

# The Doon School WEEKLY

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

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## ACADEMIC REFLECTIONS

Old Boys reflect on the academic environment of School.

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## Editorial

# Reputation, Reflection and Reason

Ansh Raj

A wave of relief must have spread across School when, (hopefully) the last of a series of letters from the Head Master reached our inbox. The IB upsets had prodded many students into considering whether pursuing this curriculum would be such a viable option after all. As would be expected of any organisation, the School responded with strict regulations and pre-emptive measures — including a few seemingly outrageous ones. Thankfully, School's ethos has bred, in most of us, a desire to resist, and soon, deliberations and rants became a common phenomena. Optimistically thinking, with the last letter, some consensus should have been reached. But more of this later. Let us first delve to understand what we are really dealing with.

In a world where results play a defining role and competition is almost toxic, a school's purpose cannot be left at the mercy of just lofty ideals. In order to establish (or in our case, maintain) a reputation, a school must remain in touch with what the world currently expects. If it fails, it risks perishing. The recent academic results held the possibility of pointing to such a risk. School decided to come down hard on it- even if that included subverting the essential character of the institution.

This opportunity cost, however, almost amounted to heresy for the students. Doscos across

generations had lived this life, and it had probably helped them greatly in becoming good citizens - so why should we be forced to live with a different (and poorer) culture? Aren't activities a trademark that could never be a "trade-off" (as a former Chairperson of the Board of Governors was quoted as having said)? But ethos, tradition, and culture are all areas where we often fail to see a slippery slope. Words like "trade-offs" appear easy to pronounce when things are running smoothly — just like any democracy treasures liberty as long as emergencies remain a distant chimera. But more worryingly, we have allowed convenience to dictate what we let slip, things which could have probably helped us become great citizens as well. Many Old Boys insisted that Doscos flying (rather than taking the train) back home, travelling in luxurious buses, being allocated exorbitant outing money, or even having Brunch on Sundays, were compromising on the spirit of a Spartan Dosco life. Why did no student raise this issue and fight for Doon's identity then?

Conversely, what if activities were reduced in number and in their scale? Arguably, both hold equal importance as far as School's USP is concerned. Reducing them would rob Doon of its most distinguishing feature, making it just like any other school. Only by itself though, this argument betrays a tinge of self-righteousness. However, there is

virtue in activities that many fail to understand, especially in their junior forms. Activities act as a liberating force from the inertia of entrapment inside the four walls of a classroom (this is applicable, albeit not equally, for both IB and ISC). The nature of activities in School is such that it gives a boy purpose, a conscious desire to push himself outside his comfort zone. More often than not, the ripples are also felt in the boy's academics. This possibly explains why boys who perform well academically have also done well (or at least strove to) in their activities. At this point, an important question that remains unanswered is: "How do you explain those who failed to meet their Predicted Grades?" The answer from many of these boys was that they were "spread too thin". At this point, activities appear to be the culprit — on a superficial level, at least. To analyse this, let us consider one important, but sadly neglected entity: pre-boards. Many serious candidates treat pre-boards as an important checkpoint in their preparation for finals; unfortunately, there are also a few who shrug it aside. This attitude speaks volumes of their seriousness and preparedness for their final papers. More importantly, this is a juncture where the School should intervene with all strictness (as they now will), to ensure that there are no fiascos in

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## ONE CUP TO RULE THEM ALL

The following are the results of **The Doon School Cup, 2018-19:**

- 1st:** Kashmir  
**2nd:** Hyderabad and Tata  
**4th:** Jaipur  
**5th:** Oberoi

Congratulations!

## LEADING FROM THE FRONT

The following are the **PT Leaders** for 2019-20:

**School PT Leader:** Armaan Batta

### Jaipur:

Pranav Sachdeva  
 Aryaman Khosla  
 Zuber Chawla

### Tata:

Adit Chatterjee  
 Aviral Kumar  
 Inderveer Oberoi

### Hyderabad:

Shanay Sojatia  
 Vansh Gupta  
 Shubhangm Choudhary

### Kashmir:

Arijit Sannamanda  
 Nand Dahiya  
 Kartik Rathore

### Oberoi:

Ajaypratap Grewal  
 Varen Talwar  
 Aryansh Sharma

We wish them a fruitful tenure!

“

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

Nelson Mandela

## UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

*Pass the veg Paneer.*

**Aryan Prakash**, our desi Gordon Ramsay.

*I have severe reasons.*

**Karanvir Singh Mann**, diplomacy at its best.

*I was being exaggerated.*

**Maharshi Roy**, now feeling belittled.

*When will notebooks open?*

**MPT**, still waiting.

*How you do that?*

**Siddhant Agarwal**, in the dark.

*On a scale of 1 to 5, 2.5 being the highest...*

**Pranav Lohia**, scaling new heights.

*Have you drunken your coffee?*

**Ameyath Sodhi**, high on caffeine.

*You can be more stronger.*

**Aadi Jain**, a Complan boy!

*Get ready to loss.*

**Yuval Kundu**, visions of victory.

## READERS' ARCHIVE

**VKL:** *Who Moved My Cheese*, Spencer Johnson.

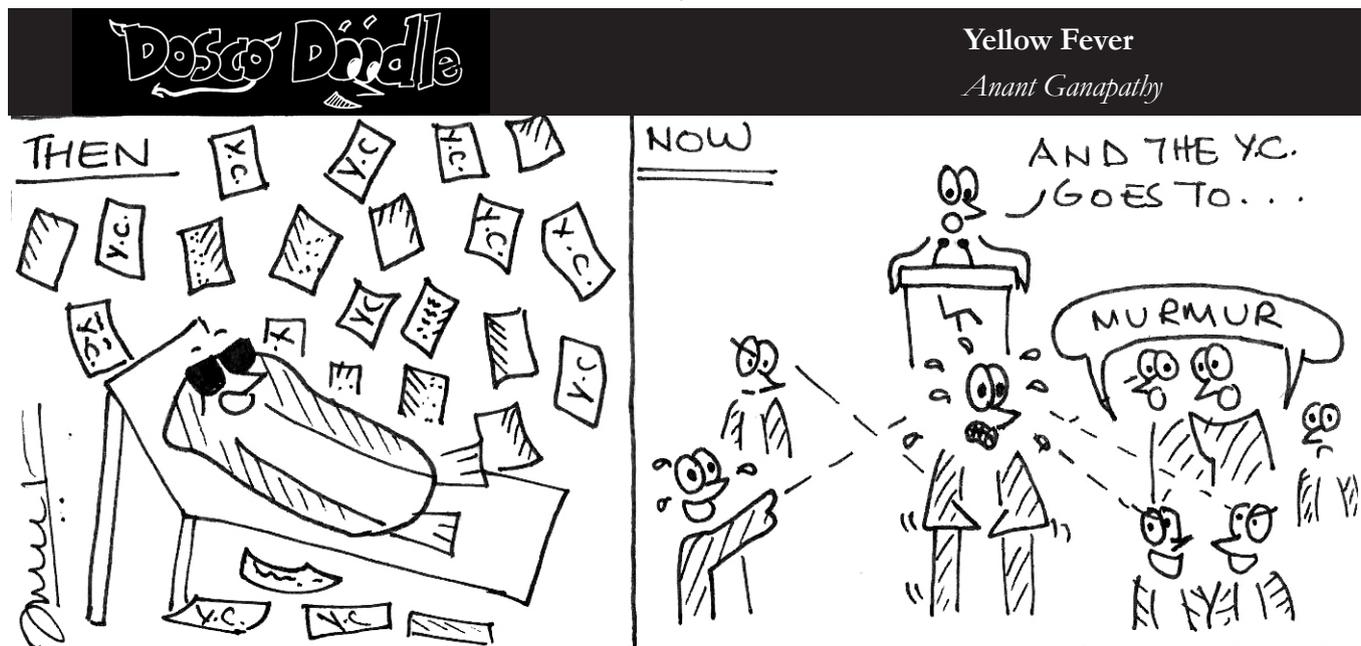
**SNA:** *Shylock Is My Name*, Howard Jacobson.

**MHF:** *Walking with Laata*, Been There Doon That.

**Adit Chatterjee:** *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, Amitav Ghosh

## Around the World in 80 Words

Mozambique president Filipe Nyuse and the leader of the opposition, Offuso Momade, signed a peace accord to end armed hostilities. Twenty people were killed, while fifty were injured in a suicide attack in Afghanistan's Vice Presidential candidates' office. US Intelligence reported the death of Osama Bin-Laden's son Hamza in an air strike. Café Coffee Day founder V.G. Siddhartha was found dead two days after he went missing. Atletico Madrid defeated local rivals Real Madrid 7-3 in the International Champions Cup.



*(Continued from Page 1)*

the future. In addition, answering the “spread too thin” dilemma requires us to ponder over the importance of individual choice. Choosing to pursue activities (which includes Founders and other large scale events) after Mid-Year Trials is a choice we make. While it can be argued that these activities carry a sentimental value which cannot be wished away, we *must* understand that the trade-off could bear devastating effects

on our own future prospects. This is not applicable to all, and a blanket ban on participation in these activities looks excessive. But if a student fails to show the required level of commitment in his studies, then it is School’s right to regulate anything that prevents him from doing so. In this regard, advancement of deadlines, stricter consequences for defaulters, and a Founders-to-Founders schedule shift is a laudable move on School’s part in driving home this point.

Coming to the latest letter from the Head Master, we hope the changes proposed remain final and revive our academic repute. Already, the sense of an iron-discipline emerging in students and a growing concern for finals is almost palpable in the SC Form. Looking ahead, it is only by reviewing ourselves regularly and adapting ourselves to circumstance that we can carry our march forward.

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## Academic Reflections

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*Ex-DoscOs reflect on the academic environment of School.*

### **Does the academic setup in School prepare you well for studying in college?**

It’s funny how much perspective a year outside of our bubble can give. Just last year we were bargaining for longer deadlines and trying to leverage some activity or the other, whether it was some sport, some Founders’ event, or even this publication! But at university? I don’t even bother trying. At university, we are held responsible for our choices, and we cannot attribute failure to such ‘circumstances’. However, School was an important preparation for the world outside Chandbagh, because the sheer number of activities forces us to manage our time and make difficult decisions. This is the hallmark of our School; it prepares us for real life. That’s why I think that the recent spate of changes that School has been undergoing is a bit of an overkill. School may be judged, to a certain extent, by its academic achievements, but The Doon School is differentiated by what its students do. Forgive me for this cliché, but if parents want perfect marks, then they’re welcome to send their kids to schools doing that; that is not The Doon School’s identity.

**-Salman Mallick (ex 418-O, '18)**

### **Did pursuing so many activities and sports result in extreme academic pressure and poor performance? In hindsight, would you have chosen to do things differently?**

I believe that pursuing various extra-curricular activities and sports did not result in extreme academic pressure or poor performance at all. Rather, I am convinced that my interests in the various activities outside the classroom were a major reason for my sound academic performance. The fact that I was content with my efforts and involvement in the different activities and sports around school allowed me to pursue my academic ambitions successfully.

As someone who took his academics very seriously, I believe that it was School’s well-rounded education, both inside and outside the classroom that led to my holistic development. In hindsight, I do not think I would have done anything differently as I never believed that my involvement in different activities happened at the expense of my academics. On the contrary, these activities supplemented my classroom learning as they provided me with the discipline and the motivation to even better my academic results.

**-Harshit Bansal (ex 396-T, '18)**

### **Would you agree that bearing too many responsibilities can take a toll on academics, especially when the results bear a lot of importance? Is restricting the number of responsibilities an answer?**

By virtue of being social beings, we have multiple roles in society. The very essence of each role is that attached with it comes a responsibility and the sooner we learn to balance our many responsibilities, we can fulfil the many roles which define our lives. By virtually exposing teenagers to important responsibilities like mentoring their peers, organising independent events and serving those in need around them, Doon prepares students in a microcosm for the multiple responsibilities society expects to them to fulfil - in roles like that of a son, parent, professional and many others. This aspect of Doon is why ours is one of the finest institutions in India. Doon teaches us to embrace our responsibilities and not shy away from them because even in the future we can’t limit our role to that of just a son or an employee, we have to realise our multiple duties. Limiting responsibility cannot ensure great academic results as the onus is on the individual and in my experience DoscOs who have held multiple offices have learnt how to balance their school-life and deliver good grades at the same time. I believe the recent changes limit students’ potential and try to fix a state of

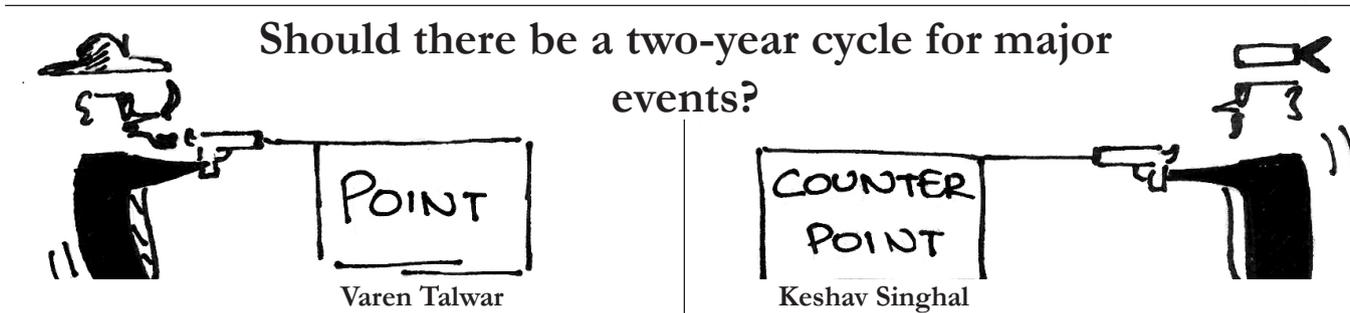
variables with a standardised solution.

-Divij Mullick (ex 371-T, '18)

**Despite the aggregate improvement in IB results, there were quite a few upsets. As someone who scored well, do you feel that the academic environment of school was not conducive for students to achieve their predicted grades?**

When assessing whether the academic environment of School is conducive for IB or not, the most common conclusion we arrive at is that there is not enough academic time to study outside the classroom. While I would agree with this to some extent, I believe that the root cause is not the shortage of time, but rather the lack of a work ethic in individuals who did not see the importance of regular practice. Admittedly, in some cases, some institutional flaws contributed to this, I feel that mostly it is an individual shortcoming that led to students not achieving their predicted grades. So, making institutional changes such as sacrosanct Toye timings to give stimulus to create an academic work ethic did improve the academic environment. However, what was also needed alongside was a monitoring of how the individuals who struggled with IB managed this designated academic time and looking at their individual needs to create a better academic environment for them.

-Kanishkh Kanodia (ex 495-O, '19)



The debate about whether to host major school events like the DSMUN, the Chuckerbutty Debates, and the Founders' Play on alternate years revolves around one simple yet influential concept – opportunity cost. It requires a detailed evaluation of whether we gain more than we lose. I believe the new system of hosting such events in alternate years works well because its benefits outnumber its shortcomings.

Firstly, we must acknowledge the time that an event like DSMUN takes. Chairpersons and their Deputies invest endless hours to formulate successful plans for their committees and extensive Background Guides, while the Secretariat works day and night so that things function smoothly. This process then repeats itself the same year, where many of the same students participate in the Chuckerbutty Debates, eating into the time that could, and should, have been spent studying.

One way of responding to this issue is to blame poor time management. The problem I see with that argument is that “time management” includes, in a major way, the practice of staying up late to complete work. This results in students sleeping in classes – compromising academic efficiency in the process.

A proposed alternative to this is that we can scale down the magnitude of these events to make them less time-consuming; but then tell me this — how often have such strategies worked in our School? Our myopic view might hinder progress the School tries to make to balance our lives. Moreover, if we scale down the event, are we not embracing mediocrity? Is it not better to host one grand event a year instead of two

Amongst the numerous changes being made in school, the change concerning the continuance of DSMUN and Chuckerbutty debates as annual events has perhaps accrued the most attention.

From a creative standpoint, these events are an outcome of the collective collaboration of people who might be extremely different. Due to their structure and organization, these events employ people from all ends of the spectrum. From arranging logistics, booking hotels, placing water bottles, cleaning classrooms, to being chit boys, graphical designers, chairpersons, Presidents, etc. there is a large room for collaboration between people who may never work together otherwise. Events like DSMUN allow this and give DoscOs an avenue to explore their skill sets. These examples are just a microcosm of the collaboration that events like Chuckerbutty debates and DSMUN forge. Many DoscOs would be deprived of an opportunity to acquire these skills if this event were to be conducted in two years, since external events are not student run and clearly don't teach us organizational skills.

Furthermore, discarding one event for a year may not be the only possible solution we have to achieve the exemplary academic performances we hope for. An indispensable element of this discussion is the manner in which we implement our time and make the most productive use of it. Having said so, events like DSMUN can be shifted to the first week of the summer vacations altogether. This would remarkably decrease the pressure students face in the Autumn term whilst ensuring that both DSMUN and Chuckerbutty debates take place. Downsizing the event may defeat

flimsy ones?

“But what about the leadership position people miss out on? Isn’t the CV important too?”

What about the juniors who will simply not participate in these events because they cannot lead them in the future?” An impoverishment of our CVs is a pressing concern, but we must not forget that only when we have consistently respectable academic grades will our CVs be even considered. We must realise this catch and choose between those extra marks on our transcripts and that extra line on our CV.

“But what about exposure? Are you not restricting DoscOs from developing their skill set?” In such cases, people forget that external events exist which students can participate in. Furthermore, one grand internal event every year is enough to hone organisational skills.

Then there is the erroneous belief that juniors will not participate in these activities as they have no “future” in the field. “Future”, for them, exists only with a title - a position of leadership - and not in the form of experience of the event. Are we not losing the essence of being a Dosco – to seek knowledge over position? Do we not betray the School’s mission of an ‘Aristocracy of Service’ – “to labour and not to seek for reward”?

This whole issue is based on our unwillingness to change our mind-set and make a necessary sacrifice. It all comes down to the choices we make, and I believe the new system is the first right choice in a long line of decisions, one we will have to make to shift to a culture of “Less is More”.

the purpose of the event. This is because the sheer number of DSMUN and the people constituting it make it a success.

Many advocates of this change claim that Chuckerbutty debates and DSMUN in particular employ a similar workforce, thus imparting the same knowledge. From an analytical perspective, this claim may not be true. If we consider the ground facts, we learn that the organization committee of the Chuckerbutty debates mainly constitutes of B formers and below. Moreover, only a handful of A formers and above debate and chair the debates. The junior DoscOs are exposed to clerical work through these debates while the A formers dip their toes in the choppy waters of leadership. On the other hand, DSMUN employs a huge number of B formers and above. DoscOs become more proficient in their organizational or diplomatic skills by participating in DSMUN. Therefore, these events impart equally important knowledge, which is also unique to each other. Hence, there is minimal overlapping between the two.

Admittedly, academics has its own significance in our school lives. However, academics only forms a part of the education the school wishes to impart to its students. After having spoken to a senior master in school, I learnt that all these experiences (Debates, MUN, etc.) give us concrete skills that we would find useful in the future. They teach us things that books and classrooms can’t. This is the education that sets Doon apart from other institutions in the country and augments the understanding of an “all-round education”.



# The Week Gone By

**Divyansh Nautiyal**

With the campus being finally greeted by light showers, Doscos and Masters alike received a break from the humid and drowsy weather that has been plaguing Chandbagh. If not for the rains, many would have had to continue with the ritual of drenching their beds with water which would allow them to sleep in the night. A power outage in the House of Nizams led to a midnight exodus with half the house shifting to the upper floor to take shelter in cooler rooms which had escaped this dark fate.

Although there is a month

and a half to go for the Mid-Year Trials, the discussion about predicted grades only gains heat with yelps and squeals over the application of the same formula for the IB and ISC grades. While multiple discussions ranging from the shifting of appointments to predicted grades rage on, the final decision is yet pending. The month ahead is packed with everything ranging from DSMUN to The Chuckerbutty Debates to Swimming and Football at the Inter-House level. Preparations for DSMUN appear to be in full swing with requests to find a place in the event flying in from everywhere. They range from the SCs wanting to be delegates to the junior B form waiting to catch their first glimpse of the event which they have heard of only in

conversations between seniors.

While MUN preparations are underway, the Inter House debates almost seem to be hurtling to an end in the Seniors category. From what I have heard, the Popular Band is also in for a long stretch of events with the Band having to prepare around two dozen songs to put up a show in the upcoming two weeks. Friday Assembly saw our Prefectorial body sharing the best of their memories they have had with their Masters. With the not-so-discreet talks amongst the Masters and Boys regarding the declining student-teacher bond, it really came as a welcome surprise. As for the month ahead, I believe we'll have to be the 'best versions of ourselves' as the campus is soon to be flooded with the much-awaited visitors!

## Wordsearch | Animals in Movies

1. This movie "Free \_\_\_\_" is based on a child who becomes friends with a killer whale and goes great lengths to free it from the exploitative owners who want to kill the animal.
2. This species of primates plays the eccentric character of Rafiki in "The Lion King".
3. This lovable sloth bear is the strict teacher of the "Seeonee" wolf pack in Rudyard Kipling's classic novel "The Jungle Book".
4. The Bengal \_\_\_\_ appears in both the novel and the movie "Life of Pi".
5. After the release of this film "Finding \_\_\_\_" the clownfish became one of the most popular fish for aquarists around the world.
6. A Terrier mix, who is the main protagonist in "The Secret Life of Pets".
7. The evil heiress \_\_\_\_ de Vil wanted to make a fur coat for herself out of the skins of a hundred and one Dalmatian puppies.
8. She was Mowgli's most trusted reptilian mentor and friend in the novel, but was changed to a dangerous villain in the movie.
9. Dr John \_\_\_\_ has a special power to communicate with animals, but his family and colleagues consider him insane.

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

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

Answers to This Week's Wordsearch  
 1. Willy  
 2. Mandrill  
 3. Baloo  
 4. Tiger  
 5. Nemo  
 6. Max  
 7. Cruella  
 8. Kaa  
 9. Doltle

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

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