

Established in 1936

The Doon School WEEKLY

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

February 14, 2026 | Issue No. 2764

ARCHITECTURE OF THE AUTOPILOT

What holds you back when you sneak your hand into a cookie jar?

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AND THEN THERE WERE NONE...

A thrilling creative on what School would look like if the Prefects disappeared for a week.

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How much do we like Games' time?

Note: *This piece wishes to address the overlap that tends to arise given the intensity of both Games and Activities in School.*

The perennial question of what it takes to scale co-curriculars and sports into equal proportion has plagued multiple piles of *Weeklies*. In fact, I am not even sure this piece will stand out a few months from now, when another one with a strangely similar byline pops up on the First page. When I first began drafting this, I tried my best to formulate a piece that glorified Activities (it was that or skip the math practice paper on my Boards study checklist!). However, after consecutive Assemblies with announcements of a plethora of Appointments, the need for a different take on how to achieve this balance felt far more urgent and compelling. Although the parade of Appointees was impressive, one must also look into the inconsistencies in the steps taken to develop a balance between the two pillars.

What our Community tends to forget is that ceremonial and symbolic gestures might feel great, might make a Dosco feel glorified but have little to no tangible benefits. This is not to suggest that macro initiatives of celebration should not happen, nor is it to prove that these measures don't have any benefits. Yet, they must serve a more constructive role and not only a ritualistic one. Symbolic gestures are comforting precisely because

they are sometimes a cover. A badge, a title, a name read aloud over Auditorium speakers gives the illusion of progress without demanding the discomfort of actual practice. They are neatly packaged moments we can point to as proof that productivity is being gained. But symbolism, when left unaccompanied by sustained support, becomes a substitute for action rather than a stepping stone toward it. It allows us to feel a need to celebrate success without actually achieving it.

Looking over the past Terms, the moments we remember of initiative are unfortunately assembly rants from the podium and unchecked promises. The inequalities between these two dimensions are inherently etched into our lives subconsciously. The disregard for time provided to activities is often accepted within us, we are expected to waste that one hour we get, for early common rooms to matches, exhaustive practices to win the Grand slam, and rest time before training.

Yet, the same sport takes up another two hours of our time after that; double the amount of time that activities receive. Practices for extracurricular activities are then pushed to post-dinner in an urgent scramble to prepare, however, this either takes up the very little academic time given to Doscos in the first place or practices are cut short to meet

the cut-throat pressure of studies. Even though the School claims to treat them equally, evidence shows that the two aspects couldn't be more polarised in importance. In order to improve this issue, it is imperative for us to change structural disadvantages and inherent differences between Activities and Sports. It is time to realise that the resolution of an issue, conditioned and formed by years of careful moulding and narratives, cannot be simplified into a solution that plainly orders the Community to think differently from before. There needs to be years of structural change and initiatives to tackle such issues. If the School aims to formulate a delta of narrative change and social thinking, it needs to concentrate on grassroots execution within boarding houses.

However difficult it may be to comprehend, we are shaped by our houses more than our School as Doscos. The House builds our role models, inculcates a spirit of moral ethics and culture within us and shapes our journey inside this campus. To bring robust cultural change within our School, closer voices like the Prefectorial Body are more suited. When role models of Juniors and representatives of Houses advocate for something, people who look up to them respond better to the change they bring. These people form the culture of a House together,

(Continued on Page 3)

Nanda Karumudi discusses the broader implications of the statement, "Games' time has to stay Games' time, but Activity time can be made Games' time."

AT THE HELM

The following are the **Appointments** for the forthcoming year:

Clubs and Societies:

English Dramatics: Rehhan Chadha

Quiz Club: Aakash Mishra

MFL Society : Pratham Agarwal

Historical Circle: Vir Sandhu

NEST Society: Aarav Patel, Anshuman Gupta, Siddharth Bawa

SEDS Secretary: Hrishikesh Aiyer

SEDS Boy-in-Charge: Aditya Koradia

Bharat Vani: Harsh Vasudeo Agarwal

Film Society: Aarav Dadu

Adventure Club: Harkirat Singh

DS Poets' Society: Jansher Grewal

Hindi Dramatics: Aryaman Lamba

The ACE Society: Yohaana Marda, Siddham Tater, Ishan Gupta

Yuv Bharti: Aineshh Dora

M.I.N.D. Club: Manya Choudhary

Infinity Society: Arish Talwar

Socially Useful Productive

Work:

Audio Visual Squad: Harkirat Singh, Rafay Habibullah, Udai Singh

Boys Bank: Abhijit Sannamanda

Stage Committee and Chair Squad: Abhinav Kumar

Trophy Squad: Naahar Khattri

Archives: Abir Garg

LPO: Naman Adlakha

The Round Square Council:

President: Abhay Varma

Vice President: Aryaman Lamba

Secretary: Krish Ghai

Activities:

Aeromodeling: Aarav Sahdev

Art: Siddharth Bawa

Chemist: Hridhay Kanodia

Computers: Aarav Anand

Cycling: Harkirat Singh

Design & Technology: Atiksh Kasana

Cooking: Saathvik Gupta

Media Club: Sumer Singh, Veer Duggal

Motor Mechanics: Neerav Bansal

Robotics: Ved Agrawal

Music Captain: Anantvikram Sinh

Dance Captain: Ansh Gulia

Orchestra Leaders: Yuvaan Todi, Krish Ghai

Choir Leaders: Aakash Mishra, Sarosh Kamal

Percussion Leaders: Aanay Goyal, Rishabh Agrawal

Band Leaders: Loechin Phangcho, Phongang Buchem

Music Society: Viraj Rastogi

Sports:

Cricket: Rushil Agrawal

Hockey: Jaiveer Grewal

Football: Jai Rana

Athletics: Sushil Kasi

Cross-Country: Udayaditya Samanta

Swimming: Aadi Tulsyan

Basketball: Abhay Varma

Tennis: Hrishikesh Aiyer

Table Tennis: Aarav Dadu

Badminton: Vihaan Jhunjunwala

Boxing: Viraj Singh

PT Leader: Jai Rana

Squash: Zorawar Sandhu

Chess: Neil Sahnii

Gymnastics: Shaurya Surana

DSMUN:

President: Uday Sardana

Secretary General: Ayaan Mittal

Deputy Secretary General:

Rajveer Agarwal

Executive Director and

Boy-in-Charge of the MUN

Society: Arsh Mishra

Director General of

Operations: Viraj Singh

Director General of

Hospitality: Parshad Kumar

Director General of Delegate

Affairs: Loechin Phangcho

Chief of Production: Aarush Kokra

**Around the World
in 80 Words**

A school shooting incident at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School, Canada, resulted in nine fatalities and 26 injuries. The Delhi Police served a notice to the Penguin Random House India concerning the unauthorised distribution of a forthcoming book written by a former Army Chief. Trade and farmers' unions called for a nationwide strike, 'Bharat Bandh', due to recent changes in government policies. A 6.0 magnitude earthquake rattled the Indian Ocean. India beat Namibia by 93 runs in the T20 World Cup.

KNOWLEDGE OUR LIGHT

Aakash Mishra and Aditya Koradia are the joint winners of the **S.R. Das GK Prize** for the academic year 2025-26.

WORD OF THE WEEK

initiative (noun)

ini · tia · tive

Definition: Energy or aptitude displayed in the initiation of an action.

A Real Life Example: *It is imperative that every Dosco shows initiative.*

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

Charge is like a water.

ADN, electro-positive.

I am the most unathletic athlete in School.

Nishant Hazarika, spoken like a true sportsman.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Martin Luther King

(Continued from Page 1)

and bringing change from within that House or culture by natural valuation is far more impactful than official orders. Juniors tend to follow what their predecessors do, because they look up to them, they want to be like them, this creates a domino effect of ideological shifts within students that bring overall change to this institution. But what does this advocacy look like? It looks like giving the same value to Activities time as Games'

time, like allowing students to practice their co-curriculars over extra sports practices, like dismissing people involved in co-curricular spheres within our School.

I am not against symbolic changes, quite the opposite actually. By treating co-curriculars as an inherently inferior activity by continuously attempting to account for why it has to be elevated, it creates a narrative for activities as a pity project. When

we want to bring social change, it is best to do so naturally, like it was obvious for it to happen. That results in transformation from within, which cannot be broken by any force.

This year can still be a year of change. For the Appointees about to take the reins, I hope this piece can help you remodel your activities. We can only hope for the very best looking ahead into the future.

As The Curtain Falls

Rehhan Chadha reports on the recently concluded theatre workshop.

“You build those emotional memories, and then you eventually have a mountain of them and you ski down the mountain, and you let the slope take you where it wants to take you. You can’t preplan. You can’t be like, ‘I’m gonna think of this memory I created at this point,’ because then your performance becomes static. But you can build it so it’s in your bones and it speaks through you.”

- Constance Wu

Dramatics is a pursuit that has underscored most of my School life. It began with the Founder’s play in my B Form, directed by Vinesh Uniyal, which was made special by various other productions I worked in, and people I became connected with along the way. This workshop, for both myself and Aryaman Lamba, Boy-in-Charge of the *Rangmanch* society, was our first step to making our beloved Societies our own, and we couldn’t have asked for something more special.

The workshop was directed by Mr Alok Ulfat, a Dehradun-born educator, theatre practitioner, and social reformer who has dedicated over three decades to using art, culture, and education as tools for social change. A trained Waldorf teacher, he has worked with children, youth, marginalised communities, and leading institutions in India and abroad. When on Campus, he was accompanied by his son, Ojasya, and his assistant Gunjan, and carried himself with the typical swagger championed by veterans of the film industry.

The first day saw Mr Ulfat and his team introduce themselves to the students assembled, and commenced with engaging in some basic exercises to gauge the readiness and enthusiasm of the team. All the exercises occurred in a circle, which I learned is special as it is a formation through which members can interact to the maximum extent. It consisted of different physical drills, voice exercises, coordination tasks, improvisation exercises, and impromptu activities. I also was made

aware of the fact that the most imperative skill for a good actor to imbibe, is in fact, contrary to popular belief, not qualities such as presence, persona, or practice (although their importance remains undisputed), but simply the art of listening. We were explained that simply listening to those around us and observing daily life passionately imbues us with various novel perspectives, which can be channeled as you act.

The second and third days largely pertained to putting these (some) newly-learned skills to good use, while designing performances. The team provided us with simple, short, and facile scripts to practice and perform. There were two: one in English which was essentially a circus jingle, and the other in Hindi about existential insecurity (quite a departure from the English script). Amidst all the chaos at School, I was half-expecting most Juniors to surrender interest quite prematurely, but was very pleasantly surprised. They took their practices seriously, turned up punctually, and most importantly, tried to put soul into their performances.

Given his illustrious career, it was no surprise to me that the workshop also shaped up to become markedly different from the ones I had attended in the past. I went in expecting to want to leave early on, having to stand around in circles for long periods of time, and being expected to “get in the zone” all while constantly keeping Juniors in check. Though I was proved largely correct with these expectations, I witnessed something remarkable take shape.

I want to especially thank the Juniors for taking the workshop in utmost seriousness, and for attempting to engender a meaningful sense of community within the practice, which, by the end of the workshop, we all felt like clinging onto. I also wish to extend gratitude to Mr Ulfat and his team for leaving us with lessons learnt not only dramatics, but for imparting intangible life lessons which will stay with us for a long time to come.

Architecture of The Autopilot

Abhir Kohli discusses how one adopts their individual morality from their experiences.

“The noble type of man experiences himself as determining values; he does not need approval; he judges, ‘what is harmful to me is harmful in itself.’”

-Friedrich Nietzsche

No one remembers being explicitly taught not to steal cookies as a kid, yet one still looked over their shoulder each time one did.

To the psyche of a five-year-old, morals are a sense of right and wrong, the good guy and the bad guy in a movie, or, more practically, the guilt felt when disobeying rules. As we grow and inevitably absorb the cultural and social norms around us, the distinction between right and wrong blurs. The idea morphs into something far more subjective. What is considered immoral to one person may be entirely acceptable to another.

If moral values were purely innate, the environment would play little role in shaping behavior. Yet we see children raised in difficult environments, often struggling with the same cycles of harm. This tension between internal conscience and external influence presents a fundamental philosophical question: are morals something we are taught, or something we absorb simply by living among others? We are products of how we live, but even the most learned behaviors must have an original spark.

Taking this into the context of the child, every child, at some point, has been lectured by their parents on what to do and what not to do. However, lessons like ‘say sorry,’ ‘say please,’ and ‘share’ are the ones most frequently taught and most consistently followed. Teaching religion and good faith, or reading storybooks with moral lessons to malleable children, is more likely to resonate with them. Surrounding a child with rules and curfews sets boundaries on their behavior and places limits on their free will. In the real world, this manifests as forgoing the easy approval of a peer group to uphold a standard of respect for others and for oneself. One may choose not to disrespect a minority even when their friends do, not just because of societal or familial consequences, but because morality is, ultimately, a social construct.

Over the course of evolution, people have designed boundaries of behavior that most follow like second nature. Eventually, morality runs on autopilot, reflecting the mixture of observation and instruction from one’s upbringing. Yes, your parents tell you not to go against the law, but

the societal frameworks and the implications of such an act serve as equally strong deterrents. This reaffirms the growing subjectivity of morality, where it stops being a simple list of dos and don’ts, and becomes a calculation of consequences.

However, morality stops running on autopilot when your original moral spark takes precedence over conformity. Sure, it might be safer to stay quiet about your corrupt boss, but your inner self is itched to speak up. At that point, morality is no longer just a consequence-based calculation; it becomes a matter of empathy and conviction. In the rare courage of the whistleblower, we witness the moment when one’s own interpretation of childhood moral teachings overrides societal pressure, which is exactly why some children may *never have reached for the cookie jar in the first place*. Everyone draws their own line between when empathy must supercede expectation or vice versa. To some, taking a bribe may align with their moral standard, but that is precisely the difference between us and moral failure.

In unfortunate situations, morals may be flipped, and the line between heroes and villains may blur heavily. When one experiences the harsh realities of the world at a young age, such as domestic violence, their lens of morality is bound to tilt. If abuse is normal to someone, then their autopilot will run on that same agenda. Morality shaped in one’s formative years can be difficult, often impossible, to unlearn, and devastating for society. The malleability of a child’s mind becomes a double-edged sword. One may grow up to help a stranger out of deeply ingrained empathy, while another may grow up to mirror the same violence they were once subjected to.

Morality is neither purely taught nor purely innate. We all live in some hybrid space, where we must constantly balance intrinsic and extrinsic influences. We begin with our own perception of the world, combined with the teachings of childhood, to fuel the original spark of our moral compass. That spark is either nurtured or extinguished by the world around us. As we grow, we must measure our beliefs against our own moral standards and the expectations of society. Perhaps we never stop looking over our shoulder, but we do get better at knowing who is there.

And Then There Were None...

Sabir Ahuja

Creative

"It was the best of times and it was the worst of times."

On February 7, the atmosphere changed. The air, previously thick with both 'scope' and anticipation, had thinned. This was the day the Prefects left. They were now in an off-site workshop whose aim still remains unknown to most of us Juniors.

One day gone, and people had begun to notice. The largest evidence were the first meals, being made thankful for sustenance by the oligarchy of times past. Speaking of sustenance, each table in the CDH had morphed into its own free-for-all, stretching the few Masters present as thin as their voices now were.

The second day opened with a rude awakening - bleary-eyed Doscos filing up on the Main Field, their sleepy anger at the continuation of Morning P.T. causing ignorance of the absence of the School PT leader himself. Upon this revelation, many simply returned to their abruptly interrupted slumber, while others continued their routine. The few who'd decided to forsake their Morphean endeavour were busy wondering why the Prefects were tardy, and concluded not to excuse them upon their eventual arrival.

On the third day of the anarchy, the Doscos, obviously asleep during the first few minutes of PT, found themselves being dragged out of bed by a few Sc-Formers. This new 'Self-Appointed Prefect Union' (SAPU) would eventually dissolve as time passed, craving for time to pass themselves. The ScLs remained silent throughout, possibly in contact with the Prefects, but refusing to reveal the perpetually postponed ETA.

By the fourth day, speculations on the dubious return of the Prefectorial Body were underway, with some greeting this ever-less plausible theory with jubilation, the end of which seemed as unlikely as the Prefectorial 'reappearance.'

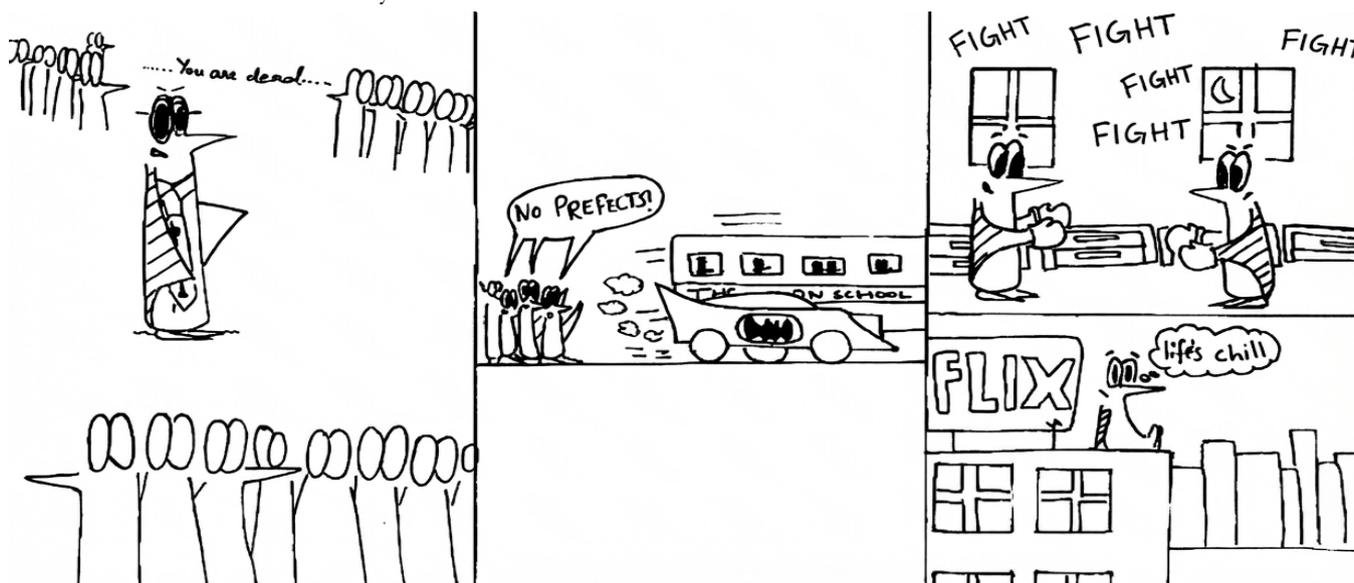
On Day Five, a bedlam commenced, thriving in this newfound state of kakistocracy. Smart devices seemed

to have been produced out of thin air, recording this pandemonium on video. This was the day many decided to simply 'forget to attend School' or 'think it was a Sunday' and deserted the Main Building for a day.

By hour 146, an ad hoc-assembled Directorate of Masters, led by *Robin* himself, assumed the right to give 'Change-in-Breaks', in a last-ditch effort to reinstate order. The few who bowed to this unforeseen power were labelled 'scopats'. The rest, however, heavily opposed this and decreed it a 'hacker spoiling the game'. What ensued was a confusing re-enactment of the *Jedi Temple Purge*, the temple being the 'Toyes' and the Main Building, and the Jedi, the innocently helpless desks and books. Some went as far as to wage battle with the dismembered legs of tables. With the majority of Doscos seeking nothing to do with the rampage, the *Hospi* was instantaneously packed with those who couldn't race to the structure at a speed unbecoming an unwell man, lining up with symptoms more creative than Tolkien himself.

With this, the Community had been divided. There were those who were there just for 'enti', there were the entertainers, the participants, and there were those seeking refuge from the conflict.

Then came Day Seven. Thankfully, the School had been peaceful at night, with everyone having been exhausted by the day's work. This day, the School was greeted by the resurgence of the yellow-lamped ties. The School fell back in order with surprising speed. Most were just tired by the previous day. Others were played by the old 'divide-and-conquer' technique (the easiest, due to their pre-divided nature caused by the last few days). There were, astonishingly, no YC handouts, nor were there any expulsions. There was no public statement made to the School community, though most figured the Directorate had enjoyed the frivolous mood too.



The Week Gone By

Rehhan Chadha

So here goes...

I loathe the cold weather we're seeing these days. Perhaps in their own strange way, the weather gods seemed to be poking deranged fun at us, and yet they seemed to forget that despite the little say we ~~Doscos~~ boys of the Doon School have over the hands of fate, we make up for it with perseverance, determination and sleep deprivation, for the slew of activities that shall never cease.

Monday saw the expected groans and muffled audible cries as freshly plump and well-fed *Penguins* trotted on down to their dreaded habitat: a frozen-over Main Field. Despite the many requests by multiple different parties, to and by, our dedicated Prefectorial Body, the S

Form still has to rub its dreary morning eyes and begin to plop into our Track Tops in the middle of what seems like the vacuous dead of night. We expect better next time!

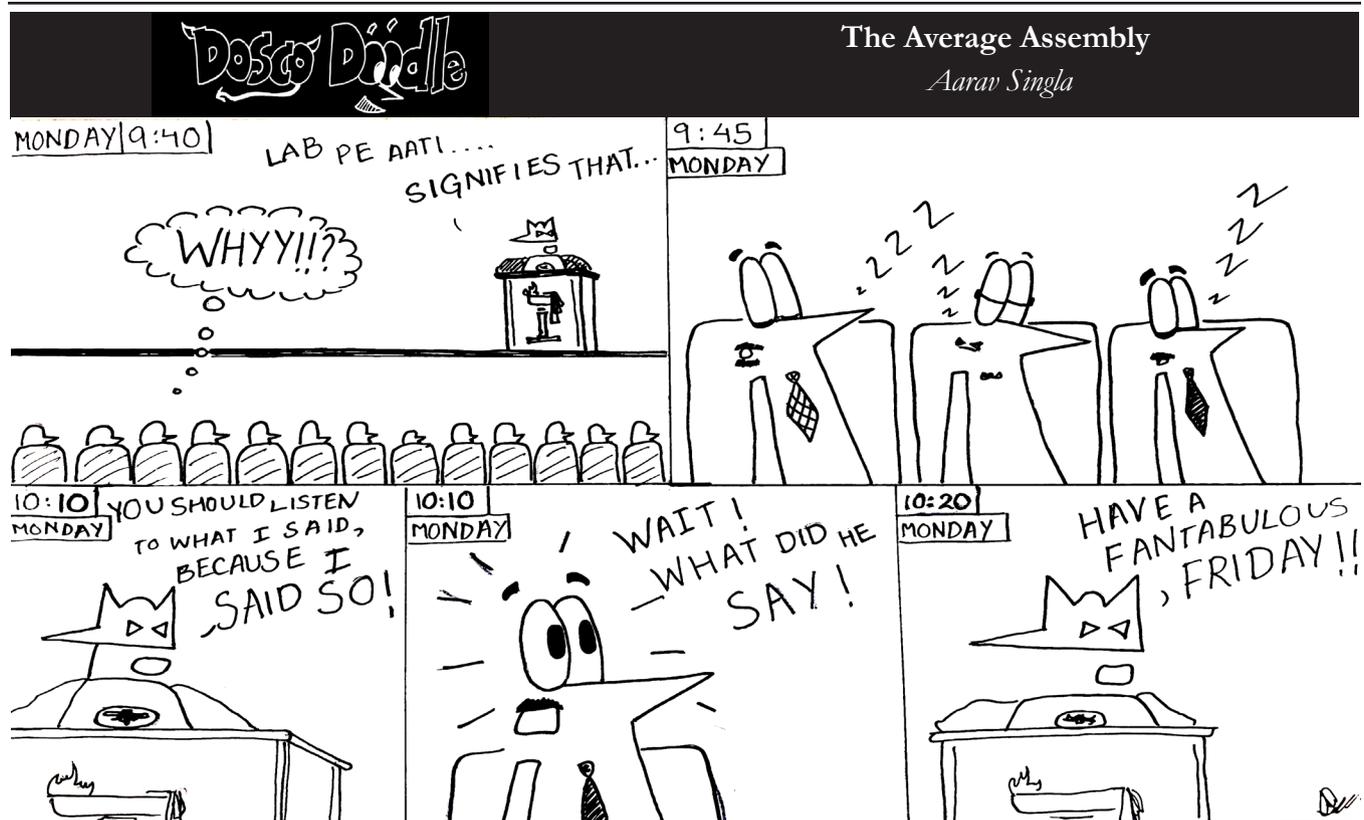
Tuesday and Wednesday were witness to further Appointments and dis-Appointments, as the S Form girds its heels firmly into the ground of their new responsibilities. We really hope that our *initiative* (word of the Week) suffices for the previous *high* standards set by the Batch of '26. All over: activities, STAs, Councils and Publications — there seem to be transitions and passings-on of roles, as each Appointee anxiously prepares to chalk out a new year, and as we slowly but surely see them grow into their roles, I wish them all the best for their tenure!

Apart from the barrage of Appointments this week, cricket practices at the fields fervently pick up ahead of the Junior Inter-House Cricket, as every now and then, someone shouts, "Watch!". While fun and games are important to a happy

life, we mustn't also lose sight of what's really going to cause a difference: the ~~CDH~~ ~~ment~~ the upcoming Trials. Though one might scoff at them, it's better to be early than sorry.

Also, if you're the type of person who, instinctively, has made their way to the very last page to read the *Week Gone By*, while I hope you've not been let down, I'd recommend you to flip through some of the other pieces of this very well-compiled *Weekly*, and exclaim, "Ohh!" while pretending to understand (P.S. this is not the only piece I've written).

Unfortunately, I'm afraid, dear Readers that my ~~word-count~~ time has run out. It seems too quick yet such was the case for this week, as I wish you all great luck for all your endeavours. Remember to cross your I's, dot your T's, and appreciate your *Lab Pe Aati Hai Duas*. Heck, write an entire speech on it if you can, (for extra points), or have already been beaten to the punch? Don't worry though, for I shall return. Until then, farewell!



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



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