Bearing the Legacy

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): What is your vision for your tenure?
School Captain (SC): I knew you’d ask me this. I wish I’d have more time to prepare, but whatever. It’s undoubtedly a difficult question to answer, but I’ll try my best. Since the day I entered School, the School Captains have always been a role model for me and my batch. Each had their own unique set of abilities, ambitions and visions for the School. However, despite their best efforts at maintaining the ethos of the School, no one can deny that COVID has thrown a massive wrench into the way the School operates and the traditions that continue from batch to batch. No fault of theirs, obviously. For example, the close-knit relationship between Masters and students isn’t as close as it used to be, something that forms one of the cornerstones of our School’s culture. And discipline, one of the key qualities that define Doscos, is one I am certain does not meet the standards set pre-COVID.

I have always looked up to our past School Captains and from those naïve D Form years, I set my aspirations sky high. Having been appointed as School Captain now, I find it a little surreal, and, in all honesty, it will certainly take me a while to get used to it. But, nonetheless, I hope for my Prefectorial body and me to bring back the Chandbagh we all knew and loved with a new sense of belonging, pride, and respect while adapting to the ever-changing landscape of today’s education system.

As a School Captain who has been selected and not elected, I understand that there are certainly some who are disappointed with this decision.

DSW: Considering how deeply you are involved in so many activities, how do you plan to effectively carry out the duties of the School Captain and how will you be able to juggle all your responsibilities?
SC: I get asked this a lot. But, to be honest, there’s not much to it. I like work. I know I sound like a nerd, but well, I don’t see anything wrong with that. All my Dosco life, I have always involved myself in as many activities as I could and somehow always managed to push myself past the limit without breaking. Reading that back, that does not sound like a healthy lifestyle, so just a word of advice for my Juniors: don’t. But I, personally, enjoy it. I like to complain about all the work I have at the outset, but the unmatched satisfaction, in the end, is worth it. Over the last five years, I’ve learned to manage my time to the best of my ability, somehow always fitting an extra hour to the 24 hours in a day. It’s hard and exhausting, but I love the challenge. So, in summary, my five years in School alone have equipped me with more than enough skills to be able to juggle all my responsibilities and effectively carry out all my duties to the best of my abilities, so I look forward to it!

DSW: Considering that you have not actually been democratically elected, how do you think your appointment will be received by the School?
SC: As a School Captain who has been selected and not elected, I understand that there are certainly some who are disappointed with this decision. But I am here to assure you that I seek to live up and maybe even exceed your expectations of any other School Captain. I understand fully the weight that lies on my shoulders and look forward to a great year ahead.

DSW: Over the past five years that you have been in School, how do you think a Prefect’s functioning has changed?
(Continued on Page 3)
WALKING THE RIGHT PATH

The following are the School Prefects for the forthcoming year:

School Captain: Tarun Doss

Hyderabad House
House Captain: Neil Bulchandani
Prefects: Arin Modi, Aryaveer Agrawal, Vidit Verma

Jaipur House
House Captain: Gursanjit Natt
Prefects: Vivaan Malik, Yuv Agarwal, Zubin Mehran

Kashmir House
House Captain: Aaditya Agarwal
Prefects: Dhruv Gupta, Vir Patwalia, Vishwa Vijay Rathore

Oberoi House
House Captain: Riddhim Agarwal
Prefects: Advay Agarwal, Krishnav Sachdev, Yashovat Nandan

Tata House
House Captain: Shehzaad Shergill
Prefects: Dhruv Murugappan, Raghav Periwal, Raghuraaj Soyhi

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

For last year’s words belong to last year’s language
And next year’s words await another voice.

T.S. Eliot, from Little Gidding.

PASSING ON THE TORCH

Following are the appointments for the forthcoming year:

Activities and SUPW:
Doon Stock Exchange: Abhay Jain
Stage Committee: Kapish Ajitsaria

Publications:
Echo:
Editor-in-Chief: Hridayam Tusnial
Chief of Production: Svanik Garg

Econocrat:
Editor-in-Chief: Riddhim Agarwal

Grandslam:
Editor-in-Chief: Shehzaad Shegill

Societies:
NEST: Rohan Taneja and Yuvan Kamdar

We wish them a fruitful tenure.

Around the World in 80 Words

Over 15000 people died after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Turkey and Syria. The US shot down a suspected Chinese spy-blimp off the coast of South Carolina. Pakistan’s former President Pervez Musharraf has passed away. The US has approved the $10 billion sale of Himars Rocket Launchers to Poland. Reserve Bank of India hiked policy rates by 25 bps (basic point) to 6.5 percent. Microsoft announced enhanced Bing and Edge powered by OpenAI. LeBron James broke the NBA’s all-time points-scoring record.

21 Savages
Pragyan Goel
SC: I think that this is probably one of the biggest misconceptions in our School. A Prefect's functioning has always been, since the days of Mr Foot, and always will be the same. What has changed is only the manner in which they function. I remember the Chandbagh I walked into five years ago as a clueless D Former and I am absolutely certain that it is not all the same today. Times have changed. Prefectorial bodies have adapted and improved one after the other. Some for the better, some, well, to put it bluntly, not so much for the better. But it is all part of learning. You can only get better if you know what you’re doing wrong.

But I want to make it thoroughly clear that the Chandbagh we are in today and this manner of Prefectorial functioning has grown into a better version of itself. But that’s not to say we are perfect now, if anything, we are far from it.

I could go on about the minutest details of what I think our School ought to bring back from a pre-COVID Chandbagh to reinstate that superior level of discipline and pride that generations of Doscos to come will never know. But, in my opinion, it is equally important to learn to adapt and restore that pride and honour in the midst of our ever-changing world.

DSW: Considering that you are now the School Captain, would you still work, as Senior Editor, for The Doon School Weekly?

SC: Yes. Unfortunately, the board’s going to have to deal with my presence for another extremely short year.

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Ms Aparna Behl, a visiting nutritionist, reflects on the revised menu in School.

The School Management and the CDH/Mess Committee decided to make some changes to the diet provided to the students. The goal of the CDH/Mess Committee was to ensure that healthy and nutritious food is served to the students. Necessary changes have therefore been implemented keeping in mind the dietary requirement for the boys. These changes in the menu are specially made to enhance the diet, health and nutrition of the students. The objective is to provide a well-balanced, healthy, nutritious and high-protein diet.

The bakery is now providing whole wheat bread, pizza bases and other savouries that are being made as per specifications provided to them. Refined flour as an ingredient in any food item has been restricted and replaced with healthier options. New flavours of nutritious milk with natural ingredients like elaichi, pista badam, munakka, dates and anjeer have been introduced. Similarly, healthy in-house prepared snacks such as makhane, popcorn, khakra have been introduced. Unhealthy snacks like samosa, patty or kachori from local vendors have been restricted.

A composition of 30 percent pearl millet and 70 percent whole wheat flour, which helps in maintaining blood sugar levels, and cholesterol and improving digestion (being high in fibre) is now being used for cooking the chapatis and paranthas with seasonal green leafy vegetables. Food is now being prepared using natural herbs and spices instead of packaged flavours. Pure ghee, canola oil and mustard oil are being used for cooking now. We are using the best quality (sole) fish and boneless chicken. High protein salads, peanut butter and artisanal creamy cheese are being served to supplement the diet. In the future, we intend to utilise hydroponic vegetables grown in School. Mr Makhija and the CDH staff have contributed to implementing changes in the menu with an open heart which helped in smoothly executing them. I express my gratitude to the Chairman, Mr Anoop Bishnoi, the Headmaster and the Board of Governors, for motivating the CDH and the Mess Committee and facilitating this collective effort in favour of good health.
Doonspeak: Appointments or Elections

A wide range of perspectives of Doscos on reverting to appointment of the School Captain.

The School Captain should be an individual who is elected and not appointed. The idea behind these elections is not to be overly political or enter a popularity contest but rather to enable students to participate in, and gauge the process of governance and citizenship. Contrary to what the Headmaster believes, I feel that students and young adults must be political. Students are one of the most informed demographics of a country or community, and as Doscos we are dutybound to be political, for in that sense, being political is having convictions and the courage to stand by them. To be aware and responsible enough to cast an informed vote is a necessary and formative experience for Doscos.

Although one must concede that the way the elections took place and the political elements surrounding them were certainly flawed, however, to remedy that by abandoning the electoral process is surely no way to go about it. What we could have done to make the electoral process more just and fair would have been to allow voting from B-Form onwards. Second, allow for open and structured campaigning through Assembly Talks and debates. Both these options would have been a step towards progress and creating a more informed electorate. The choice to revert to an undemocratic format is uncharacteristic of an institution that takes pride in its progressiveness. Moreover, if I have to detach myself from my objectivity and comment, I’d say that the entire ordeal is simply disheartening.

- Armaan Rathi

Before I go any further, I must confess that my qualms with the School Captain elections are practical in nature. From a principle standpoint, the elections did serve a purpose as the intersection of democracy and legitimacy. However, the functional obstacles posed by the process outweigh any moral justifications for the same.

My primary grievance is that the electorate, especially the Juniors, are seldom aware of the candidates and their traits which often leads to them falling victim to the tunes of the bandwagon. At the risk of languishing in obscurity, prospective candidates are coerced to resort to deceitful means that run contrary to the intent of elections. One might then argue, that campaigning ought to be permitted. However, this would only feed into the increasing sense of factionalism and division that appears to be festering in School. Moreover, this would do little to allay the risk of illegal campaigning.

Second, even if the electorate was made aware of the candidates prior to elections, the decision to cast a vote for a particular individual requires a maturity far beyond the years of Juniors, perhaps even A-Formers. Their votes, in effect, lend minimal legitimacy to the candidates. Consequently, I stand by the decision to appoint the School Captain.

- Gurmehar Bedi

The first day after winter vacations has always been a memorable one. I remember the first time I cast my vote, four years ago in C-Form. It gave me a sense of belonging, and a taste of democracy. Because I had the opportunity to cast my vote, I felt responsible to get to know who the candidates were and what kind of agenda they brought to the table. That was my experience, and while the decision to remove voting has been made in my last year at School, it saddens me to see that future Doscos might not be afforded that same opportunity. While I think there might be some merit in the new system, I think that we need to take a step back and reassess our core values and see how we can fulfil those better.

- Karan Agrawal
I was surprised by the cancellation of the School Captain election—an unexpected change whose effects only time will tell. The Headmaster justified this decision as a move to revert to the previous method of appointment, wherein the School Captain was directly appointed by the School Management Committee along with the Housemasters. This would make sense, considering that elections in recent years have been controversial at best. However, upon closer inspection, this move has seemed to create more controversy than it has dispelled, reducing student involvement in decision-making and reducing transparency overall.

The defining feature of a democracy is the involvement of people in the electoral or appointment process. Therefore, if we are to follow such a system, we should no longer label it as a democratic one. Moreover, I feel that the electoral process within School prepares us for the electoral process as adult citizens, since we understand the system of voter accountability. Reversing this system would seem like a step in the wrong direction and, as stakeholders of the School community, I believe we deserve to be more involved in the electoral process, even if it only involves the seniors in the student body.

- Siddhant Srivastava

Over the past two years since COVID, we have experienced a lot of drastic changes within the School, the most recent of them being the decision to not have voting anymore for the position of School Captain, replacing it with appointment by. At first, this was encountered with a lot of backlash from the student body, with gossip flying around about the possible reasons this may have happened. It was no challenging task to discern the facts from the baseless chatter and it was evident that nobody actually knew why this happened.

A few days and a couple of conversations with my masters later, I started to consider the possibility that this was decided upon in an attempt to depoliticise the role of the School Captain. It is a fairly reasonable assumption to make that the management of the School could pick out the best candidate to lead the School, whereas an election process could lead to someone getting the role not on the basis of merit only, but also popularity. In my opinion, it's too early for anyone to judge the management's decision and the best we can do is support their endeavours to propel the School forward. Who knows what their pick would amount to in a year's time but, right now, there's no reason to not have an open mind about it.

- Krishnav Sachdev

Should the School Captain be elected or appointed?

321 members of the School Community were polled.
Are We Doing Enough?

Aditya Gupta decodes the recently unveiled budget and questions where the government is focusing funds.

The upcoming parliamentary elections in 2024 were a large but unsaid part of the budget for 2023-24. The Finance Minister presented a budget to please everyone: the rich, poor, and the corporates. It truly has something for everyone. Generous new tax brackets; higher investments into the railways, roads, and highways and increased focus on local green energy production and transition. But, just as there are no free lunches in the world, increased provisioning in these areas, too, comes at the expense of the much-needed social welfare schemes.

Prima facie, the country has been focussed on hard assets over the past few years. This year was no different: an uptick in infrastructure investments was complemented by a decline in provisioning for social welfare schemes. Sadly, our focus on the “hard” infrastructure has drawn us away from the softer priorities like education, healthcare, and poverty, all of which are equally, if not more important, to drive India’s growth potential over the next decade.

We became the world’s most populous country this year, surpassing China. Our unemployment rate is 7.14%, with about 100 million unemployed people. Large-scale survey data has found that three-fourths of students in the seventh grade can’t do simple subtraction, and one-third can’t read at a second-grade level. Gender disparity is still a mainstay with women’s participation rates being abysmally low for a major economy. Wealth inequality has been rampant since the crippling lockdowns during the pandemic. We live in a nation where the poor are hounded for indebtedness, while the rich are rewarded for their indebtedness in the capital markets. While the country reels from a hard-pressing inflationary wave, wealthy investors’ fortunes have only gone one way: up, up, and up.

India’s socio-economic story is not a new one. These problems have been there for many decades, and the present government has been relatively successful at combating parts of this problem. But, of late, the government’s focus on assets like roads and railways have stolen the spotlight from these social issues. We are not investing enough in financial inclusiveness or expanding access to education and healthcare, amongst other things. Education was a big miss in the budget. State-run schools have motivated, dedicated students willing to study, but they do not have the resources required to do so. The government needs to do much more than just set up online libraries. What about the equipment necessary for today’s digital age like laptops and the internet? What about teachers who lose their willingness to teach because of state pay problems and irregular, sometimes non-existent training? What about reviewing and updating the syllabus every few years? Far too many questions and too few answers.

Women were a big part of Sitharaman’s budget, but the only substantial women-focused plan, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (DAY-NULM), is not the most effective one. The plan encourages women to create independent savings accounts, incentivised by a 7.5% interest rate. But, the fact of the hour is that women are often uneducated and reliant on their husbands. Very few Indian women are salary earners, so this scheme does little to help women who may need skill development more than higher interest rates.

Schemes like MNREGA, which provided jobs to the underprivileged and unemployed, have seen their budgets slashed. MNREGA is one of the most important schemes because it has provided jobs and encouraged and increased women’s participation in the economy. Women’s active participation in MNREGA stood at 34.6% in 2022-23. Yes, the government has been able to control inflationary pressures to a great extent, but they have gone ballistic on schemes that aid the underprivileged as they face disproportionate increases in food prices and real income appreciation. The government also quietly withdrew its pandemic-relief-free food scheme at the beginning of this year. Other such schemes have either seen their budgets cut or have been entirely removed, much to the dismay of the needy and poor.

All “hard” infrastructure investments are invalid until the economy’s demography is healthy and educated. India’s value to global investors and lawmakers is not our investments in infrastructure but rather our people. The size of the population and percentage of the youth population is what the global community cares about. They see an economy with the potential for unmatched consumption backed by people who can earn and will consequently spend. But, if the government loses sight of the gold - education, healthcare, and financial inclusiveness, then they will lose their biggest and only advantage in the global community. It is time we balance our efforts. It is crucial that we start to pour more investment into our “hard” infrastructure and we should, but along the way let’s not forget the softer priorities that will ultimately make the country and its investments worthwhile.
एक महान व्यक्ति ने यह कहा है: "अनुभव एक व्यक्ति के दिमाग, उनके व्यक्तित्व और उनकी पहचान को आकार देते हैं।" पहचान और अनुभव, दो चीजें हैं जो किसी भी व्यक्ति को परिभाषित करती हैं। अनुभव लोगों के जीवन में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं। जब पहचान और अनुभव बहाल होते हैं, तब गहरी पहचान अफसर बनती है। एक व्यक्ति को बचपन में किसी भी कीड़े के रूप में जाना जा सकता है, लेकिन जब वह बड़ा होता है, तब वे एक व्यक्ति के रूप में विविधता कर सकता है।

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The Week Gone By
Vinesh Uniyal

Though the term started only two weeks ago, the vibrance and liveliness of the Campus might say otherwise, as Chandbagh never ceases to teem with energy. Apart from the liveliness, however, Chandbagh also experiences frigid temperatures, as it is a Herculean task to merely get out of bed. A few wise words: in such weather, every layer is the difference between a frostbite and catching a cold, so please choose carefully.

Yet, the weather couldn’t prevent the School from experiencing perhaps the most awaited event of the year, as the Senior Mathematics Colloquium test took place in full swing, in which I confess that I might get in the negatives. On the same day, relatively minor announcements resulted in formation of the Prefectorial body of 2023-2024. Strangely, all S-Formers seemed to be glued onto every word of the Headmaster, as any sort of phrase could either make or break their worlds.

As the names were called out and the ties were passed down into the hands of the new body, the assembly came into fruition as the current Prefectorial body was lined in front of the past. Such an image seemed to represent something much more beautiful: a legacy to be continued and preserved, and as we slowly but surely see them grow into their roles, I wish them all the best for their tenure!

Unfortunately, with every appointment comes a disappointment. It is bound to happen, and I advise my fellow batchmates not to judge their worth through this metric, and realise there’s far more they can accomplish regardless of the position they hold.

Apart from the barrage of appointments this week, cricket practices at the fields fervently pick up ahead of the Junior Inter-House Cricket Competition, as every now and then, someone shouts, “Watch!”.

Moreover, a new term will always bring with it new opportunities and challenges, both of which are an integral part of a Dosco’s journey. Ultimately, we all should aim to improve at every step, and as we continue, we should never lose sight of what’s most important: the CDH menu (and of course, the upcoming Trials). Though one might scoff at them, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Remember, you don’t want somebody else shouting at you, “Watch!”.

Sudoku

Key:

Source: https://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/sudoku/#top