

Established in 1936

The Doon School

WEEKLY

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India's Tryst with Destiny The Dosco Indian

*Extracts from the speech made by **Abhinav Kumar** (ex-285 TA, ě91), the Chief Guest on Independence Day*

At the very outset, let me express my pride and joy at being with you on the occasion of India's 60th anniversary of independence. To be able to share this occasion, in itself an event of great significance in human history, in a setting that is of deep personal significance to me, is something to cherish twice over, and I must thank the Headmaster for according me this privilege. As a student of history in school, and later on, economics and philosophy at university, and now as a public servant with over a decade of experience in the police, I would like to share my personal understanding of what it means to be a Dosco and an Indian, in that order, in the 21st century.

Going through the daily grind of a term at Doon as an adolescent, and then a teenager, it is quite understandable that most of us end up seeing school in a very limited perspective. For the *scopers* amongst us, school is simply a surface for honing and sharpening our ambition; for the *jaanos*, it is merely a showcase for our academic talent; for the more robust and muscular, it is an opportunity to inflict gore and earn glory on the playing fields; for the *heras*, it is a test-drive at learning how to beat the system, and for the *vellas*, it is another place and time to amble along in life. Accept this line of thinking, and the school simply becomes a vessel accommodating us for a few years of our life as we move on to hopefully bigger and better things. This, I think, is a dreadful mistake. Any great institution, which this school indisputably is, despite all the disproportionate negative publicity that the misdeeds of a few DoscOs attract in the media, is much more than an inert, lifeless vessel for the strengths and failings of those privileged enough to pass through it. This school, like other great schools of the world, is a nursery that gives you the opportunity to discover yourself and blossom, a philosopher's stone that has the potential for the transformation of the ordinary, the base and the mundane into something rare, precious and desirable. But for all this to happen, you must be prepared to appreciate the opportunity that the school represents and find it within yourself to go through your years in school with an open, receptive

mind, a positive attitude, and a desire to stretch yourself well beyond what you thought you were capable of.

Sixty years of independence: the more historical-minded amongst you might be aware of the broad outline of the historical forces and towering personalities that led to India's freedom. Pandit Nehru eloquently expressed the sentiments of a subcontinent when he made his tryst with destiny speech in the Central Hall of Parliament. To me, his words never fail to strike a chord almost two decades after I first read them here, within the very confines of Chandbagh estate. I would urge you to take the trouble of going through it to understand what India was then and how far and distant we have travelled since then. I hope you appreciate that from its inception in 1935, The Doon School has always had a special place for the idea of India, and in many ways the history of the school is a microcosm of the history of independent India. The secular, rational, humanistic sensibility that lies at the heart of the school also lies at the heart of the idea of modern India. There is a story about the early days of school which, even if a myth, goes to show how the nationalist ethos was an integral part of the culture of the school from the very beginning. In 1942, some of the senior boys decided to mark the Quit India movement by wearing black bands on their arms. The matter was brought to the notice of the Headmaster, A.E. Foot, and many boys expected that, being an Englishman, he would take exemplary action against these boys. It is a remarkable testimony to the spirit of the school that the Headmaster chose to award the boys yellow cards for violating the school uniform, and left it at that.

I don't subscribe to the theory of perpetual decline in the context of India, a variant of which is especially popular amongst ex-DoscOs, namely, that things in school are not as good as they used to be in their time; in fact, looking at the school and comparing it to the time when I was at school, the stunning and very visible improvements in the infrastructure of the school represent progress in a very real and significant sense. However, in the larger context, after sixty years of freedom, it is easy to see that the goblet of India's achievements is both half-empty, and half-full. It is up to us, more pointedly up to you, as you prepare to face the world in India's Diamond Jubilee and the school's approaching Platinum Jubilee, that while we rightly rejoice in the many accomplishments of independent India, we do not lose sight of the challenges that are

(contd. on page 3)

REGULARS

CHESS MOVES

In the **Inter-School Council's Chess Tournament**, held at Ann Mary School from August 9 to 11, nineteen schools participated, and Uday Shriram won the trophy in the senior section, while Gopal Singh Mann reached the semi-final stage in the junior category. Congratulations!

DEBATING NEWS

The final round of the **Inter-House Senior English Debates** was held on Saturday, August 12. Hyderabad House won the debate, while Tata House came second. Shikhar Singh was adjudged the Best Speaker of the debate, while Vivaan Shah was awarded Second Best Speaker.

Well done!

IN CONCERT

Eminent musician, Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, performed on the Mohan Veena, at the Music School on Wednesday, August 15. This concert was sponsored by **SPICMACAY**. A report will run in the following issue.

SPORTS UPDATE

The School **Soccer team** beat **Sela Qui World School** 3-0 and the **Under-17** team defeated the **Carmen School** 3-2. Well done!

In the **District Individual Badminton Championships**, held from August 4 to August 12, Dhruv Goel, Arjun Khaitan, and Mukund Nyati reached the quarter-final stage in the **Under-13** category in the singles section, while Dhruv Goel and Mukund Nyati reached the semi-final stage in the doubles section. In the **Under-16** category, Vedant Chandra reached the quarter-final stage in the singles section. Ayaan Patel and Vedant Chandra reached the quarter-finals in the doubles section. Archit Kumar reached the semi-finals. In the **Under-19** category, Chetan Kaul and Abhimanyu Chandra reached the quarter-finals in the singles section, and Abhimanyu Chandra and Pranay Kapur reached the quarter-finals in the doubles section. Kudos!

SHANTI SWAROOP

In the **Shanti Swaroop Science Essay Writing Competition, 2007**, Shantanu Garg was adjudged the Best Writer while Pratham Mittal was Runner-up. House Cup positions: Jaipur (First), Tata (Second), Oberoi (Third), Hyderabad (Fourth) and Kashmir (Fifth).

Unquotable Quotes

Let's go for a candlelight dinner.

Dilsher Khanna, lost in the dark.

Anaesthesia is the disease that causes you to forget your memory, and most importantly, your name.

Aadhar Sharma, Mr. Malaprop in the making.

I will turn a blind ear to whatever you say.

Samaay Mangalgi, turning a deaf eye.

Are you a tribal or a bass?

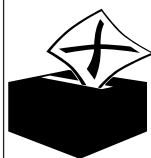
Arjun Midha hits the high notes.

All playboys move to the Common Room.

Shrish Srivastava instructs.

Let's see who brokes it.

Anirudh Kapur keeps watch.



Opinion Poll

Do you think Callover serves its purpose?

No
94%

Yes
6%

415 people participated in the poll

Next Week's Question: Do you support the Indo-US Nuclear Deal?



CAREER CALL

The careers' notice board will focus on **Architecture** as a career in the coming week. All boys who are interested in architecture as a profession should look it up.

Gastronome

This week, we bring to you the culinary delights of **Bangalore**, as recommended by K.P. Somaiah:

Olive Beach– The rustic ambience of this Mediterranean eatery adds to its charm, truly making it one of India's best. *Must try: Seafood risotto.*

Karavalli– With a charming setting modelled on a typical Konkani house, this restaurant serves food from all along the Konkan coast. *Must try: Alleppy fish curry with appams.*

Mainland China– Serves delicious Chinese food with an atmosphere that is just right. *Must try: Crispy lamb konjee.*

I-talia– As the name suggests, Italy's best is on the menu. This joint is famous for innovative dishes. *Must try: Squid-ink pasta.*

Kamat Lokaruchi– Serves sumptuous vegetarian delights of southern India. *Must try: Paper dosa.*

Sunny's– Continental cuisine in a metropolitan ambience. Their desserts are to die for. *Must try: Crillon cake.*

Sahib Sindh Sultan– Set on a mock railway platform, this eatery serves Indian railway cuisine of the colonial era. *Must try: Railway mutton curry.*

Bombay Days– The place to go if you want a taste of authentic Bombay food. *Must try: Jhingri fry.*

Northern Gate – This restaurant, despite its modern decor, serves sumptuous traditional dishes. *Must try: Hyderabad Biryani.*

(contd. from page 1)

yet to be overcome. We are self-sufficient in food, yet hunger, famine and malnourishment remain a fact of life for many Indians. We have scientists, engineers and doctors who are welcomed with open arms around the world and yet a huge part of our population remains without the basic amenities of *bijli*, *sadak* and *pani*. The last five years alone have seen an unprecedented economic boom that will, no doubt, provide lucrative opportunities for many Doscos and yet nearly two hundred districts in our country are affected by Naxalite violence, the root cause of which is poor governance, and growing social and economic inequalities. Of course, in the country the size of a sub-continent, for every generalisation you make, its opposite can be asserted with equal validity, but it is precisely these complexities and contradictions that you must come to terms with and find lasting solutions to, if you are to justify the privileges you enjoy as students at one of the most elite institutions in, what is, despite its recent achievements, an extremely impoverished country.

I joined school in the year of the Golden Jubilee of the school, a time that by general consensus is regarded as an exceptional period in the school's history. It was a time when the hard work put in by the generations that grew up under Foot and Martyn bore fruit and the school could boast of a dazzling array of distinguished alumni in every field of human endeavour, bringing glory to themselves, to the school and to the country on the national and international stages. We, of course, then had the privilege of having Shri Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of the country, an Old Boy with a great deal of affection for the school and for the friendships he had fostered there. For a moment, it seemed that India would attain its long, delayed tryst, and The Doon School would play a prominent role in leading the nation in its modernising quest. History records otherwise. That moment of glory soon faded into a quagmire, where the people of India were ready to believe the worst about their leaders, especially if they were from The Doon School. Overnight, from being a symbol of merit, excellence and leadership, we became in the public eye the fountainhead of a system of nepotism, corruption and arrogance. The alumni of the school continue to occupy positions of power and influence both within and outside the government. However, the Dosco badge is no longer seen as a shorthand for a person of rock-solid integrity, intellect and commitment to the nation. We have ourselves to blame for this fall from grace.

No institution can survive by being unfaithful to its origins and it is my humble submission that Doscos today, under the pressures of a materialistic, performance-driven, market-oriented culture, have largely abandoned the idealistic, humanistic and nationalistic ethos that lay in the heart of the school's founder, when his dream came into being in 1935. For sure, S.R. Das and his associates who brought the idea of the school to reality, the school was to be an elitist institution, but it was to be an elite that you earned the right to be included into through sheer merit and hard work and not because of the power and position of your parents.

I did not come here to preach or sermonise. I stand here before you as a concerned elder brother, dismayed and bewildered in equal parts to see what the beloved home of my most formative years has become in the public eye. We need to take a pledge today to restore the prominence and respect for The Doon School in the collective imagination of India. There is no one way to do it. My way is to do it by being as fair, as honest and as tough a police officer as I can be. Choose your own. By all means, go ahead and embrace the lucrative professions in commerce and industry that did not even exist a few generations ago; but, in the process, do also end up creating wealth and prosperity for the nation as a whole. Some of you will give expression to your creative genius in the arts and in the new forms of media that have exploded since I was a schoolboy, but at all times, do remember that art without a conscience is a frivolous and irrelevant luxury. Some of you will enter public life through the electoral arena, but do it not just to perpetuate a family tradition, but also to uphold the Dosco tradition of making a difference. Some of you will become outstanding professionals in the fields of medicine, law or architecture, but do make sure you embrace excellence and integrity in everything you do. Maybe a few of you will choose to endure the grind of public examinations and enter the civil services and the armed forces of our country to accept a lifetime serving the people of India in remote corners of the country, accompanied by all the trials and tribulations that are a part and parcel of the government service, as I have done, simply because a Doon School education remains the best preparation for serving the country and facing any adversity with fortitude.

My thanks to the Headmaster once again for his kind invitation. It is always a pleasure to return to one's roots and be rejuvenated by them. I remain convinced that now, more than ever, Doon needs to continue to draw inspiration from the idea of India just as India continues to need the kind of leadership that thrives so readily in the environs of Chandbagh. My young friends, surely you are not that young to miss the significance of this day in your life. Find your own answers to the questions I have posed today. They may take some time in coming, but then this too is part of the privilege of living in a free country. Happy Independence Day.



doonspeak

60 years of Independence...

But a single heart-beat in a journey towards perfection. –

HMD

The economic growth has not yet spread to rural areas. –

VNP

A long way to go. – **Akshit Batra**

The difference between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is widening and we must cater to the needs of the less privileged. – **VKL**

Great going despite all the odds. – **Dr. Negi**

Proof of India's democratic strength – **Nikhil Sardana**

From the death of a colonial power emerges a new one – **Dhruv Velloor**

Speakers' Corner: Doon and Delhi

Shaurya Kuthiala reports on the final round of the Inter-House Senior English Debates held on August 11

The final round of the Inter-House Senior English Debate was held in the AV Room on August 11. In the semi-final round, Hyderabad and Tata had advanced over Kashmir. The vetoing of the topics had been carried out an hour before the debate, and the two topics left were *This house believes that authority spawns rebellion*, and *This house believes that Gandhigiri is ineffective today*. The topic finally chosen was the latter and the participants moved towards the IT Centre to prepare for it.

An hour later, the audience was seated in the AV Room and waited for an evening of convincing and logical arguments. Hyderabad House was the proposing side, and Tata House led the Opposition. Shikhar Singh opened the debate as the Lead Speaker of his team, presenting his arguments in a calm and structured manner. He left the lectern to much applause from the audience. Vivaan Shah, the Lead Speaker of his team then proceeded to speak with his usual passion. Both debaters, though their styles were widely contrasting, presented their points of view convincingly.

The second speakers of the teams then took over, with Akshit Batra's skilful delivery making the crowd hang on to every word he spoke. Chinmay Sharma followed, with some some valuable points to substantiate his team's stand.

The final phase of the debate included a hectic rebuttal from both sides, highlighted by wordplay and accusations-counter accusations. The audience gleefully watched Vikramaditya Chaudhary and Saurav Sethia pick out the tiniest loopholes in the arguments of their opponents. They did a good job, exposing flaws in the arguments of both teams, and countering them with their own arguments.

Shikhar and Vivaan then came back to sum up their teams' stands and rebut their opponents' arguments. They did so well in this case, that the audience was left guessing as to which side would finally emerge victorious. The floor was then thrown open to the House and the judges offered their views on the debate and gave valuable suggestions on the fine art of debating.

The Headmaster spoke of how Gandhism has touched every aspect of our national life, from the very institution of democracy to the environment, and is not just confined to the practice of non-violence.

Finally, the results: Shikhar Singh was the Best Speaker, Vivaan Shah, Second Best Speaker. Hyderabad House won the Cup for the second consecutive year, by a margin of thirty points.

Anindya Vasudev reports on the Shree Debates held from August 6 to August 10

With Kishore Kumar's music in our ears and cheese sandwiches in our hands, five of us, Saurav Sethia, Shaurya Kuthiala, K.P. Somaiah, PCH and I, set out for Shri Ram School in Delhi, for their annual Debates. It was a pleasant journey and with some difficulty, we found the school. Entering, we were greeted warmly by our escorts and taken to their auditorium, for the general briefing about the Debates. Apparently we had got a walkover from Springdale School in our pool, and we were up against Shri Ram itself. Since we had a day off, we were then escorted to our host family, Mr. and Mrs. Rana, whose marvellous hospitality we enjoyed for four days.

Early next morning, we set out for the school and got our topic: *Opposition to sex education is a case of misplaced morality*. We were to oppose the topic. It took us some time to grasp the complex nature of the subject, but when we came to a conclusion about its meaning, we quickly started using the excellent facilities that the school offered us, researching the topic and finding statistics and data relevant to the stand we were going to take. We burnt the midnight oil with a night full of discussions about different themes and points and somehow managed to get ourselves to sleep in the gradually overwhelming excitement. The next morning, after a very unusual brain-storming session, we arrived at the school to find everyone ready and the proposition (Shri Ram School), sharpening their weapons. With loud applause from the very enthusiastic Shri Ram crowd, the debate began with their Lead Speaker briefing the audience about the topic. Our Lead Speaker was Saurav, who very finely dissected the topic and elaborated on our stance, with great efforts to drive the point home. Our main point was that while we agreed that sex education was necessary, opposition to it arose not from squeamishness or prudishness, but because of the insensitive way in which it was handled. The second speaker, Shaurya, began with a gripping start but seemed to lose the thread of his argument, until the end, where he seized the reins again and held the audience's attention. As for myself, I was the third speaker for the team and could have done better if it wasn't for the long awkward pause at the start of my debate. Somaiah provided us with valuable inputs throughout. In his summation, Saurav rebutted with skill and determination, which earned him the certificate for the second best speaker of the debate. Our team lost by a narrow margin and the Shri Ram team proceeded onwards. We stayed back till the nerve-rattling finals, in which Delhi Public School, Vasant Kunj, took the trophy, with Vasant Valley closely following as the runners-up.

In all, the debate was a good experience for our young team and forged new and better bonds between the Shri Ram School and The Doon School.

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