

# The Doon School WEEKLY

*"I sketch your world exactly as it goes."* -Arthur Foot

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# The Exam Entanglement

*Ansh Raj comments on the flaws in the ICSE curriculum.*

As I spend my days cramming boring monoliths of text for my Board examinations, I find myself stranded in an island of anxiety and relief. I am anxious, because if I don't fulfil my role as a rote-learner sincerely, I would fail to score well (which denotes an aggregate below 95%). Simultaneously, and quite contrastingly too, I am relieved, because in about two months, the ICSE will cease to exist as a curriculum that is taught in Doon.

The Council's mission reads "serving the nation's children, through high quality educational endeavours, promoting introspective learning, and by creating exciting learning opportunities." Yet, the Council fails to deliver in all the aforementioned criteria - and the primary culprit is the culture of rote learning that it promotes among the students, due to the examination structure. Its content-heavy curriculum causes the students to be constricted to only textbook-based memorisation, which consequently bars room for further exploration in the subject. "High quality educational endeavours" and "exciting learning opportunities", therefore, appear as exaggerated terms.

Another significant aspect of the curriculum is the Internal Assessment component. Internal assessments comprise 20 per cent (50 per cent in case of Economics, Computer Applications and other

optional sixth subjects) of the aggregate ICSE score. While no objectives of these assessments are mentioned by the Council as such, these assessments are generally meant to promote the students' immersion in the respective subjects, by pushing them beyond the pages of their textbooks, and keeping them engaged throughout the academic session. Far from this, however, some students take this project as an opportunity to seek out the easiest way out by copy-pasting at the last moment. Consequently, both the purposes of research and of consistent engagement - are defeated.

However, the Council's failures transcend the curriculum itself, and are more profound in the examination process. In both ICSE and ISC, the answer sheets are sent to different examination centres across the nation for evaluation. However, when the scores of the same are uploaded, the students are only able to see the aggregate scores of their respective subjects. Not only are they unaware of the distinct scores in their internal assessments and their written assessments, but they are also unable to view a copy of their answer scripts. If anything, an answer may have been wrongly marked or missed out; however, the students, because of the sheer lack of transparency, may never know.

But the acutest problem that adversely affects the examination process is the policy of moderation.

Under this policy, the aggregate scores are pushed upwards, causing the average percentage of the nation to rise. One of the reasons cited for the same was that low-scoring students, under the moderation policy, would be enabled score above the 'pass mark'. However, this policy is flawed in its very structure. In the status quo, the pass mark is 35% in ICSE and 40% in ISC (this per cent has in fact been lowered for 2019 onwards). It is plausible, therefore, to conclude that it is extremely difficult to fail in the board examinations. Although, since moderation does happen, it can be reasonably inferred that some must be failing despite the low pass mark. Accordingly, is it really justified to aid even these students to make them pass? Alternately, this policy also causes many aggregate scores to spike and pass the 95% threshold. Since the same policy is applicable to ISC, the cut-off marks for admission in colleges have also risen exponentially.

Admittedly, the Council is revered by many for providing a challenging course to students; however, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Recent news reports say that the policy of moderation may be removed for this year's examinations and onwards. We can only hope that this is the case, and more reforms are initiated in the coming years. Else, progress in the education sector will only remain a distant dream.

## A WAR OF WORDS

The following participated in the **Team India Debating Camp** held in **Chennai**: Arjun Singh, Aryan Chhabra, Arunav Vaish, Yash Dewan, Kanishkh Kanodia, Devang Laddha, Karan Sampath and Aryan Battacharjee.

Karan Sampath was selected to become a part of the Indian team for the **World Championship**.

Kudos!

## DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

A group of fourteen people participated in the **MUN** conference held at **The Rato Bangla School** in **Kathmandu, Nepal**.

Shivendra Pratap Singh and Kanishkh Kanodia received the **Best Delegate** awards. Rajveer Kochar, Lakhshman Santhanam and Armaan Verma were adjudged **Most Outstanding** delegates. Darsh Garg received a **Special Mention**. Tarush Bansal was given a **Letter of Commendation** and Gunvir Paintal received a **Verbal Mention**.

Well Done!

## IN MEMORIAM

On December 20, 2017, Old Boy Rahil Arora (628-H, 2015) passed away. He was visiting home from college and spent his last few days with his family. He lives on in our memories, our laughs, and all good things to come. We offer our condolences to his family and friends.

“

“We accept the love we think we deserve.”

—  
Stephen Chbosky

## THE WATCH BEGINS

The following have been appointed as **School Prefects** for the forthcoming year:

**School Captain:** Viksit Verma

### Hyderabad House

**House Captain:** Tarush Bansal

**Prefects:** Anirudh Bazari, Mayank Sojatia, Rohin Agarwal

### Jaipur House

**House Captain:** Aayush Chowdhry

**Prefects:** Anish Bhide, Aditya Vikram Singh, Zoraver Mehta

### Kashmir House

**House Captain:** Shiven Dewan

**Prefects:** Armaan Verma, Naman Khurana, Ranvijay Singh

### Oberoi House

**House Captain:** Kanishkh Kanodia

**Prefects:** Pratinav Bagla, Raghav Saboo, Shaurya Jain

### Tata House

**House Captain:** Kabir Kochar

**Prefects:** Amritansh Saraf, Dhairya Rastogi, Shivendra Pratap Singh

We wish them a fruitful tenure!

## Around the World in 80 Words

A shooting in a school in Kentucky killed two teenagers and injured seventeen. Rahul Gandhi accused Narendra Modi of transporting black money into the country from Switzerland. Padmavaat will not be screened in four states according to a major multiplex body. ‘Save the Children’ has been suspended after two died in an ISIS attack in Afghanistan. Roger Federer will play his 43rd grand slam semi-final against Chung Hyeon. Apple will begin selling its new ‘Home Pod’ on February 9th.



# An Idealistic World

Adit Chatterjee reviews the current prefectorial system.

*“The boys should leave Doon as members of an aristocracy, but it must be an aristocracy of service inspired by selflessness, not one of privilege, wealth or position.” –Arthur Foot*

The quote above is the essence of what all our founding fathers hoped to achieve through the creation of this institution; an aristocracy that inspired leadership, goodwill, the motivation to create a ripple effect that could perhaps cause good in the world. It is with these hopes that our founders created the famed system that has formed our school today, in order to prepare the students to go out and face the real world. As a result of those goals, we now bear witness to systems such as our prefectorial body, designed to provide valuable leadership experiences to a select group of students. Again, this body was created in the hope of achieving one of our fundamental values: to inspire leadership. Therefore, the aims of this group are very simple: to ensure that a certain level of discipline is upheld by the junior forms for whom they are responsible, and to otherwise ensure the smooth running of school events and procedures. However, the power provided to this group in order for them to complete these tasks is overwhelming, and in my opinion, slightly disturbing. Eighty years later, it seems that what was intended by the creation of this body is not what we see today, with the harsh truth being that of exploitation, and unforgiving punishments activities being meted out by this body.

I find it extremely unethical to provide a group of teenagers with such levels of power that allows them to punish at their discretion. What we must realize is that we are still dealing with teenagers, who have not reached the level of maturity that would enable them to use their power wisely. At this emotionally vulnerable stage of a person's life, even using the wrong words with a person with such a power could end badly, as the ability to punish bears too great a temptation to resist, especially when such powers allow them to effectively control what goes on around them. While it is good to provide such power and hope they choose not to abuse it, at whose expense are we leaving it at hoping for the best? Today, all we see is a never-ending cycle of rampant abuse of power, and the root cause of this is the unconstrained power provided to the prefects. Not just that, but the fact that this power slowly spreads to other forms is also due to the example set by the student leaders. Even a senior just one year older is able to punish in exactly the same way a prefect could, due to the hierarchy that has now been established due to the existence of such powers, or even order him around to do the dreaded ‘favours’.



Even the most basic principles of being a prefect have been distorted. For instance, now, when the juniors attempt to maintain discipline, they do so not because they respect the prefects, but because they fear them. Even speaking out against this system leads to backlash and punishment, as life becomes so simple for those with such a power that even though they were subjected to it in their junior years, they still choose to subject others to it under the guise of having some sense of maturity simply due to those years of experience. Unfortunately, six years does not a leader make, and nor does even eighteen, and it is clear that those being provided with this power are not mature enough to handle this power like leaders in real life. Rather, the opposite is true, and this is only due to the endless carousel of the abuse of power that was inflicted upon these seniors when they were juniors. Thus, when they arrive at their positions atop the nest of power, after being pushed around for a great portion of their junior lives, they find out that they now have the ability to push others around just as they were, and it seems to them that the system is justified simply because it has continued for so long. Throughout the years, many of our revered alumni have also spoken out against this system, and it seems that the problems faced today are an age old issue, and will most certainly continue, unless something is done about it. Alas, countless reforms in our system do no good, as the root cause of the problem still remains: an unprecedented amount of power over someone else simply due to seniority. By all means, seniority should be respected, as all seniors must, but does the administration really believe that respect is garnered by handing over the physical control of oneself to another person? If this very power, the power of being able to punish someone physically, were to be removed, perhaps we would find a much more harmonious society.



# At Hell's Gate

Arjun Singh

By orders of the Führer, we innocent students were sentenced to four months of hard labour at a prison camp on a Military Base. The abruptness of this sentence bore us agonizing pain as, reluctantly, we were plucked from the warmth of our homes and forced to face cold weather against our will at this camp of doom: seized of our families, friends, fun and – unjustly – fifteen lakhs of our money.

Through cars, buses and trains we traversed the countryside and arrived outside the wretched walls: topped menacingly with new, barbed – and artificially overpriced – razor wire paid for with our swindled money. In a distant corner, stacks of smoke rose from where our wardens lived: their gas chambers carrying the pungent scent of tobacco that thickened the eyes as well as the bills. Close by; the tall, bleak floodlights did little to conceal our prison attire: robbed of our clothes, we wore bleak greys and whites with our inmate numbers stitched in. The young were crying, while the many faces bore sadness, agony, fear and stress – incarceration had raked from us all happiness and established common, blank frustration.

However, the worst of this

punishment was yet to come – a fate we met at Hell's gate.

All prisoners were lined up and segregated from each other into dreary queues by the shrieks of uniformed guards, armed with sticks and a corrupt mandate to unlawfully search and seize. One-by-one we stood helplessly as our belongings were tossed out and examined with exacting detail, with the brutal guards snatching from us our valuables rightfully-owned – sparing none amidst the howling cries for mercy. We, too, were frisked – touched by the guards even at our sensitive, private areas – and stamped with “Check” like packages: objectified.

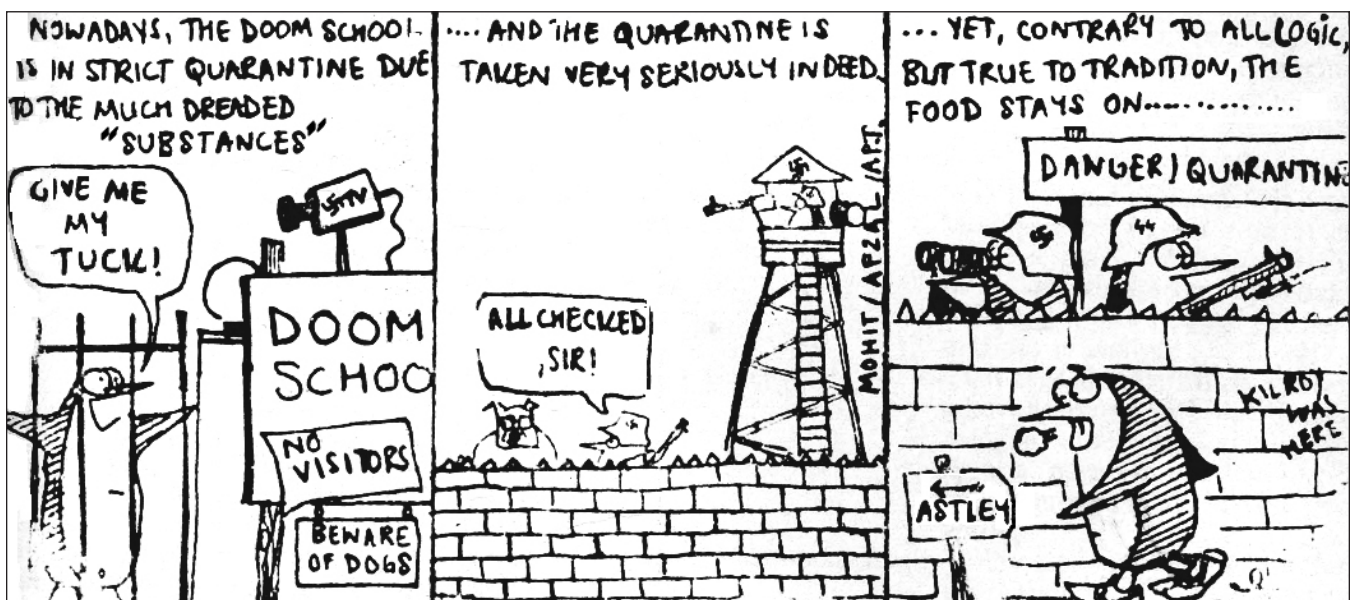
Our money was taken from us – soon to be greedily counted and proclaimed with high haughtiness, with dubious prospects of a full return. Our means of communication were seized too, ensuring we'd exist under the regime's penal censorship – unable to fully expose either its corruption, embezzlement or the violations of our rights. Many had hidden meagre morsels of their own food for survival, for prison offered not food but hard, faecal rations – often stale, undercooked and with occasional hairs – that

would leave us malnourished. This too was cruelly taken from us.

But what had we done to deserve this punishment, this objectifying treatment, this absolving of trust? The question loomed over us – large and perplexing. Surely, we all weren't delinquents who couldn't be trusted, who posed a threat and who could poison society with substances unknown. That was their pretext, “for security”: a line off' uttered by leaders to conceal their darker purposes and priggish objectives – ensuring their encroachment on our rights and lives would be veiled by a thin, shallow legitimacy.

We, however, were neither thin-skinned nor thick-headed, seeing through to the Fuhrer's real motives, and the danger that lay ahead. With the little we now had, we were prepared to resist – defending our lives and protecting what remained of the last remnants of freedom.

*Disclaimer: This account is NOT based on any 'recent events' in our institution, since no prison would permit me to write searing attacks on its administration that demolish its intentions and trash its credibility. Why would we think otherwise...?*



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# A Labour of Love

*Ms. Liz Grey and Mr. Ambikesh Shukla reports on the recent Round Square initiative.*

In December 2013, a group of teachers travelled together to Cambodia on a Round Square Teacher Training Project. During the course of that trip, many deep friendships were forged and four years later some of those friends were keen to meet up once again. While many had moved on in their careers, none of them had forgotten what bound them together – a shared love of community service, and travel. The plan was hatched and it was proposed that we would all head to India for a reunion trip.

Our friends at The Doon School have many connections and a knowledge of service programmes, and knew of a community that needed our help. An alumnus of School, Manish Joshi, put us in touch with the Dungri community - that lives next to the adventure camp owned by r Joshi - that had asked for a community centre that they could use for events, and to train the youth -and adults - of their village and surrounding communities in employment skills. The Head of the village proposed the initiative; the land was donated by one of the village residents and the building plans and logistics were completed by Manish Joshi and The Doon School staff-team comprising Ambikesh Shukla, Doctor Amar Lanka, Anand Kumar Mandhian and KC Maurya.

Fast-forward to 28th December 2017 and in a hotel lobby in Dehradun. Six of the original Cambodia friends met again, bringing along their partners, family, friends and work colleagues to join the team. They had travelled from Canada, Singapore, Australia, UK and all over India and included teachers, engineers, doctors, musicians, architecture students and a wise yogi called Joseph. Team LemonAid India 2017 was born!

The group had fund-raised enough money to buy all the building materials and to pay a team of local builders to help manage the build. Under cold blue skies, the team arrived at Dungri village bright and early on the first morning, and were serenaded into the village by a couple of local men on drums. A welcome committee from the village greeted us with speeches and songs, and then our work began in earnest.

The foundations of the building had been prepared before our arrival, so over the first few days, the work consisted of flattening the huge mountain of earth and rock in the main floor area; moving all the bricks to the four corners of the building. With the help of some of the village women and girls, we very quickly had all the walls up to window level.

The team celebrated New Year's Eve in style, with drums, bagpipes, fireworks, campfire, ghost stories,

and with our new community well and truly embedded in our hearts. The next phase of the plan then began. The windows and doorframes had arrived, so these were put in place, and our crew of bricklayers took the walls up to roof level. The crew of welders gradually got all the roof beams into place, ready to receive the sheets of red roof panelling. By the end of seven days of building work, our international group had done all the work they could, leaving the technical work to the local builders. Tears were shed as we waved the villagers goodbye and took one, last look at our building.

As we look back on our time at Dungri , we are grateful to our supporters around the world who contributed funds for the centre to be built. The building will be finished by the end of January 2018, with the first events scheduled soon thereafter. The Doon School will continue its association with the centre, with plans to take students and teachers there for service work and with an initial plan to start an LED bulb re-cycling project. The team will keep in communication with the community during visits to the camp and will oversee its progress. Meanwhile, a UK organisation that starts bee-keeping initiatives with villages in Africa and India is looking into whether this is something we could introduce to the community.

We are looking forward to keeping in touch with the village over the coming year, and it's safe to say the whole group has returned home with a large piece of Dungri village in their hearts. Our thanks to everyone who made this trip possible, especially our esteemed friends at The Doon School and at Adventure Legend. Until we meet again!





# The Week Gone By

Aayush Chowdhry

After a less than kind welcome—in terms of the harsh weather and the harsher checking – the walls of Chandbagh were filled with familiar faces giving it a feeling of wholeness. However, many couldn't settle in before grousing about the length of the term or comparing School's system to that of a *Nazi Camp's* (which the Headmaster prudently clarified as merely an airport styled security check). Thankfully, the reuniting of companions and the excitement for the new appointments overweighed any rebellious sentiments the boys had.

As Monday morning assembly celebrated our boys and their achievements during the holidays, few were left thinking whether they are even supposed to work during holidays. However, a majority of the School focused on the upcoming election and Special Assembly. In all the hustle and bustle, the previous School Captain seemed to be lost for a while, but appeared just in time to hand the tie to our new one. After a day of appointments and disappointments, the new cohort of leaders took their respective common rooms and began fitting into the shoes of their predecessors. With a rather academic set of House Captains, many hope to secure commendable marks in the upcoming Promotional Trials.

The last set of ICSE (to-be) martyrs also began their fervent preparations for pre-boards as the SC-E batch make the last pull towards college. Games in School also commenced with the various School Sports' Teams practicing under their new captains.

Changes in administration were not only seen in terms of students but in terms of teachers as well, as the new House Master of Jaipur House began his reign and rumours of a vacancy for the position of Assistant Head Master were floated. Speaking of vacancy, the Head Master's office returned to its default condition as he travelled to Delhi for a meeting. Amidst all the action, let's hope that boys regain their footing quickly for a packed term ahead!

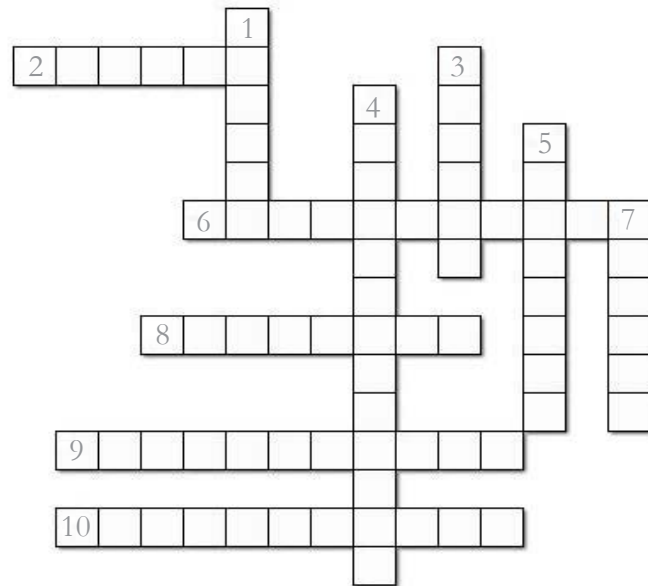
## Crossword | Mythology

**Across**

- 2. This god was named the god of smallpox by a Yoruban cult, and was used to threaten and extort money from innocent people.
- 6. This violent god is believed to have cut off his mother's head and killed all the Kshatriyas of the world 21 times.
- 8. This Greek God was reborn sewn to his father's thigh and brought up as a girl.
- 9. This goddess of self-sacrifice and sexual restraint cut off her head, after which two attendants drank her blood.
- 10. This strange goddess was named the god of "eating dirt" by certain Aztec tribes.

**Down**

- 1. This Greek goddess was made, among other things, the goddess of door hinges.
- 3. This Greek God castrated his own father, married his sister and ate his children.
- 4. This cryptic and obscure god is said to have communicated with the Innuite people through their farts.
- 5. A rather negative designation, this god was crowned by the Greeks with the title "God of Stupidity".
- 7. This Greek God gave King Midas donkey's ears when he judged Pan's music better than his.



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

<b>Down</b>	
1. Cardea	9. Chinnamasta
3. Cronus	8. Dionysus
4. Marshshshkapen	6. Parashurama
5. Koalemos	2. Sapona
7. Koalemos	10. Tlazoteotl

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

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