Shikhar Singh and Ashish Mitter interviewed the eminent journalist Ajai Shukla on his recent visit to The Doon School Weekly (DSW):

Just how independent is the Indian media?

Ajai Shukla (AJS): I would say that it is fairly independent: at least far more so than it has been before. In fact, while the government might be able to influence the print media, it has limited control over the electronic media. Television channels, for example, earn most of their revenue from private advertising. There are really very few government advertisements on TV. In India today, editorial pressures are from within. The government really has very little say.

DSW: You had mentioned briefly in your talk that the way the Indian media had covered the Kargil conflict was far from satisfactory. But is it really possible to remain unbiased at such a time?

AJS: It is really difficult to divorce yourself from a bias while reporting. But a personal bias is no excuse for not reporting real, hard facts. Let me give you an example. In conflict areas such as Jammu & Kashmir or Nagaland, the army tries to make the entire country believe that we are in a perpetual state of war. But often we are not. In J&K in particular, the army is almost completely engaged in operations against local Kashmiris, who are, at the end of the day, Indian citizens. If an ordinary journalist succumbs to army propaganda, and allows his preconceived notion that the army can do no wrong to engulf his mind, the unlawful imprisonment, the beatings, the torture sessions, that our own citizens are subjected to will not be reported. The media must remain unbiased, for people around the country don't want the wool pulled over their eyes. They want the truth.

DSW: Do you see a resolution to the Kashmir conflict in the near future?

AJS: Not until the government realizes that this is not just another insurgency. Unlike any other insurgency in the country, this one has considerable local support. As much as 70% of the insurgency (and by this I mean not only men, but also weapons, funding etc.) is carried out by the Kashmiris themselves who demand azadi. Thus, the government's policy of maintaining a status quo is foolish. A dialogue is required with the Hurriyat, and back-channel dialogues with the terrorist outfits like the Hizbul Mujahideen must be encouraged. The common Kashmiri has no problem with the state government in Srinagar. He has a problem with the national government in New Delhi. It's about time New Delhi began to reinvent its image.

DSW: What are your views on the American presence in Iraq?

AJS: After 9/11, the USA had a unique opportunity to get world opinion on its side. Sadly, they lost this chance by listening to hardliners within the administration. When they decided to go to Iraq, they had already lost the support of half the country's population. In Iraq, they created a mess by destroying institutions and not making any effort to rebuild them. I fear that Iraq is about to be plunged into a civil war. The country has no future. The only positive fallout of the war is that Saddam Hussein was arrested. I feel he should be hanged—after all, he is evil personified! However, that doesn't justify the way in which America has dealt with the whole situation.

DSW: What are your views about the death sentence awarded to Mohammed Afzal in the Parliament attack case?

AJS: I think that the sentence on him should be revoked because there is very strong support for him in J&K, with even the Chief Minister expressing concern that the situation could get ugly if he is indeed hanged. More importantly though, I am not satisfied of his guilt, and of the fact that his is a 'rarest of the rare' case.

DSW: To end on a completely different note, do you think that it is advisable for Doscos to go into journalism?

AJS: Yes. Absolutely. There are too few people from this section of society who actually look at journalism as a viable career option. This is bad, because journalism has everything one dreams of in a perfect career. It is satisfying, meaningful, challenging and even pays big bucks these days! As a journalist you can be on the ground with the common man while also influencing decision-making and state policy. It is really a very interesting job.
REGULARS

**CAMPUS VISITORS**

Ashvin Kumar (ex-271 OB ’91) was on campus on Sunday, November 19, to screen his Oscar-nominated documentary, Little Terrorist. A short question and answer session followed. Delhi-based journalist, Ajai Shukla, visited school on Saturday, November 18. His talk to the boys of the school publications was followed by a lively interactive session.

**HINDI DEBATER’S CUP**

In the Naveen Chandola Best Hindi Debaters’ Cup, 2006, Vishal Sonthalia and Aruj Shukla were jointly second, while Vishesh Goel emerged victorious. Well done!

**ART NEWS**

The following are the appointments in the Art School for the forthcoming year:

- **Art Secretary:** Shashank Mittal
- **Boy-in-Charge STA:** Vishal Singh
- **Boys-in-Charge SUPW:** Tanuj Bhrahmar, Shailendra Singh
- **Art Magazine Editors-in-Chief:** Vivan Rai, Shashank Mittal. **Chief of Production:** Vanish Nathani.

**Congratulations!**

**AQUA WORLD**

The following have passed the Rashtriya Life Saving and First Aid exams and are qualified Lifesavers: Karm Chowdhary, Jehangir Chinoy, Ramkrishna Pappu, Vidit Nainain, Praman Narain, Dushyant Sapra, Kunwar Sai Arman Mahotra, Devrat Patney, Rudra Bajpai, Naman Kamboj, Vishnu Dw Dutt, Vishesh Kochar.

The following are now qualified Lifeguards: Jaiveer Singh, Akshay Dobhal, Dilawar Kapur, Apoorva Joshi, Surya Narayan Deo, Arjun Gulati.

Arjun Gulati and Surya Narayan Deo have been appointed as the Boys-in-Charge of the RLSS for the forthcoming year. Congratulations!

**LENSMEN**

Dilawar Kapur, Shubojit Chattopadhya, Pranay Kapur and Shoaib Ahmed won 1st prizes in photography in various categories of the Founder’s Day Photography Exhibition. Dilawar Kapur and Arpit Panjwani have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of Photography for the year 2007. Congratulations!

**MORE APPOINTMENTS**

Shikhar Singh has been appointed Secretary of The Historical Circle and Model United Nations for the forthcoming year.

Vikramaditya Chaudhary has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of the Trophy Squad for the year 2007.

Praman Matta and Shivam Saluja have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of Aeromodelling for the year 2007.

Udai Singh and Sarthak Mishra have been appointed Boys-in-Charge of Electronics for the year 2007.

Deeptanshu Thakur has been appointed the Boy-in-Charge of the Implement Store.

Skand Goyal has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of Srijan Prayas. Saurabh Tiwary has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of Yuv Arpan.

Manuj Vyas has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of Hindi Dramatics.

Skand Goyal has been appointed Secretary of Bharat Vani. Kanishka Aggarwal has been appointed Secretary of Yuv Bharti.

Dhruv Gupta has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of D&T STA while Surya N. Deo has been appointed Boy-in-Charge of D&T SUPW. Congratulations!

**COLOURFUL**

Vratul Kapoor, Eshaan Puri, Samaay Mangalqir, Pranav Kapur, Ayappa Vemulkar have been awarded Half-Colours while Rishabh Bir Singh was re-appointed Basketball Colours. Keep shooting!

**DEBATING ACCOLADES**

Shikhar Singh was re-appointed the Secretary of the Senior English Debating Society. Shikhar Singh and Ashish Mitter were awarded Debating Colours. Keep talking!

**GAMES BLAZER**

Akaash Maheshwari and Jehangir Chinoy have been awarded the Games Blazer. Congratulations!

**INTER-HOUSE BASKETBALL**

The following are the results of the Inter-House Basketball Competition 2006:

- **Juniors**
  - First: Kashmir
  - Second: Oberoi
  - Third: Tata
  - Fourth: Jaipur
  - Fifth: Hyderabad

- **Seniors**
  - First: Jaipur
  - Second: Oberoi
  - Third: Tata
  - Fourth: Kashmir
  - Fifth: Hyderabad

- **House**
  - First: Oberoi
  - Second: Jaipur
  - Third: Tata
  - Fourth: Kashmir
  - Fifth: Hyderabad

**Unquotable Quotes**

He is a punk-rock bard.

Usman Ghani Khan, crazy about music.

D don’t down your head.

MNP, feeling low.

Is this chicken or non-veg?

Siddhant Gupta, hungry kya?

Listen to the colours of sound.

KPS paints a pretty picture.

**Opinion Poll**

Do you find value in tutorial night-outs?

- No: 26%
- Yes: 74%

283 members of the community participated in the poll.

**Next Week’s Question:** Do you take filling your Self-Appraisal Form seriously?
Headmaster’s Address
Kanti Bajpai’s speech delivered on Founder’s Day–2006

Ladies and Gentlemen, and students of The Doon School: welcome to our Founder’s Day celebrations. Let me begin with a brief introduction of the Chief Guest. Mr. Piyush Pandey has been named the most influential man in Indian advertising four years in a row by The Economic Times, India’s premier business paper. Under his leadership, Ogilvy & Mather India has won a dozen ‘Lions’. In 2004, he became the first Asian to be the president of the Cannes jury. Before he joined the advertising world, Mr. Pandey was a professional cricket player (he played Ranji Trophy cricket) and a tea-taster. Twenty years ago, he gave up both professions to join Ogilvy & Mather, Mumbai. In 1994, he became the company’s national creative director.

Over the years, Mr. Pandey has picked up over 500 Indian advertising awards. Under his leadership, O & M has been named India’s most creative agency ten times in the last eleven years. O & M India is now ranked amongst the most creative offices in the entire O & M worldwide network.

A d Club Mumbai voted Mr. Pandey’s commercial for the adhesive brand Fenvikwik as the commercial of the century and his work for Cadbury as the campaign of the century.

Mr. Pandey is currently Executive Chairman & National Creative Director, Ogilvy & Mather India. He graduated from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University.

May I also introduce the Board of Governors: Mr. Dhruv Sawhney is Chairman of the Board of Governors. Mr. Sunil Munjal has helped the school with its technological initiatives and safety and security. As he leaves the Board, may I thank him for his support and advice. Mr. Karan Thapar headed the Education Committee. As he also leaves the Board, may I thank Karan too for his support and advice. Dr. Krishnamoorthy Srinivas has helped the school with medical and counselling issues. Mr. A. Naljit Singh chairs the Fundraising Committee. Mr. V. K. Ram Lall is head of the Human Resources Committee of the Board. Mr. Mahesh Sahai helps the school with financial and tax matters. Mr. Rohit Anand will join the board after Founder’s and is an Old Boy who has spent many years helping the school with Architecture and Projects and is currently the Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Ratanjot Singh will also join the Board after Founder’s and is an Old Boy who, among other things has been an educationist, and runs his own school in Simla. Mr. A. Nop Bishnoi is President of the Old Boys’ Society and a Special Invitee to the Board. He helps coordinate between the Old Boys and the school on a range of issues. I would like to express my thanks to A noop for all his help as President of the DOSOB. It is a great pleasure to welcome all visiting parents, Old Boys, and other friends of the School who lend such colour to the occasion.

May I extend a special welcome to those Old Boys who have come to celebrate their jubilees and get-togethers. These are the batches of 1946, 1956, 1971 and 1981. It is good to have you here.

I would also like to recognize two distinguished alumni from Pakistan who are in our midst today: Mohammad Afzal Khan and Mohammad Zafar Khan of the batches of 1946 and 1947. A f zal lives in Islamabad and Zafar lives in London.

Finally, as always, may I welcome back into our midst former Headmasters Mr. Gulab Ramchandani and Mr. Shomie Das. I also want to welcome back all those former masters of the school who are with us today.

The Annual Report, in its entirety, will be on the school website. I will, therefore, turn to some of the highlights of the year. Let me begin with the Board examination results. We had an excellent year. The ISC batch averaged over 83%, and 25 boys scored over 90%. Salman Chowdhary topped the ISC batch with an average of 95.75%. Sk and Goul topped the ICSE batch with an average of 95.04%. In the past five years, the average of both exams has gone below 80% only once. That is a fine run, and we hope it will continue.

A major development for the school has been to authorize other teams to participate in the International Banaralaurent from A pril 2007. The boys of the present ICSE batch will begin, from next year, to have the option of doing the ISC or the IB diploma. We have prepared carefully for the IB, training 17 teachers, making timetables, schedules and lesson plans, and interacting with other IB teachers in different parts of the world. The teaching staff is raring to go. The IB is internationally acclaimed and will enhance the school’s curriculum. It was first proposed for the school in the early 1980s; 26 years later, we finally are ready to go! You will appreciate that we at Doon do not make decisions in a hurry!

As important as academic excellence is excellence in sports and other co-curricular activities. It has been a busy and fulfilling year for the school in this regard.

In sports, we continue with our basketball prowess. A fter Mr. Jayant Lal’s departure in D emember 2005, we feared that there might be a dip in performance. The reality is that while we certainly miss Jayant’s passion and expertise, the team has gone on to do well. In our own A f zal Khan Tournament in A pril 2006, the school team reached the finals and was eventually placed second. There is good talent coming up in the more junior ranks, and I am confident that with the new courts we will continue to produce fine teams.

The Chandbagh School from Pakistan came to visit us in November 2005, shortly after Founder’s Day last May. Forty or so boys from Chandbagh were here with three teachers. We had an exciting cricket match. Karam V r Lamba, once again, as he did against Stowe School from England two years ago, bowled beautifully and nearly won us the match. A s a measure of how well he played, I would note that the Chandbagh School has never lost a single match in Pakistan! In soccer and basketball, we beat our Pakistani friends fairly comfortably. The matches were played at a high level of skill and with great sportsmanship, and the visit was capped by a fine musical evening organized by boys.

In debating, as in basketball, we thought we were in a rebuilding year. I am very pleased to report that we had a very successful year. T he highlight, of course, was our very own Chuckerbutty D debate. This was the 50th year of the D debate. L ast year, we brought home the Cup after ten years. We were not sure what lay ahead of us this year. In the event, we reached the finals and in a wonderful, competitive showdown with the M odern H igh School, D uai, we came second. Mr. John Mason, my predecessor, who did so much for modern tempore beating at D oon, agreed to be our Chief Guest on the occasion and conducted the debate in his own inimitable style! Our thanks to him and to Anju Mason for taking the time to come back to Chandbagh.

(continued overleaf)
One trend in sports that I want to note here is the launching of junior school teams that compete in tournaments. Our junior cricket, hockey, soccer and basketball teams are a reality now and will grow in strength and skill in the years to come. We plan to hire more coaches for this and to therefore 'professionalize' our approach without, I hope, losing the joy of amateur sports, by which I mean playing a game for the love of it.

A rt has always been a great strength at Doon. In conjunction with the Old Boys' Society, the school auctioned some of the paintings done by boys over the past 70 years. Their art, along with art donated by well-known artists, fetched a tidy sum for rebuilding the Art School.

While I am on the subject of art, I want to report on the very successful trip to Italy this summer. A dozen boys accompanied by Mr. Alok Bhownick and Mr. Sanjiv Bahl saw everything it is possible to see in two weeks in Rome, Florence and V a n i e. We hope to organize trips of this kind in future as well. We are looking at the possibility of not only Italy and other European countries but also China and fellow Asian countries as destinations.

The list of House and individual awards this past year, as always, is immense. Let me just report two items. A t the Inter-House level, The Doon School Cup was awarded for the second time. The Cup goes to the H o u s e that scores best on academics, sports and other co-curricular activities, and discipline. This year, once again, the Doon School Cup was won by Oberoi H o u s e, followed closely by Kashmir H o u s e.

At the individual level, our most coveted awards are the Scholar's Blazer and the Games Blazer. The following were awarded the Scholar's Blazer: Kushagra Kumar, Aritree Rai, Akhil Kherival, Aish Shitt Mitter, Chetan Aggarwal, and Pushparaj Deshpande. The Games Blazer went to the following: Syed Zain Ali, Nikhil Bector, Chirag Nangia, Arjun Anjaria, Zain Rehman, and Shilawada Bhattacharjee.

The school continues to be involved in a variety of social and community service projects. We are involved with village schools where we have helped build low-cost facilities or improved existing structures. Our boys and masters have helped children who are less well off with their studies. We send boys regularly to work with the elderly and the physically and mentally challenged. Doon School boys have worked in this past year with D. A. N. Joshi of HESCO in village development, a tradition that goes back to Tunwala, a village we adopted back in 1937. Our boys and masters have gone on Round Square International projects in Ladakh, A nd h i r a Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to build low-cost facilities, to help with medical camps and to rebuild facilities devastated by the tsunami, respectively. Some of our boys went to Forfar in Scotland to help with a nature reserve, so you can see that our involvement is international as well.

Of course, we continue to do community work within the school. Our A u d i o-V isual squad organizes virtually every school function. Our Chair squad does the unglamorous work of putting out seating for all our events. Our publications perform a different kind of community service, namely, to keep us informed, to record the life of the school, and to entertain us. I would especially recognize the Doon School Weekly, the School List, and the Yearbook in this regard. Recently, we organized a group of junior boys to go round and count all the trees on the estate. I could go on. To my mind, social and community service is one of the greatest strengths of the school, and we can all be very proud of it. Our boys learn a lot from it: service, management, organization, cooperation and leadership.

Ladies and Gentlemen, students: that concludes my review of some of the highlights of the year.

I want to end with two important sets of thanks: the first to those who have made donations to the school; and then to the students and staff of the Doon School.

This year the school has attracted a number of generous donations. I would like to take this opportunity to express our very great thanks for these gifts. In particular I would like to recognize the following:

In the Old Boys' category, the Class of 1981 has collected well over a crore of rupees on the occasion of their 25th year reunion. The Doon School Old Boys' Society has also given the school Rs. 1.50 crore for the Art School and Rose Bowl. The following have also given to the school, in some cases, in conjunction with their class: Alok Oberoi, Rs. 46.5 lakhs, A-nil Kumar, Rs. 4.5 lakhs, Arun Malhotra, Rs. 91 lakhs including last year's donation, Arjun Sahai, Rs. 1 lakh, Arun Sinha, Rs. 50000, Daman Singh, Rs. 43000, DOSCENT Trust, Rs. 42.5 lakhs, Jaideep Khamena, Rs. 23 lakhs bringing his total to Rs. 46.5 lakhs, E.S. Krishnamoorthy and Neuro Sciences India Group, Rs. 25000, Krishnamoorthy Srinivas, Rs. 50000, Vire Seth, Rs. 9000, Gautam Berry, Rs. 10000, Harindra De Silva, Rs. 50000, Harindra De Silva, Rs. 10000, Pratyush Jaiswal, Rs. 70000, Rahul Rana, Rs. 4.5 lakhs, Ravi Sinha, Rs. 9.3 lakhs, Riyoko Hira, Rs. 1 lakh, Sanjay Mehrotra, Rs. 5 lakhs, Umesh and Mahesh Sahai, Rs. 5 lakhs and Vikram Philip, Rs. 50000.

Among corporate donors, you will recall that I acknowledged the wonderful contribution of Hut. This money has gone towards the refurbishment of the Central Dining Hall and you can see the difference already in the work that has been carried out thus far. Mr. Aashim Gosh is Managing Director of Hut and has been with us today. Mr. Gosh, I thank you for your support to The Doon School.

May I record my profound thanks to the Fundraising Committee and in particular to Mr. Aalajit Singh as Chairman of the Committee, and Mr. Sati Puri as the Dehra Dun representative. Aalajit has donated over Rs. 50 lakhs towards the fundraising campaign, and I wish very warmly to record my additional thanks to him.

Before I close, may I also take this opportunity to thank the entire Doon School community for their cooperation and good humour. The students, who are the life and soul of the school. My colleagues on the teaching staff, who are tireless and dedicated to the cause. The Heads of Departments, Housemasters and Deans, who are in the front-lines every day. The Deputy Headmaster, Mr. Philip Burrett, who does so much with great good humour and understanding, The Head of Humanities and Social Studies, Mr. Philip Burrett, who allows us to get on with schoolmastering. And finally, the administrative, technical and subordinate staffs, who serve the school with such diligence and affection. Ladies and gentleman, boys, that concludes my remarks for the evening.

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4. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, November 25
Basketball is undoubtedly one of the most popular sports played in school, as everyone enjoys either playing or watching this action-packed game. A high standard of basketball has been maintained for the last couple of years, and this year was no exception.

The Senior section saw some remarkable performances and a colossal amount of House spirit. The Seniors A match played between Jaipur and Tata Houses was memorable, with Samaay Mangalgiri keeping Tata alive and eventually leading his House to victory. The Seniors A match between Kashmir and Tata Houses was a nerve-racking experience, with Kashmir House making a comeback in the last quarter and losing by a minute margin. It was impossible to keep count of the number of three-pointers that Anirudh Narayan Singh shot into the basket. Jaipur House performed an astounding feat, winning all but one match in the Senior section, with Rishabh Bir Singh scoring the most number of baskets. Eshaan Puri stood tall as pivot and strengthened the Jaipur House team further. Jaipur House emerged winners in the Senior section.

In the Junior section, Kashmir House and Oberoi House fought neck to neck for the much-coveted Junior Cup. Kashmir House lifted the Cup, winning all their Juniors A matches. Oberoi House was not far behind in putting up a good performance and bagging the second spot. Sumer Boparai, Aseem Kumar and Pururava Janjwal showed promise, with Aseem Kumar scoring the most number of baskets. The trio of Abhinandan Rajan, Ashik Salam and Shiva Gururani was also quite impressive.

On the sidelines, some very innovative cheers were employed and added humour and gusto to the competition. The baski culture was at its peak with players sporting armbands, elbow guards, kneecaps and psychedelic shoes in abundance.

Oberoi House struck a fine balance between the Senior and Junior Sections and came second in both sections, winning the House Cup. Chirag Hirawat, Rajat Sabharwal and Vratul Kapur played a vital role in the victory. Mr. Durgesh Bhatia’s intense training, Mr. Michael James’ constant involvement and Mr. John Xavier’s organizational skills contributed immensely to the competition’s success.

With half the school returning from a tutorial night-out and the other half reeling under the term’s pressure, it was with deep trepidation and skepticism that many of the boys tentatively came to the AV Room last Sunday, for a tête-à-tête with Ashvin Kumar (ex-271 OB ‘91). Ashvin was accompanied by Mr. Roland Heap, the sound recordist and editor of his film. Ashvin had the noble intention of showing two of his films—Little Terrorist and Road to Ladakh. Due to time constraints, we could see only the first film and the show reel on its making. Ashvin’s film has won numerous awards and recognitions including being short-listed for the Best Live Action Short Film category of the Academy Awards, the Oscars, 2005.

The Little Terrorist is about 15 minutes long. The film takes off with a young boy trying to retrieve a ball from a minefield in no man’s land, on the Indo-Pak border. In the confusion that follows his being sighted by the Indian border outpost, the boy manages to dodge the mines and the bullets breathtakingly, but lands up on the Indian side of the border. How this Muslim boy is mercifully discovered and saved by a Hindu village teacher from the Border personnel, and how he makes his journey back home is the subject of this film.

“A film is judged by what’s on screen. Not what is seen and heard of it. That is the fodder of gossip columnists.” This is what Ashvin says in his blog-site, and truly, the show reel on the making of the film brings out the enormous amount of work and nail-biting moments in real life (including burning tents containing inflammable film-stock and arrested artistes) that have gone in to creating the 15-odd minutes reel magic. The five-day shooting schedule with untrained actors was actually the least of Ashvin’s problems!

In the brief discussion that followed the screening, Ashvin answered not only questions on the film— which brought out facts like: the film took five days of shooting and six weeks of editing— but also queries on how film-making is a viable and creatively challenging vocation. Ashvin talked about how he learnt most of his skills, albeit in their absolutely rudimentary forms, in school. His romance with acting began at the ‘Rosie’. He went to St. Stephen’s after school and then on to the US for a year before completing his degree in Media and Communications from the University of London.

(continued overleaf)
As a humanities person who is quite a film-buff, it was great to hear Ashvin talk, at the Monday morning Assembly, on an invitation from yours truly to talk to the Science formers, making with Hollywood producer Judith Alipur Films while briefly attending the London Film School. Of the many screenplays that he wrote, he continued one to a featurette, which was the Road To Ladakh. It would also allow the school to offer film-making and editing as IB subjects in future.

Leaving behind a post-production business in New Delhi, Ashvin relocated to London where he established Alipur Films while briefly attending the London Film School. Of the many screenplays that he wrote, he converted one to a featurette, which was the Road To Ladakh. On an invitation from yours truly to talk to the Science formers the next day, Ashvin was promptly there in the class at 8 a.m. As you sow, you shall reap!! Amen!!

On the issue of style, Ashvin says, "Best not to worry about having one's own style. A 'style' shall emerge if it must. Meanwhile, let's make a movie." So while Ashvin goes on to another venture, let us keep watching good cinema and hope that the studio and a film appreciation course comes to a pass!! Amen!!