.

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

### Unquotable Quotes

*Nikhil, tennis le aa.*

**Saarthak Singh** raises a racquet.

*Don't look at to me like nursery KG boy.*

**MLJ**, centre of attention.

*Mera spelling mistake galat hai.*

**Abhishek Gupta** failed the English Language test.

*He was reborn after his birth.*

**Kamran Cooper** muses on the afterlife.

*This is the best news in today.*

**Shaurya Sinha** the newshound.

*Kisi ne mera tie whack udaa liya.*

**Vahin Khosla** loses it.

*Who's the opening bowling?*

**Shreyvardhan Swaroop**, aren't you?

*Stop hiding suspense.*

**Shreyvardhan Swaroop**, we won't.

*Have you come here to play cricket or MUN?*

**Govind Singh** meddles.

*I am a scholastic.*

**Shatrunjai Dewan** goes publishing!

*You only speak without saying*

**Devansh Khaitan** corrects others' speech.

*My keys of my locker are locked.*

**Devansh Khaitan**, tongue-locked.

*There is Tropicana Real juice today.*

**Faraz Khan's** juicy cocktail.

*Make Vahin bat at Silly Point.*

**Vivek Santayana**, sad he wasn't selected.

*Are you planning to overtake the company?*

**Shahaan Pushp**, tycoon in-the-making.

*I'm applying UK.*

**Prateek Agarwal**, career-conscious.

### CAREER CALL

The Careers' Notice Board will feature **Geology** as a career this week. All those interested should look it up.

## Junior Poetry

### THE FUNERAL

*Shashvat Dhandhania*

Everyone stood still.

No one said a word

Until the silence was broken

When the priest spoke.

His words: mournful,

Miserable, meaningful.

Silently, they all walked across

And strew flowers on the pyre.

Their hearts, full of pain,

Remembered their beloved.

\* \* \*

### ALONE

*Rahul Srivastava*

I look around in the dark.

I don't seem to know how I got here.

I walk into the unseen,

And I find I'm in a forest.

The trees are thick and possibly tall,

But where is the end?

I run; run faster than I ever have,

And suddenly, I am stopped by a tremendous force.

It's a force that is invisible,

But one that's stubborn.

I push and I fight, but it hangs in there,

And it seems as if nothing can dispel it.

All of a sudden it breaks away,

And I fall.

I fall till I see the light.

\* \* \*

### FEET FEAT

*Utkarsh Jha*

I dodge the feet of a hundred humans,  
Especially the ones with mountains on their soles.

The kind that can stab you.

Click-clack! Click-clack!

It's all in my head.

One step at a time

Till I reach my den.

I scamper up the tree

And watch those hundred feet

Gradually become a hundred heads.

Carelessly I drop a nut

On the head of a lady

With one of those fancy hats.

"Eeek!" goes the lady,

Screaming a dignified scream.

She grabs her handbag

With her woollen hand

And tiptoes away on her expensive feet.

| Viewpoint |

# THROUGH THICK AND THIN

*Dilsher Dhillon concludes that his experiences at School have given him the confidence to face the outside world*

It all began like a dream. A dream that was years in the making. I was an eager member of a new batch of students that set foot in school six years ago. Initially everything was all hunky-dory: great school, new friends, quality education and limitless opportunities. It seemed like something out of a commercially-viable 'feel-good' advertisement. We were excited customers, ready to buy whatever Doon School was selling. And then the bubble burst.

We became the bottom-most components of a food-chain of sorts, directly accountable to each of the numerous species above us – seniors, prefects, teachers, deans and ultimately, the Headmaster. We became the

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lesser-known parts of an intricate system. The pressure increased on all fronts – academically, physically and every other way possible. Punishments reared their head for every minor misdemeanour. Sadly, teachers, with all due respect, were the main exponents of the punishment trend – YC's, bad chits, gating etc. What we learned in our junior forms was do the so called 'right thing' not because it was morally upright, but out of the fear-based expectation of punishments. Is this sociologically and psychologically viable? But we still live with these 'traditions'. If we can't think of anything better, why bother with change? – This is our mentality. On one hand, seniors are meant to change the system and embrace equal rights for juniors, a noble task, but what about the other traditions, especially the ones perpetuated by the system itself?

As we progressed in the food chain and became seniors with young ones under us, we were afforded more power, but were soon corrupted and as a result, the misdemeanours increased and so did the punishments. A vicious cycle was set in motion and there we were, at its very centre. With increased power, we became brash with teachers and rough with juniors. Even the seemingly incorruptible 'gems' in our trophic level contributed in ways unfathomable to them. With the potential to progress even higher with time, we exploded with energy and vitality, trying to consume everything in our path. Unfortunately, the higher authorities mistook our effervescence for rebellion and blatant impudence, and so there was no mutual understanding and adequate ground was not furnished for cooperation. The result – forced obedience on our part out of fear. In the midst of all this, peer pressure reared its ugly head, exercising another form of control over us. But amidst all this, some of us still rose up, against others' expectations and wishes and did well for ourselves, carving out a niche in a multitude of fields and gaining a lot of talents and skills, opportunities presented by the system. Sadly, others were left behind in a cruel rat-race that saw dreams shattered, and they thus, saw their energies suppressed.

Finally, we were perched at the topmost level for students in the food chain – Sc Form. Circumstances had changed. Being both abused and at the same time, nurtured by the system, we *became* its outright products. We finally came to terms with the processes and values of this place, and thus accepted it for what it was – a flawed, but nevertheless, enduring system of complexities. We achieved the unthinkable, we acceded to its needs and desires and although we had the most authority amongst the students, we were, ironically, the most powerless, a defeated bunch that had finally given up. We were referred to as the main 'evils' of the system, but only we, or a few of us, were the ones who realised that this evil was widespread. It was a salient feature of every change-in-break, yellow card and suspension.

Everyone contributes to this system in school, in negative and in positive ways, although only a select few get the credit or the blame. Students feel teachers are the cause of the flaws in our system and inversely, teachers think that the students, especially the seniors, bring out its negative aspects. With such opposing ideologies, there is meagre scope for mutual understanding and cooperation.

At the end of it all, it is safe to say that despite its flaws, the processes and occurrences embodied by the system can be perceived, in a bout of positivity, as a blessing in disguise. The experiences that I have had and the wide range of situations that I have faced, have helped me mature to the extent that I am ready to enter into another food chain in my life- adulthood. I know that whatever I have experienced in school is an indication of things to come. Having undergone the brutalities and perks of the school system, we're confident of facing the world, all engines firing.

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# Letter To The Editor

## Reality vs Dreams

The subhead for Vivek Santayana's article on how today's youth is losing its perspective makes Vivek, whom I happen to have interacted with on a few choice occasions, sound like an eighty-year-old, status-quo-loving gentleman. And though he argues through his article that he, as an individual, broke free from the norm, and has "the freedom to do what he wants", he does not realize that his ideas of 'norm', 'ambition' and the so-called 'youth' (which, incidentally, comprises almost 70 per cent of India's population!) are all heavily influenced by his family and other members of the previous generations he interacts with on a daily basis.

Fierce competition and the ubiquitous 'rat-race' are characteristics that will define us, the current 'youth'. It will still be a while before we, this new crop, the youth of the nation, take over the happenings of the world from our parents. But while we are still germinating in the ambiguous realms of education, we will continue to be influenced by the thoughts and actions of 'the man', 'the big boss', 'the older dudes', or simply put, mum and dad. And indeed, it is mum and dad who look at us and go -- "Oh! Poor babies. It is a pity they have to struggle so much to try and achieve that perfect grade. When we were young..." And that is when the rambling discourse begins, and you realize how unchallenging our parents' youth was. They will tell us how easy it was back then to get into the best colleges, and how achieving 70 per cent in the Boards was indeed an achievement. But they were only dealing with a fraction of information we have at our disposal today. Today's youth interacts with a much bigger world, therefore our ambitions are that much bigger. There is a phenomenal gap between us and the previous generation as far as the sheer volume of things go: more people, more communication and more information shared between those many people through those many modes of communication. My response from halfway across the world to Vivek's article illustrates that.

In effect, I am trying to say that every activity we indulge in becomes an inevitable 'rat race' because in the context of youth, there are no longer any 'endangered species' amongst us. Vivek thinks he has broken free from the 'norm', but instead he has trapped himself in another race – the one involving the rats that are trying "to break free." We haven't "lost sight of our dreams." They are beyond the 'sight' of mum and dad, and are therefore dismissed by them as being non-existent. Every generation thinks its succes-

or will never be up to mark. They cannot predict the change the new guys will bring with them, and when they do, they will refuse to accept it. That is exactly why Plato admonished Aristotle, Geoff Boycott despises T20 cricket, and my parents disliked *Dev D!*

While the '8th grader-coaching-for-IIT' kid is breaking free from his parents' mould of thought and is paving his generation's path to the top, the 'I'm-going-to-break-free' kid (Vivek!) is getting trapped within the parental web of philosophy which fears change and distances itself by looking down upon 'the youth'.

At the end of the day, it turns out to be just another vicious cycle, or as George Orwell says – "Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it."

**Harsh Mall**  
(ex-25 K '08)



## Opinion Poll

**Do you think the Board examinations affect the entire School community?**



(172 members of the school community were polled)

**Next Week's Question: Do you think the School has taken adequate measures to relieve the stressful routine?**

## Wordsearch *Shashvat Dhandhanian*

Find below the hidden surnames of ten former US Presidents

N	L	O	C	N	I	L	R	W	T
R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T	R
Y	E	T	L	R	A	K	N	C	U
H	O	Z	G	G	E	O	B	O	M
S	F	J	E	N	T	T	B	B	A
U	I	N	N	N	I	A	R	L	N
B	L	E	I	L	M	H	I	A	K
L	C	L	X	A	R	A	S	K	C
Y	C	L	O	S	E	B	T	A	I
O	X	I	N	F	H	O	J	C	W

Online Edition: <http://www.doonschool.com/magazine>

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IPSS® All rights reserved. **Printed by:** The English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun, Uttarakhand - 248009, India. **Published by:** Philip Burrett, The Doon School, Dehra Dun.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Dhruv Velloor **Senior Editor:** Pranjal Singh **Associate Editors:** Shashank Peshawaria, Vivek Santayana, Arnav Sahu, Bharat Ganju, Chandrachuda Shukla **Special Correspondents:** Revant Nayar, Arjun Badal, Piroune Balachandran, Kanishka Malik, Abhinav Mittal **Correspondents:** Shashvat Dhandhanian, Arjun Parmar, Arifeen Chowdhury **Chief-of-Production:** Sriyash Kishorepuria **Webmaster:** Vishal Mohla **Assistant Managers:** Stuti Bathla, Priya Chaturvedi, Arvindanabha Shukla **Special Assistance:** K.C.Maurya