



# The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot  
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# A Learning Curve

The *Weekly* interviewed **Mr. Rajesh Majumdar**, the newly appointed **Dean of Academics**.

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW): How has your perspective shifted from being a master to being the DEA?**

**Mr Rajesh Majumdar (RMR):** There is no shift in my perspective. I have always believed in excellence and now as Dean Academics, I expect more professionalism from each individual, including myself.

**DSW: Hybrid models of education are touted to be the future of education. What are your thoughts and ideas about teaching-learning skills in the post-COVID era?**

**RMR:** We need to have a clear understanding of what a 'hybrid' model means, as we have been

using it quite commonly. The virtual part of the model is not a replication of the physical teaching learning process. It is actually an evolution to a higher state of independency from a system of dependent modalities of teaching-learning. Such platforms existed all along, in different avatars, but only a handful of learners were motivated enough to venture into it. Those who transcended into such realms, excelled. The virtual space forcefully opened up this arena for all, providing equity. In this way, Covid has helped in

the actualization of the dream to democratize education like never before. In future, hybrid in other

forms and the Metaverse with AI enabled adaptive strategies will demand an even higher degree of independency in learning. We have to be ready for it.

**DSW: What is your vision regarding the teaching-learning and academic environment at the school? How do you plan to change, evolve, and sustain the same?**

**RMR:** My vision is in sync with that of the school. It aspires to take the school to its rightful

position among the world's pre-eminent educational institutions. Though we have that capacity and expertise but unfortunately, strive less. The learning environment is created and sustained by deep engagements. Believe me, the faculty here is exceptional, and the infrastructure is being upgraded to world standards. The academic standards are affected by teacher competencies, and in just one year we provided financial assistance to train 90% of our teachers in skill-based programmes. Now, we have chalked out a comprehensive plan to rigorously monitor the teaching-learning processes and the learner experiences. Change is inevitable and so we have to evolve and move with the time. Presently, we need to focus on the blended form of curriculum transaction, giving easy accessibility to resources and

formative assessments. Over the years, we have not captured the transformative journey of a DOSCO in an organized manner. So marks became the only beacon to showcase achievements. I want to change this myopic view and design a system to capture and document each DOSCO's personal growth story based on agreeable set of metrics. It sounds like tall talk, but I will come out with a plan soon.

**DSW: We are approaching a skill-based economy, and many might point out that the conventional educational system doesn't really prioritize skill as much as knowledge. Do you think that Doon's academic practices need to be updated too, and if so in what way?**

**RMR:** I am a little surprised to hear this question. Have we ever honestly, deep-dived into the curriculum framework of Doon? What Doon proposed and has run for the last 87 years got its imprint now in the National Educational Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). What are STAs, SUPWs, Societies and Service? What are the fundamental objectives and outcomes of

these? Why has the school been offering this wide spectrum of engagements? Is it not for skill-development? The Doon School never had the conventional

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educational system, and it was always ahead of time. We follow conventional methods of age based segregated groups for examining boards, but it doesn't exist in our activities. The entire gamut of co-curricular activities provide extraordinary opportunity for skill development. Have we explored its full capacity and recorded our journey of growth? The futuristic Finnish model of education is about personalized curriculum woven around individual child. I see components of that model already existing in our system. We have to take activities seriously as part of academics, try to engage in them to identify our interest and map it to our careers. Neglecting activities and sports reflects our unwillingness to explore the rich offering. You name a skill which is required in the modern world, and I will map it to an activity offered in the school. Having said so, I will not deny that academic practices need to be updated. I

mentioned teacher training, but we also need student willingness to change. After regular lessons we need to use the bandwidth to its full potential only for 'educational' purposes.

**DSW: What transformational changes do you hope to see in a Dosco following the implementation of the Doon School Curriculum?**

**RMR:** The Doon School Curriculum always existed. Over the last two years a massive exercise was undertaken to identify the major attributes that we all desire in a DOSCO. The comprehensive implementation plan is in the offing, ever since I was designated as DEA. The plan will be slowly introduced at the D-Form, as a pilot project, run and analysed, reshaped, and then grow. My formula is 'hurry, slowly and steadily'. I can't divulge more at this moment, but we intend to move from knowledge

dissemination to skill development by mapping the attributes and objectives. There will be merging of topics from different subjects giving a more holistic approach to learning. In the coming year you will start getting the flavours of this new direction.

**DSW: What are some of the challenges that you foresee in your new role and how do you plan to address them?**

**RMR:** As Rabindranath Tagore said, "*Do not limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time*". My biggest challenge will be to establish a system where learning takes centre stage and not forceful teaching. You will observe the changes as the plan gets implemented gradually.

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## The Dark Origins of Valentines

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Krish Agrawal

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Describing Valentine's day simply as a celebration would be a major understatement. Every year millions of cards, chocolates, teddies come pouring in on this day in February. A celebration of love, Valentine's day is bound by no religion, nationality or any sort of divide. However, it is a celebration which has a long history and has evolved over the centuries. It all started with the actions of one or two men.

The early origins of Valentine's day can be traced all the way to the Roman Empire. The day came into conception after the Feast of St Valentines was established by the Pope in AD 496. It was a day to honour martyred Christian priests all by the name St Valentines, who had been executed by the Roman emperor Claudius II in the third century. The most famous of these martyrs was St Valentine of Rome. There are multiple stories regarding his imprisonment and execution, the most famous of which has led to the beginning of the Valentine's Day we know today. As the story goes, it was believed that St Valentine

used to secretly marry young couples at a time when it was a crime to do so. The emperor, Claudius II, believed that unmarried men made better soldiers for the army, thus banning men from marrying. Once St. Valentine was caught, he was imprisoned and subsequently executed on the 14th of February. There are also records of a second St Valentine who was also executed on the same day by the emperor Claudius II but in a different year. The day could be in honour of both or either of these priests, however, it is possible that both these men were one and the same.

While Valentine's Day originated as a way to honour these priests, it still was not celebrated as a day of romance until many centuries later. Many are still uncertain how it came to be so connected with romance and love. Some believe that the English poet Geoffery Chaucer, now regarded as the father of English literature, linked the day to romance in his poem *The Parlement of Foules* in the 14th century

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## This Week in History

**270 CE:** Beheading of Saint Valentine, a priest in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius II.

**1779 CE:** Death of Captain James Cook, who found and charted all of New Zealand, apart from sailing along the entire western coastline of Australia.

**1801 CE:** Election of Thomas Jefferson as the third U.S. President.

**1959 CE:** Swearing in of Fidel Castro as the Prime Minister of Cuba.

**1979 CE:** Chinese invasion of Vietnam in response to Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

**1989 CE:** USSR withdraws its last troops from Afghanistan, ending the occupation that began in 1979.

### READERS CHECKLIST

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

**Sriyash Tantia:** *Anansi Boys* by Neil Gaiman.

**SPB:** *Status Anxiety* by Alain De Botton.

**Aviman Pratap Singh:** *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* by Francesc Miralles and Hector Garcia.

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The brave man is he who overcomes not only his enemies but his pleasures.

Democritus

### UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

*Then there are letters, then there are letters.*

**RDG**, wondering what's next.

*Then you start creating, but then it stops.*

**Advay Gupta**, playing god.

*Scientists have this problem. Don't know. What is solution. To know.*

**ADN**, unanswered questions.

## THE WHO?

### Who is Elzie Crisler Segar?

**Arnav Kathuria:** A singer

**Saksham Makin:** A painter

**Aditya Shashank Agarwal:** An author

**Neel Sahai:** A pianist

**Elzie Crisler Segar**, known by his pen name **E.C. Segar** was a prominent **American cartoonist**. He was most famous for being the creator of **Popeye**, a pop culture character known and loved by everyone today along with most of the other characters present there including **Wimpy, Bruto, Swee'Pea** Popeye first appeared in 1929 in **Segar's comic strip, Thimble Theatre**.

### Around the World in 80 Words

India's civil aviation minister removed curbs on the number of India-Ukraine flights. The first phase of UP Assembly polls commenced this week. The Reserve Bank of India lowered India's GDP forecast. Russia announced its withdrawal from Crimea. The World Health Organization confirmed a nineteen-percent drop in COVID-19 cases. The government of Belgium announced a four-day work week with a right to disconnect after office hours. PSG beat Real Madrid in the first leg of the UEFA Champions League knockout stage.

**Dosco Doodle**

(Head) Masters of Time

Sai Arjun



# UPside down

**Katyayan Kanodia** *comments on his experiences in the course of the ongoing elections in Uttar Pradesh.*

With the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly elections taking place from the 10th of February, 2022 to the 7th of March, 2022, it does not come as much of a surprise when I look around my neighbourhood to find every nook and cranny as spotless as they had been roughly five years ago. The supply of electricity seems to have a newfound wish to not go for even a second, and the regions once suffering from water shortage suddenly possess enough water to bathe the clothes of their cattle. The only pollution which did manage to rise, however, is aided by the herd of auto rickshaws and tempos which are armoured with loudspeakers and tasked to roam around Kanpur “influencing” people to press the button next to either the lotus, broom, hand, elephant, or any of the various other symbols. Cheap but catchy jingles have been employed by almost all parties to further sweeten the highly-improbable promises made by them. Nonetheless, I must admit, my favourite outcome of wooing of the electorate is the banter between the contestants that one gets to see, read and hear about in our lively media. Be it the satirical comments which attempt to highlight the ineffectiveness of the incumbent government or the vain praises which negate such accusations; these slogans never fail to get a chuckle out of me.

Numerous rallies can be seen nowadays where the party leaders themselves address the crowd. Defending champions have not been holding back at any of their poll rallies, claiming that there have been no riots since they took over, while accusing their opponents of trying to set up a mafia-dom across the state

or being a ‘volatile party whose downfall is inevitable’ because of the leaders.

With the pressure at an all-time high, one thing is abundantly clear, every party wants the limelight, and what better way to achieve that than by publicly making exaggerated and altogether absurd claims to eke out any attention they can get, or by switching parties suddenly and effortlessly to make headlines. An excellent example of such absurd comments is seen when there were accusations against other parties which claimed that a certain party in the state “would have settled in every town of UP”. While highlighting the ‘job well done’ by the present government, there were further accusations that every other party that has held power in the state in the past has “handed over the state’s citizens to the mafias”. The opposition party members, however, show no intentions of playing fair either. For instance,

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one opponent accused the present government of wishing to ‘see him dead’, going on to add how he was attacked during the filing of the nomination of another party colleague from a constituency in Varanasi.

Meanwhile, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister strengthened his campaign by partnering with an unlikely ally,

who have withdrawn from the race, but implore the public to vote for the party of the former Chief Minister, accusing the present regime of being liars. Another hopeful party promises to bring “Delhi like” transformation to UP, alongside many other benefits. All this, while the major opponent keeps surprisingly quiet on the matter apart from the usual criticisms and promises.

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All in all, with promises raining from all sides, I invite readers to bet on which party will emerge victorious, reflecting on whose campaigning has been the most effective and expansive in the state. This despite the fact that contestants really might be on thin ice here since it appears as if their mouths are issuing checks that their party cannot cash. Unless the citizens of Uttar Pradesh start observing some real changes in the state from the get go, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly elections might start gaining a bit more competitiveness in the coming years. Personally, I would not mind if these elections happened a bit more frequently, as the work and effort put into the city of Kanpur these past few months has really stood out, and if it is the lure of the throne that brings about development, then so be it.

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and that the subsequent literature inspired by it led to our modern perception of Valentine's Day. Another reason could be that Valentine's Day replaced the pagan festival of Lupercalia which promoted health and fertility, and with all the rituals of Lupercalia gone, Valentine's day became a day of love and intimacy and saw a re-emergence in England centuries later.

After an increase in popularity in the 18th century, Valentine's Day celebrations spread across England

and Europe. Traditions such as sending cards and giving flowers were invented and soon afterwards, with the advent of the industrial revolution, thousands of cards were mass produced every year and the number has only grown since. Today, Valentine's Day has grown to become a universal day to celebrate love despite its dark origins.

## A Service to Society

*Svanik Garg reports on his social service initiative.*

COVID-19 hit everyone hard, and the virus was deadly to such an extent, that nobody saw such a pandemic coming, and therefore preparation to tackle the same was lacking. Economy in South Asian countries is built on frail foundations and is heavily decentralised, with a sizable portion of the underprivileged living on daily income, rather than a stable source to keep them financially safe. The pandemic brought chaos with it, as these sources of income completely derailed, leaving many hopeless, slowly burning their savings and forcing them to live on a knife's edge. Back home in Nepal, this was a very prominent problem and it came to my attention during the second lockdown, when demand for unemployment aid from the government grew, and tensions in the public were rising. This had a particularly devastating effect on children. The lack of money in the system meant that as a result of schools closing physically, the majority of the children were unable to get access to any form of education due to the lack of electronic devices. In some cases, parents were not even able to support their child and provide the appropriate facilities required. This was a significant problem as a result of the economic crisis. To positively contribute, I decided to assist an organisation that facilitated closed camps throughout the country for children to live in and study till the time their parents were able to overcome

of use, including food rations, clothing, and books, along with eatables that could support these children and provide them with the best of resources. As a result, I was able to collect a significant amount that could support about 45 kids for a month or two. Furthermore, I also decided to volunteer as a tutor to help many with their studies.

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**While providing aid seems easy, in such times collecting funds was difficult and challenging**

their economic hardships. While providing aid seems easy, in such times collecting funds was difficult and providing significant contributions which could help the cause was extremely challenging. Therefore, rather than focusing on monetary donations, I directed my efforts towards collecting all items which could be

Such social work is often documented to be an enlightening experience, but for me a humbling experience, which made me aware of the numerous disparities that exist in our society. On my own, I can never anticipate a situation wherein my parents are unable to provide for my basic necessities. However, I realised that there are many families which go through such devastating trouble. Hearing testimonials of children as young as nine, explaining how they had to leave their parents during this hard time, and realising that joining the camp would be a better opportunity, was truly heartwarming and emotional. Sometimes examining the ground reality itself can reflect the perils of human society, and living in privileged conditions creates a facade wherein these sections of society are invisible to us. This pandemic has broken families apart and made people experience economic hardship nobody deserves to face. While I tried my best to contribute on my own, it was and will never be enough, yet it has motivated me to contribute as much as I can to foster the development of young people who by no fault of their own find themselves in situations one can never imagine, and you should too!

## Problem of the Week

The organiser for a sports league with four teams has entered some of the end-of-season data into the table shown. Each team played 27 games and each game resulted in a win for one team and a loss for the other team, or in a tie for both teams. Each team earned two points for a win, 0 points for a loss, and 1 point for a tie.

Team Name	Games Played	Number of Wins	Number of Losses	Number of Ties	Total Points
<i>P</i>	27	10	14		23
<i>Q</i>	27				
<i>R</i>	27				25
<i>S</i>	27				

- How many ties did Team *P* have at the end of the season?
- Team *Q* had two more wins than Team *P* and 4 fewer losses than Team *P*. How many total points did Team *Q* have at the end of the season?
- Explain why Team *R* could not have finished this season with exactly 6 ties.
- At the end of the season, Team *S* had 4 more wins than losses. Show that Team *S* must have finished the season with a total of 31 points.

Source: <https://www.cemc.uwaterloo.ca/>

### What Have You Been Reading At Home?

**Rich Dad Poor Dad**  
**Author: Robert Kiyosaki**

*Rich Dad Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki is a very interesting first-person narrative where the author compares his two dads — one his real father (poor dad) and one who is his best friend's father (rich dad) in the ways in which both men feel about money and investing. The book is written from Kiyosaki's perspective of how 'Rich Dad' went about making money and the mistakes that the 'Poor Dad' made over the course of his career. In my opinion, the lessons from the 'Poor Dad' throws light on mistakes that one should avoid, whereas lessons from the rich dad suggest the right moves to financial freedom. Lastly, the book talks about taking action other than just thinking about it and encourages making thoughtful investments. The book is a great read for not only someone well versed with finance, but those beginning to think about it too from an early age!

- Aditya Shashank Agrawal

*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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