

The Doon School WEEKLY

“I sketch your world exactly as it goes.” -Arthur Foot
May 16, 2020 | Issue No. 2572



AMIDST THE CHAOS

An account of the pandemic from one of India's worst-hit areas.

Page 3

THE BOOK AS A BLURB

A creative reflection on the allure of a bookstore.

Page 4

कल करे सो आज कर

कार्यों में विलम्ब के आम कारणों एवं उनसे संबंधित सुझावों का विश्लेषण।

Page 5

Swansong for Traditional Teaching?

Mr. Manu Mehrotra *reflects on the pedagogical changes adopted due to the lockdown.*

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, in his book *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, argues that unexpected events or the events with very low predictability have a disproportionately huge impact on our lives and historically have changed the course of history. Events like 9/11 and the economic meltdown of the last decade fall in this category, and so does the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of the various areas of our daily lives that have been affected, education could be counted as being the foremost to be affected by the pandemic. Schools and universities across the globe have been forced to get on to the online platform in no time. The challenges for both teachers and students are immense. Both need to change and adapt rapidly. I have seen my own teaching change rapidly to suit the needs of students. My aim was to give them a classroom experience that enhanced their understanding and did not limit it because of the lack of a face-to-face setting.

These developments got me thinking: if I upload a PDF with everything I would say written down in it, it would work. Soon I realised the limitation of this – it is impossible to write up all that you might say while explaining a concept or a problem. I also felt that getting to read the document along with my voice explaining the concept would lead to a better

understanding. Therefore, I then moved to a PDF coupled with a Podcast, but soon realised the limitations of this also – how do I signal to the students about the salient feature of the graph, for example? Gestures were missing. How could I make it better?

Next came screen recording – I made notes and scanned and transferred them on my laptop. I then made a screen recording with me talking and moving the cursor to the point or the figure or the part of the solution that I needed to refer to. How could this be made even better? I could show it in real time with the students watching as I wrote. So, web camera came next, thanks to an idea by a colleague that a phone can be converted to a webcam. He used a juicer found at home to hang the video camera so it could be placed right above the writing pad! I used a stack of books and a wooden ladle to do the same thing. Now, of course, I have a stand borrowed from the Physics Department to place the phone on.

Sorting such issues is the not the most difficult of things, thanks to technology and the availability of graphing tablets and other such gadgets. However, since this situation came at us out of the blue to begin with, the teaching community across the globe was especially taken by surprise. I was not prepared enough to teach in an

Make no mistake, the actual classroom experience, and in our case the actual boarding school experience, cannot be replaced by online classes.

online setting. I was anxious – how would a lecture over a video call work? How would I show the diagrams? Would the course get completed on time? Would I get enough time for revision? How would I monitor what the students were doing? How would I assess their learning? However, the alacrity with which the teachers in our School and around the world have adapted to this situation is to be appreciated.

These are times for learning and for reflecting on our practice. I am happy with all the academic and technology-related discussions we are having among colleagues, exchanging ideas and any new thing we come across. Students, too, are sharing useful information and knowledge about possible tools that may come handy for us.

We need to be mindful that

(Continued on the next page)

(Continued from the previous page)

Since this situation came out of the blue at us to begin with, the teaching community across the globe was especially taken by surprise.

we cannot be replicating a traditional lesson online but should take advantage of the digital infrastructure and digital pedagogies. The main course elements of any online learning are best characterised by the RASE learning design model (Churchill et. al, 2013). The model comprises digital resources (R), activities (A), supports (S), and evaluations (E). A good example of such a model will have all of the above, but the keystone needs to be the design of learning activities that should

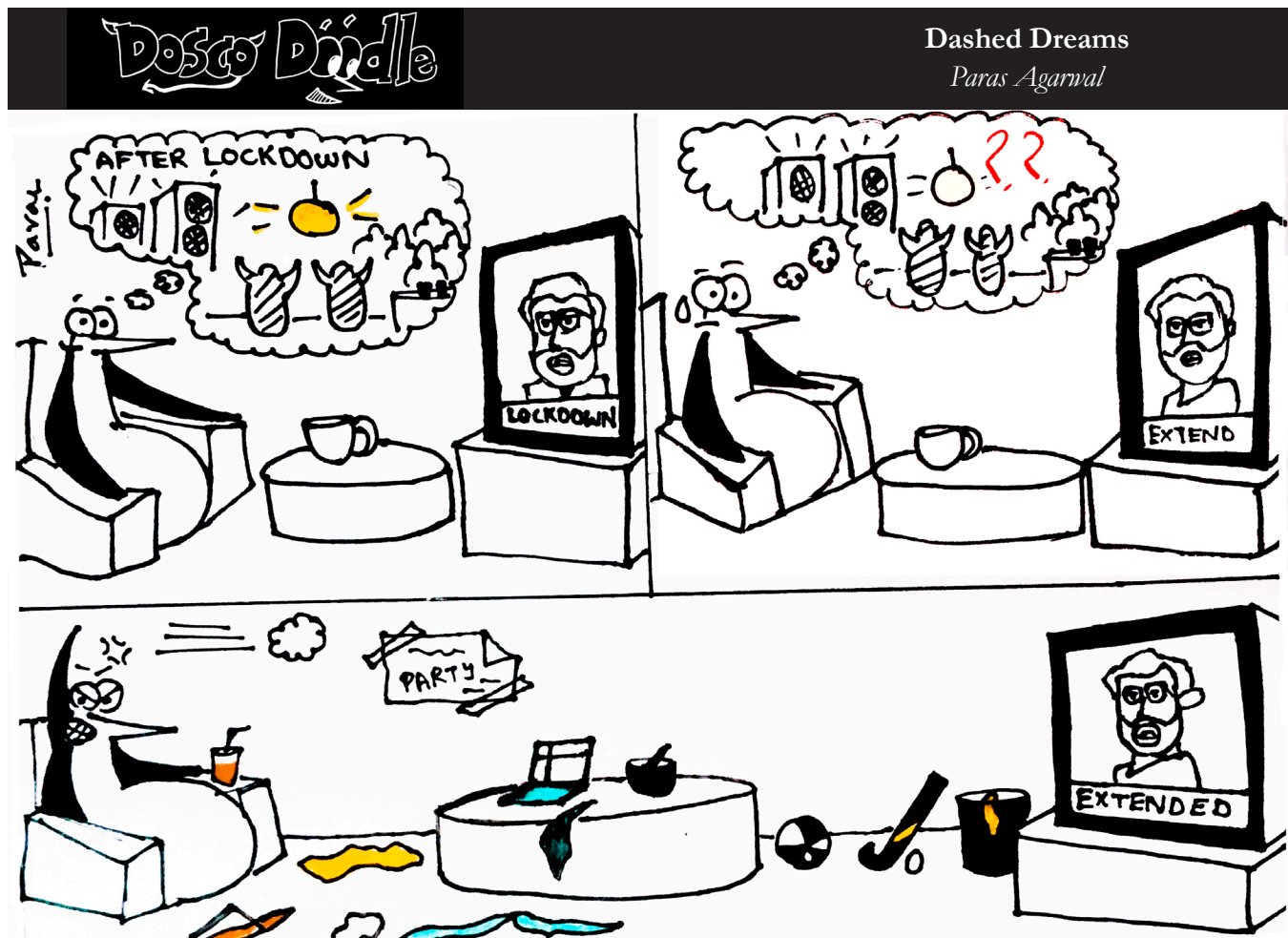
help the learner to construct and use knowledge from the digital resources. For example, group problem-solving after a lecture, individual written assignments, short quizzes at the end of the class to gauge understanding, etc. I think as teachers we need to collaborate to come up with more learning activities to enhance student understanding.

As much as these times require teachers to adapt and change pedagogies quickly, these times require students to be more responsible for their own learning and to hold themselves more accountable as well. The kind of supervision that can happen in a face-to-face setting simply cannot happen in an online environment. Students need to ask themselves some questions: are we being punctual to the class? Are we being attentive? Are we contributing to learning? Are we accessing the digital resources regularly and coming to the class prepared? In short, are we becoming independent learners?

The coronavirus is here to stay, and we do not know for how long. It has forced both teachers and students to use an existing learning tool more often. I think online learning and teaching is preparing us to be versatile and flexible in our approach.

Make no mistake – the actual classroom experience, and in our case the actual boarding school experience, cannot be replaced by online classes. I think I speak for everyone at Doon when I say that we are not only teachers of academic subjects here, but also have other roles, the ones without which we would not like to imagine ourselves. I am sure it is the same for our boys as well.

Let us together learn to learn. Teachers learning to learn how to teach online and students learning to learn online. Above all, we need flexibility to change our approach and cater to both online and face-to-face setting. What if the next black swan event is technology getting its corona virus thanks to the b(a)ots!



Amidst the Chaos

Inderveer Oberoi *talks about his experience of the lockdown in Mumbai, one of the worst-hit places in India.*

On March 24, 2020, the Indian government clamped a nationwide lockdown due to the drastically increasing COVID-19 cases in the country. Maharashtra is one of the worst-hit states, with the number of cases growing rampantly. The streets of Mumbai that always bustled with vehicles and people are now deserted. The usual thrum of this city has been replaced by an eerie tranquillity. Around March 20, seeing the graph of the COVID cases increasing exponentially, it was decided that none of us would leave home under any circumstance and that no staff would be permitted to enter the building. While we were safe at home, several cases were detected around the vicinity. It took me a few days to adjust to this new, tense, and unforeseen situation, but as time passed, I got used to staying indoors. News about the stranded migrant workers being unable to get to their villages, the sufferings of the daily wage workers, the emergency shelters, the Bandra fiasco, and the death spikes was being belted out each day by the news channels. Yet, living in the comfort of my home, none of them directly moved me until very recently.

Two Wednesdays ago, the security guard called home to inform us that our laundry man was at the gate, weeping. Over the past month under lockdown, he had run out of his meagre savings and now was unable to feed his family of five. The only breadwinner of his family, he made just enough each day to feed his family. With no work and no resources, he was completely broken and thus at our doorstep. My parents immediately sent him some money and offered to help further if need be. I was crestfallen at this sight and understood how fortunately I was placed. I felt this intense urge to help those who do not have the privilege of staying home without working during these testing times.

I discussed my growing concerns with my family. I really wanted to help – to reach out to the needy during these difficult times. Initially, they were worried about the increased probability of my getting infected if I went out to help. After much consideration, we came up with a way to help without having to expose ourselves to the lurking danger. Using the society office records, we contacted the household help – the car washers, the visiting vegetable and fruit sellers, and the security guards. We asked them to reach out to those families living near their homes that were

looking for help. We wanted an approximate count with their contact numbers. Having done that, we contacted our local general store, requesting them to pack individual bags consisting of basic necessities that are needed to sustain a family for a week. One member of each family was asked to collect a coupon from the building security officer, present it at the general store, and collect their packed parcel. We hoped that this food ration would at least ensure some families didn't sleep hungry and that they would sustain themselves through the week till they could receive their coupon next week again. Confined indoors, this was the least we could do to help. I truly wish we could have done more. I hope to find other ways to assist the people around me, because at the end of the day, we stand true to our morals of being an aristocracy of service.

| Poetry |

Midterms at Doon

Aradhya Jain

I climbed the trees,
I waded through the falls,
So, when it comes to Midterms,
I love them all.

My first was in April.
It happened at Maldevta Farms
There was a lot of trekking;
Going through a village, we saw barns

The second one in September,
We were sulking in the camp.
It wasn't at all fun,
As the beds were all damp

A few days afresh,
A new camp started.
We had fun there
With fields that parted.

The third didn't occur
Due to the pandemic.
The entire time at School
Was spent on the year of academics

I really hope the next one
Is as exciting as the firsts,
With fun, frolic, and merry times
Giving us joys in bursts.

The Book as a Blurb

Aryan Agarwal

In the Bookstore, every book waits on its shelf for its prey to come to it. The brass bell chimes when a customer steps onto the muffling carpet of the store; she does not plan to buy a book. “I want only to check for the latest, Ma!” Maya had proclaimed before she left her mother who was buying groceries at a nearby store. Unaware that her resolution was destined to collapse, Maya ventured past the bookstand-thickets of ‘Bestsellers’ and ‘Buy-1-Get-1’s, into the towering jungle-shelves of Classics. It was surprising that neither the reflective gloss of the Bestsellers nor the apparent harmlessness of the ‘B-G’s enticed her at all, but the books did not worry about it, for the fact is that one does become relatively loose upon entering the store. Not being able to hear one’s own footsteps convinces the customer of their literal lightness, soon after which all monetary reservations melt from the jaunty jazz theme playing in the background.

Maya squatted on the floor with her heels up and strained her neck from the left to the right and back again. She was scanning under the ‘Contemporary Literature’ heading, whilst tapping her knuckles to the rhythm of the gentle snare. She saw very few navy and scarlet leather-bound hardbacks, lost among the more vibrant and dominant population of digitally illustrated paperbacks. Many writers grabbed her fancy, with each name sounding grander than the one before. After reading the back of yet another book and staring into the monochrome picture of its author’s unnaturally blank face, she wondered whether the writers of the blurbs ought to win awards; after all, they do make the book very seductive to the casual customer. For instance, in the ‘Classics’ shelf, she had picked up a book with the following blurb: “Brontë’s most passionate, powerful poems on death, nature’s beauty and the passage of time.” Inside her head, the sound of these words made her think that all of life’s wisdom would be inked on its pages, so she clung to it tightly, wanting to become the wiser person.

As had been foreseen, once she emerged from the

‘Classics’ Row, between her index finger and her tense thumb was clasped a preying book – a conspicuously slim booklet. Some time ago she had been caught off-guard by the fact that great books could be thin too, due to the assumed premise that great books had to be big and ‘great’. However, she had gradually come to accept it, although she liked to think that it was done deliberately to induce a sense of novelty.

Anyway, she moved to the *cul-de-sac* of encyclopaedias at the end of the bookstore to acquaint herself with the musings to come. She parted the pages of her book with her two thumbs, but with the same immediacy with which the book was hoisted up, it was laid back down. She flipped the book around to read the blurb once again: “Brontë’s most passionate, powerful poems on death, nature’s beauty and the passage of time.” She definitely liked the blurb a lot, but began to think whether she would ever like the book. She weighed having the book, which made her feel smart and because it had a blurb she liked, against not having it, which would be very similar to not having the book at all, because she could not see herself reading it anyway. So, sliding off the chair, she strode towards the door, having tucked her book behind the animal encyclopaedias.

Halfway down the aisle however, she decided that the book looked nice enough, the grain of the paper felt good, and above all, that the blurb was an effective balm for her yearning for deep thought. “Besides, having the book increases the likelihood of me reading it,” she thought to herself for her conscience’s sake. In less than a minute she returned with the exact amount – the change in it smelled of her mother’s coriander and peas – and handed it to the cashier before she ventured back into the maze of shelves to recover her book. Book in hand, she walked up to the cash register thinking about how carefully the book had been designed to catch her attention, and how effortlessly she had fallen prey to it.



कल करे सो आज कर आज करे सो अब

आदि जैन

कल करे सो आज कर आज करे सो अब।

पल में प्रलय होगी बहुरि करेगा कब।।

कबीर दास द्वारा शताब्दियों पहले रचा गया यह दोहा आज भी प्रासंगिक है। इसकी सीख को हम सब समझते हैं कि हमें किसी भी कार्य को टालना नहीं चाहिए क्योंकि समय किसी की प्रतीक्षा नहीं करता, किंतु इसे जीवन में अपनाना कोई आसान काम नहीं। उदाहरण के लिए छात्रों को देखा जा सकता है। कोरोना महामारी के कारण मिले अवकाश में हर छात्र के दिमाग में दो विचार होते हैं, पहला होता है समय का पूर्ण उपयोग कर ज़्यादा से ज़्यादा काम करना चाहिए और दूसरा होता है कि समय तो बहुत है काम बाद में हो जाएगा। हम जानते हैं कि पहला विचार सही है किंतु हमारे जानने के पश्चात भी अक्सर देखा जा सकता है, दूसरा विचार पहले को पराजित कर देता है। सवाल यह उठता है कि किसी कार्य में विलम्ब करने का हमारा मन क्यों करता है और इस समस्या का निवारण कैसे कर सकते हैं।

परिहार चिंता का सामना करने का एक प्रसिद्ध तरीका है। विफलता के डर के कारण लोग किसी कार्य को स्थगित करना शुरू कर सकते हैं। मनो-वैज्ञानिक शोधकर्ताओं के अनुसार शिथिलता का तनाव से सीधा सम्बन्ध है।

इसके पीछे प्रथम कारण है एक साफ लक्ष्य की अनुपस्थिति। जब हमारे पास कोई साफ लक्ष्य नहीं होता तो हमारे पास किसी कार्य को करने की कोई ज़रूरी वजह नहीं होती जिसके कारण हमें आवश्यक कार्यों को भी करने की लगन नहीं होती। लगन के इस अभाव के कारण हम अधिकतर सरल और निष्फल कार्यों को जटिल और महत्वपूर्ण कार्यों के ऊपर चुनते हैं। कई बार हम ऐसे कार्यों को पहले कर लेते हैं जो हमें अभी तो आनंदमय लगते हैं किंतु जिनका भविष्य में हमारे ऊपर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव होगा।

इस तरह की टालमटोल से बचने का सर्वश्रेष्ठ उपाय है अपने लिए लघु अवधि के साफ लक्ष्य बनाना। अगर ज़्यादा दूर का लक्ष्य हुआ तो नजर आने वाले परिणामों की कमी के कारण हमारा उत्साह कम हो जाएगा। वहीं, दूसरी तरफ़ अगर हम जीवन में लघु अवधि के लक्ष्य रखें जो एक परमलक्ष्य के लिए सीढ़ियां बनें तो हर छोटा लक्ष्य प्राप्त करने के पश्चात हमें जो तृप्ति और प्रसन्नता मिलेगी वह हमें अगला कार्य करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करेगी।

ऐसे में यह ध्यान रखना भी आवश्यक होगा कि सभी छोटे छोटे लक्ष्यों का अंतिम उद्देश्य अपने बड़े लक्ष्य पर पहुँचना है अन्यथा हम छोटे लक्ष्यों को ही प्राप्त कर इतने संतुष्ट हो जाएंगे कि हमें आगे बढ़ने की इच्छा ही नहीं होगी। अगर हम जीवन को एक खेल के समान दृष्टि से देखें तो भी लाभ हो सकता है, अनेक छोटी चुनौतियों को पूरा कर अंतिम लक्ष्य हासिल करना।

किसी कार्य के विलम्ब के पीछे एक और कारण हो सकता है, तनाव। परिहार चिंता का सामना करने का एक प्रसिद्ध तरीका है। विफलता के डर के कारण लोग किसी कार्य को स्थगित करना शुरू कर सकते हैं। मनो-वैज्ञानिक शोधकर्ताओं के अनुसार शिथिलता का तनाव से सीधा सम्बन्ध है।

तनाव से राहत के लिए, कम आत्मविश्वास वाले लोग अपना ध्यान भविष्य की उच्च प्राथमिकता से हटाकर आसान कार्यों में लगा लेते हैं। आत्मविश्वास की इस कमी की वजह से ही लोग किसी काम को करने की अपनी क्षमता पर संदेह करते हैं जिस वजह से वह कार्य करने से पहले उन्हें ऊँचे स्तर का तनाव महसूस होता है तथा वे उस काम को टालते हैं।

शिथिलता से बचने के लिए अपने तनाव का स्तर कम रखने के साथ आत्मविश्वास अनिवार्य है और ऐसा करने के लिए अहम है एक सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण। "जो होता है अच्छे के लिए होता है", अगर व्यक्ति इस कहावत को समझ ले और अमल में लाये तो वह अपने तनाव, ऊँची उम्मीदों और नफरत को ही अपने प्रोत्साहन के स्रोत में परिवर्तित कर सकता है। किन्तु हर व्यक्ति के लिए इस कहावत को अमल में लाना संभव नहीं इसलिए आवश्यक है कि उसके करीब जो लोग हों वे उसे एक सकारात्मक वातावरण प्रदान करें, उससे बहुत ऊँची उम्मीदें न रखने और लक्ष्य प्राप्त न करने पर उसे समझाएं और उसकी सहायता करें, उसे खरी-खोटी न सुनायें। अगर किसी व्यक्ति के साथ संवेदनशीलता से बर्ताव किया जाए और उसे अपने आप में विश्वास दिलाया जाए तो ये दुनिया न ही अधिक खुश परन्तु अधिक दक्ष भी बन सकती है।



Problems of the Week

A unit equilateral triangle is shown in Figure 1, 4 of them in Figure 2, and 9 in Figure 3. This series continues. Find numbers of unit equilateral triangles in Figure 4, in Figure 25, and in Figure 50.

Number of unit sides in Figure 1 is 3, 9 in Figure 2, and 18 in Figure 3.

Find the number of unit sides in Figure 4, in Figure 12, and in Figure 25.

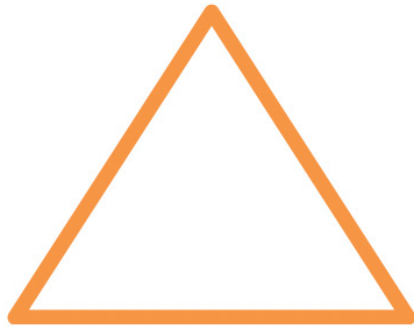


Figure 1

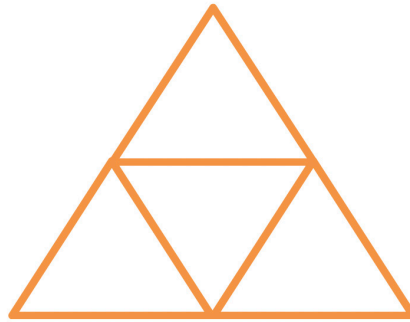


Figure 2

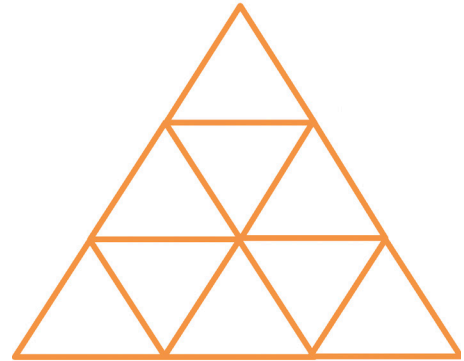


Figure 3

What Have You Been Reading During the Lockdown?

‘Date Line Dehradun: The School Town of India’ and ‘Walking with Laata: 50 Trails Through Doon Valley’s Living History & Nature’

Authors: Raj Kanwar and Lokesh Ohri

The two most recent books I have read are *Date Line Dehradun* and *Walking with Laata*. Both books look at Dehradun’s rich, albeit overlooked, history. Written in an accessible manner, the two books are a delight for those who want to know more about their city. Personally, for me the two books together are a veritable trip down memory lane. Written by a veteran city journalist Raj Kanwar and its most famous flaneur Lokesh Ohri, the two books familiarise the reader with Dehradun’s rich cultural past, the remnants of which are crying out for our attention. *Date Line Dehradun* especially has an extended section on our School and may be of interest to the extended Dosco community interested in knowing more about the city, and the social and cultural space occupied by our School in the city’s social and cultural landscape and imagination.

- Dr. MH Farooqui

Around the World in 80 Words

More than 75000 people have been declared infected with the coronavirus in India. Japan announced a relaxation in its state of emergency. PM Narendra Modi announced a 20 lakh crore package for the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. Terrorists in Kabul killed 24 people in a terror attack on a hospital, including two new-borns and sixteen women; the Taliban took responsibility for the attack. Mohammad Bin Salman reportedly submitted a takeover bid for the Premier League team Newcastle.

“

Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen.

Michael Jordan

The views expressed in articles printed are their authors’ own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Weekly or its editorial policy.

Online Edition: www.doonschool.com/co-curricular/clubs-societies/publications/past-weeklies/ weekly@doonschool.com



©IPSS: All rights reserved. **Published by:** Kamal Ahuja, The Doon School, Dehradun.

Editor-in-Chief: Varen Talwar **Editor:** Adit Chatterjee **Senior Editors:** Aviral Kumar, Keshav Raj Singhal, Sriman Goel **Hindi Editor:** Sudhir Chowdhry **Associate Editors:** Aditya Jain, Advaita Sood, Aryan Agarwal, Kabir Singh Bhai **Special Correspondents:** Aadi Jain, Ahan Jayakumar, Armaan Rathi, Sudhanshu Chowdhry, Vihan Ranka **Correspondents:** Abhay Jain, Sai Arjun, Siddhant Srivastava, Yashovrat Nandan **Cartoonists:** Anant Ganapathy, Paras Agrawal **Webmaster:** Kritika Jugran **Assistant Managers:** Arvandanabha Shukla, Priyanka Bhattacharya, Purnima Dutta, **Technical Assistant:** KC Maurya **Picture Credits:** The Wall Street Journal (Page 5)