

The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
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The Final Countdown

Tarun Doss *reflects on School life, the lockdown and the final months of this School year.*

Mealtimes at the Jaipur House tables are usually very enjoyable. Lively banter and convoluted ribbing generally pepper the conversation. At one end, somebody tries to figure out how many times a hardboiled egg can spin on its side in five seconds (with the others 'egging' him on), while at the other end, black market deals are being devised - somebody is willing to exchange two gulab jamuns for five ice cream sandwiches (what a bargain!) Topical, amusing, philosophical, even criminal at times, one never knows which way the conversation will drift, but it is sure to be engaging.

This was the scenario until March last year. I remember sitting among my form mates celebrating KLA Sir's announcement in the CDH for what we thought would merely be an early break for our summer vacation. Little did we know that we would not be returning to our beloved Chandbagh in July 2020. Almost a year and a half flew right by, as I breezed past B Form, and now find myself anxiously awaiting the impending doom of Boards.

Perhaps, I would have found myself seated at the AT's table on Monday morning - lacklustre appetites, shoulders drooped in a tense huddle and pensive expressions greeting me from one quarter while a half-hearted attempt at insipid conversation greeting me from the other end.

A surprise would knit my brow as I would have asked a casual, "How's it going?". The predictable response of half-smiles, shifty eyes and embarrassed coughs. One of the many exclusive and once-in-a-lifetime experiences the Pandemic has snatched away from me before my very eyes. Having been stuck at home for so long, even the uneasy atmosphere of what would have been my Jaipur house AT Form table, in one secluded corner of the CDH, allures me. My yearning to return to Chandbagh only grows stronger as these lonely days pass by me, and my limited time at Chandbagh creeps to its end.

With boards just around the corner, and half the A Formers still stranded at home, I sense the nervous tensions of the AT and Sc formers no matter how far apart we may be. No matter how many miles of land lay stretched between us, the anxious air of the upcoming deciding exams seems all the more claustrophobic. Enveloped in a bubble of overwhelming work and responsibilities, we must persevere. Connected only through Instagram, WhatsApp, and other forms of social media, DoscOs can be seen studying day-in and day-out hoping to receive the best grades possible at this crucial juncture in their lives. While knowledge certainly is our light, it is only now that we are able to see how truly in the dark we were. Studying as hard

as possible - extensively practising past and topical papers - while desperately trying to make time for the occasional Netflix or YouTube break.

Nervous tension can be infectious. It transmits even faster than malicious gossip and perhaps with the same apathy towards the suffering soul. Of course, the examinations are just around the corner. Of course, you all are wondering. Of course, we AT's and Sc-Leavers are feeling the pressure. So, are you going to buckle under the pressure or rise to the occasion and meet the challenge head-on? Most of you have prepared well and have determined the areas you need to work on. This is the last hundred metres of the marathon. You have got to tap into your positive energies and get the adrenalin to work for you. The finishing line is tantalisingly close and we are sure that all your hard work will come to fruition. Along with burning the midnight oil and consuming gallons of coffee, take a few moments to organise and plan. As they say, an ounce of planning is worth a pound of effort. Now is the time to work smart, not necessarily hard! Explaining a difficult concept to a friend who is struggling with it will reinforce what you have learnt and perhaps help a peer reach the coveted distinction status. There

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is a whole new world out there waiting for you – exchange, college, travel, ‘chilling out’. But first, you have got to cross that finishing line. Draw on that

famous Dosco spirit, keep your chin up, square your shoulders and give it all you have got. Stay focussed, help a friend match your pace, keep the positivity at a high and go for it.

CLARIFIED



German Elections

This year’s German elections took place under particularly interesting circumstances since incumbent Chancellor Angela Merkel is not running for re-election. It was also an opportunity to learn about some of the prevailing electoral systems in the world and see how they function in a real election.

In the German election held on September 26, citizens cast two votes: one to directly elect the candidate who will represent their constituency in parliament, and another to determine how many of the 598 seats each party gets in parliament. The first vote functions on a ‘first-past-the-post’ system, which is essentially a simple majority system in which the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. The second vote is based on proportional representation since each party receives a certain number of the 598 seats in parliament that is proportional to the number of votes they received. However, parties that do not get at least five percent of the votes in the second vote are excluded from parliament, unless their candidates win at least three constituency seats in the first vote. Furthermore, sometimes, in order to maintain proportional representation, certain parties may be awarded ‘balance seats’, which increases the number of seats in parliament. After the 2017 election, for instance, parliament was composed of 709 seats.

Once the parliament has been formed, it votes on who should become Chancellor, which is the equivalent of a Prime Minister. Before the election, each party has to decide on a candidate who will become Chancellor should their party attain enough seats to form a government. However, since World War Two, no party has ever won enough seats to form a government on its own, and so there has always been a coalition government formed. In this case, the German President has to suggest a candidate who has a strong chance of being voted in as Chancellor, and only this candidate is voted for. Once a candidate is chosen, all the parliament members vote, and the candidate has to secure an absolute majority to be appointed Chancellor. If he or she fails to gain an absolute majority, a second and third round of voting is conducted. Till now, there has never been a candidate who has not secured a majority in the first round itself.

In this year’s elections, it seems that Germany is set for long weeks of protracted coalition talks after the race to succeed Angela Merkel has not resulted in a clear winner because the centre-left SDP (Social Democratic Party) has won the majority of the votes with too narrow a margin to form a government. The party, led by Olaf Scholz, has secured 25.7% of the vote while the CSU-CDU (Union party), led thus far by Merkel, is not far behind with 24.1%. The CSU-CDU has, however, seen an all-time low number of votes in about 70 years. After winning 14.8% of the votes, the Green Party got its best result ever in the national poll. The party, however, still holds a major hand in the upcoming coalition talks. It also has the youngest chancellor candidate - Annalena Baerbock - and SPD’s Scholz has expressed his willingness to work together, after Scholz swiftly congratulated the environmentalist, stating there were many similarities in their ideologies and goals for Germany.

The Green party has doubled its result, making more improvements than any other party and stepping ahead of the FDP (Free Democratic Party) into third place. A quarter of a million voters who had not voted in the previous election also voted for the Green party this time, and this strongly indicates that the environmentalists are likely to be a major part of the new coalition. The results clearly show that Germany is moving, as was predicted, toward a three-sided coalition. The most favoured coalition at the moment is a so-called green-yellow-red “traffic light” coalition, with the SPD (Red), the Green Party and the FDP (Yellow). It took about three months and a huge wrestle for power to navigate through the formation of the last coalition in 2017. However, analysts predict that it will take close to a year to work

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THE WHO?

Who was Salim Ali?

Arhavirr Singh : A politician

Maadhavan : A singer

Aryan Baruah : An economist

Sálím Moizuddin Abdul Ali was an **Indian ornithologist** and **naturalist**. Sometimes referred to as the “Birdman of India”, Salim Ali was the first Indian to conduct systematic bird surveys across India and wrote several bird books that popularized ornithology in India. He was awarded the **Padma Bhushan** in 1958 and the **Padma Vibhushan** in 1976

MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

The following students have completed their respective grades in the recently-held **music examinations**:

ABRSM, Music Theory (Grade 3): Avighna Daruka

Trinity College, Drum Kit (grade 4): Samarth Pundeer

Kudos!

EXPERTS AT ELOCUTION

The Doon School was represented by Divyaansh Surana, Sriyash Tantia, Aaron Ashdhir, Zubin Dhar, Krtin Goel, and Hridyansh Kothari at the **Singapore International School Confluence, 2021**. Krtin Goel won the **Most Promising Speaker** award in the **Bridge Writing** category in the **INSTIL** debates.

Kudos!

POLYMATHS AND PRODIGIES

Ruhan Agarwal, Maanat Bhadani, Avik Bhargava, Vivaan Sood, and Aradhya Jain participated in the **SelaQui Science Decathlon, 2021**. Aradhya Jain secured **first position** in **Jeopardy** event which had a **Quiz on Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, and Astronomy**.

Well Done!

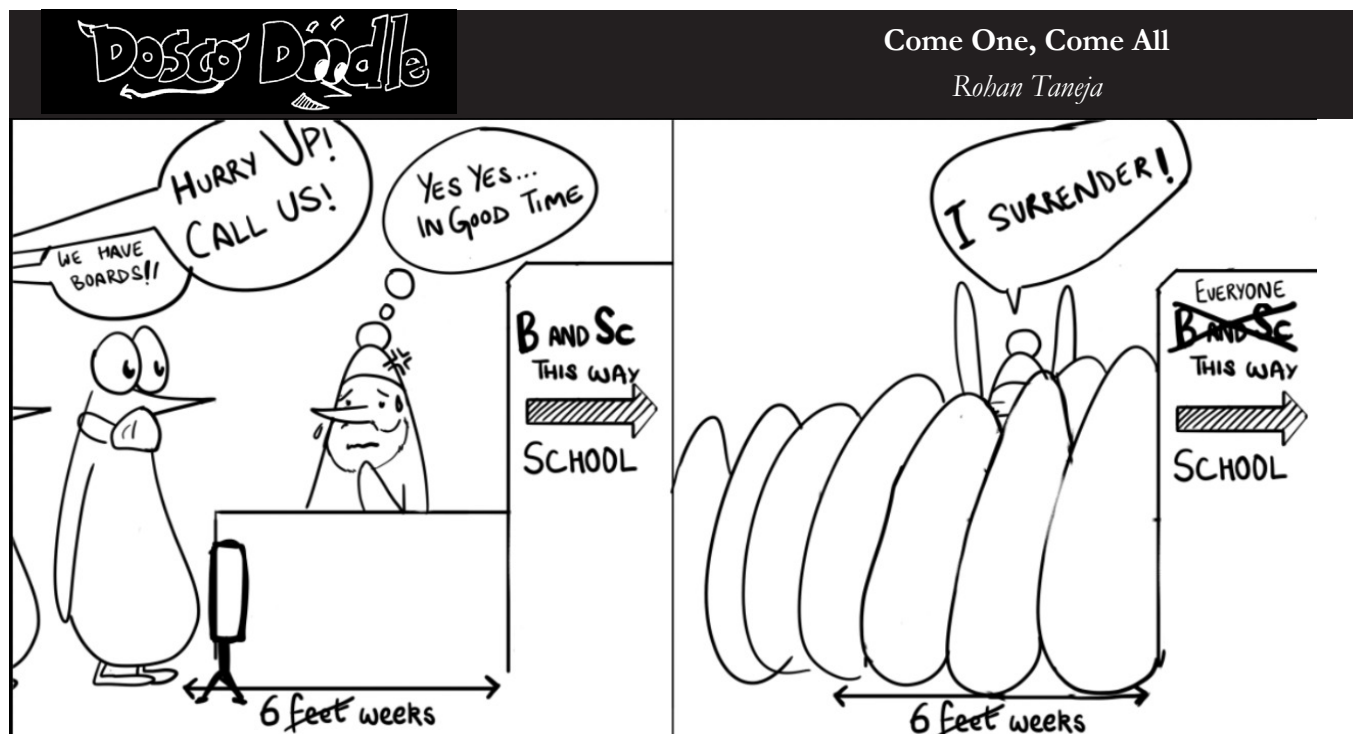
MASTERS OF MELODIES

The Doon School participated in an **annual cultural festival** called **Harmony 2021** hosted by the **Unison World School**. The **Polyphonic - Acapella** team comprised of Mizhgan Ali, Pratham Gupta, Iman Chatterjee, Tarun Doss, and Atharva Jain won **second place** in its category. The **Symphony - Instrumental** team represented by Veer Nigam, Aryan Prakash, Harveer Kochar, Shaan Bulchandani, and Aadi Jain secured **third place** in the category.

Congratulations!

Around the World in 80 Words

A Taliban victory in Afghanistan fueled terror attacks in Pakistan. French president, Emmanuel Macron, asked Europe to ‘stop being naive’ after France signed a defense deal with Greece. Malaysia made the COVID-19 vaccine compulsory for all government employees. Energy Ministers met in Milan for the final UN talks before the major climate summit. A militant was killed by Indian security forces during a search operation in Jammu and Kashmir. Messi scored his first goal for PSG as they routed Manchester City 2-0.



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out the finer points in this year's coalition. Until it is decided, Merkel will be interim leader. She will be unable to propose new laws but will keep the government functioning until her successor takes over. Since Merkel is not running for office, this election was also the first time since World War Two that the incumbent Chancellor did not run for re-election. This made the election race quite unpredictable, with an estimated 25% to 35% of voters remaining undecided until the actual day of voting.

Sources

- 1 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58698806>
- 2 <https://www.euronews.com/2021/09/21/how-does-the-german-election-system-work>
- 3 <https://news.sky.com/story/german-election-explained-how-does-it-work-and-who-will-be-chancellor-after-angela-merkel-12415294>

Coats and Urban Myths

Aryan Baruah

The streets of London were never empty at night. The chilliness of the wind had a certain presence which the streetlights seemed to dissipate. Of course, all of this ended as soon as the sun rose on the horizon, its light bursting through the clouds onto the dull, grey streets of London. As night approached, there was one constant that I forgot to mention, the constant of the long, black coat.

People had tried to capture it, some claimed that its fabric was as smooth as perfectly rounded pebbles and that its gold chain was authentic while others said that it was a slip of the mind, a drop of imagination to colour the foggy streets of London. Some said that it was a resemblance of the past, for it had originated over a century back and was now nothing more than an urban myth that miraculously stood the test of time, a reminder to the older generations of their fugacious youth.

I walked past the streetlights, climbed up to the steps of my house, passed the rickety wooden staircase which never failed to make a creaking noise on the fifth step and ignored the half-painted walls of the hallways as I went up to the rooftop. The chilly wind had come back and I was too far from the streetlights to be saved by their warmth. I held my beige coat tighter around me as I approached the edge of the rooftop in the hope of being warmed by the sight of the streetlamp. The rain dripping from the gutters made it a miserable place to live, but the only one which I could afford.

My eyes glazed over as I looked down at one of the ends of the street and saw a couple kissing with youthful passion. I looked away to the other end and let out what could only have been an audible gasp. Under the streetlight, there was a coat. The coat had no face, but its fabric was visibly rough, drawing a

similarity to a black trench coat. It walked towards the couple at the other end of the street, unbeknownst to his prey. Strangely, the wind began to die down as the coat got nearer to the couple. It was a good thing that there was no sunlight, my glasses would have reflected the light and betrayed my presence.

My eyes were glued as they followed the coat, desperate not to lose it. It closed in on the clearly visible couple now, who were deep in conversation about things which couples usually talk about. The woman suddenly got up as she saw the coat; there was a look of raw fear in her eyes. It was clear to me that she knew about the coat and that she had heard the stories before.

There was an audible thump as her body collapsed as if taken by some unseen force. I looked for the coat, but it wasn't there. There were footsteps behind me, but I could not take my eyes off the woman who had collapsed. I was waiting for her to get back up and to tell her boyfriend that it had been a fleeting moment of weakness, a headache, fatigue. But she did not.

I felt myself being touched on the shoulder, not by a hand but by a certain smoothness of cloth. My head tried to turn around, to see the person who had joined me but with a sense of horror, I realised who it was. My body was paralysed with fear as I climbed onto the ledge. I looked down at the brick textured street and at that moment I saw the perfect fusion of light and dark, yin and yang. It was good to know that nature had come together to witness my demise. As I fell through the air, I realised that it was not the perfect fusion, for concealed in the corner of my eye was the coat. As I touched the ground, it disappeared into its dwelling place of an urban myth.

A New Experience

Krishnav Sachdev and Yash Adalti report on the recently-concluded Round Square conference

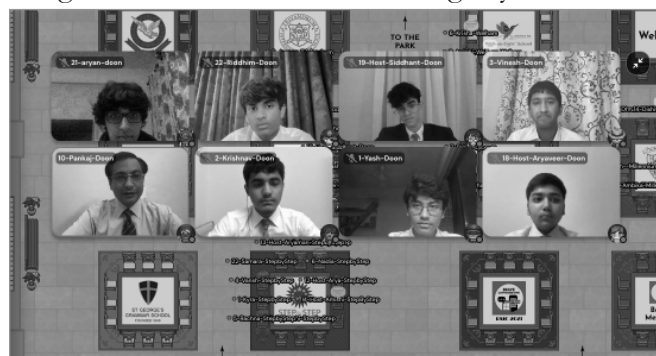
The Round Square International Conference is an annual conference hosted by one of the 200+ member schools across the world, all of which are part of the Round Square network. This year's conference was hosted on the Gather platform, a medium that combines a retro Pokemonesque environment with video calling and chat features. The conference was hosted on this platform over a period of four days - from September 20 to September 23 - and featured several keynote speakers from all over the globe. For the first hour of each session, delegates were free to interact with others and participate in activities such as 'picnic blanket,' in which schools hosted discussions, and 'fire pits,' in which schools held debates. This provided delegates with ample opportunities to socialise with other schools. The Barazza sessions themselves were held in smaller, more cohesive groups in order to facilitate intense debates and discussion about various real-world topics such as climate change, ethical leadership, moral dilemmas and many more.

The experience was engaging, fun and did not get boring at any point

Even after close to two years of COVID-19 protocols, there is always going to be a little part of our hearts that longs for physical events and occasions. The Round Square International Conference was the first time any of us had ever attended such a large-scale event on an online platform. Our expectations before going into the conference were not extremely high. Venturing into an online world such as the Gather platform was a really strange and disorienting experience, but by the end of it, we were really happy that we had the opportunity to have done so. At the end of the four-day-long conference, we were all a bit more open to the idea of such conferences. Although we went into it thinking that it would be a mediocre experience simply based on the fact that it was online, we soon came to realise that our expectations were low because we had experienced only physical Round Square conferences in the past and thought that only a physical conference could do justice to the Round Square experience. Furthermore, we thought of ourselves as being experienced judges of Round Square conferences, since all of us had organized conferences and been part of numerous delegations in the past. So we went into the conference with a closed mind. Little did we know what really the conference had in store for us.

We were extremely glad to see that the platform was elegant and the amount of effort that went into it was beyond anything we could imagine. It was as far from a boring zoom meeting as it could possibly be. An intellectual conference carried out in a retro gaming style may sound implausible, but it played out beautifully in terms of the facilitation of intellectual discussion. The experience was engaging, fun and did not get boring at any point. This was a major factor in the quality of debates and discussions we witnessed and were given the opportunity to participate in. The discussions were not just limited to the *Barazza* sessions (an African word which means the 'coming together of different people'), as in a normal conference. The online avatar was however diversified into 'picnic blankets' and 'firepits' where you could seat your avatars and participate in a variety of discussions taking place. This was a great way to get the delegates' minds working and warmed up for the crucial *Barazza* sessions. The platform was exceptionally well thought out and boasted captivating scenery, such as ponds and beaches, as well as a few ways to relax if you were mentally exhausted from the discourse, including a cinema and games (many of which were popular retro video games such as *Tetris* and topical crosswords). I can only imagine the amount of work that went into the creation of the student platform.

The quality of any event depends on three factors: the organization, the topic and the quality of the environment it is hosted in. The environment, as mentioned, was effective and the topic, "Blue Skies and Brave Conversations," was something that intrigued us and made our experience ten times better because it kept us engaged. The organization of the event was even more commendable than the platform. The way the hosts and *Barazza* leaders organized and conducted themselves was in itself praiseworthy. The division of activities, key-note speeches and allocation of breakout rooms made the conference seamless and something that our entire delegation will cherish in the coming days.



Problem of the Week

Four vehicles travelled on a road with constant velocities. The car and the scooter were travelling in one direction whilst the bike and the motorcycle travelled in the opposite direction. The car overtook the scooter at 12:00, then met the bike at 14:00 and the motorcycle at 16:00. The motorcycle met the scooter at 17:00 then it overtook the bike at 18:00. At what time did the bike and the scooter meet?

Source: *nrich resources*

Gandhi Jayanti Checklist

Books

- 1. India After Gandhi by Ramachandra Guha**, is not set in the British era, but tells us about the implications of British rule on India and how our country developed as a result of M.K. Gandhi's revolutionary actions.
- 2. Satya ke Prayog by M.K. Gandhi** is an autobiographical account which allows us to witness Gandhi's early days until 1921. It delves into his childhood and his college days and gives us more insight into who he really was.
- 3. The Words of Gandhi by M.K. Gandhi and Richard Attenborough** is a compilation of Gandhi's speeches, teachings and philosophies with original text from Gandhi himself, compiled by Richard Attenborough.
- 4. My Dear Bapu: Letters from C. Rajagopalachari to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, by Devadas Gandhi and Gopalkrishna Gandhi** is a compilation of letters exchanged between Gandhi and India's final, and only Indian, Governor General from the years 1920 to 1945. The dialogue not only gives an insight into their lives but also provides food for thought.
- 5. My Days With Gandhi by Nirmal Kumar Bose** narrates the last stages of *Bapu's* life. The author was Gandhi's secretary and companion during those crucial last years. He has drawn on his close relationship with Gandhi, and on a wealth of documentary evidence to show how Gandhi dealt with the crises he experienced both at a personal and political level.

Movies

- 1. Gandhi** is an oscar-winning epic historical drama based on M.K. Gandhi's struggle for freedom against British rule
- 2. The Gandhi Murder** tells the story of the events leading up to the assassination of the Father of Our Nation, M.K. Gandhi.
- 3. Gandhi my Father** is based on Gandhi's son Harilal's biography and explores the fraught relationship between father and son.
- 4. Hey Ram** is a fictional drama set during the Partition and tells the story of Saketh Ram as he plots to kill Gandhi after his wife dies as a result of sectarian violence. The movie derives its title from Gandhi's dying words.

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

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