

The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
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DREAD AND THE CREATIVE MIND

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Budgeting the Budget?

Aditya Gupta shares his views on the Union Budget of 2022.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman drew much praise from various quarters of the economy when she announced her budget earlier this month. It would be rude of me if I too did not commend the Finance Minister's efforts if not her budget itself. While my views do not converge with the larger populace, I do believe they highlight some major hits-and-misses in the budget. By no means am I claiming the budget was a catastrophe. Instead, I am only saying that perhaps it is not as wholesome a package as many are making it out to be.

Let us begin by taking a look at the budgetary allocations for education and healthcare. It has been two years since the government made a big splash with its new National Educational Policy which it had heralded as the start of a new era for the Indian education system. Like many, I too believed that the policy had the potential to bridge the growing gap between international and Indian educational standards. So, it was disappointing to see that no provisions were made for the NEP 2020 in the new budget, even when there is so much riding on the policy's success. What further compounded my disappointment is the fact that the proposed schemes all rely on the assumption that the target beneficiaries have

Cable TV or internet access. If the government is so concerned about setting up 200+ television channels to facilitate education for the very people lacking cable TV or internet, there clearly needs to be more reflection on how to provide access to such facilities.

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Further, the entire healthcare policy was centred around the creation of an online database that would store and relay information about doctors to patients in need. The database is a very worthy endeavour that I fully support. However, its dependence on the internet to facilitate information exchange is extremely concerning to me. The budget reflected a deep appreciation for the potential of tech-based schemes, but lost in that appreciation was an understanding of the harsh ground realities of much of India. Many reports indicate the dire state of internet

provision in India, with one report stating that only about 65% of the population has steady access.

I also believe that it would not be quite right to believe that the government, given its ambitious vision for the role technology stands to play in the functioning of India, has a plan in place to tackle this under-provision, because, so far nothing seems to suggest this. Airtel, Jio and Vodafone have all been vocal about the need to increase tariffs on internet plans to make the telecom business economically viable, with the companies all having already pushed phase-I of this tariff hike late last year. If this is to be continued, then there is no merit or feasibility in all that the government has planned for the country with a tech-based approach in mind. The current education and healthcare policies are small players in the government's *Amrit Kaal* scheme of things. Rather, they highlight the urgent need to recognise the alarming lack of internet access which can not only increase inequality but also cause large swathes of the population to be left behind in India's growth story.

The budget's unprecedented capital expenditure allocation, resounding confidence in the Indian growth story, and, most importantly, its ability to jumpstart

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a cycle of private sector investment has pleased the business elite of the nation but they have not been able to address those who need the support of the government the most. Sure, every government needs the support of corporate India to achieve its vision of making India the next China or America, but it also needs the support of the

larger populace to facilitate that very growth. Without a population with high purchasing power, the government's demographic dividend would be zero. Keeping this in mind, I would say that it is high time the government starts recognising the hidden potential in India's under-privileged, poor, and middle-class sections, all of whom

when unleashed can collectively outpace the consumption of the top 10% of the population.

It was a nice budget but it failed to be a truly wholesome one. It was a thoughtful budget but not groundbreaking. It was, then, a budget that tried to be a blueprint for the 'Amrit Kaal' but did not quite end up doing so.

Dread and the Creative Mind

Vivaan Sood and Arav Khanal

I have not even passed school and I feel aged. The world is cold and unforgiving. Meanwhile, words like 'Kyiv', 'spike-protein', 'potpourri', 'A*' and 'Bobsledding' are thrown at me every day by everyone and I do not understand. I believe I would only attain joy once I do understand them, but until then I am left in a perennial state of confusion. Here are my findings.

Kyiv: A city in Europe. War is brewing in Europe. I suspect they are getting a feeling of *deja vu*, and hopefully the realisation kicks in sooner rather than later. Not only do I ruminate on my exams, but I must now worry about weapons of mass destruction. I am not ready to get enlisted into the army. However, I've been thinking. If war does come, surely they would have to declare a state of emergency, maybe perhaps cancelling exams in the next year or so. Even if we are halfway across the globe, it is war, it is disastrous, they would have to. War could be the best thing that has ever happened to me.

Spike-Protein: Part of a virus. So anyway, the world is on the brink of collapse. Fun. My teacher attempted to lighten the mood by demonstrating how viruses work to kill us with obscure grey balls, but we would not have it. I tried to leave the class, but in my haste, I bumped into the basket of the balls, and they flung themselves all over the class. Everyone looked at me as if I had just dropped a case of hand grenades next to them. If only.

Potpourri: Still do not know what it is. I asked my mother what the bowl in the living room had, and she said 'Potpourri', to which I replied 'Bonjour'. Upon further inquiry, I believe it to be something of great importance, seeing as my mother managed to have a lengthy conversation about it on the phone.

A*: This one, I know, but I do not understand it fully. I yearn to achieve it, I have been told over and over that if I want to head anywhere, I need an A*, and that it helps immensely, but it does not help

immensely. At least, not as far as I see it. To study is just as perplexing as the real world, and I am again at a loss for words. I dread the day I realise that I have been underprepared. I hope it is just not me who feels this way, that it is not solely me at fault, but some other greater cause. All these concepts that I have to wrap my head around, I feel like I understand nothing, but what else.

For me at this point it's hard to keep track of who's doing what, but if I take my eyes off the ball, I fear I will wake up to a world far different.

Bobsledding: An Olympic ice sport. The Olympics have just started in China. It seems like no country agrees with what they are doing, yet are participating, perhaps to win and rebuke China. I do not actually know what China is doing, but maybe that is where the disapproval comes from; the secrecy is just unsettling for everyone. For me at this point it's hard to keep track of who's doing what, but if I take my eye off the ball, I fear I will wake up to a world far different. This concludes my findings. I am an efficient man, with inefficient methods, and I suppose there is much more to know. However, I don't feel like I need to. It is exhausting to know everything, and I would rather focus on what I do best, whatever that would be. Trying to keep up with the current state of affairs, trying to appease everyone, maybe what it takes is sticking to yourself. To pay attention to everything divides resources, creates restraints. That, is just the constant dread that plagues the creative mind.

This Week in History

1757 CE: Calcutta is taken back by Robert Clive through the Treaty of Alinagar.

1763 CE: The Treaty of Paris is signed, ending the Seven Years War between France and the United Kingdom.

1809 CE: Revolutionary naturalist Charles Darwin is born.

1876 CE: Alexander Graham Bell applies for a patent for the telephone.

1960 CE: France detonates its first nuclear bomb in the Sahara Desert.

1979 CE: Margaret Thatcher is elected as the prime minister of the United Kingdom.

1996 CE: World chess champion Garry Kasparov loses a match to the computer Deep Blue.

1996 CE: A new element, Copernicium, is synthesised by Sigurd Hoffman and his team of physicists.

READER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the school community have been reading this week.

Aryav Agarwal: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens.

Advaita Sood: *Nausea* by Jean-Paul Sartre.

RDG: *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation* by Tanika Sarkar.

Udathveer Singh Pasricha: *Elon Musk and The Quest For a Fantastic Future* by Ashlee Vance.

“

A mind that is stretched by a new experience
can never go back to it's old dimensions

—
Oliver Wendell Holmes

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

I just took attendance like a lame person.

RDG, playing the lame game.

Sir, X-rays are done with gamma rays.

Kabir Chawla, child prodigy.

THE WHO?

Who is Jonathan Lyndale Kirk?

Vedansh Madaan: A politician

Kai Kubo: An architect

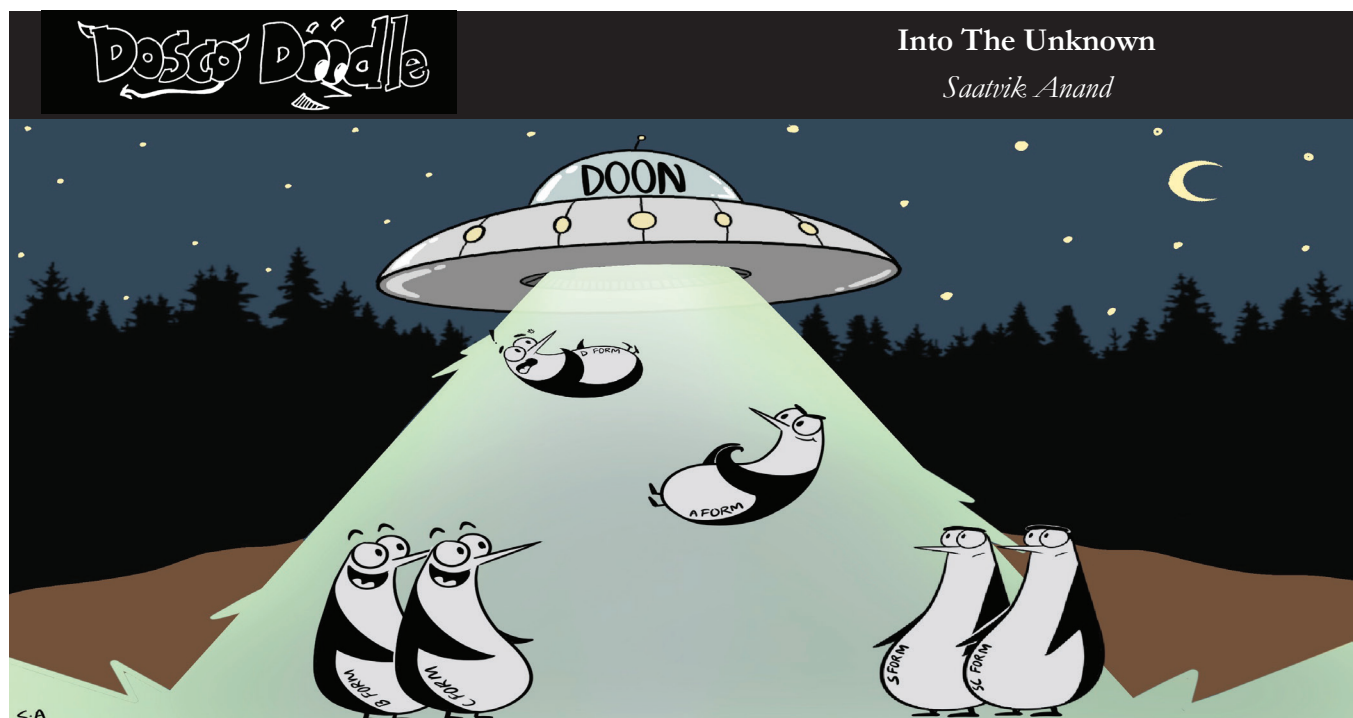
Advay Sapra: A singer

Jonathan Lyndale Kirk, commonly known by his professional name **DaBaby**, is a famous rapper and singer based in America. He is known for songs like

Blame it on Baby, **Suge** and **Rockstar**, featuring Roddy Ricch, which debuted at Number 1 on the Billboard charts. The rapper rose to mainstream prominence in 2019, and has been growing in popularity ever since.

Around the World in 80 Words

Elections for the Legislative Assembly commenced in Uttar Pradesh. Colleges in Karnataka were shut following protests against the ban on hijabs. Russia began a military drill with Belarus, sending their troops to the Ukrainian border. Ottawa, the Canadian Capital declared a state of emergency due to trucker protests against COVID mandates. The US National Archives requested a probe of former President, Donald Trump over the handling of official documents. Senegal won their first AFCON after defeating Egypt 4-2 in penalties.



The Queen of Melody

Masters share their thoughts on what the late singer meant to them.

Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar, fondly known as Lata *didi* was a perfect example of devotion, dedication and diligence. With more than 30,000 songs in 36 languages, and for more than 1000 movies, she earned her love, respect and honour around the world. Lata *ji* gave us a song for every season, reason and occasion. She inspired every soul to believe in themselves, their ideals and gurus. Lata Mangeshkar for her whole life worshipped the '7 surs'. Here listed as a tribute are her 7 praise worthy and inspirational qualities. Lata *ji* started her career at the age of 13 and served the music industry for 8 decades. She inspired us to be dynamic and to consistently improve ourselves. Her strong determination, capability of accepting rejection and the ability to move on is a life lesson in itself. Lata *ji's* forgiveness and tolerance for those who performed evil deeds against her teaches us to be like her. To promote emerging talent, Lata *ji* requested various committees to not consider her for any award, this reflected her humility and humbleness. As a true fighter against all odds, once she observed one year's voice rest to maintain quality and recently, fought against deadly diseases for several days. Lata *ji's* true professionalism, punctuality, compassion and team work earned her love and respect in the industry. Her deeds and efforts always promoted equality. Lata *ji's* songs promoted nationalism and international brotherhood. She united the human race with her '7 surs.' This disciple of Goddess Saraswati left us forever, but she will remain in our heart and soul, as an inspiration for living a contented life.

-HCY

'Tum mujhe yun bhula na paaoge, Haan Tum mujhe yun bhula na paaoge, Jab kabhi bhi sunoge geet mere, Sang sang tum bhi gungunaoge'. Yes, Bharat Ratna, Lata *ji*, that is the feeling of crores of people today. From my grandmother to my *Buas* and my mother all humming the old Hindi songs and so many of them belong to Lata Mangeshkar! I use the word 'belong' intentionally for no one could sing them better. In the 1989 blockbuster, *Maine Pyar Kiya* we had a sixty year young Lata *ji* singing for a twenty year old Bhagyashree! This ageless/timeless magic of her voice has been awe-inspiring. She felt that her music will not be appreciated by children of the coming generations. Reading this in one of the numerous recent articles on her, got me thinking about art, its connection to culture, art appreciation, and a whole lot of other issues. Besides these facets that I had not seriously delved into, there are so many facts about the legendary singer that I did not know - she was given France's highest civilian award, *Officier de la Legion d'Honneur*, for instance. Interestingly, she had an influential role in music education at a conservatory in China! A Marathi story based on her, written by Pandit Kumar Gandharva, was included in the high school textbooks in Maharashtra, for a while. Growing up listening to her melodious voice, humming along and cherishing the era, I am now left with a lot to think about - about her, her music and life, and about art and talent. Lata *ji*, I am sure everyone who heard you sing will today be saying: *Tere bina zindagi bhi lekin, zindagi, to nahi, zindagi nahi, zindagi nahi, zindagi nahi*.

-MMR

Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar or Lata *ji* as we know her has been synonymous to Indian playback singing. She has been an inspiration to each one who loves Indian music and especially to those who want to become a musician. Her father Pandit Deenanath Mangeshkar was a very well known Indian Classical vocalist who trained Lata *ji* in the tradition. That is why in her songs we can see the influence of Indian classical music. There are no words to describe the beauty and effect of her voice, it is for this reason that she has been given the name of the "Nightingale of India". Be it a romantic Bollywood duet, a devotional song, a patriotic song, *Gazal* or *Qawwali*, her sense of singing the song with the emotions attached to it will be remembered always. She is and always will be an inspiration for all of us.

-ASA

CLARIFIED



Non-Fungible Token (NFT)

With the advent of digital currencies, other forms of digital items are making a concurrent appearance in the world. A particularly popular version of these are the NFTs. The phrase 'Non-Fungible Token' may sound like a string of incomprehensible words, however, it is in fact the source of the recent craze that has taken the world by storm. The advent of these 'Non-Fungible Tokens', or NFTs is something that is a startling sign of what our ambiguous future holds.

First, we must understand what it means. A Non-Fungible Token is something that is unique and irreplaceable. For example, a Bitcoin is fungible: trade one for another bitcoin, and you will have exactly the same thing. An NFT on the other hand is one-of-a-kind, and if you were to trade it for another NFT, you would have a completely different thing, therefore it is Non-Fungible.

This property of NFTs is achieved through a blockchain. NFTs operate on the Ethereum Blockchain, however are separate from an Ethereum coin, because it is only its blockchain that supports NFTs by storing extra information. Likewise, other blockchains from other cryptocurrencies can have their own NFTs. The blockchain verifies each NFT's ownership.

The current hype behind NFTs is because several people are turning their digital art into these kinds of unique tokens, however, an NFT can also include music, pictures, tweets, or rather anything digital. Many see NFTs as the next step in the evolution of fine art collecting. While anyone can download or copy a digital file as many times as they want, only one person will have actual ownership of the NFT (however the artist can still retain the copyright and reproduction rights, just like with physical artwork). For example, anyone can buy a Van Gogh painting, but there is only one original copy. Since there is only one copy, they can be sold at high prices, and there are many such examples. The co-founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, sold the first-ever tweet for \$3 Million as an NFT. Moreover, at an auction at Christie's, a digital artwork by the artist Beeple was sold for \$69 Million. This event was a defining moment for advocates of NFTs.

Another pivotal aspect of NFTs is that they give artists an avenue to sell work that there otherwise might not be much of a market for. Every time an NFT is sold or changes hands, the artist can get a percentage of the fee. That way, artists are able to set any type of rule on their artwork. So NFTs are incredibly beneficial to artists. For buyers, they are also beneficial. They function just like any other speculative asset, such that if one day the value of it goes up, one can sell it for a profit, therefore it is an investment for the buyer. You also gain usage rights when you purchase an NFT, such as being able to post the image online or setting it as your profile picture on social media. On top of that, they can also be a way to support your favourite artist.

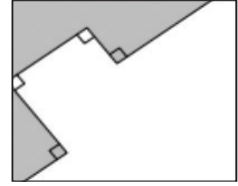
All in all, the market for NFTs is one that is largely accessible to everyone, as compared to something like the stock market, where you may need large sums of money to get started. The downside of NFTs is that some of them may simply be the product of a computer mass-producing various tokens with little variation, and not the work of a hardworking artist. NFTs may be shifting away from the artist, to more of a cash cow for business opportunists. Moreover, the security of Ethereum that is the basis of NFTs, requires an innumerable number of computers contributing their power to this network, which uses a lot of energy. This sort of energy intensive process can harm the environment. For now the future of NFTs is dicey and uncertain, and while its insurmountable success gives us an insight into the future, its downsides may well hold it back as much.

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2. <https://www.theverge.com/22310188/nft-explainer-what-is-blockchain-crypto-art-faqsouth-africa/>
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Problem of the Week

Five line segments of length 2, 2, 2, 1 and 3. Connect two corners of a square as shown in the diagram. What is the shaded area?



Source: <https://www.ukmt.org.uk/>

What Have You Been Reading At Home?

'Hero of Our Time'

Author: Mikhail Lermontov

Hero of Our Time is one of the lightest and most enjoyable novels that I have come across in a while, something I did not expect at all, especially from a Russian literary giant like Lermontov. I was bound to read this work of his when I was prompted by the innumerable references in Milan Kundera's *Life Is Elsewhere*. The novel *Hero of Our Time*, which revolutionised Russian prose and influenced other greats such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, explores a Byronic hero named Pechorin who is disillusioned with society and someone who goes through great perils, simply just to experience the limited thrills that life has to offer. Lermontov the Romantic, also comes out in this book, in the form of beautiful descriptions of the Caucasus, compelling me to look up the 3D representations of those exact locations on Google Earth, and also the witty depiction of the vain 19th-century Russian aristocracy.

The story is told in five parts, the first two parts are told through the lenses of a person who comes in contact with Maxim Maximych (a friend of Pechorin's) and the second with Pechorin himself. The last three parts are taken from Pechorin's fictional journal, which ends up in the possession of the narrator. The eerie thing about this book is that it describes a duel, which is oddly similar to the one that caused the author's untimely demise. Both Pechorin and Lermontov, ironically end as wasted talents, the former because of his indifference to society and the latter due to death at such a young age that too for a trivial act of bravado. Their lives were pretty similar too, both egotistical wealthy aristocrats who were cynical of society.

Lermontov delivers this memorable read in a very fun, non-linear structure describing Pechorin through the lenses of other characters; this structure later became a staple in Russian prose used by the likes of Tolstoy. Through this fascinating style, Lermontov gives the reader glimpses into the psychology of this madman, who ruins women who care for him and kills people and destroys entire families with utter indifference. However, it is to be noted that Lermontov, through his skill, never lets the reader despise this antihero, in fact, makes them admire him and his lust for adventure, despite his despicable actions. Perhaps this is also because, as Lermontov describes in the preface, Pechorin "is a portrait of our whole generation in their development".

Overall, it is a novel embedded with originality and flair, something I would certainly love to revisit in the future.

- Uddhav Goel

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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