



Established in 1936

The Doon School WEEKLY

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

April 11, 2026 | Issue No. 2771

DOONSPEAK

The School Community recounts the recent Midterm experience.

Page 4

THE BLOOD OF BRAVADO

Mr Manu Mehrotra comments on the suggestive and morally ambiguous depiction of war in cinema.

Page 6



UNDER THE SCANNER

The Conflict in the Middle East | Abhir Kohli and Agastya Mehrotra

Note: The assessments and data contained in this report are verified as of April 8, 2026. Due to the high volatility and rapid evolution of the active conflict, conditions remain highly fluid and subject to immediate change without notice.

When those at the table agree to peace and those behind it choose war, whom do you hold accountable?

In February 2026, Iran and the United States held indirect nuclear talks in Muscat under Omani mediation, and Iranian officials described the opening round as a good start. However, the public reporting still pointed to deep disagreements, not a confirmed breakthrough. Even if peace was close, it was never close enough to survive the tug of war. Less than 24 hours after peace was declared within reach, American-Israeli strikes began. Peace had appeared possible. Those with power just failed to take hold of it.

The Road to War

What's important to consider is the rising arc of escalation that was consistent but just as harmful. The Hamas attack in 2023 forced Iran and Israel into direct confrontation. By 2024, the two countries were exchanging missile strikes openly. The Twelve-Day War of June 2025 saw Israel bomb military and nuclear sites across Iran, with the U.S. joining later, sparking further controversy and conflict. Trump proclaimed a ceasefire, but it proved ineffective; less a resolution than the end of a beginning. Iran's authoritarian regime, weakened militarily and economically, crushed the largest protests since the 1979 Revolution in January 2026, inevitably killing

thousands. By mid-February, Washington was preparing another round of negotiations even as it moved a major aircraft carrier into the region; within days, deterrence had given way to open war. Each step felt robust but avoidable, and a war without clear aims is a war without a clear end.

Reports indicated that Israel's security cabinet had approved an operation against Iran in early January, well before the first strikes. Military planning was running ahead of diplomacy. The war was justified as stopping a nuclear threat. The International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.), the world's nuclear watchdog, said that no such threat existed. The decision appears to have run ahead of the public evidentiary case.

The First Strikes and Iran's Response

The opening phase of the war killed Iran's supreme leader and sent the region into a new and more dangerous chapter, one in which military targets and civilian suffering were never clearly separable. Failed diplomacy does not discriminate. Hundreds of Iranian drones and ballistic missiles followed, targeting Israel and U.S. bases across Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the U.A.E. The destructive and largely unethical side to Iran's response lay in its use of cluster munitions — weapons

that release hundreds of smaller submunitions over a wide area, which were internationally banned under a 2008 convention — though notably, neither Iran nor Israel are signatories to it. These targeted purely residential areas like Beit Shemesh, killing nine civilians on March 1. By day ten, Iranian missile attacks dropped by ninety percent, credited to U.S.-Israeli suppression and Iran's depleted stockpiles. However, the first U.S. jets were shot down by enemy fire in over twenty years, further highlighting the unexpected nature of Iran's brutal response.

The Lebanon Front and the Regional Spillover

By early March, Lebanon had been pulled deep into the war after Hezbollah entered the fight in response to the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader. By early April, Lebanese officials reported more than 1,500 killed and over a million displaced. A British R.A.F. base in Cyprus was hit by a Hezbollah drone, pulling yet another nation into the crossfire. Israel backed the two-week ceasefire on April 8 but made clear it did not extend to Lebanon, leaving that front dangerously unresolved. Entire border villages lay in ruins. Israeli lawmakers seized the moment, pushing for a "new, more secure border" — what critics have called

(Continued on Page 3)

LISTENERS' CHECKLIST

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

Vivaan Agarwal: *Isbj Jalakar* by Shashwat Sachdev

Pange Buchem: *Don't Stop Me Now* by Queen

Rudra Saran: *The Colour Violet* by Tory Lanez

Vihaan Lakhota: *Took Her To The O* by King Von

Arham Benara: *Ransom* by Lil Tecca

Rafay Bukhari: *E85* by Don Toliver

READERS' CHECKLIST

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

Saksham Agrawal: *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

Nihal Bhathal: *The Republic* by Plato

Nanda Karumudi: *A Feast of Vultures* by Josy Joseph

Rivaan Singhania: *Percy Jackson and The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

Aarav Singla: *A Thousand Ships* by Natalie Haynes

PUER SCHOLAE PUBLICAE

Rahul Oram and Jigmet Urgian have been awarded the **Games' Blazer**.

Ayaan Mittal has been awarded the **Scholars' Blazer**.

Congratulations!

THE RIDDLE ?

*Facing the Eagles' nest cornered by water,
I stand before colours that don't quite compare.
I watch every passer as seasons go by;
A silent old guard on the edge of your way,
I offer you shade but have nothing to say.
I watch every battle raging on the grass,
What am I, standing quietly in between?*

This Week in History

1865 CE: Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant, effectively ending the American Civil War.

1896 CE: The opening of the first Modern Olympic Games is celebrated in Athens.

1930 CE: At the end of the Salt March, Gandhi raises a lump of mud and salt and declares his open defiance to the Empire's 'Salt Law'.

1933 CE: Nazi Germany issues the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, banning Jews and political dissidents from civil service posts.

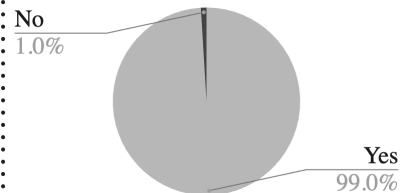
1955 CE: Winston Churchill resigns as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom amid indications of failing health.

Around the World in 80 Words

Oil barrel prices hit \$150 per barrel as the U.S.-Iran war continues to escalate. Predictions suggested that India may face below-normal monsoons this year due to El Niño conditions. *Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge* crossed the one thousand crore rupees box-office mark in India. Artemis II broke the record of reaching the farthest distance from Earth as a manned spacecraft. Workers in Maharashtra protested against job insecurity and wage unfairness. Southampton stunned Arsenal in a 2-1 showdown in the FA Cup.

VOX POPULI

Are your Peshawaris uncomfortable?

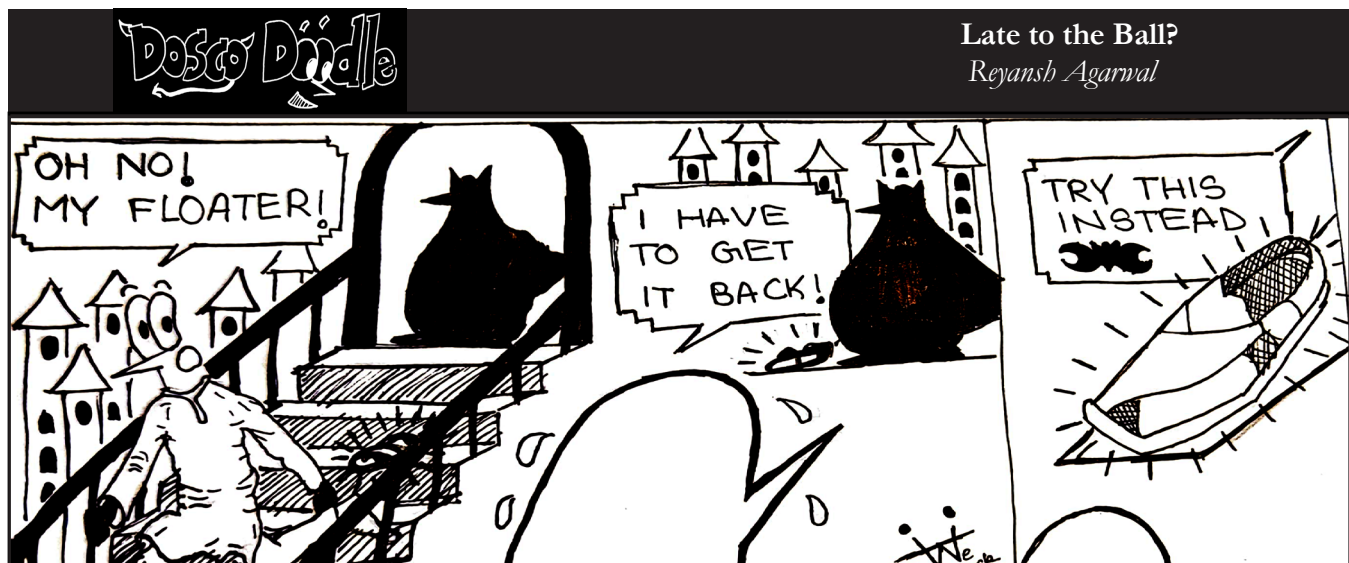


320 members of the School Community were polled.

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

I'm so deeply locked in that I feel unlocked out.

Daksh Singh, in crisis.



(Continued from Page 1)

expansion under the guise of war.

Eleven people, among them a four-year-old girl, were killed in a single strike. That is not a statistic. That is a child killed in a strike. While bodies were being buried, Israel struck the South Pars gas field — the world's largest — decimating Iran's LNG output and severely disrupting the downstream petrochemical industries dependent on it.

Week Six: A Fragile Window

Approaching day forty, the war had reached its most volatile juncture. Trump gave Iran a deadline to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, threatening to bomb power plants and bridges. His expletive-filled social media post warned that Iran would be "living in Hell." Iran's IRGC vowed "not a litre of oil" would pass through Hormuz. Children were killed in overnight strikes in Baharestan County. Iran's heavy water facility at Khondab was destroyed. Then, less than two hours before his own deadline expired, Trump announced a two-week ceasefire — brokered in part through the intervention of Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief, Asim Munir — with Iran agreeing to allow safe passage through the Strait.

Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi confirmed that Tehran would halt military operations if attacks against it ceased. Talks are scheduled to take place in Islamabad on April 10. Iran's Supreme National Security Council declared it a historic victory, claiming the U.S. had accepted Tehran's ten-point plan as the basis for negotiations — a plan that demands the lifting of all sanctions, full compensation, release of frozen assets, and recognition of Iran's right to enrich uranium. But, within minutes of the announcement, missile and drone alerts sounded across the Gulf.

The World's Artery, Severed

The war did not stay within borders. Neither will its consequences.

Let's take the Strait of Hormuz as the world's main artery. Block it, and everything goes haywire. Reuters reported that the closure of the Strait disrupted oil exports, forced refiners to seek alternatives, and drove European and Asian buyers to pay nearly \$150 a barrel for physical cargoes. Even the ceasefire announcement brought only hope, not stability, because the market remained tight and analysts warned that a prolonged closure could drive Brent Crude prices higher still.

The fallout doesn't stop at oil. Fertiliser prices climbed twenty percent. Global sulphur supply fractured — a byproduct of Gulf oil and gas processing; the region supplies a disproportionate share of the world's sulphur to industries, including fertilisers and chemicals. The prices of Jet fuel and diesel more than doubled. Aviation rerouted around the entire Middle East, disrupting fifteen percent of global air traffic.

Countries otherwise uninvolved experienced repercussions with nations like Bangladesh having closed universities early. In similar fashion, Pakistan and the Philippines declared four-day work weeks. Goldman Sachs raised the probability of a U.S. recession to 25 percent. Oxford Economics warned that if oil reached \$140 a barrel, the Eurozone, the UK, and Japan would tip into contraction. This is not a regional crisis. It is a global one, and it is accelerating.

Diplomacy is struggling to keep up. The U.N. condemned both sides, but the Security Council could not act. The I.E.A. released 400 million barrels from reserves, but that is temporary relief. 35 countries said they were ready to help secure the Strait, but not one acted while conflict continued. The U.S. requested N.A.T.O., China, Japan, and South Korea to help reopen the waterway. All declined during active hostilities. Gulf

states, hit by Iranian strikes despite deepening ties, may isolate Tehran for years. The WTO warned that sustained high energy prices could cut 2026 global GDP growth by 0.3 percent, with Europe losing at least one percent of the expected output.

The Price

The human cost has spread across Iran, Israel, Lebanon, and the Gulf, though several exact casualty figures remain too fluid to state confidently without stronger sourcing. What is already clear is that civilians have paid the price for strategic decisions made far above them, while displacement, bombardment, and uncertainty have become the region's common language. This war began while a nuclear deal was days from being signed. The people who had the least to do with this war are the ones paying the most for it.

What's Next?

The United States' credibility as a negotiating partner has been questioned. Iran's regime, although shaken, still stands. Khamenei's scion has been named successor, signalling continuity over collapse. Energy has revealed itself as a weapon, and the developing world is learning this as the days pass. The I.M.F. warns that every ten percent rise in energy prices pushes global inflation up by nearly half a percent. Saudi Aramco's CEO has warned of drastic effects on the world economy. As of April 8, the more defensible conclusion is that the war has entered a conditional pause rather than a settled end.

This does not feel like a conflict that ends cleanly. The systems meant to prevent this failed. The systems meant to manage it are struggling. What comes next is uncertain, and that uncertainty is the real danger. On February 27, the world was told that peace was within reach. We are still waiting for those with influence to choose it.

What were your Midterms like?

Since their inception in the 1930s, Midterms have served as an integral tradition of a Dosco's school life. They have acted as arguably the strongest learning experiences outside the four walls and closed doors of our classrooms. The B Form of Hyderabad House experienced its second Midterm in the Main House earlier this month. We went to Chopta via a nine-hour long bus ride (sleeping almost the entire way due to some sound advice given to us by our Tutor), after which we disembarked in front of a rest-house with a wonderful view of a forest. The day passed with great speed, given that my formmates were developing a worryingly strong desire, teetering on addiction, for *pabadi chai*. The next day was our first trek — to the snow-clad Tungnath temple. Much to the disappointment of our Form, we failed to obtain the 'bragging rights' expected from summiting Chandrashila Peak as well. The following day, we trekked to Deoria Taal, and were greeted by the incredible sights of a calm river, snow-capped mountains, and fresh grass, all in one view. The rest of the days passed by quite fast with visits to nearby attractions. The five days away in the mountains were refreshing and rejuvenating, allowing us to return for the new academic term with renewed energy.

- Sabir Ahuja

Our Midterms started on an 'off-note', with my Form forming a low-budget school choir in the bus, but fortunately, ended on a 'higher note', leaving us with memories for a lifetime. On day one, we went to the world's highest altitude temple of Lord Shiva, Tungnath. It was quite a challenging trek, but with the cobbled path, food, and company, it proved to be rather enjoyable. The snow made it slippery and a bit scary, but we managed nevertheless. After reaching the temple, we went away from the cluster of buildings to a field of snow, where Snow War One, Two and Three took place before a biryani lunch. It took about three and a half hours to get to the top, and half as much to get back down. We also collected plastic bottles along the path to remain environmentally conscious, and ended the day with a relaxing bonfire and exciting conversations. Day two began with a tug-of-war, followed by a game of cricket, where we lost all the balls since our fielders were taking naps on the ground. We headed out for camping next, where three teams lit a fire, and helped in cooking Maggi, which turned out to be some of the best I've ever had! On the third day, we went to one of the most serene and beautiful places in India: Deoria Taal, the lake where goddess Parvati used to bathe. The trek was light, the lake was huge, and the water lay still, forming crystal-clear reflections of ourselves and our surroundings. It was truly an experience worth having. The day had ended, aside from the final bonfire, where we had people compete to win the 'Best Performer' award. To my surprise, I won best singer! The next day, we arrived back safely, but only after a two-hour traffic jam. The contrast between the mountains and the city could not have been more stark! These Midterms were nothing like those of my D Form, where I cried out of homesickness on every trek. These were truly unforgettable.

- Aurva Dwivedi

After waiting painstakingly for a year, I finally departed for my first-ever Midterms from the House of Nizams. The Hyderabad House C Form left for Chakrata at the crack of dawn. After a relatively short journey, we finally arrived at one of the most picturesque views I've seen in my life: a small hill town, nestled in the mountain ranges of Uttarakhand. The second day of the Midterms was perhaps the most interesting day, with my Form visiting Tiger Fall, one of the prettiest waterfalls in India. It was as powerful as a tiger itself, but, before it lay an exhausting eight-kilometer journey. However, the excitement (and our very own *Tiger* trekking with us) pulled us through the tiring climb. Back at our campsite, we had the most scrumptious food awaiting us. The dinner was warm, and its aroma wafted through our tents. Every night had its own quirky challenge, with us never knowing what lay ahead of us among the dense jungles of Chakrata. This Midterm truly held up to be as exciting as we had anticipated!

- Neivv Miterr

Midterms are a memorable and exciting event which tend to leave a lasting impact on every Dosco. We *Footies* went to the secluded and peaceful hill station of Lansdowne. As we boarded the bus, which would take us to our very first Midterms, all of us experienced a myriad of emotions: confusion, excitement, homesickness, queasiness, and more, but at least we were all in it together — a comforting thought! Through long yet beautiful treks along mountain trails and unique team games, we forged deep bonds, some of which I hope last a lifetime. Midterms are more than just a trip to the mountains; they act as icebreakers. They introduce you to new friends, help you acclimatise to School, and let you truly interact with nature. Additionally, the signs of camaraderie on the bus ride back to School were evidence of the joy and connections you feel after experiencing an integral part of a Dosco's life: Midterms.

- Reyaansh Kapoor

This Midterms, my colleague Mr Vishal Mohla and I, planned an educational trip to Harsil and Gangotri with the C Form students of the Oberoi House. We accompanied a group of 22 students (21 C Formers and one Sc Former), whose excitement grew as they explored the history and geography of the region. While Harsil and Gangotri are well-known destinations, I thought of introducing them to a hidden gem: Gartang Gali. Their curiosity deepened when they learned that it was once an ancient trade route connecting India to Tibet. Located in the remote Nelang Valley of Uttarkashi, Gartang Gali is a narrow wooden trail carved along a steep cliff at an altitude of nearly eleven thousand feet. Built over one hundred and fifty years ago by skilled Pathan craftsmen, the structure is made of wood fixed into solid rock, reflecting remarkable engineering skills. Historically, this route led to the trading villages of Nelang and Jadung, the once-thriving centres of Indo-Tibetan trade. Goods such as wool, salt, and spices were transported along this difficult terrain. Our trek began near Lanka Bridge. From here, the route diverged towards the Gartang Gali trail. A dedicated army route exists in the region, where visitors are permitted on the trail only up to the two-kilometre mark, which is maintained by the State Forest Department, and it has an entry fee of two hundred rupees. The initial stretch passes through dense vegetation, with towering Deodar trees creating a peaceful atmosphere. The chirping of Himalayan birds enhances the experience. From this height, Bhaironghati appears deep and dramatic.

Far below, the Jadh Ganga flows swiftly through a narrow gorge and meets the Bhagirathi River at Bhaironghati, creating a powerful, slightly intimidating sight. However, the trail demanded caution. There is no water source along the way, and while railings have been installed along some points, many stretches require careful footing. After the two-kilometre trek, one reaches the iconic wooden Gartang Gali, clinging to the mountainside and leaving visitors in awe. At higher altitudes, animals such as the snow leopard and the musk deer (*kasturi mrig*) inhabit this terrain. After the Sino-Indian War in 1962, the area was closed due to its strategic location near the border, and the villages were abandoned. The local Jadh Bhotiya community continues its seasonal migration to lower altitudes during harsh winters. Reopened in 2021 after decades, Gartang Gali stands as a symbol of resilience and history. For our students, this was not just a trek but also a journey into the past. Walking on this ancient pathway, surrounded by nature and history, gave us a connection no classroom could possibly provide. The excitement on the students' faces, their never-ending questions, and their admiration for the beauty of the place made this journey special. This Midterm to Gartang Gali gave me and the DoscOs memories that we will cherish for a lifetime.

- CSG

After waiting to go on Midterms for over a year, we finally began our journey to Sankri — a ten-hour drive that encouraged thoughts, motion sickness, numb bodies, and a lot of sleep. Our first stop, Kotgaon, offered food that tasted better than anything I've ever had at School (or maybe I'm just saying that because of the hunger generated by the mountain air!). That night, eighteen boys shared mattresses, blankets, and formed memories that are sure to last a lifetime. The next stop, Juda ka Talaab, seemed unexciting. That was, until one of us actually fell into the Talaab itself (trust me, it was even funnier than it sounds). We adapted to the given conditions well, sitting around bonfires and going to the loo the 'old-fashioned way'. After a little rest, we trekked uphill to the Kedarkantha Base Camp (KBC). The main day began at two in the morning, with a tough 75-degree inclined climb to the snowy summit, which was at a bolstering twelve thousand five hundred feet above the sea level, well-rewarded by an ethereal sunrise. Our descent ended by four in the afternoon. And, though we later learned about the 'five percent death rate', it was undeniably memorable. I think I finally understand why Old Boys talk about the Midterms 'back in their days', because I'm definitely going to talk about mine.

- Dhruvo Mishra

Midterms are usually a Dosco's way of escaping the chaos of School. This year, my adventure through the winding meadows of Dayara Bugyal was, in fact, the complete opposite. For Hyderabad House A Form, our Midterms kicked off much before the hues of the sun could be seen over the horizon, at around four in the morning. An eight-hour bus drive from School brought us to a guesthouse, where we began to trudge up to twelve thousand feet towards one of the most stunning meadows in the Himalayas. Our itinerary revealed that we had two nights of camping ahead of us; one in a field covered in bones, and the second located near the summit, blanketed by thick snow. Each day brought about a new experience. From my Form's first ever snowball fight, multiple 'pithu' games, to spending nights curled up in tents, exchanging stories. We returned back to School, anticipating the challenges and the fun, our next Midterm is sure to bring.

- Rayan Kapoor

Before And After

Mr Justin Burrett contrasts the nature of *Midterms as a Master to that as a student.*

As I trundle up the trail upwards from Lohajung, en route to Brahmatal, with my trusty Tata House A Formers, the thought that some things just haven't changed, hits home. It all begins to come back to me; the familiar tinkle of kbachchar bells, the newly bloomed rhododendrons, and the old oaks with their serrated leaves! Sights, smells, sounds, and even aches retrieve memories of miles climbed, weights hauled about in these same hills, years ago. Other things that haven't changed? The elation of breathing in that mountain air, the thrill of bounding up those slopes, and the resounding silence during breaks in the woods, reminding one of one's insignificance.

Some of my happiest memories have been made in these very mountains, surrounded by like-minded Batchmates, who would seek each other out each time Midterm were around the corner. Back then, A Formers and above were allowed to go on private Midterm in groups of as small as four boys. The process of planning and executing a Midterm, which began weeks in advance, is still something I look back at as a singularity of Doon. Once groups were decided (organically, by the students themselves, depending on who you wanted to go with), we would have to fill in a comprehensive questionnaire outlining meticulous details pertaining to the route, day-wise itinerary, intended transport arrangements, and budgetary requirements. After due scrutiny by the Masters-in-Charge, the process moved forward and one could begin making arrangements for supplies — equipment, cooking supplies, guides, and transport arrangements such as buses or jeeps ('trekkers' as we called them) to take us to the roadheads. This whole process, that is now looked after by the vendors who help organise Midterm, taught us foresight — the skill of anticipating all that would be needed, and all that could happen. It was a great mix of living in the future, planning our work and then working our plan.

However, once actually out in the wilderness, it has always been more about living in the present — each sight, smell, sound to be savoured; each step up the steep slopes, gruelling yet rewarding, carrying one higher into lush valleys and pristine meadows — until one breaks past the treeline and the Earth begins to take on a planetary mantle — rock, glacier, ice, snow, the azure sky which depicts a stark backdrop. Now, as we pull into camp, the tents are already up — the mule train had overtaken us on the way up, carrying all but two boys' rucksacks and our personal supplies, while the support team had been hard at work, pegging down the tents. Gone of course, are the old canvas centre-poled ones, thankfully!

In their place stand taut ridgepole ones and even some fancier dome ones. The kitchen tent is up and running — hardly had we kicked off our sweaty boots, when hot cups of tea were thrust into our eager hands!

This would all have been unheard of in a private Midterm of bygone times. Back then, we would have had to carry most — if not all — of our supplies, including cooking utensils, plates, mugs, spoons and the like; a stove with kerosene, our tents, all our clothes, sleeping bags, foodstuffs including dry rations, oil, tea, milk powder, and canned food among others. There was little luxury of having all of one's luggage carried up on mules. I recall being weighed down by kilos of stuff, yet hauling it all over the next three or four days, nonetheless. Yet, I still know that I'll be just as excited about the next Midterm in a few months' time.

As I take a stroll up towards Bekaltal, just above our campsite, I notice other things that have changed. Of course, at a planetary level, there is less snow, generally. March Midterm were known to be the ones where one encountered vast amounts of snow above a certain altitude. Now, as I walk uphill, I am quite comfortable in a light fleece and trackpants. Even when we hit our highest altitude the following day, at Jhandi top, at about twelve thousand five hundred feet, snow is scant and limited to a few patches. I remember being part of one 'the most adventurous Midterm', where, even at Darva Top (above Dodital), we had to navigate several feet of thick snow. Another change: plastic; the sheer amounts of it strewn across the hillsides is nothing short of shocking. We try to pick as much as we can to carry back down to School, but at times, it seems insurmountable.

As I sit across my laptop writing this, I reflect on some of these changes that our Midterm have seen and realise that things cannot remain constant. Things such as climate change, changes in Schools' and parental expectations of what and how much adventure is acceptable and safe, curricular requirements, and much more, inevitably affect policy. However, I am so happy to see some things remain constant — the sense of achievement upon summiting a mountain or arriving at a long-awaited lake; the camaraderie that is fostered when groups struggle it out together, helping each other along the way; the way we are awakened by Midterms to all that we take for granted, whether it is a warm meal in the comfort of our CDH or a cool glass of water...

The Blood of Bravado

Mr Manu Mehrotra critiques the portrayal of war in Indian Cinema.

Disclaimer: This is an opinion piece, which reflects the author's own opinions, and does not echo those of the Weekly.

The key concern with contemporary Indian war films is both deep and broad: they seem to honour patriotic spectacle over the actual complexity of conflict: its moral ambiguity, institutional obligation, and human cost. Is nuance giving way to noise in the name of populist storytelling? When true events are used as a backdrop, this question gains further pertinence. Skewed emotional depth and an overall intellectual shallowness are what the public is in for.

Border 2 invites reflection on how the armed forces are framed on screen. The film seems to falter in three areas most visibly: the nuance in representation of women, the idea of heroism, and the cultural ethos of the military.

First, women, or rather, their absence. An appropriate comparison point can be the now famous 'inverted' Cadbury advertisement — the girl as the player-protagonist and the boy as her support system and cheerleader — presents a stark contrast. This parallel matters because both the movie and the advert are mass narratives that shape public imagination; one progressive, one regressive. The advertisement was widely appreciated and applauded, and rightly so. Not because it was revolutionary in isolation, but because it addressed a deep-seated absence. It showed women not merely as emotional anchors, but as aspirational actors.

A possible defence (though it does not seem to have been demanded at all) may be historical accuracy — that women were not in combat roles at the time. This is true, but incomplete. Women served in medical corps, communications, logistics, and intelligence, and so their absence on screen is therefore not a necessity but a choice. *Lakshya* (2004), while centred on a male arc, acknowledged women's contributions through the presence of a frontline war correspondent. In *Raazi* (2018), Sehmat is not a token presence but a morally burdened protagonist. *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* (2020) foregrounds aspiration colliding with institutional resistance, revealing both progress and prejudice. The last two movies had women-

centred themes and probably should have nudged the movie-makers in the direction of highlighting the role of women in wars. Against this backdrop, *Border 2*, having got a second chance and two decades to mature, being deprived of female representation feels like a missed opportunity.

Second, heroism. We seem to gravitate towards the 'solitary saviour', pushing aside the vision of the disciplined and coordinated teams. One man single-handedly overthrows the enemy while others withdraw on his command, watching the spectacle from an escape boat. Moreover, the narrative then invites celebration from them rather than ethical unease. *Shershaah* (2021) offers a more responsible model: while it lionises Captain Vikram Batra, his courage is consistently embedded within platoon-level choreography and shared sacrifice. A more grounded syntax of heroism would honour collective courage.

Third, cultural ethos. Repeated and unnuanced invocations of Hindu mythology risk recasting institutional professionalism as religious sentiment, narrowing the secular and multi-faith identity of the armed forces. This is not an argument against faith as personal motivation, but a plea for cinematic restraint. *The Ghazi Attack* (2017) is instructive: it avoids overt symbolism and anchors its drama in procedure, protocol, and chain of command. That restraint lends the film credibility — and, paradoxically, greater emotional force.

Indian cinema has also shown that war need not be reduced to spectacle. *Haseerat* (1964) endures because it centres on loss and futility rather than swagger, while *Madras Café* (2013) highlights political complexity and collateral grief over a sense of triumph.

These films demonstrate that audiences are willing to engage with sobering narratives when filmmakers trust them with complexity.

The aim is not to drain war stories of emotion, but to widen their emotional register — from chants and charges to added hues of doubt, solidarity, and consequence. Two decades after *Border*, it is reasonable to expect *Border 2* to evolve with society: to acknowledge women beyond domestic frames, to infuse pride in shared goal and effort, and to reflect the secular, diverse ethos of the armed forces.

The aim is not to drain war stories of emotion, but to widen their emotional register — from chants and charges to added hues of doubt, solidarity, and consequence. Two decades after *Border*, it is reasonable to expect *Border 2* to evolve with society...

The Debate of Languages

Emile Lulla examines the reflection of state-to-state nationalism through the three-language policy.

Disclaimer: This is an opinion piece, which reflects the author's own opinions, and does not echo those of the Weekly.

"Why should Tamil Nadu accept a third language when Hindi-speaking states are not ready to learn Tamil? This is not education policy, this is imposition." - CM of Tamil Nadu.

This quote does not just summarise the recent clashes between the governments of South India and the Central government, but also represents the Central government's attempts to impose Hindi on the educational curricula of the South. The CM describes this "forced Hindi imposition" on the Southern states as a 'covert mechanism' to implement Hindi on non-Hindi speaking regions, while systematically marginalising India's rich and diverse linguistic heritage. Consequently, this debate has now become less about school curricula and more about the autonomy of the state in the face of the Central government.

State leaders in South India are generally differently aligned (party-wise) than those at the Centre. Hence, they tend to be much more independent and less flexible when it comes to accepting Central government policies. Most leaders in the South tend to see Hindi implementation as something that suppresses local languages. They wish to preserve what continues to separate them from the Hindi-majority northern states. There have been many instances of Southern states going against Hindi implementation, in the pursuit of protecting their local language. An instance of states protecting their local language took place in Karnataka in 2023, when the state authority started enforcing a rule that stated at least sixty percent of all signboard text must be in Kannada and that the text should be clearly visible. It was around this when political groups started visiting shops and checking signage, putting pressure on local businesses to follow the rule. In some cases, when the conditions were not met, quick escalations to violence took place. Shops whose signage hid or showed very minimal Kannada text were targeted. As a result of the targeting, the signboards were either broken or torn down. The Karnataka government supported the protection of Kannada, but looked down upon the violence caused,

deeming it unacceptable, detaining several protesters in the process. Public view also mellowed down with many choosing to preserve the language without the use of brute force.

Tamil Nadu has also always taken a very strong stance against the implementation of Hindi in state curricula. The CM has repeatedly stated that Tamil Nadu will never accept a three-language system for a multitude of reasons. The most important of the reasons is this: adding an additional language to the already effective Tamil education system, recording an 85.5% literacy rate, will only harm the education system, acting as a burden on students and distracting them from the

learning of other important skills. He further feels that the NEP, mandating this three-language policy, favours the Northern states given that they don't have to learn a Southern language, all while the Southern states are burdened with the obligation of learning Hindi. In expression of his dissatisfaction, the CM states, "Why should Tamil Nadu students learn Hindi when Hindi-speaking states are not willing to learn Tamil or any South Indian language?" He also referred to instances in which officials from the Central government, posted in state positions, created and enforced rules that favoured the Centre. Among many others, an example can be seen in Lakshadweep in 2025, when an administrator appointed by the Central government passed an order, removing the choice students had of choosing their local dialects and languages, like Mahl and Arabic respectively, leaving the students with Hindi as their only choice for third language. But, the Kerala High Court intervened, examining and pausing the policy, based on the cultural and local linguistic rights of the people.

All of these events together display the changing nature of the Indian education policy. Despite the Centre's efforts to

provide larger coverage to regional languages, whether discreetly or not, the extension of the influence of Hindi across the country creates a power shift from the State governments to the Centre, all in all resulting in a possible suppression of the State's regional languages.

**...all while
the Southern
states are
burdened with
the obligation
of learning
Hindi. In
expression of his
dissatisfaction,
the CM states,
"Why should
Tamil Nadu
students learn
Hindi when
Hindi-speaking
states are not
willing to learn
Tamil...?"**

School Council Report

A report on the School Council meeting held on April 6, 2026.

The first proposal was that of the Hyderabad House representative. The new ID card system was reviewed, which replaced the previous chit-based Tuck Shop access. Issues raised included the absence of a protocol for lost cards, and the inconvenience of visiting the Boys' Bank to load funds. Proposals for pre-loaded allowances and a login-based fallback were discussed, but management confirmed both were impractical: the Boys' Bank remains integral for teaching financial literacy, and pre-loading full allowances would undermine the per-visit spending limits (Rs. 350-500) that help cafeteria staff plan food production. Lost cards will incur a Rs. 50-100 replacement penalty, with balances on unused recovered cards reinstated. A second card-loading machine has since been installed at the Tuck Shop, and visits will be regularised to approximately once per week. A test case will be run to audit the lost card recovery process, with outcomes to be reviewed at the next meeting.

The Secretary proposed two pillars for strengthening the School's intellectual culture. The first centred on creating an ambient intellectual environment through initiatives including a News Flash at Morning Assembly, summer reading lists, mandatory reading awards by Form, a holiday book test contributing ten percent to English and Hindi marks, 'Drop Everything and Read' (piloted monthly on Saturdays), a weekly writing prompt published in the *Weekly*, Sunday book circles in the Library alternating between student and Master leadership and structured reading time during Toy

for Junior Forms. The second pillar proposed formal faculty office hours, which were ultimately deferred in favour of tutorial lunches and structured discussion prompts within existing fortnightly tutorial meetings. The Dean of Academics will raise the holiday book assessment at the Head of Departments' meeting, and the Secretary and the DEA will develop a combined framework for all reading initiatives to review at the next meeting.

The two School Captains presented a jointly developed merits and demerits framework designed to address declining attentiveness, poor homework submission, and respect for institutional norms. Under the proposal, students begin each Term at a neutral baseline, with merits and demerits recorded in the School's ERP system across academic, pastoral, and co-curricular domains, mapped to Green, Yellow, and Red zones with corresponding privileges or interventions. Discussion led to a narrower pilot scope — academics and punctuality only — with co-curricular and pastoral domains deferred to a later phase. It was agreed that demerits should trigger structured reflection rather than purely punitive measures. The School Captains will form a subcommittee, the IT team will activate the existing ERP's merit-demerit module, and a refined pilot framework will be presented at the next meeting.

The fourth agenda, scheduled to discuss changes and amendments to the School Council Charter, was tabled to the next meeting due to time constraints.

बारिश की बूँदें

चाँदबाग़ के चंचल पंख

आराध्य डिडवानिया की कलम से...

पानी की प्यारी-प्यारी बूँदें गिर रही हैं,
मानो कोई नन्हा मन खुशी से गा रहा हो।
जल-देवी जैसे गगन से उतरी हैं,
मन, हर कण में सौंधी खुशबू बसा रहा है।

गीले पत्ते, गीली टहनियाँ,
हर ओर बसी है भीगी कहानियाँ।
कागज़ की नावें तैर रही हैं,
संग बहती बचपन की निशानियाँ।

छत से मधुर सी धुन बरस रही है,
हर बूँद जैसे सरगम रच रही है।
मन कहता है, दुनिया भीग जाए,
हर चाहत जैसे सच हो रही है।

मिट्टी की खुशबू गुनगुना रही है,
हर साँस नई आस जगा रही है।
हर बूँद जीवन का गीत बने,
हर धड़कन उम्मीद सजा रही है।

किसान गगन को निहार रहा है,
मन में सपनों को सँवार रहा है।
नदी सागर से मिलने चली है,
हवा का झोंका भी सुर बिखरा रहा है।

बारिश आई है प्यार जताने,
सूखे दिलों को फिर बहलाने।
रिमझिम फुहारें गुनगुनाती हैं,
हर दिल में प्रेम की धारा बहाने।

चाँदबाग़ में कामयाबी के सपने पलते हैं,
हर सुबह उम्मीद के नए रंग खिलते हैं।
दीवारें किसी न किसी की गौरव गाथा कहती हैं,
जहाँ सभी अपनी एक नयी पहचान गढ़ते हैं।

पीपल की छाया में नए विचार खिलते हैं,
ज्ञान और अन्वेषण के झोंके हर ओर मिलते हैं।
घंटियों की ध्वनि में बसी है एक विरासत,
पेड़ यहाँ जीवन के अर्थ लिखते हैं।

कभी मैदान में दौड़ते हैं अपने अरमान,
तो कभी पुस्तकालय में सजते हैं सपनों के जहान।
यहाँ जीत का अभिमान है, हार का नाम नहीं,
हर सपना यहाँ उड़ान है, कोई विराम नहीं।

चाँदबाग़ विरासत है, सिर्फ़ एक जगह नहीं,
यह वो धरोहर है, जहाँ कुछ भी बेवजह नहीं।
यहाँ हर पंख को खुला आसमान मिलता है,
हर दिल को उड़ने का अरमान मिलता है।

The Week Gone By

Rehhan Chadha

A warm welcome (and a fair warning) to our new D and C Formers, who have now officially entered the cycle of Doon's busy life.

If you're reading this, congratulations — you have survived a full year of School life, and finally been promoted to the next Form, even if your marks were below average. This week began with most of the School returning from their Midterms: backs breaking, knees aching, eyes feeling heavier, and becoming more religious than usual to pray for a Day-Off (or maybe this is all just me). Following our return to School, there were already play

practices at night, followed by PT in the morning, and hockey in the afternoon, not to forget classes in between.

You'd expect this to be a slow week; exams just ended and so did the Midterms, and the new academic year has only just begun. This, of course, coincided with the arrival of our new textbooks — massive, intimidating, and promising to single-handedly ruin our entire lives.

The lead-up to May has resulted in a dangerous bombardment of engagements within multiple Inter-Houses at the same time. Dreaded echoes of "SQUAD, LINE UP!" reverberate across a frigid Main Field (why is it so cold?) at ungodly hours in the morning, as Penguins waddle down, clad in barely adequate P.T. vests, rubbing their freshly opened eyes to soak in the glory of the morning. The nights have also elongated, as all Houses

have begun practicing for the upcoming Inter-House One Act Play (prepare to see different parts of the *Mahabharata* being covered). On the sports front, Hockey season has commenced in full swing (pun-intended), and so has a steady influx of injuries. The *Hospi* has never been busier, with players limping in, some sporting bruises, others pretending their minor scratches are career threatening. The Junior Inter-House debates also kicked off around the start of the week, and the results that drop each day are interesting to take note of, to say the least.

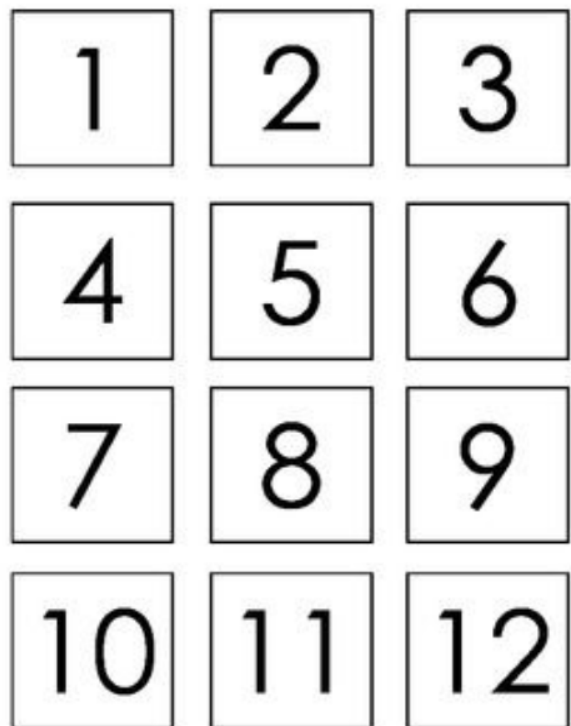
And so, as we conclude yet another week, we look ahead to the madness still to come. More early mornings, more assessments, more bruises, and probably more medical leave applications after Midterms. Here's to many more mornings of listening intently for the rain as the clocks strike six. Until next time!

Bingo | Assembly Edition

Instructions:

Tick off the "expected phrases" as the week goes by — some of them are quotes, so, if they get called out in Assembly through the week... play along.

1. The introduction of a Peshawari appreciation evening led by *Batman*.
2. A run-of-the-mill Centres of Excellence *glaze*.
3. The addition of another Zero Tolerance Policy.
4. *Kong-gratulations*
5. The typical D Form Big-brother-*gyaan*.
6. Another supreme court judge's gown being 'borrowed' by *Batman*.
7. '*Traditions and Legacy*' of *Chandbagh*.
8. *Young Minds*.
9. *Shake-hand with the Headmaster*.
10. Classic, good-old fashioned vernacular disdain.
11. *Where's the urgency in your walk?*
12. *Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys... and Girls...*



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

The pieces published represent the views of the author and not those of The Doon School Weekly or its editorial policy.

©IPSS: All rights reserved. Printed by: The English Book Depot, 15 Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand-248001, India. Published by: Kamal Ahuja, The Doon School, Dehradun.



Editor-in-Chief: Hrishikesh Aiyer **Editor:** Rehhan Chadha **Senior Editors:** Ayaan Mittal, Rafay Habibullah
Hindi Editor: Hridhay Kanodia **Associate Editors:** Aashman Agarwal, Manit Jain, Shiven Singh, Sumer Gill, Uday Thakran **Special Correspondent:** Abhir Kohli, Agastya Mehrotra, Daksh Singh, Kahaan Patel-Vadodaria **Correspondents:** Emile Lulla, Osman Huq, Samar Singh, Srivathsa Narayan, Swarit Chaudhary **Hindi Correspondent:** Abhinav Kumar **Cartoonists:** Aarav Singla, Rian Gupta, Reyansh Agarwal, Vivaansh Agarwal **Illustrator:** Shiva Shamanur **Webmaster:** Communications Manager
Faculty Advisors: Rageshree Dasgupta, Sabyasachi Ghosh, Satya Sharma, Stuti Kuthiala, Suravi Podder