Of Patriots and Padmavati

Ranvijay Singh discusses the controversy surrounding the upcoming Bollywood movie, Padmavati.

The recent protests over the upcoming quasi-historical film, Padmavati, once again proves that the secular and tolerant fabric of India is under serious threat. The main issue surrounding the film is the rumoured portrayal of a romantic relationship between the Rajput queen, Padmavati and the Muslim Sultan, Alauddin Khilji. Now, before even delving into the arguments presented by both sides, one must realise that these are rumours. The director, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, has repeatedly denied the presence of any such scenes and hence, the public outcry being stirred by the right-wing political forces seems rather redundant.

The Rajput communities from Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan are all demanding the ban of the film, and being a Rajput myself, I can understand their sentiments to a certain extent. Rani Padmavati symbolises many of the traits our community prides itself for: sacrifice, honour and bravery. She is revered as a deity for immolating herself along with thousands of other Rajput women when Alauddin Khilji defeated the ruler of Chittor. This act of self-immolation, or Jauhar, was done so that they would not have to suffer dishonour under the rule of the foreign invader. Historically speaking, though, the story of Rani Padmavati has little evidence to support it. The first reference to her can be found in the 16th century poem, Padmavat, which doesn’t provide much historical value, but is still integral to Rajput culture.

Considering this fact, right-wing political factions have no right to openly threaten the makers of the film. These groups have not only issued threats, but also participated in blatant acts of vandalism. Their justification for this: preservation of culture. Belonging to this community myself, I feel ashamed that such people, cowering behind the argument of ‘preservation’, are indulging in such criminal activity. Threats have been made to the lives of the actors and director by members of extremist Hindu groups, and in certain cases, by the leaders of the BJP itself. Suraj Pal Amu, a BJP leader from Haryana, recently announced a reward of ten crores for anyone who would behead the lead actor of the movie, Deepika Padukone. I shuddered at the very fact that a leader of BJP, the ruling party of India, could issue such a threat and receive no backlash from his party. Not only does this reflect very poorly on the party, but on a larger scale, the political atmosphere of our nation.

Due to increasing tensions, the release of the film has now been delayed till next year. This delay though, has a much larger significance than just a film not being released. This case has gone to show that extremist groups such as the Karni Sena and the VHP, through the use of crude rhetoric and violent actions, can violate essential principles of our Constitution. This has also come (Continued on page 3)
TOP ORDER
The following have been awarded Cricket Colours for their contribution to the sport:

Half Colours
Aman Aggarwal, Kabir Kochar (re-awarded) and Chaitanya Gulati

Full Colours
Ajatshatu Singh and Viksit Verma (re-awarded)

Kudos!

VOCAL VIRTUOSOS
The School participated in the All India Music Competition by Sangeet Milon on November 19, 2017. In the mediums category Harsh Dewan and Rushil Choudhary secured the second and third position respectively.

Congratulations!

Around the World in 80 Words
Robert Mugabe officially resigned as President of Zimbabwe after 37 years, with Emmerson Mnangagwa succeeding him. The United States officially declared attacks on Rohingya Muslims as a form of “ethnic cleansing”. A Pakistani court ordered the release of 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed from house arrest. A Parliament board requested a report on the film ‘Padmavati’ from The Information and Broadcasting Ministry and the Censor Board. Sri Lanka drew with India in the preliminary Test match of their three-match cricket series.

“Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers.

— Voltaire

CROSSING OVER
The following are the results of the Inter-House Table Tennis Championship, 2017:

Juniors
1st: Hyderabad
2nd: Kashmir
3rd: Oberoi
4th: Tata
5th: Jaipur

Medians
1st: Kashmir
2nd: Oberoi
3rd: Jaipur
4th: Hyderabad
5th: Tata

Seniors
1st: Oberoi
2nd: Jaipur
3rd: Kashmir
4th: Hyderabad
5th: Tata

House
1st: Kashmir and Oberoi
3rd: Hyderabad
4th: Jaipur
5th: Tata

Congratulations!

BREAK POINT
The following are the results of the Inter-House Tennis Championship, 2017:

Juniors
1st: Kashmir
2nd: Tata
3rd: Hyderabad
4th: Oberoi
5th: Jaipur

Medians
1st: Kashmir
2nd: Hyderabad
3rd: Jaipur
4th: Tata
5th: Oberoi

Seniors
1st: Tata
2nd: Hyderabad
3rd: Kashmir
4th: Jaipur
5th: Oberoi

House
1st: Kashmir
2nd: Tata
3rd: Hyderabad
4th: Jaipur
5th: Oberoi

Well done!

UNQUOTEABLE QUOTES
Ranvijay Singh, incorporated.
Freedom for Speech.
Kushagra Kar, newly appointed.

Glued
Anant Ganapathy

Saturday, November 25 | Issue No. 2487
to show that the so-called fringe groups have now taken centre stage in national politics. Long gone are the days that right-wing Hindu nationalism had few takers. With the rise of the BJP, Indian politics has seen new elements being integrated into it. Hindutvavadis, Gaurakshaks and others have come to dominate political discourse in India. Rather than focusing on crucial issues like education, infrastructure and agriculture, our government spends more time and money protecting cows, raising the height of flag poles, and promoting the whole idea of Hindu supremacy. This has not only come to dominate the political arena, but has also seeped into the thoughts of civil society. People have come to understand the notion of patriotism as being synonymous with nationalism. Consequently, one can observe a domino effect on the perceptions of the common Indian. Societal perceptions are becoming overwhelmingly accepting of the right wing ideologies preached by the Sangh Parivar.

India currently stands at a juncture. One path leads towards India becoming a xenophobic nation which glorifies and caters to only one community at the cost of others; an India that has failed its purpose. The other path leads to secularism and tolerance; to the pluralistic nation which our founding fathers dreamt of. As Indians, it is our duty to protect the idea of India which is eroding in front of us. So I would request Prime Minister Modi to make sure of the release of Padmavati, because it will send out a message to all those extremists who aim to manipulate the insecurities of the majority.

Zimbabwean Political Crisis | Aryan Bhattcharjee

Politics in Africa will never be the same. One of the African Union's prominent members, Zimbabwe, saw an unprecedented shift of power in its government. Robert Mugabe, veteran politician and freedom fighter, resigned as the country's president after a 37-year reign, just before his visit to New Delhi; the only President the nation has seen since its independence in 1980. This regime change has implications for Zimbabwe's international relationships, including its vital ties with China. Chinese investment in the country, economically and militarily, has played a critical role in providing jobs for the country and preventing an economic meltdown.

Despite the rapidly deteriorating economy and starvation reaching an all-time high across the country, the political elite tussled for power. The conflict gained momentum when the 93 year old Mugabe fired his Vice President, an assumed successor, Mnangagwa a few weeks ago. Allegedly, this move was to allow his wife Grace, to enter the country's top political echelon where Robert planned to make her his successor. Zimbabwe erupted from the presidency. Mugabe was granted immunity from being prosecuted, in view of the veteran's desire to die in his motherland. Soon after, former VP Mnangagwa was elected the leader of the party and was sworn into office just yesterday. His vision for Zimbabwe focuses primarily on employing all of the country's capable workforce. This prodevelopment policy is sure to welcome Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] and usher in a greater role for China. Hopefully, his policies effectively counter the numerous problems plaguing the country today.

Despite Mnangagwa's optimistic policies, such ruthless struggle for power took place whilst 70% of the nation lies under the poverty line. Transparency International, an international NGO, estimated that about 1 billion dollars of tax money is lost to corruption every year. In such distressing circumstances, what alternative does this leave the poor and oppressed apart from the criminal occurrences that beset the country? It is high time that rational men and women dismiss such hunger for power and focus on battling real problems like starvation and poverty. It is only when the public stands up against something that real change comes about.
This year’s Founder’s Day Hindi production of Charandas Sidhu’s *Kal College Band Rahega* was a treat in many ways. A student-led production, directed by Divij Mullick and produced by Shikhar Trivedi, and guided by theatre veteran Dr. Hammad Farooqui, the play had the nuancing that could speak to the audience at many levels. Many of us, especially JNU-ites like me, were smiling at the picture of the massive battle-tank as the backdrop of the stage, with S.S. College, written on it, cryptically. The prominently displayed national flag as well, set the visual metaphor of the stage, drawing in current context and recent pronouncements by powers-that-be that such symbols be displayed in educational institutions to inspire ‘patriotic’ fervour amongst students. This attention to detail is what set the play in a class of its own. One can see the Punjabi playwright, Dr. Charan Das Sidhu, himself a professor of English at Hansraj College, Delhi University, having had a first-hand experience of the petty and amoral politics that plagues many college and university systems. His near-Orwellian vision in this play critiques the lack of idealism amongst the youth of today.

The satire focusses on the rot in the educational system that is mired in bureaucracy and corruption, a system whose moral compass points far away from true north. A pair of students, preparing for a Math exam together, must pay a terrible price for also being a girl and a boy daring to be friends in a conservative setting deeply suspicious of any alliances across the sexes. There are many who stand to benefit from catching them “bed-handed”, as the Staff Secretary, K.R. Verma (played with great clan and conviction by Divij Mullick) puts it. The pair is harassed and humiliated, and repeatedly accused and questioned, and in the process, the dynamics of power and corruption that dominate the relationships within the staff themselves, and between the staff and the student community is revealed. Some seek promotion, some escape, some sanctuary: no one really cares for the fates of the pair themselves. The staff are a divided house, not averse to bullying and threatening one another: what hope can then be spared for the students? The student leadership is equally morally corrupt: an issue such as this can be politicised and capitalised to no end.

Our students put in spirited portrayals across a range of characters: Shikhar Trivedi as the amoral, equivocating Principal, keen on saving his job; Akshat Jha as the helpless warden, a man of integrity caught in a pitiless world; Manandeep Singh as Manoj Sethi, the lumpen student leader far removed from any pretensions of scholarship, Sudhir Chowdhry as the vocal “feminist” Madhur Keshvani; Mihir Gupta as the glamorous professor cum theatre personality whose heart belongs to her rehearsals and free lunches, Arnav Sethi as Miss Balbir Bakshi, the bride-to-be-professor whose leave application outweighs all other compulsions, and Ribhav Bansal as the principal’s wife, Usha Bhatnagar, who seems to call the shots in his life. All these characters were pitted in various ways against the hapless friends, perhaps romantically inclined to one another, Paramendra Jain (Anant Jain, in a superb portrayal of a boy with no choices) and Shama Tanha (Armaan Thapar, as the poetess trapped in a world of vices). Implicit in the play are also the many dangers of advocacy too: those speaking on behalf of the accused pair render them even more voiceless.

As a member of the audience, I was swept by the sheer power of the court-room drama format itself. The entire stage was dynamically stretched by the use of the Chorus miming out actions in the flanks of the stage. This element added to the tragic and satirical force of the production. Payas Hasteer, Aditya Kapoor, Mehraba Pannu, Sachin Gautam, Nand Singh Dahiya and Inderveer Singh Oberoi put up spirited performances as the Chorus, and must be commended for their
From the Editor’s Desk
Kanishkh Kanodia

The Weekly is a publication that has sustained itself for the past 81 years without disappearing into the pages of history. While many activities in School fade away over the course of the years, the Weekly is an institution in itself that has stood the test of time. It has chronicled history, seen people make history, served as the voice of the School, but above all, it has been a mirror to the School community. In doing so, it has always endeavoured to embody what it has always meant to be: the conscience of the School.

Being the journal that is supposed to serve as a forum for ‘commentary and debate on issues inside and outside School’, it is our duty to be unbiased in our opinions, and to refrain from providing judgmental commentary on any issue. As a School publication, the Weekly must spark debate not controversy, must point out the flaws in the system but not challenge them outright, and must incite humour but not hurt sentiment. However, in the past few years the fine line between these binaries has been blurred. It happened so to an extent that the Weekly was dubbed as ‘the crib column’, ‘the gossip column’ and ‘a mini R.A.T.S’.

The root of the problem stems from the fact that we did not realise the ambit within which our rights, as a free press, lie. While many highlight the absolutist nature of media being the outlet of free speech and expression, I believe that there is a limitation that restricts us from printing anything and everything for the sake of ‘freedom of the press’. Being a part of an institution from which we derive our printing rights, it is our duty to think about the impact of every article, sentence, phrase or even a word on the people of our community, and then accordingly regulate the articles that we choose to print. However, self-regulation is not the same as censorship, and the fine line that exists between the two must be maintained in any form of media, and especially in the Weekly. So, while we fulfilled our purpose of being the reporters of the truth, we did not entirely keep in mind the impact of certain pieces on the people of the School, thus alienating them from reading the publication itself. While I agree that there might be some who are inevitably affected by some article or the other, we need to keep in mind the topicality of the issue and the general atmosphere in School prior to deciding our final pool of articles for the week.

As a result, the onus is on the Editorial Board to withhold the image of the Weekly and clear its name of the aforementioned descriptors. In doing so, we plan to review and edit articles that demean and tarnish the School’s image to an extent that it is framed for something it does not abide by. It will be our constant endeavour to ensure that our words do not hurt someone’s sentiments or antagonize them completely from the Weekly. This publication is not one to which only the 20 of us are entitled to but rather something which should resonate with the entire School community, because at the end of the day, it is ‘The Doon School’ Weekly.

So, while we, at our end, will constantly strive to improve The Doon School Weekly in every possible aspect, we expect the School community to engage with us for discourse of any nature cannot be unilateral. To make the Weekly more engaging, livelier and truly make it what it is meant to be: the ‘Voice of the Entire School Community’, we implore you to criticise us and provide us with your valuable feedback in any form, because it is the only way to make sure that the Weekly is not consigned to the annals of the history of this institution.
Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to start off by congratulating the new Editor-in-Chief and his editorial board. This LTE is in response to the Editorial published in the Weekly's Issue No. 2486, or rather to a minor part of it. The Editor-in-Chief of the Weekly talked about his concern that the Weekly, over the past year, had become a forum for pointing out the errors in School but one that fails to provide any tangible solution.

I can see where this concern stems from, but would advise the Editor-in-Chief not to worry about it. Solving problems pertaining to the School is not what the Weekly is responsible for. The Weekly’s only responsibility is to report what is going on in School. Finding the solution is the responsibility of the School Community as a whole, and the Weekly gets that started by bringing the situation into the public domain. The Editor-in-Chief used an example of the article, “The Cool Gang Conundrum” in his editorial. He posed the question, “What good did the ‘Cool Gang Conundrum’ bring about, considering the fact that the notion still holds considerable ground on campus?” I would like to answer that question. Yes, it is true that the notion still holds considerable ground on campus but it is also true that School has seen a significant decrease in the ‘syndrome’ and that some people have started condemning it, which I think is a step forward to improving the situation. Overall, this letter is to assure the Editor-in-Chief and his entire editorial board that, in my opinion, the Weekly has successfully achieved its purpose and I would urge them to continue in this direction.

Best of luck and regards,
Abhiraj Lamba

Dear Weekly,

Well done on a well-written editorial, and all the best to the new team.

Considering the disclaimer that your issues carry these days about views being their author's own, and not reflective of the editorial policy of the Weekly, who should the readership ascribe the Roving Eye to, if the author/s remain anonymous? If the Roving Eye needs to address burning issues of student sycophancy and what not, why not a proper article, with authorship? Why the dog-whistle writing which, nudge-nudge, wink-wink, is only accessible to some frequencies? How can the editors themselves choose to remain anonymous? In earlier times, the Roving Eye used to to be written to roast SC formers after their Socials, and thus, the nicknames and the epithets, to protect their, er, romantic escapades. What is the need to do the same with reference to school issues?

Why should the Weekly, which is an exercise in public reasoning, sound like The R.A.T.S.?

Even more astounding was the advice contained in the clarification/rejoinder, that curious folk may simply “ask” seniors in the know, about who the boys mentioned by epithets, are in real life. Indeed. I had visions of myself and other such Curious Joes/Janes, chasing knowledgeable seniors around Chandbagh, clutching a mace, in another, yelling, TELL ME, TELL ME, TELL ME!

Still mystified,
Priyanka Bhattacharya

Artistic Analysis

Adithya Kapoor recounts the film society’s activities over the year.

The film society has undergone immense change this year. With frequent visits by experts in the area of film making, the members of the society have grasped that films are not just a form of entertainment but a form of art. The highlight of the year was the film appreciation workshop conducted by Professor Ravikant. The interactive sessions with Professor Ravikant showed us that a film is not only influenced by its actors but the smallest of objects involved on the set. For example, in the workshop, Professor Ravikant showed us that a radio could play an essential role in a movie by expressing the feelings of the actors through a song played on it.

The film society was escorted for a film viewing session for exposure to the different aspects involved in the creation of a film and also to critically analyse the film to enhance our film appreciation skills. The film selected was called ‘Ittefaq’.

The thriller ‘Ittefaq’, directed by Abhay Chopra and starring Siddharth Malhotra, Sonakshi Sinha and Akshaye Khanna kept the audience engaged throughout. The characters have been established without providing a clear picture of the movie till the climax. The movie revolves around the murder case of Shekhar Sinha with two suspects - Vikram Sethi, a novelist charged for double murder, and Maya, the wife of the victim. The entire plot is built on two stories narrated by the accused actors about the night of the murder. Akshaye Khanna (police officer) has to investigate this cryptic case with both the accused stories narrated by the accused actors seeming innocent. With his perspective continuously being influenced by the two stories as they are alternately narrated in short intervals, the officer comes under immense pressure, but takes on this duty to crack the case within the deadline. The slow pace of the movie builds the suspense. The performance by Akshaye Khanna is heart-winning. The slight humour in his dialogues adds to the beauty of the character along with the co-actors
A New Equation

The Doon School Weekly interviewed Mr. Arun Bhatt, who recently joined the Mathematics Department.

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Can you please tell us something about yourself?

Mr. Arun Bhatt (ABT): I did most of my schooling away from Dehradun, my home. Because my father was posted in Gujarat I was there till the 10th Grade, and after that I returned to Dehradun. I started my professional journey in Gurgaon 14 years ago, where I initially started by joining a coaching centre, as my interests were inclined toward mathematics. Meanwhile, I was pursuing my further studies, but unfortunately due to some unavoidable circumstances, I left in between. Gradually, as I became more experienced, I started my own centre. In 2008 I got married and six months later my wife started teaching, and it occurred to me then that maybe I should join a school. So, my school teaching career started in 2008, nearly ten years ago. My journey started with a CBSE school, where I taught for two years, shifting then to The Sri Ram School in 2011, now arriving here, at Doon.

DSW: What differences have you observed between The Sri Ram School and Doon in your short stay here?

ABT: Naturally, Sri Ram is a day school, and this is a boarding school, so both have different cultures and set-ups, including in the professional aspect, with the primary difference, in my opinion, being the discipline. What I mean by this is that Doon is very systematic, and I only need to link up with someone in particular as opposed to going all over the place, and this person will organise what I need, which makes it far more convenient for me.

DSW: What changes do you wish to see in terms of how maths is taught in schools?

ABT: As I mentioned earlier, I started teaching in a coaching centre, which made me a ‘raw’ mathematics teacher- a very bookish individual. When I started teaching in schools, however, I learnt many things besides teaching, such as management skills, among other things. When I shifted to Sri Ram, I became a part of IB teaching, where I learnt many new things about Mathematics, such as how to apply maths practically, not only in the field itself, but in other subjects as well. So that was a great learning experience for me, and I want to continue that all my life, to apply my subject practically and connect it to other subjects.

DSW: You've mentioned that you've lived in Dehradun for a long time, and so have seen it change and transform over the years. Which of these changes do you like and which ones do you not?

ABT: If one looks at the environment of Dehradun, environment in the sense the atmosphere and the climate, it's wonderful and it's still the same. On the other hand, if one looks at the traffic, the number of vehicles has constantly increased, which is polluting the city and is a major concern. Another major change I've seen is that much of the forest has been cut down. When one sees the road to Haridwar, much of the foliage is gone, the roads have been widened and the government is building new multistory structures. Hence, I am both overjoyed and worried by these changes, in equal measure.

Concert in the Park

Tonight at 8:15 PM

The School Community is invited to the Music School Lawns after dinner to witness a short performance by the School Popular Band. Considering it is the last performance of the band before the outgoing SC form passes out, it will be a special event highlighting the culmination of all their experience and practice over the last four years!

Saturday, November 25 | Issue No. 2487
The Week Gone By

Zoraver Mehta

With clear blue skies, School looks more serene and blissful than usual, this time of the year. The winter sun further illuminates the lamp of knowledge as class attendance and attention is on a record high. Standardised tests and college applications continue to occupy much of the senior boys’ time. We did receive some brief outpour early in the week, followed by some bitter-cold temperatures that caused many to shiver.

Hyderabad House emerged victorious in the Athletics competition, with their thumping marching squad comprising the most athletic boys who helped the house secure a comfortable win. The end of a year also sees everyone making plans for 2018. Earlier in the week, the A-formers had their parents come over to choose a set of subjects for next year. The S-formers attended the prefects’ workshop on Wednesday which provided an understanding about the ‘secrets of being a good leader’. Amidst the fervour of house-level captaincies being decided and prefect interviews being conducted, even the SC-formers are pulling out their CVs as the second leg of college application season trudges on. We wish them all the very best of luck!

With many of us yearning to go home, the prefects have explicitly stated that the term is not over yet; a message which has been reinforced by the school authorities. The last 15 odd days prove to be the hardest, especially with the assessment week around the corner! Men’s health workshops are being conducted, and the cause has never got as much support as it did this week with the School Doctor, Dr. Amar Lanka, disseminating information on mental and physical health during Wednesday and Friday assembly.

Finally, the School Popular Band has planned an impressive line-up of performances to entertain us this evening. With a slew of events scheduled for what remains of the term, the coming two weeks are going to be a healthy mix of academics and entertainment!

Crossword

Assassinations

Across
2. This actor-turned-assassin killed Abraham Lincoln in a famous theatre.
4. This U.S. President was killed by Harvey Oswald; he also has an airport named after him.
6. This writer and racial equality activist, who defected from the Nation of Islam, was the target of three Islamic agents.
9. This Roman general’s assassination inspired a Shakespearean tragedy.

Down
1. This assassin was angry over India’s decision to give 420 million rupees to Pakistan, and spoke out by murdering India’s most famous freedom fighter.
3. This aristocrat’s assassination was carried out by a terrorist organisation called ‘Black Hand’ and is thought to have triggered World War I.
5. This Macedonian king, who was also the father of Alexander the Great, was murdered by his own bodyguard.
7. John Lennon, a member of the rock band ‘The Beatles’, was killed by one of his own fans named _______.
8. He assassinated Martin Luther King Jr, America’s most famous Black rights activist.

Note: All answers to this crossword are the concerned persons’ surnames.

Source: http://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/crossword/