

Established in 1936

The Doon School WEEKLY

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

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TOO MANY DOORS

Do we have the environmental backing to meet our 'academic goals?'

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RUNNING SOMEONE ELSE'S RACE

In one's developmental years, one experiences pressure to conform to certain expectations that may trap you.

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Opinion

Knowledge Our Light?

Rehhan Chadha

Our motto is not "Aristocracy of Service!"

Modern psychology has a word for this. It is called the 'Mandela effect': the phenomenon of mass misremembering of common everyday items such as popular characters (Mr Monopoly never wore a monocle), details about movies (the dialogue is not "Luke, I am your father") or everyday brands (it is KitKat, no hyphen). What is apparent is that the same mass dilution of collective memory has occurred in School: most DoscOs polled seem to instinctively attribute the tagline of our School motto to the oft-quoted phrase "Aristocracy of Service" and not "Knowledge Our Light." Is this problematic?

There is nothing particularly perturbing about "Aristocracy of Service" becoming, or being framed to become, the School motto. First uttered by Founder Arthur Foot on the opening day, it refers to a high stratum of society, within which the spartan ideals of social usefulness and giving back are held in high esteem. Comparatively, "Knowledge Our Light" seems slightly more obscure (perhaps because it is less discussed). The issue which surfaces here is not the quality and interpretations of both quotations, but dismissing a historical truth whilst claiming to hold School history as paramount.

On institutional memory

For a school that must metamorphose to adapt to a more futuristic and forward-looking model of education, we continue to cling onto elements of nostalgia and institutional history. To an extent, rightfully so. We have been accredited with producing stalwarts who have contributed to national growth in the aftermath of the socio-cultural ruptures created by the British Raj's presence. We have played key roles in facilitating political and cultural landmarks of the country, including holding several positions in the center and across fields. When this clinging to tradition starts to block necessary growth and change, when it turns into an old mouthpiece trying to dictate how a new, energetic generation should act, and when it becomes rotten fuel keeping an institution running that is clearly open to criticism in the modern world, we see that there are deep problems at the core of the value system through which the School judges itself. The surfacing tension between performance and preservation must be addressed systematically. There are layers to this argument. The imperative trade-off lies between remaining true to a rich tradition and embracing the qualities of other schools similar to ours.

School, like many aging institutions, has become intersections of the glorious old,

*"We have been **promised** that this **ideology** is sure to made us securely through our **personal and professional lives**, an undertaking ratified by the hordes of Old Boys who still credit School in **engendering perspective and purpose** in their lives, who seem to owe much of their personal gains to what their **alma mater** (intentionally or otherwise) evoked in them."*

and the exciting new. It has been publicly claimed that securing an admission to a prestigious college should never become the primary goal of the Doon School education. Should it come as a by-product? Definitely. While we do embrace certain aspects of contemporary education (by this, I mean that which is practiced at other familiar institutions which hold contemporary educational standards), the unique selling point remains unruffled, as it has in the past — to produce Batches of boys and girls who work towards the collective goal of utilising their personal, imbibed skills to serve a reality where the better-privileged are obliged to help out their fellow man; in which meritoriousness is a sought-after trait; and where the development of a robust character and persona, through hardship and struggle in lived experience, is sure to garner success. We have been promised that this ideology is sure to guide us securely through our personal and professional lives, an undertaking ratified by the hordes of Old Boys who still credit School in engendering perspective and purpose in their lives, who seem to owe much

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LISTENER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the School Community have been listening to this week:

Aarav Shukla: *The Less I Know the Better* by Tame Impala.

Kabir Walia: *Tere Liye* by Atif Aslam and Shreya Ghoshal.

Tejvir Majithia: *Eye of the Tiger* by Survivor.

READER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the School Community have been reading this week:

Reyansh Agarwal: *Sneaker Wars* by Barbara Smit.

Sabir Ahuja: *Freedom at Midnight* by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins.

Abhir Kohli: *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt.

Daksh Singh: *The Stranger* by Albert Camus.

Aryaman Lamba: *Table For Four* by Sunil Munjal.

SCIENTIFICUM INGENIUM

The following are the awards for the **Dipankar Sen Science Quiz, 2026:**

Seniors Category:

Runner-up: Naman Adlakha

Winner: Ayan Dhandhanian

Juniors Category:

Runner-up: Siddharth Sahay

Winner: Swarit Chaudhary

Congratulations!

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

Why you dancing on a one feet?

JTR, expert dancer.

Why is C-MUN coming to my mouth again and again, I don't know.

NAS, we are left speechless.

Dramatic irony is irony that is dramatic.

Don't confuse the two.

Aarav Kajaria, over-dramatic.

Even the changes are changing.

Nishant Hazarika, change is the only constant.

CAS is an activity of your and yourself.

Aditya Koradia, IB learner.

WORD OF THE WEEK

urgency (noun)

ur · juhñ · see

Definition: The quality or state of requiring swift or immediate action, typically demanded of in walking to or from classes.

An example: "Every Dosco must walk with a sense of urgency."

“

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial 'outside agitator' idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider.

Martin Luther King Jr.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

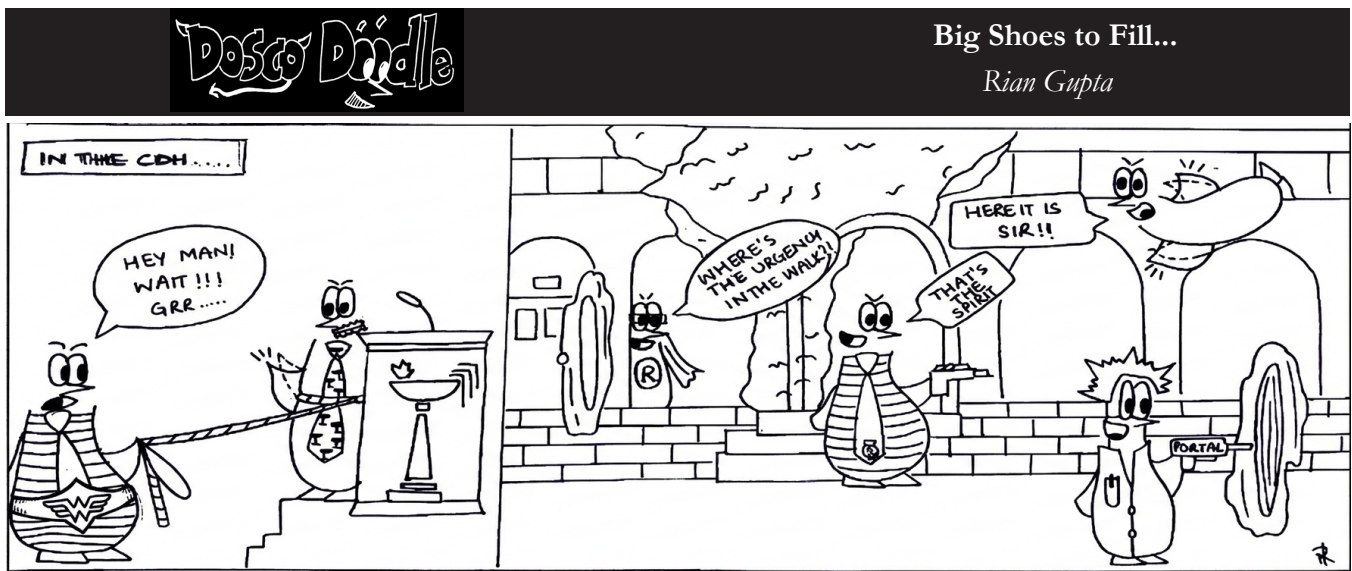
"...The Doon School Weekly celebrates its first anniversary next week. In the leap year 1936, it has appeared every Saturday with an uncanny regularity and phenomenal success. This has only been made possible by the magnificent spirit of cooperation and support which the readers and contributors of The Doon School Weekly have shown during the past year. The headmaster with his message in the Assembly, the Masters and boys with their numerous activities and games have all heartily contributed in the production of the Weekly..."

(Source: *The Doon School Archives*)

An Extract from *The Doon School Weekly*, Saturday, 27 February, 1937.

Around the World in 80 Words

Mexican Security Forces killed 'El Mencho,' a Mexican Cartel leader leading to widespread violence in Mexico. President Donald Trump recently planned an increase in global tariffs to fifteen percent, causing sharp market volatility. Several European nations declined the offer to participate in the first session of the Board of Peace. The 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan-Cortina, Italy officially ended with Norway finishing on top of the medal tally. Pakistan declared an 'open war' on Afghanistan with air-raids conducted on Kabul.



Big Shoes to Fill...

Rian Gupta

(Continued from Page 1)

of their personal gains to what their alma mater (intentionally or otherwise) evoked in them. Although the success of those previously in our place provides comfort and required validation, it is equally imperative to question the validity of these narratives, and to gauge to what extent they apply to our lives today. No one understands the nature of School better than the Batches currently witnessing it. All custodians of the institution deserve to make their own mark on it, usher in their own changes, and not live in the shadows of opinion proliferated by the previous Batches.

An evolving ethos?

Simply suggesting the evaluation and review of a historic ethos is not a facile task. One may assume that this sudden demand for grassroots change within School is a curse of the newly seeded transactionalism prevalent in the education system today (which many seasoned educationists, especially the kind our School nurtures, tend to resent). There is a certain veracity in understanding that School is a nonagenarian (a ninety-year-old) place: it's had a full life, but now needs to reinvent itself to stay interesting. Ninety years is more than the entire lifetime of most people that comprise the Community, not just students. Given that no one present on campus has seen School develop and transition in its own right, we must reconsider before framing multiple reservations. Hence, any metric through which we judge School will not be able to do justice to even institutional memory. That said, we cannot afford to treat a beloved guild like an immovable, unameliorable monolith. Introspect: when you claim, "School is perfect the way it is!" does it come from a place of optimism, or the

dreadful realisation that your contributions are not significant enough to cause actual change, hence, why try? On the contrary, there has been meaningful change in the past. Former Headmasters received plenty of resistance for ushering educational reform, yet, it is safe to say that both decisions have benefitted today's Doscos. This helps us feel palpable growth between days of the institution's infancy and its state today, boosting pride rather than diminishing it. Hence, dynamism is an important feature of any institution that hopes to guard its relevance. Additionally, the criticisms are of a different nature this time; they are far more internal. When scrutiny is poured in from outside School, we at least had the liberty to shrug it off by saying that "Oh, they don't live in School, how could they judge?" It is worrying when members of School, some of them long-serving, begin to pose difficult questions.

Et Tu, Brute!

From the discussions above, we understand that School's history is so deeply coalesced with its present that if anyone even held the intention to separate them, it would be a Herculean task to do so. Therefore, to grow forward, a feature of the possible reinvention cannot be separation from the past. It is simply not the solution. Since we were on the subject of psychology initially, there is a model which applies specifically to the situation of diaspora, who immigrate to foreign nations. Berry's Acculturation model estimates the condition of these immigrants based on their attachments to their native culture versus the culture of the host country. Considering School to be an 'immigrant,' or at least a comparative novice in the field of modern competitive education, we are somewhere

along the middle between assimilation and separation. We are actively losing touch with both sides, but somehow claim to walk a poised tightrope. We claim to be attached to what has historically been the culture of our School, but the validity of this claim is questionable when an uncomfortable majority of the School Community, including its more senior members, get the motto (basic information of historical significance) wrong. The confusion over the motto is not an isolated semantic lapse; it is symptomatic. It exposes the ease with which rhetoric can ossify into ritual, and how readily repetition can replace reflection. When symbolism begins to outpace substance, institutions risk mistaking familiarity for fidelity. If we cannot recall something as foundational as the motto, are we preserving tradition, or merely rehearsing a softened version of it? Is our pride rooted in lived understanding, or in inherited nostalgia? Perhaps the real question is not whether School must change but whether we can bring positive change and evolve in the right direction. We claim to protect both sides without understanding what it takes. It is imperative for us to gain this understanding, collectively.

Too Many Doors

Taarak Harjai *comments on the inability to prioritise, thus resulting in a non-conducive academic environment.*

Over the past year, we have observed commendable attempts to establish a newfound academic culture in School, where the administration has tried to draw more attention to academics as compared to other spheres of a Dosco's life. Quite often, in Assemblies, the synonymy of the term 'School' has been reinforced with academics. This pursuit does have its merits, as an institution, we must strive to match the academic excellence displayed by other national and international schools. If realised, Doon's academic standing in the eyes of universities will inevitably enhance both, admissions prospects, and long-term trajectories.

However, as a well-wisher of Doon's institutional aims, I find within myself a deep urge to reflect: are we treading on the right path? Where does the problem lie? Why was there a problem in the first place?

The Tyranny of Opportunity

Doon's model of 'holistic education' believes in a simultaneous pursuit of three fields: Academia, Co-curricular Activities, and Sports. Throughout my School life, I have seen a major percentage of Doscos devote greater time to the latter two than the first.

I dub this phenomenon the 'tyranny of opportunity'. As D Formers who join School, we are not merely overwhelmed, but indulged by abundance. The two-hour Sports time, tens of different Societies and Activities, Inter-Houses that hold great significance in our life, activities that require hours of your time, learning new skills — this is new territory to the average D Former. This ethos is truly unique to our School. Opportunities transition across forms — making a name for yourself in Junior forms, 'scoping' for Captaincies in S Form, and executing your 'well-thought-out vision' in Sc Form. Amidst these evolving pursuits, we neglect the one constant — academics.

As human nature would dictate, all that which commands participation inevitably commands prestige. This leads to prestige being skewed away from academics. All these factors build up to a lack of academic motivation. We may prompt a Dosco to study by ensuring he sits down for Toye, but they will never study well unless they actually want to.

Clichéd Consistency

Let's say a Dosco has his priorities straight. He sees through the 'tyranny of opportunity,' and actually wishes to study. In these cases, long sessions of studying become a challenge. With our School's jam-packed calendar, post-class self-study becomes a myth. As he sits down for Toye in the evening, he's instantly summoned for one thing or the other; be it Inter-House practice or any other non-academic task.

This is a concept one only comprehends through

experience. To give an anecdote, when the weight of organising your House's One Act Play lies on your shoulder, the tyranny of opportunity shifts from transparent to quietly obscuring.

Humans are known to build up a routine after 21 days of repetition. I recommend some self-reflection here. How many of you reading this article have consistently studied outside of class for 21 days in a row? Academics outside of class during Inter-House Play, Music or Dance season appears to be a distant dream, doesn't it? In this trade-off, we either lose the things that make 'Doon' special, or we lose academic focus.

The Solution

I've narrowed the problems down to a lack of motivation, consistency, and time. These three problems are quite evidently linked. We do not achieve our 'academic' vision unless we solve both matters.

I believe the latter has been tackled in an effective manner by the School authorities — Toye time has been made stricter, and post-dinner meetings have been discouraged.

Onto the more difficult part: how do we actually place academics at the forefront, when it isn't even at the same pedestal as Co-curriculars and Sports?

The most evident solution is to alter the student observation of academics, and integrate it into the daily life of Doscos in increasingly explicit ways. We saw an attempt at this through the Inter-House Academics Cup. By making academics more relevant into the day-to-day life of a Dosco, we increase its significance in their life.

Comparable initiatives, implemented at a greater scale and visibility, must be undertaken to ensure that Academics are as respected, dignified and honoured in School as Co-curriculars and Sports. Distinctions such as the Scholars' Blazer hold symbolic weight to reshape common perception.

Over a period of time, the focus must be on tapping into the psyche of Doscos, and ensuring that every Dosco is self-motivated. Merely ensuring that they sit down at their desks will not be enough. They must truly believe that focusing on their Academics will get them the same amount of respect and honour in School as Sports and Activities. We need institutional direction. This is the only way self motivation can be induced for large masses.

Doon has a history of producing individuals who shoulder responsibilities far greater than those within these gates. That journey, however, begins with the discipline one exercises when no audience is watching, and no idol is enforcing.

Opinion

Running Someone Else's Race

Daksh Singh *discusses being caught in someone else's expectations.*

Imagine running behind a car, endlessly. Oblivious to your location, you just run faster and farther, thinking it will lead you to your desired destination. You're full of hope, ambition, and excitement along the way, accompanied by many other runners, as if it were a marathon — a long one at that. All of you take the same strides, breathe the same way, and sweat the same amount. You find yourselves included in a 'happy' camaraderie of runners, but slowly, you realise that you've forgotten the destination itself, lost track of the car, and are blindly running with the group. You start to hear shouts from the front, pushing you to go on, even though you're exhausted to the core, and encouragement from your friends, even though their once-comforting voices now come with a twinge of indifference. There's a steady honk from the driver in the car, telling you it's still there, still dangling in front of you like a dream at the tip of your tongue. A dream you all had, an illusion you all bought, and an idea you all strived towards — Success.

No matter how excruciatingly painful the course was, it was all okay since you were with everyone else, right? Your groans finally started to merge with everyone else's; you realised that it was better to sulk collectively than alone, and somehow, everything became easier.

The lead runner dictated the rules of the marathon, guiding everyone through the seemingly endless course, reassuring everyone that what they were doing was right, and banishing those who didn't follow the rules — the 'crazy dreamers,' he called them. Everyone followed, and nobody questioned, all believing that he had the map, that he was their ultimate key to success. He painted a brilliant picture in your minds of what success would look like, and that vision kept all of you going. It was top-tier marks, a magnificent college, and a high-paying job with a picture-perfect family. Your mouths drooled at the mere thought of it, and once you started to talk to others, you realised the brutality of the situation. People's dreams of starting their own venture capital firm turned into hopes of scraping up the corporate ladder, their hopes of opening an art museum transformed into landing a job and starting a family, and what was once a pursuit of passion had now become a rat race to an uncertain, but allegedly 'safe' space.

You all started to fear banishment from the race, to be considered roadkill by your family and friends. What face would you show if you weren't able to live up to the standards of your family? Your parents had

sacrificed so much for you to become an engineer. They boasted about you to their friends at meetings and dinner tables, and their love, wrapped in the cloth of expectations and years of socialisation, moulded you to conform to society's valuable blueprint. What would they think of you? And even though your passion slowly started to go against the flow of the marathon, you wouldn't dare risk it. For how would you muster up the courage to tell your parents that what once held them back was now slowly holding you back, too? That they had started to reproduce the fear that was once instilled in them? So you continued down the JEE pathway, abandoning your hopes of one day performing with your band in front of a gathering.

We've started to seek pleasure in superiority, approval through compliance, and happiness in success. We've started to believe in an idea painted in vivid colours by our dear runner, but if you dare take a step back from all the hustle and bustle for 'success', you'll start to notice the black-and-white image that forms. It forms when passions fade away, when dreams start to look the same, and when the hype of success takes its place in the minds of the youth. And maybe, just maybe, you'll one day realise — if it isn't too late — that the glory of happiness and success was but a mere hoax.

Yet the greatest fault isn't in the car or the lead runner, but in ourselves, for falling prey to what wouldn't have been an animal had we not been easy targets — the marathon for success. The system only exists because of our collective willingness to run, only because we are participants in our own conformity. The only solution is to look inwards, upon ourselves, to the answers that lie deep within, and to refuse to jump on the bandwagon just to fit in.

Walk your path alone if you have to. Sometimes, it's not just about having people by your side upon the mountaintop; it's about realising its value when there are millions of others there with you. And from that crowded peak, you may even see those banished runners in the distance, on their own solitary summit, basking in the happiness of their freedom from the rat race, realising that what was once socialised into you might have been wrong — that it's okay to be considered roadkill by rats stuck in a savage race. Be the explorer, the wanderer, the supposed 'roadkill' and 'failure', because, at the end of the day, it is your mountaintop that has value, not anyone else's.

The Week Gone By

Ayaan Mittal

Cricket Inter-House has annexed the sun-kissed afternoons of Chandbagh. “*Howzat!*” now ricochets off the Main Building, the Pavilion, and possibly the *Shivaliks* themselves. The 35-minute schools — courtesy of the ‘Cricket Mafia’ — have restored to my Batchmates a lost civilisational treasure: the post-lunch nap. It takes me back to the good ol’ primary school days. A note to my Batch: do not let the Juniors catch you taking a ‘nappy with your blanky’, because we need to seem scary.

And in what can only be described as divine intervention, yesterday marked the final morning PT for the month. At dawn, JTR Sir — the ‘poster boy of unsolicited sunrise monologues’ — was reportedly spotted behind the Pavilion, staring wistfully into the horizon,

perhaps rehearsing punchlines that will now go tragically unheard. His 5:45 a.m. stand-up special, “Jumping-jacks with JTR,” has been indefinitely postponed. The nation rejoices mourns.

In the Main Building, our valiant Hindi debaters lock horns beneath the watchful gaze of the School’s esteemed *mahodays*. One cannot help but wonder whether Hindi debates are still constitutionally permissible in an era rumoured to operate under a zero-tolerance Hindi doctrine. Whispers suggest that the *Justice League* is drafting a cease-and-desist as we speak. To all Hindi debaters: remain vigilant. Vengeance never sleeps.

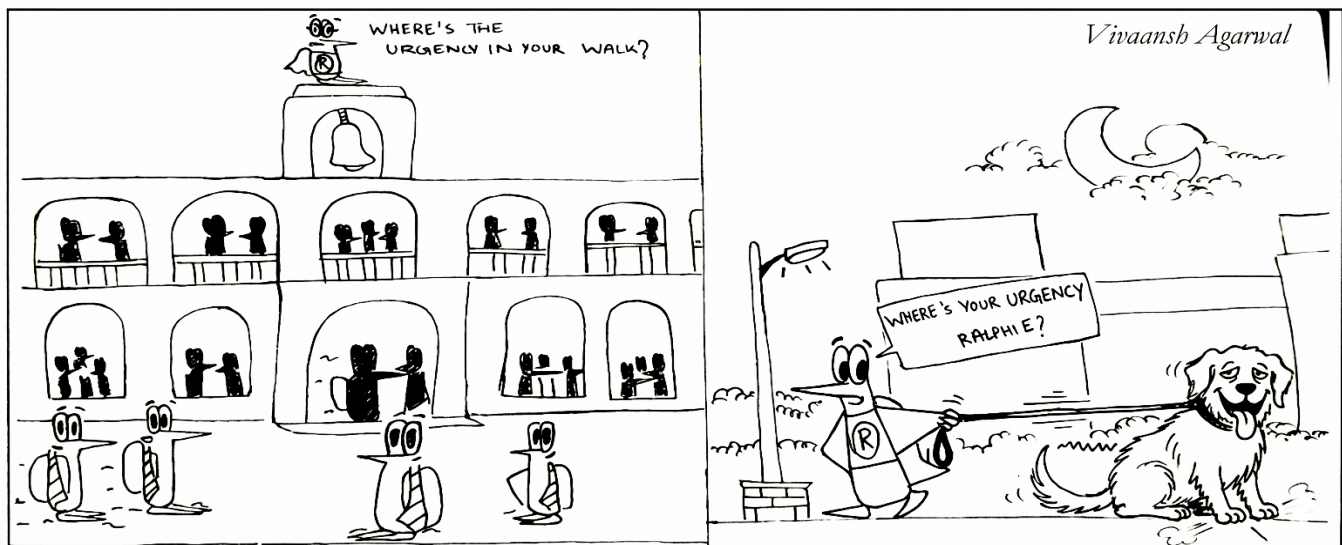
Meanwhile, *Robin* — the ‘urgency’ evangelist — has apparently ignited a revolutionary fervour in D Form, as little penguins have been seen running down the *bajri* paths with newfound conviction and storming the corridors in their bid to ‘be the first to reach class.’ Old Boy nostalgia works with alarming efficiency; nothing mobilises the youth like a well-

timed anecdote beginning with, “Back in my day...”

Toye time has clearly overtaken all other life goals. Between eight and ten, Houses take on the look of a graveyard; no noise, no movement, just the faint glow of “serious academic commitment.” The *Justice League* is reportedly pleased, but not satisfied. Productivity is up, but so is suspicion. I guess only time will tell...

Speaking of the *Justice League*, the School was graced with a less-than-eventful *visit*. In a move no one saw coming (or asked for), pasta was promoted to lunch while *idli-sambhar* was demoted to dinner. You know it’s serious when your South Indian friends question the timing of South Indian food. “*Appeasement! I won’t ever be able to look at idli-sambhar the same way!*” Hrishi remarked before eating about ten idlis.

And last but not the least, maybe consider hitting the books, for exams lurk. Until next time...



The *Weekly* wishes our dear publisher Mr Kamal Ahuja, a belated Happy Birthday!

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