

Established in 1936

# The Doon School

## WEEKLY



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## Editorial

The year that has gone by can only remind us of the fact that the word 'stasis' is not part of the dictionary of life. As always, 'the times they are a-changing'. We saw global economies fall to their knees, political scandals rock the world, and the sad passing of great personalities. The outrageous terrorist attacks that occurred in Mumbai late in 2008 and the subsequent 'Talibanisation' of Mangalore will also leave scars on India's memory.

And yet we have so much to be thankful (or hopeful) for. 2008 heralded an Indian nuclear revolution after the signing of the Indo-US deal, ending India's four decade-long exile from atomic energy. Americans were also able to breathe a sigh of relief as George Bush (after 8 years of ill-advised war-mongering and obdurate administration) relinquished his position as President, allowing Barack Obama to attempt to salvage a nation fraught with capitalistic excesses.

The very same goes for Doon. We have seen people come and people go. Older buildings have crumbled and newer facades have been built in their stead. Chandbagh also gears up to welcome a new Headmaster, and to thank the incumbent Headmaster for all he has done during his tenure here. Of more immediate consequence is the fact that the School is now led by a new School Captain and his group of Prefects, who look to change things in their own way.

And the Weekly? As I had written in my first editorial, we are no exception to this rule. We too have undergone a process of change as we attempt to evolve from year to year. It's just that this change is more gradual, and less conspicuous. We take heart in the fact that there is always something new to write about, and a different opinion that will always find ready listeners. And therein lies our determination to continue, the true strength of a journalist, and the only thing we believe to be constant.

But that's enough time spent dwelling on the past. 2008 is over; we live in 2009 now. And we must continue to look forward, until more change comes our way. Till then we wait, and we watch.

## 'Head'ing forward

The Weekly interviews the newly-elected School Captain, Sriyash Kishorepuria



**The Doon School Weekly (DSW):** How do you feel on your election?

**Sriyash Kishorepuria (SRK):** I feel happy, and honoured. It feels truly great to be an elected School Captain of this School. I believe

it is an appointment that places a lot of responsibility upon me, and I hope I can meet everybody's expectations.

**DSW: What do you propose to change during your tenure, and how do you think it will benefit the school?**

**SRK:** I would want juniors (D and C formers in particular) to read more often. A Dosco rarely reads and is actually proud of it! I find this quite appalling. By doing so, Doon will have a better-read and more knowledgeable student body, which will hold them in good stead for the future. I would also like to further improve the senior-junior relationship, which has already seen a lot of improvement from the past.

**DSW: On the other hand, what do you feel should stay the same?**

**SRK:** I feel that the student-teacher relationship at Doon is unlike that of any school. The various inter-house competitions provide the student body with a platform where everyone can excel. Small acts like serving at meals or even the social service we do on Independence Day truly define a Dosco.

**DSW: We hope you won't forget that you are the COP of the Weekly! Will you be able to juggle all your responsibilities?**

**SRK:** "No" to the first question, and "I hope so" to the second. The Weekly is the School's flagship publication and it is an honour to be a part of it. I think one of the first and most valuable lessons we learn at Doon is how to multi-task. Juggling responsibilities is something all of us have to do.

**DSW: Do you feel that bullying remains a major problem in school? How do you feel that it can be eradicated?**

**SRK:** No. Without saying anything about what has happened in the past, bullying in School is not a major problem today, as some believe. Life in School for a junior is a lot more comfortable and easy than it used to be, say, five years ago. With the House Cups being abolished, a lot of undue pressure has been taken off juniors' shoulders.

**DSW: Post the prohibition of electronic gadgets, do you feel that Doon can ever become truly tech-savvy?**

**SRK:** Yes, I believe Doon can become truly tech-savvy. Just because thefts have taken place in the recent past, it does not mean that they will continue forever. This sensitive issue has been correctly dealt with, and in time, gadgets could be reallocated. However, this should not be at the cost of individual equality within School. Doscos must learn not to misuse the freedom afforded to them and this can only be done when we all learn to be more mature.

## Regulars

### WELCOME

We would like to welcome to the school community Debosree Samanta Roy (DSY) and Mohd. Istemdad Ali (MIA). They are teaching Biology and Economics, respectively. We wish them a fruitful tenure at Doon.

### DECORATED

The following were awarded **School Colours** in the previous year:

Anirudh Gupta, Jaspreet Singh, Saurav Sethia, Ritvik Kothiwai, Vansh Nathani, Abhimanyu Chandra, Ankur Saxena, Hanumant Singh, Rachit Khaitan, Madhav Bahadur, Ayyappa Vemulkar, Kushagra Aggarwal, Armaan Malhotra.

Congratulations!

### LEADING THE PACK...

The following are the appointments to the prefectorial body for the forthcoming year:

**School Captain:** Sriyash Kishorepuria

#### Hyderabad House

House Captain: Harnaresh Singh

Prefects: Anuj Bhatia, Arjun Kapur, Ritvik Kothiwai

#### Kashmir House

House Captain: Devvrat Patney

Prefects: Amitaabh Sahai, Tushar Aggarwal, Sumer Boparai

#### Jaipur House

House Captain: Aashray Patel

Prefects: Vedant Chandra, Arjun Singh Maini

#### Oberoi House

House Captain: Aruj Shukla

Prefects: Sagar Aggarwal, Shrey Gaurishankar, Aaditya Vicram Gupta

#### Tata House

House Captain: Aditya Sukhia

Prefects: Amit Gupta, Pururava Jamwal, Saurav Mediratta  
Congratulations!

### ...ON THE FIELD

The following are the various games captaincies for the forthcoming year:

**Soccer:** Sumer Boparai

**Cricket:** Aruj Shukla

**Hockey:** Amit Gupta

**Athletics:** Aaditya Vicram Gupta

**Badminton:** Vedant Chandra

**Tennis:** Harnaresh Singh

**Squash:** Sriyash Kishorepuria

**Senior PT Leader:** Sumer Boparai

**Basketball:** Aseem Kumar

**Boxing:** Melvin Michael

**Swimming:** Vishesh Kochher

Congratulations!

### IAYP HONOURS

The following have been awarded the **IAYP Blazer**: Yash Lalwani, Adhip Chopra, Anirudh Gupta, Ayyappa Vemulkar, Jaspreet Singh, Divijinder Singh Oberoi.  
Well done!

### TROPHY KEEPER

Amarinder Sodhi has been appointed **Boy-in-charge** of the **Trophy Squad** for the year 2009.  
Congratulations!

## OBITUARY

We regret to inform the School community of the passing away of Mrs. Pheroza Das, wife of former Headmaster Shomie Das, on January 31, 2009. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved family.

### In Memoriam

I knew she was ailing with a kidney disease for some time and knew for certain that I would sooner than later receive that much dreaded call telling me of the news I did not want to hear. I was loath to visit her, as my memories were one of a hale and hearty, active person and I just wanted that etched on my mind for ever.

Mrs Pheroza Das for me was the typical Headmaster's wife, always hospitable, kind and warm. I remember her walking the dogs and sitting out in the lawn with boys or involved in the play she was doing. She enjoyed the company of young people, (I recall her telling me she preferred the co-ed atmosphere of Sanawar to the all-boys one in Doon) and her home amply reflected this. It was designed to look lived-in and suitable for young people to feel comfortable: cushions, rugs, chairs one could sink into, photographs of boys, extending to the Das's tenure at Mayo and Sanawar, mugs of coffee lying around, music wafting from one of the rooms, shelves of well-used books and dogs all over the place.

I recall the teas at the Das's residence after hockey matches on hot April evenings where Pheroza tolerated our dirty shoes and sweaty shirts while she served us tea. I remember the dinners at their Clement Town home and at the Headmaster's residence at Doon where I met the family, Rohit, Nishad and She She who all embodied so much of their mother's friendliness and warmth. I also recall the day Mr and Mrs Das had a serious road accident which she survived, with both her hands fractured apart from other wounds, and how bravely she recovered from that with her usual charm and fortitude.

After leaving Doon Mrs Das was involved in the GAP movement and helped place British school-leavers to find something to do in India for a year prior to University, as well as in looking after their lovely home in Clement Town.

When the call finally arrived on January 31, I was not shocked, but relieved that this wonderful woman who radiated life was now at peace. She will be remembered by hundreds of staff members and students of Mayo, Sanawar and Doon whose lives she touched.

-Philip Burrett

My best memories of her are from my Sanawar years which, she admitted, were the best years of her life. A caricature of Ma'am would depict a stout lady, clad in a sari and sleeveless blouse, with short hair, red lipstick, screaming at children with one arm flung in the air and the other tucked behind her back, hiding chocolates and biscuits. The children standing there would be giggling in anticipation. That was Pheroza Das. Why? Because she would calm down as quickly as she got angry, with a disarming, "*Bachu*, darling, I am sorry" – and all her affection would start pouring out along with the goodies. She was the very model of a mother. In fact, I know of a Dosco who actually called her *amma*. She was the very life and soul of Sanawar, with a passionate involvement in theatre which led to some memorable productions. She was generous to a fault and counted nothing as hers: neither time nor material possessions. A larger than life figure not only on one campus, but three (Sanawar, Mayo, Doon), Pheroza Das will be long remembered.

-Piyush Malaviya

| Reflection |

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## WHERE DADDIES BECAME MUMMIES

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*Sanjiv Bathla*

As the saying goes...Egypt is the Nile and the Nile is Egypt. A land where the sun was worshipped, and as it awakened each morning, it was believed that man too would rise again to life after death. As we Doscos ( Aditya Kothiwal, Dhruv Kumar, Milind Kukreti, Piyush Gupta, Skand Swarup, Vidur Vij, Vidur Yadav, SSM and SJB) slipped through the soufflé of Egyptian clouds, looming below were the Giza Pyramids and the Nile, as if it was cutting an endless emerald swathe through the mysterious desert, cradle of myths and gods. My mind, musing over stories of ancient Mesopotamia and Babylon opened a delta of thoughts that left me spellbound.



As we touched down at Cairo airport, the mysteries began to unfold. The Nile and its valley are not all there is to Egypt. There is much beyond the pyramids and the Sphinx. The drive to our hotel, the bazaars of the old city of a thousand nights, the visits to fabulous temples, the cruise on the Nile, the train journey through the countryside, all revealed their tales. Five thousand years of architecture, culture, the amalgamation of construction and most importantly, destruction, by the Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Arab, Turkish, Burgi and Ottoman occupiers, as well as the modern republic, create this history. The footprints of the British and the French cultures are noticeable too.

Egypt, the men in her life, the pharaohs, pashas and the sultans: why did they all find a home here? Cairo has its treasures to see. The Egyptian Museum holds by far the largest antiquities. Understanding the treasures of Tutankhamun before visiting his tomb in the Valley of the Kings made it even more intriguing. The spectacular architecture is visible in the mosques, *madrasas*, churches, the synagogues and the citadels. Between the palaces are the bazaars, where spices, gold and silver are seen being traded in quantum. Linen embroidered for the harem ladies, the fusion of incense and the aroma of the *sheesha* and the *oud* being strummed in the background is sometimes overwhelming. In the *quasbas*, magicians and fortune-tellers are still in evidence. The quaint, narrow streets silently tell tales of fortune and catastrophe. The food is predominantly Middle Eastern and the baklavas are delightful confections. A common Egyptian saying goes "Once you drink the water of the Nile, you will always come back to Egypt." Believe me, most of us stayed with mineral water, but still hope to go back one day.

The Egyptians are blessed with long hours of good sunshine and even longer hours of free time. Every second shop we saw seemed to be a *qahwa*, where people just sat all day to drink *chai* and smoke *sheesha*. I did notice a distinctive character about these cafes. These *qahwas* are unpretentious and yet full of history. Some were exclusively for couples, some for musicians, and others for shopkeepers. On asking, I was told that there was one even for the deaf and dumb...order by gesture, pay by gesture! *Salaam*.

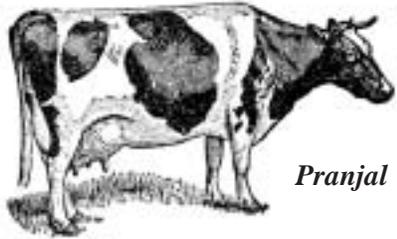


However, there was so much else to explore behind the smoke and the mirrors. The next on our itinerary via Memphis were the Pyramids of Giza, the Step Pyramids and the tombs in Saqqara that dated back to about 3000 BC. Three great royal pyramids, surrounded by many smaller ones were seen in Saqqara, distinct from each other. The Sphinx stands in sole grandeur, etched by the winds of time. Our next visit was to Alexandria, set on the shores of the Mediterranean, and was named after the Macedonian conqueror, Alexander the Great. After Queen Cleopatra played temptress to Caesar and then Mark Antony, Alexandria preserved its autonomy for years and became a Roman city only at her death. The visible glories of the past are very few along the coast and we could explore them easily by foot. The

Roman council chamber excavated downtown, the Greco-Roman Museum, the Sayyid Darwish theatre—a 19th century opera house, the rather impressive Bibliotheka, the fort of Qaytbay and the catacombs of Kom as-Shuqafah were some of the exciting places we visited. Walking along the Mediterranean sea, it felt that one large wave could toss us to Greece or Cyprus or even Istanbul. Perhaps that is how the conquerors swooped down from the north.

Then from the north coast, back to Cairo, we took a flight down to Luxor. The temples of Luxor and Karnak were breathtaking and had their own distinct character. The temple of Queen Hatshepsut was spectacular and unique. We started the beautiful Nile cruise, at Luxor, upstream down to the south, visiting Esna, Edfu, Kom Ombo, via the Elephantine island right down to Aswan. The temples of Khnum, Horus and Abu Simbel were pit stops. The highlight was a Nubian settlement and the colours of the Nile. Imagine a wine red shading to a calm blue. In a sailing yacht, known as *dahabias*, across the cataract, we visited some quaint Nubian tribal homes and even met their pet crocodiles! We also visited a village school and tried learning their alfa and betas. In exchange, we left them with a few useful Hindi names to grapple with, like Amitabh Bachchan, whom they all seemed to know personally.

Twelve days in the land of plenty, we ourselves felt monumental enough with visits to temples, pillars, pyramids, hieroglyphs, ideograms, tombs, the obelisk, the asterisk. Saturated with tales of papyrus, cotton, camels, donkeys, historical pharaohs and their mummification, we ended our vacation. It was definitely a very memorable trip and a good learning experience. After getting the feel of Egyptian cotton, next, the Doscos are hoping to weave the silk route towards China...



# Eating Grass



*Pranjal Singh questions the logic behind vegetarianism*

**H**aving been a vegetarian most of my life, I have been questioned relentlessly on my restricted diet. Before we get on with this, let me give you a little background to this vegetarianism. My mother belongs to a Jain family so, for her, not only non-vegetarian food but also root vegetables are taboo. I admit that their thoughts have affected me. I was always instilled with a strong belief that it is a sin to kill a living being for food, which is why one should abhor all kinds of meat. This was much before I knew that even plants were living.

Later on, my beliefs were heavily questioned by my peers, teachers and even my father. Although my father comes from a vegetarian Hindu family, he is a non-vegetarian. Vegetarianism in his family does not originate in belief but in general economics and geography. My paternal ancestors have been inhabitants of the fertile 'cow belt'. Vegetables and grain are available in plenty and are easier to procure than meat. In fact, meat was such a delicacy that it was reserved only for the men who got it through hunting and denied it to the women who, in retaliation, refused to cook it for them. Although the most abundant meat-provider is the cow, it is a sin according to Hindu tenets to slaughter cows. Again, the economics! A cow is worth much more alive than dead. After this, I stopped ranting about how I am a sinner for killing living things for meat and gave a much more acceptable answer: I am a vegetarian by choice.

If you ask a vegan or a vegetarian why he or she shuns animal products, the most likely answer would have something to do with animal rights, cruelty and sin. But anyone with a little knowledge of science would soon see the absurdity of the argument. Why are plants exempted from this so-called list of living things?

To provide more scientific evidence: if humans were supposed to be so benign a race, nature would have endowed us with some faculty to perform photochemical reactions to produce our own food. If humans were created as heterotrophs, then is it not evident that humans are meant to survive on other living things?

Vegetarians need to realize that they are not vegetarians because they are supposed to be, but because they choose to be. Being a vegetarian, I realize this, and also that vegetarianism is not a virtue. Humans are one of the rare species that enjoy the status of omnivores (who can eat both green plants and meat) and all of them have the full right to use this privilege in any way they want. This is the message I would like to give all the cribbing vegetarians of the world: "If you are a vegetarian, you are so because of your own choice, but you cannot force or expect anyone else to be the same."

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## Unquotable Quotes

*My name has four digits.*

**Aman Dhar** in a digital world.

*No, your name has six digits.*

**Aman Dhar**: still there.

*What's the name of Kurt Cobain's wife's name?*

**Ashik Salam**, requiring the family tree.

*You are my enemy, my friend.*

**Nikhil Sardana** makes the oddest of allegiances.

*I asked her to write me down.*

**Amit Gupta** puts himself on paper.

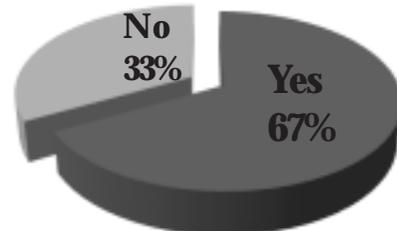
### CAREER CALL

The Careers' noticeboard will focus on **Photography** as a career opportunity this week. All aspiring photographers should take a look.



## Opinion Poll

**After the 26/11 attacks, do you feel safe living in Indian cities?**



*(357 members of the school community were polled)*

**Next Week's Question:** Do you think the so-called 'pub-and-mall culture' goes against Indian traditions?

