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RSIS, Fatehpur

Rishi Sood reports on the Round Square International Service Project, held in Fatehpur in December, 2008

In 2004, The Doon School and HESCO (Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation) adopted the village of Fatehpur in order to help it attain self-sustenance. Since then, groups of enthusiastic Doscors have been going to the village regularly to continue the legacy.

This time, for the RSIS project, 19 students, accompanied by 6 teacher escorts, from Round Square schools around the world took part in the project which lasted two weeks from December 9 to 23. The project saw participation by students from every part of the world: Australia, Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom and India.

Aditi Joshi and I were chosen to represent The Doon School at the conference. We were escorted by AKC and AKS, both of whom took an active part in the project.

Till the last minute, it was uncertain as to whether the project would take place in the aftermath of the Bombay blasts of November 26. It was touch and go till the last minute. Fortunately, the organizers decided to go ahead with the project as planned. Unfortunately, four students opted out of the project at the last moment, voicing safety concerns.

All the students arrived at Dehradun from where we proceeded to the SKCC hostel. The very next morning we launched ourselves into a packed schedule, beginning with yoga on the rooftop. Waking up at 6:30 in the morning, in freezing December temperatures, was definitely not pleasant! Strangely enough, after the third day we began to enjoy yoga and it no longer seemed like a punishment for us.

We would leave for the worksite at 9 o' clock by bus and would be back by three, all sweaty and exhausted, just in time for lunch. In the afternoon again we would leave for the worksite at around 3:30 to be back at five in the evening.

The work was strenuous but there was nothing that we could not handle. We were divided into groups, each

headed by a group-leader who kept a vigilant eye on the students ensuring that they did not overstrain themselves and that they undertook proper safety precautions.

The work involved making bricks, laying stones for the foundation of a new house and raising the walls up till roof height. The highlight was that we managed to complete ten roofs in seven days. Apart from this, we dug a soakage pit for a toilet to be constructed.

Towards the middle of the project, a short, two-day trip to Rishikesh had been planned for us. We all

had a great time, treating the foreign students to a variety of Indian food items. Shopping never seemed to end as everything seemed to fascinate them: from cloth bags for ten rupees to scarves to imitation silver jewellery for 150 rupees.

On our way back from Rishikesh, we passed by Dehradun where they indulged in a little more shopping.

We even made a brief stopover at School where Aditi and I had the privilege of escorting our guests around.

We reached Fatehpur, recharged and rejuvenated, and all set to complete the remainder of our work. By the end, our coordinators were running out of tasks for us, for we were completing the work at such remarkable speed that we were giving them a hard time figuring out new tasks for us to complete!

Every evening after dinner, the students would put up presentations pertaining to social and political issues regarding their country. Some came with documentary films, others with Powerpoint presentations. One even wrote a song on the severe drought being faced in Australia... 'Save the water... and drink the beer!'

I found the entire experience thoroughly rewarding as it made me more self-confident and helped me grow as a person. There was a remarkable atmosphere of camaraderie among the students. Since there were students from diverse cultural backgrounds, each brought a unique colour to the project. Interacting with the villagers was truly an enriching experience.



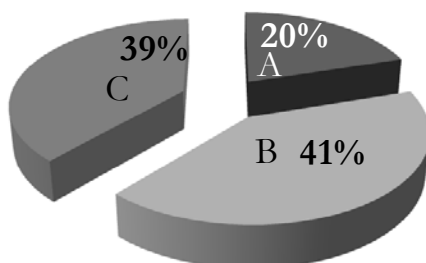
HELPAge TALK

AK Singh, Joint-Director of **HelpAge India**, Northern Region, gave a talk on the need for caring for senior citizens across the country, on Saturday, March 26, in the AV Room.



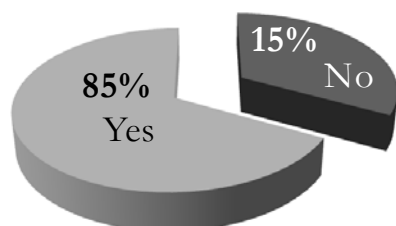
Opinion Polls

The School is to receive a MIG-23 fighter plane, which has been recently decommissioned. Where would you choose to place it from among the following locations: a) the area between the Swimming Pool and ASH's residence, b) the area between the Art School and the CDH, or c) the garden in front of the Science Block?



(307 members of the School community were polled)

Do you think that movies should be screened in the Rose Bowl?



(296 members of the School community were polled)

Next Week's Question: After having received the results of the Test Week, do you still believe that the new schedule is better?

CAREER CALL

The Careers' noticeboard will focus on **Marine Engineering** as a career choice this week. All those interested must look it up.

Letter To The Editor

Symbol Search

Dear Editor,

We, the boys of Foot and Martyn Houses, have recently made the move from the Holding Houses to our respective Main Houses. While we look forward to this change, we also feel an attachment to the place where we have spent our first year in School. This has made us come up with the idea that the Holding Houses too should have an emblem each, just as the Main Houses do. This would give them an identity of their own.

Shantanu, Jai Singh Yadav, Sanat Garg

The Great Indian Xerox Machine

Vikram Kejriwal

The *Sunday Times*, dated March 22, published an article by film-maker Muzaffar Ali, who spoke of the flaws of Bollywood while praising Hollywood.

This multi-talented film-maker, painter and designer has created works like *Umrao Jaan* which merged history and aesthetics in a single tape role. People's first reaction on reading his article, however, were the usual phrases such as "Who the hell is he to insult Indian cinema... look at *Slumdog Millionaire*." Well, to these 'slumdog' supporters, I say that this is primarily a British movie with a British director and producer. There are, however, Indian actors and actors of Indian origin in it.

We are so used to seeing releases of every single Hollywood movie that Bollywood movies are reviewed with titles such as 'Akshay Kumar does a Brad Pitt'. This might earn several crores for the industry, but this makes India look like a country which mindlessly apes Hollywood.

Our film industry has lost touch with the creativity, poetry and art of Indian cinema, and instead, Bollywood has become a factory, churning out remixes and copies of Hollywood hits. Today, more stars come from the families of famous actors, and thus, achieve easier fame. The main criteria for an A-level actress is a cosmetically-enhanced bosom, a good-looking face and, obviously mediocre acting abilities.

Nowadays, the low-budget movies assure a great experience, not the multi-crore blockbusters. Our horror movies have proven to be more of a comedy than something that would leave us terrified. When was the last time we touched upon our great culture or produced a racy thriller? Hollywood has excellent directors, who delve into every aspect of life, while we continue to use Bollywood like a Xerox machine which duplicates originals and where rivalry among artistes makes for more news than their work, where fierce egotism shatters fledgling hopes and non-funny comedians make fun of worthy film-makers at award ceremonies.

It is not that Indian cinema lacks financial backing, but that the system itself is flawed. Our visual effects and song editing are top-notch, mastered by AR Rahman for music and Abbas-Mustan for visual quality. While the good scripts often turn out to be box office toppers, even the poor ones achieve success with weak storylines but excellent endorsements and widespread publicity. It is this hype before the release of a movie that actually spoils it; merely due to the fact that viewers expect much more from it.

We also lack directors with trademark talent. We need a Peter Jackson to make an epic or a Quentin Tarantino for an edgy, personal-eye view. A Priyadarshan movie is always the same: monotonous and camera-eyed.

What Indian cinema grants today are only millions of special appearances. Indian cinema has lost its bearings: directors such as Satyajit Ray, and now, actors like Naseeruddin Shah only appear in cerebral, low-budget movies with a limited release.

Movie-makers in Bollywood need to realize that they bear a great responsibility on their shoulders. Cinema is not just about the box office, but is a medium of thoughts. It is the medium of creativity and the art and culture of a country.

अब तो ज़माना गुज़र चुका है

हमने तय किया था कि समय समय पर हिन्दी पृष्ठ पर साक्षात्कार दिए जाएंगे। ये साक्षात्कार न केवल समय की धड़कन हमें सुनाते हैं, अपितु कुछ ऐसी जीवन की परते भी हमारी आँखों के सामने खोलते हैं। इस बार प्रस्तुत हैं लेहरादून में स्थित एक वृद्धाश्रम में निवास करने वाली एक महिला का साक्षात्कार। यह साक्षात्कार कुछ ही समय पहले लिया गया था, जब साक्षात्कारकर्ता ऋषभ पाण्डे अपनी अध्यापिका के साथ इस वृद्धाश्रम में रहने वाले वृद्धजनों से मिलने गया था। इन महिला का नाम एनी जेन है तथा ये आर्मेनिया की रहने वाली हैं। आइए कुछ प्रश्नों के माध्यम से इन महिला के जीवन में झाँकने का प्रयत्न करते हैं -

प्रश्न - मैडम, मैं लून स्कूल का छात्र हूँ और आपसे कुछ प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। मैं इस आश्रम में रहने वाले वृद्धों के जीवन के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त करने में आपका सहयोग चाहता हूँ। अगर आप बुरा न माने तो मैं आपके अतीत के बारे में जानना चाहता हूँ।

उत्तर - अरे नहीं, इसमें बुरा मानने की क्या बात है। तुम्हें जो पूछना हो खुलकर पूछो। अच्छा, मेरा अतीत...ठीक है, मेरा जन्म अर्मेनिया नामक देश में हुआ था। मैं कई वर्ष तक उसी देश में अपने परिवार जनों के साथ रही। मुझे अपने बचपन की तो ज़्यादा याद नहीं है। वैसे भी उम्र काफी हो चली है। समय के साथ साथ यादें वैसे भी धुँधली होती चली जाती हैं। जब मेरी आयु कुछ बढ़ गई तो हमारा परिवार दिल्ली आ गया। मेरे माता पिता की मृत्यु जल्दी ही हो गई थी। इधर मैंने शादी कर ली। धीरे धीरे गृहस्थी भी जम गई। मेरे लो बेटे तो बड़े होकर मुम्बई में ही बस गए। मेरी बेटा मुझे अपने साथ यहाँ ले आई। फिर वह तो अपने पति के साथ फ्रांस चली गई और मैं यहीं की हो कर रह गई।

प्रश्न - आप यहाँ कब से रहती हैं?

उत्तर - मैं तो यहाँ लगभग चार वर्षों से रह रही हूँ। कुछ समय मैं अपनी एक सहेली के साथ भी रही थी। मेरे पति सेना में थे और उसके पति भी सेना में ही थे। शायद इसी वजह से हम दोनों पक्की सहेलियाँ बन गईं। अब तो ज़माना गुज़र चुका है। समय अपने साथ बहुत सी चीज़ें बहा कर ले गया है, पर जब भी पीछे मुड़कर देखती हूँ लो लगता है कि जीवन अच्छा ही बीता है। किसी से कोई शिकायत नहीं है। वैसे भी अभी तो बहुत जीना है, अभी मेरी उम्र ही क्या है। मेरी शक्ल सूरत पर माता जाना। (हँसती हैं) तुम्हारी जानकारी के लिए बता लूँ कि अभी मेरी उम्र केवल 92 वर्ष है।

प्रश्न - हमें आप अपनी दिनचर्या के बारे में बताइए।

उत्तर - यहाँ आने के बाद मेरी काफी सहेलियाँ बन चुकी हैं। कमला और विना मुझसे आयु में छोटी हैं, पर उनका साथ मुझे बहुत अच्छा लगता है। वे हमारा खूब मनोरंजन करती हैं। मारिया भी मुझसे खूब बातें करती हैं। उनके साथ मैं अक्सर गिरजाघर भी जाती रहती हूँ। हम खूब बातें करते हैं। समय मिलने पर मैं लेहरादून के स्थानीय लेखकों किताबें पढ़ती हूँ। हिन्दी और अंग्रेज़ी, दोनों ही भाषाओं में मैं आराम से पढ़ लेती हूँ। बाकी सारा समय तो सोते हुए ही बीतता है।

प्रश्न - इस आश्रम के लोग आपका अच्छी तरह ख्याल रखते हैं?

उत्तर - हाँ, यहाँ की व्यवस्था रखने वाले लोग बहुत अच्छे हैं। सभी लोग बड़ी अच्छी तरह से पेश आते हैं। सभी

बुजुर्गों की सहायता की जाती है। हमारा दिन सुबह के छह बजे की चाय के साथ शुरू होता है। नौ बजे नाश्ता और बारह बजे लोपहर का भोजन परोसा जाता है। चार बजे फिर से चाय मिलती है और रात को आठ बजे भोजन करके हम सो जाते हैं। हम लोग डोर्मेटरी में रहते हैं और मुझे खुशी है कि हमारा ख्याल भली भाँति रखा जाता है।

प्रश्न - पर्व-त्योहार आप लोग किस तरह से मनाते हैं? क्या आपको ऐसे मौकों पर अपने परिवार की याद नहीं आती?

उत्तर - हम लीपावली पर सामने के घरों में जलते लीपक और पटाखे लेखते हैं। बाहर कुर्सी लगाकर बैठे हुए ही सारी शाम निकल जाती है। इस त्योहार पर यही हमारा मनोरंजन होता है। होली पर हम सूखी होली खेलते हैं। सूखी होली का मतलब तो समझते हो ना? किसी के जन्मदिन के अवसर पर हम लोग एक बड़ा सा केक मँगा लेते हैं और हमारी पार्टी हो जाती है। (ठहाका लगा कर हँसती हैं) हाँ मुझे ऐसे मौकों पर अपने बच्चों की बहुत याद आती है। उनके एक एक बात याद आती है। मुझे याद है कि जब वे पटाखों के लिए बहुत ज़िद करते थे और मैं मँगाने से इनकार कर लेती थी। अब तो समय ही बदल गया है। सब अच्छा ही है। आप जैसे बच्चे कभी कभी मिलने आ जाते हैं। अब तो यही बहुत मालूम लेता है। सब खुश हैं तो इसी में हमारी भी खुशी है।

मृत्यु दिखती है

प्रांजल सिंह

लूर तक चले आये हैं,
साहिल पास ही लीख रहा है,
जब इस अथाह जल में
पहला कदम रखा था,
तीर को ताकते नेत्र,
इस शीतल जल से
जल्द
छुटकारा पाना चाहते थे।
आत्मा की प्रबलता,
शिथिल सी पड़ती जा रही थी।
आज क्षणिक जीवन का
अंतिम पड़ाव आ गया है।
जल भी गहराई
खोता जा रहा है।
परंतु हम खुश नहीं हैं।
शायद इस जीवन से लूर भागते
चंचल मन को,
इस क्रूर और ज्वलंत जीवन में ही,
स्वर्ग की कोई टूटी किरच
प्राप्त हो गयी है।
मन मन्दिर आज फिर डोल गया,
नदिया से निकलने को
यह तैयार नहीं है।
शायद हर यात्रा का यही अंत है।
गंतव्य से अधिक मार्ग भाता है,
मृत्यु से अधिक जीवन भाता है,
मेरे इस लघु जीवन का अंत
भी तो निकट आ रहा है।
वानप्रस्थ आश्रम आ गया है
संन्यास भी अवश्य आएगा,
पर हमारी पहचान
यह लेह कैसे छूटेगा?

facebook: a real social utility...

Point
Arjun Badal

“The beauty of Facebook lies in the fact that we can build a relationship with people whom we would feel awkward calling or mailing, as we do not know them well enough to do so. Also, Facebook strengthens our relationship with these people as everyone we know does not live in our town and even if most do we do not meet them every day.”

for us to maintain connectivity with everyone we know or would like to know, through phone calls (which in School is, in any case, extremely limited) or E-mail. However, Facebook allows us to do just that, by adding these people on our ‘friend lists’ and writing a ‘wall post’ or two to them once in a while.

True, some people on our friend lists might not be as close to us as our ‘regular’ friends. In the ‘Facebookers’ defence, I would point out that the beauty of Facebook lies in the fact that through Facebook we can build a relationship with people whom we would feel awkward calling or mailing, as we do not know them well enough to do so. Also, Facebook strengthens our relationship with these people as everyone we know does not live in our town, and those that do, we obviously cannot meet every day.

Through Facebook we maintain a certain amount of connectivity with all our friends and family members who we are close to, and with whom our relationship would perhaps peter out without Facebook. I myself know for a fact that if it weren’t for Facebook, my family abroad and my friends outside this campus – whom I do not get to meet too often – would have been little more than strangers to me. Now, however, I am up-to-date with all their lives (and vice-versa); we can even see pictures of each other, which are updated regularly.

However, this brilliant networking tool has developed a bad reputation because some people have started silly groups and made fake accounts to trouble others. But let me remind you that these are the same people who concoct fake e-mail accounts, harass people through e-mails and make prank calls. Facebook is not the cause of their malice; it is just a convenient way for them to express it. Moreover, Facebook facilitates users to stay safe from troublemakers (which sites like Orkut do not) as it allows you to simply delete them from your ‘friend list’, after which they can do nothing to bother you. If someone starts groups on Facebook or posts certain pictures which are hurtful to others, that person can be reported to the Facebook authorities (who are known for their vigilance and efficiency) who lose no time in disabling his/her account. Parents and the School should be encouraged to advise children not to interact on Facebook with people whom they do not know.

Coming back to the issue of whether or not Facebook should be allowed in School, the main complaint that masters and others have against this site is that boys spend the whole day whiling away their time on the computer purely because of it. That is not untrue; socializing and networking more than necessary is not constructive and has adverse effects on one’s academics, sports and co-curricular activities. It is for this reason that I am of the opinion that parents and the School should limit students’ use of Facebook; anyone missing out on activities because he was too busy on Facebook should be dealt with strictly. However, I am sure that most Doscors would not be foolish enough to sacrifice their academics and other activities for the Internet. But after weighing the pros and cons of this controversial site, I can say with conviction that Facebook is an extremely useful and safe networking tool which should not be used above a certain limit.

“This brilliant networking tool has developed a bad reputation because some people have started silly groups and made fake accounts to trouble others. But these are the same people who concoct fake e-mail accounts, harass people through e-mails and make prank calls. Facebook is not the cause of their malice; it is just a convenient way for them to express it. Moreover, Facebook facilitates users to stay safe from troublemakers (which sites like Orkut do not) as it allows you to simply delete them from your friend list.”

or a virtual disaster?

Counterpoint
Dhruv Velloor

A recent series of events (which I will *not* comment on, thank you) has led me to wonder why exactly we need social networking websites (Facebook, Orkut, MySpace, *et al*) so desperately. This veritable army of networking sites has managed to stretch its arms quite far, consuming several million people in the process. We hear that even the government has gotten interested in it as a medium to attract votes. But setting aside the obvious popularity of these sites, we need to objectively look at whether they are truly useful in an all-encompassing sense.

Admittedly, students do have social lives. Even I, an introverted and confirmed book-addict, confess to an occasional urge to hook up with a few long-lost, elusive friends. I, too, feel the need to shout something out to the rest of the world as a status message, at times. I am also

part of the era of the netizen, a member of 'Gen X' or whatever we are labelled these days. In keeping with John Donne's famous words, we need to find new ways to not be islands, and Facebook seems a perfectly acceptable way to do it.

However, what completely manages to elude my comprehension is our apparent state of deprivation when we can't glue ourselves to a computer monitor. We are *addicted* to Facebook. We need our daily Facebook fix, and, should we not receive it, the sky shall fall on our heads! (It is worth noting here that what Goscinnny and Uderzo's terrifying Gauls feared with such paranoia, did not ever happen, and is not likely to happen in this millennium, either.) Frankly, the two weeks during my holidays when I was unable to access the Net proved to be my most stress-free; that fortnight was a relief!

After Facebook, the Oxford English Dictionary ought to invent a new definition for the word 'friend', because the people the average Joe makes friends with these days are often not Joe's friends at all. In fact, most of Joe's (769 or more) friends are people to whom he has said the words "Hi", "How are you?" and "Great weather today, eh?" an impressive *once* in his lifetime. The majority of us in School will admit that, in most cases, it is just the first phrase that is required to define 'friendship'. It is also common knowledge that the more friends one has on Facebook, the more respect one has among his 'group'. Omar Abdullah knows this, and is proud to boast of a fair bit more than a thousand friends.

At the same time, becoming socially extrovert on the Internet really means becoming more withdrawn from the real world outside the (new) idiot box. An increasingly common occurrence is that students often forsake their studies and hobbies to chat online, or post pointless comments on the message boards of people they have made friends with, or create childish and disgusting groups somewhere along the lines of 'I Love the Word Random' or 'Doscoss Name Their...[censored]'. Sometimes, thankfully, they are seized with *productive* creative afflatuses, the end result being speeches on 'How Best to Waste a Whole Hour on Facebook' (I happened to read that one; it offered me quite a few good ideas). Getting stuck to Facebook also makes people more irritable, more obese, less intelligent and more prone to get into trouble. And if I haven't already added, lots of Facebooking also means fewer people playing sports for the House.

That brings me to my final – and most worrying – point. Whenever we find something we can use, we will *misuse* and *abuse* it. That's the tragedy of today's youth, I'm afraid. The daily papers are rife with stories of students stalking other students and other students committing suicide because of other students. Some people create fake accounts of their nemeses to pursue silly vendettas, or sometimes just for fun. Some people send unnecessary messages to their friends to ruin somebody they have a problem with. All this because Student 1 said something nasty to Student 2 after Student 2 pestered Student 1 for three weeks with messages. Schools are implicated too, forcing to come down hard upon their students. Due to this, we just don't know whom to trust anymore – especially our 'friends'. At the same time, the School and our parents should also act more sensibly to help guide us – blocking Facebook on Websense is hardly the right way forward.

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My conclusion is this: Facebook, along with the other members of its clan, is a drug. We are hooked to this drug. From a cost-to-benefit point of view, this drug has not done us much good. It has made friends we barely know status symbol goods and has caused actual, real interaction with true friends to decrease. It has reduced us to unproductive leguminous plants. Most disappointingly, it has turned us into malicious, vindictive people. We do not need social networking, but we have come to crave it. And when the School tries to take it away from us, we'll just be caught singing like Amy Winehouse: "You tried to make me go to rehab, but I said no, no no..." It's a pity then, that despite her great and heavily publicised addictions, Amy Winehouse has never been a great musician.

Mistaken

Shashank Peshawaria

I hear your lilting laughter silently,
And see love in your happy face.
But soon the truth comes before me
As this I quietly trace:
The love you showed all the while
Answered another human smile.

Unquotable Quotes

This formula is grammatically incorrect.

Abhilaksh Lalwani's mathematical blunder.

Pocket money learns you to keep a budget.

Dhruv Velloor, costs and works accountant.

I don't entertain every Tom, Dick and Sanjer.

Pulkit Bansal recalls the only book he's read.

We do this for better you.

Sparsh Batra, the good Samaritan.

Did he show the geograohy movie about children.

Nakul Talwar, land-locked.

I no do anything violence.

Avik Gugalia, in his defence.

Midnight Bondage

Abhilaksh Lalwani

It is often that I have dreamt.
And that too dreamt such dreams
As will visit but once:
Fleeting images of past realities
With all their grim intricacies,
And of futures that may or may not
Trouble the time yet to come.

Several several deaths have I faced,
But worse yet were the days
When the very dreams that I dreaded
Materialised without any eerie haze,
When the very deaths that I had died,
I saw, replayed, with my own two eyes..
And then, despite myself, I had cried.

I have dreamt of disease and decease,
Of losing myself in uncharted seas,
Of doomed souls in sealed vaults,
Of my own unending faults,
And of such realities,
That if had been or will be,
Would be more than enough to kill me.

But what keeps me asleep,
And what grants me the will
To brave the phantasms so deep,
What gives me the courage,
And what lets me be still
Through that midnight bondage?
It is just that, despite it all, I still dream...

Old

Narinder Kapur

Old.
Old, beyond reckoning.
Beyond recognition.
Old, and worn.
Torn apart, by this cruel world.
Death is what it craves.
And Life
Is what it hates.
A being,
So old,
That it can take no more.
Caught in its own age,
Trapped by its own inhibitions.
Lost in search of nothing,
Remembered for nothing.
It will never die,
No matter how much it wants to.
It will linger,
Linger, forever.

doggysearch



Vivek Santayana

*Hidden below are
the names of
thirteen dogs that
live on campus.*

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

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