

# The Doon School WEEKLY

*"I sketch your world exactly as it goes."* -Arthur Foot  
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## FAKE TO THE LEFT...

Heated matches, massive point hauls and a three-peat.

Page 3

## ECHOES OF THE PAST

Black and white textbooks, media and history.

Page 4

## THE WEEK GONE BY

A humorous account of the week's events.

Page 6

# A Hypocritical Piece

**Krishiv Jaiswal** *explores the rigidity to learn without incentive in Doscos.*

*"We know what we are, but know not what we may be."* (Hamlet, Act IV, Scene V)

90 minutes. 90 seats. A lot of empty seats.

The idea of inviting an eminent individual to address a concentrated group of students rather than the entire school in the AV Room was, to me at least, something unheard of and a chance to gauge history beyond textbooks through the lens of an acute intellect. However, the scant turnout brought notice to a more pressing problem: the eroding academic atmosphere at our institution. In principle, from requiring House Academic Cups to instil an academic culture to not caring a minute bit to things that do not account for your predicted, it served as a stark reminder that intellectual curiosity in this place is more about incentive than true involvement, making one question if we are really dedicated to learning or just the illusion of it.

To begin with, I do not know why I write this, being somewhat in this situation myself. I, too, have not been the most passionate about these sessions and everything else I will pretend to have a dislike towards in this article. Maybe, for the fear that I am turning into someone that I often complain about in my articles. Preachy articles, even though I am not some sort of guru myself; in fact,

far from it. Or maybe, for the fear that our entire School has been inundated with a fixed, congested narrative; one that has made learning a secondary concern, seen in the depreciation of the academic environment in School, not in terms of achievements, but genuine self-discovery...Or most importantly, for the fear that this is just the start of it and this downward spiral of academic effort is only going to result in more such articles and talks, with a greater degree of intent and seriousness.

In questioning this academic culture, I am questioning myself more than anyone else. In the classroom, my aim never goes beyond simply fulfilling the expected role of any student. I dutifully attend, jot down a few points my teacher asks me to, offer the occasional nod of agreement, and sure, submit assignments on time (and some additional work prior to PTMs, of course). This is the case with everyone. But is that it? It is as if we have been cast in roles of eager learners who, privately disengaged, wait for the scene to end so we can applaud and exit.

To be fair, we are not solely to be blamed for this. We are, after all, products of our surroundings; where the occasional nod and outward appearances sometimes trump true learning or simply just a realisation of our facade. There are, of course, exceptions. There

are both teachers and learners who sincerely care and make an effort to inspire and be inspired; the irony, still, is hard to overlook when, for the most part, these dystopian learning principles appear more like far-off dreams than reality.

Maybe that's why I write this piece. Maybe it serves as a warning to me and to everyone else that if we don't change our idea of education at Doon, we'll keep going in this direction and our interactions with academics will become more and more meaningless. Going through the routine — attending, nodding, taking notes — without ever truly participating is all too hollow, but truthfully, rewarding when we talk of grades. However, the curiosity within us will merely be a comfortable illusion, an exterior that appears appealing on the surface but possesses no depth in reality.

So, prove that you are more than this clump of cells that eats, visits classes, dreams, and dies. Opening a Word document, writing that answer without being nagged, appreciating the little efforts put in by School, and realising the magnitude of the problem — maybe this is how it starts. We're in the *Thick of It* when it comes to the November Trials, so take this article (if you've got this far) as a sign to learn — everyday, every second — without having a second thought in mind.

## This Week in History

**1918 CE:** An armistice is signed between the Allied forces and Germany, ending World War 1.

**1989 CE:** The Berlin Wall is broken down, marking the end of the Cold War.

**2001 CE:** Microsoft releases their first ever Xbox Console, proceeding to sell over sixty million consoles.

**2015 CE:** A series of coordinated Islamic terrorist attacks take place in Paris, killing 130 people.

**2023 CE:** Virat Kohli scores his fiftieth century in ODI cricket, tying Sachin Tendulkar's record.

### READER'S CHECKLIST

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

**Shiva Shamanur:** *The Girl with all the Gifts* by M R Carey

**Kabir Chawla:** *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo

**Aryaman Shilswal:** *In Praise of Flattery* by Willis Goth Regier

**Kavye Sood:** *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

**Vihaan Lakhota:** *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang

### Around the World in 80 Words

As Delhi air pollution reached 'severe' levels with an AQI of 418, the BJP asked the Delhi government to close all schools up to Class 5. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump announced that Elon Musk and former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy will lead the newly created Department of Government Efficiency. Justin Welby resigned as Archbishop of Canterbury as a result of the John Smyth abuse scandal in the Church of England. Chelsea and Arsenal drew 1-1 in the Premier League.

### NOSTRI DUCES

The following are the **School Prefects** for the year 2025-26:

**School Captain:** Pranay Gupta

#### Hyderabad House

**House Captain:** Shlok Thumar

**Prefects:** Arjit Sandhu, Devansh Jitu, Samarth Pundeer

#### Jaipur House

**House Captain:** Aarit Singhania

**Prefects:** Aditya Dungarpur, Arnav Agarwal, Debojyoti Ghosh

#### Kashmir House

**House Captain:** Aadhvan Suri

**Prefects:** Aditya Agrawal, Harsh Begani, Harshil Makin

#### Oberoi House

**House Captain:** Lohitaksh Gupta

**Prefects:** Artham Gupta, Ganadhipati Aryan, Taarak Harjai

#### Tata House

**House Captain:** Ranveer Saharan

**Prefects:** Madhav Mehra, Vaibhav Santuka, Vedant Kapoor

We wish them a successful tenure!

“

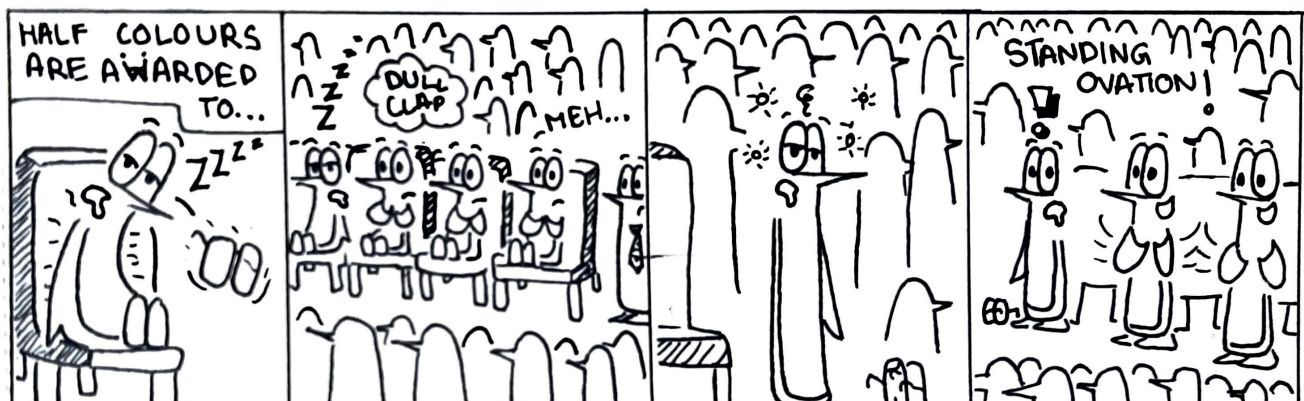
**Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.**

—  
Martin Luther King Jr.

**Standing Ovation**

Reyansh Agarwal

Dosco Doodle



# Fake to the Left...

**Aaditya Agrawal** reports on the recently concluded Inter-House Basketball Competition.

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed an unforgettable basketball season, where enthusiasm and rivalry were at an all-time high. Each House came out in full force, filling the courts with energy, passion, and fierce competition as they vied for victory in the annual Inter-House Tournament. Cheers filled the sidelines, going on and on for their teams, and players put their everything into the court, knowing the stakes were high across the Seniors, Mediums, and Juniors divisions. From nail-biting finishes to standout individual performances, this season has been packed with unforgettable moments, as players from each division showcased their dedication to the game and to their houses. As the season continues, the spirit of competition only grows, making this one of the most exciting Inter-House tournaments in recent memory.

In the Seniors division, the Gentlemen clinched the prestigious Seniors Cup with a decisive win over the Nizams in a thrilling, title-deciding match. Standout players Umaid Dhillon, Rohan Kailath and Aadhvan Suri led their team to victory, marking a memorable chapter in the Gentlemen's history. The Nizams, despite a strong fight, couldn't hold onto the trophy. Meanwhile, the Swans secured a shared runner-up position with the Nizams after defeating the Warriors. The Eagles finished winless, while the Warriors' inconsistent performance placed them fourth.

In the Mediums division, Hyderabad House emerged as champions, achieving a clean sweep in Leagues B with standout performances shown in the form of Abhay Varma and Siddharth Kothari, who guided the

Nizams to victory. The Gentlemen, led by their star player Abhishek Shukla, provided close competition and managed a clean sweep in Leagues A, but struggled to maintain that performance in Leagues B. The Warriors fell behind in the race due to inconsistency, while the Eagles showcased their potential with a close match against the Nizams, losing 43-45. The Swans surprised everyone in Leagues B but were unable to demonstrate their full capabilities. With farewells to departing Seniors and plenty of basketball action still ahead in the Juniors division, the season has already proven to be one to remember.

In the Juniors division, Hyderabad House clinched the title for the third consecutive time, with Nityaraj Sodha leading the charge. The Swans secured second place, proving to be a formidable challenge for all the Houses. The Warriors continued their daunting yet inconsistent performance, finishing in third. Jaipur House, though second last, managed to create matches to remember. The Gentlemen put up a fierce fight throughout but fell short on the leaderboard.

Hyderabad House clinched the House Cup title for the third time in a row, a testament to their strong performances across all divisions. This season saw thrilling moments, unexpected upsets, and remarkable individual performances that made it one of the most exciting Inter-House basketball tournaments thus far. As the season concludes, the bar has been set for future tournaments, with all Houses looking forward to even greater challenges in the years to come.

## The Afterlife

**Smyannh Mandhanaa**

The gate to heaven, the gate to hell,  
Does not exist, what does, is only asphodel.  
Asphodel, a place where the dead reside, no matter their evil  
deeds,  
Everyone is equal, it is us who chose our creed.  
The seed you sow, the plant you shall yield,  
Does not matter, the only place you reach is the endless field,  
Where the dead are mourned, where the forgotten stay,  
Deep down the grave where their bodies lay.  
The bludgeonings of Asphodel are the worst to be created,  
Helplessness is prevalent, no one is spared.  
Under the evil clutch of Asphodel, all burn,  
To meet their loved ones they yearn.  
There is no day, there is no night,  
The feelings of these souls, Oh! Their plight.

## A Dish of Lies

**Shrey Gulati**

Rumours spread at the drop of a hat,  
Ear to ear like a restless rat.  
  
Everyone's a great cook,  
I believe they all have the recipe book.  
  
The dish formed is always unique,  
The seasoning they add gives it a taste quite oblique.  
  
Each and everyone has their own taste,  
Some add spices others just a bitter paste.  
  
The dish for the people is sweet entertainment,  
While the framed one always suffers the end.

# Echoes of the Past

*The Doon School Weekly interviewed Mr Manu Pillai, an Indian historian and writer.*

**The Doon School Weekly (DSW):** To what extent do reductionist, black-and-white history textbooks shape perspectives, especially in areas with limited access to diverse sources? Given their potential for promoting state-driven narratives, how can we ensure a more balanced, critical understanding of history among students?

**Manu Pillai (MPL):** To some extent, poorly done textbooks are unavoidable. Our resources are so limited, and the scale is so vast that you end up cutting corners, especially at the school and government level. A writer is given a hundred pages and told: condense Indian history into this. Now for the person authoring the textbook, this is a headache. Hundred pages isn't a lot of space. You can expend it all just on a small fragment of history as opposed to encapsulating "all of Indian history". Textbook writers are forced to reduce history to its bare bones, therefore. Because of their format and structure, textbooks are not the ideal vehicle to teach history with all its nuances and layers. They can serve as a guide, but to engage with history, you need good teachers who are able to go beyond those bare bones. That's where the teacher's talents come in.

But here again, for most part, our teachers are handicapped because they live under certain pressures themselves. You're all in a good school. Think of the average government school, though. Firstly, they don't have enough teachers. Sometimes the same teacher has to teach five different subjects which they are ill qualified to teach. So, you see an English teacher doing Maths and Hindi. There are schools which only have one teacher, who must cover all the subjects. So, the teacher, instead of teaching, opts to just cover as much ground as possible, as rapidly as possible. One can hardly blame them for not giving students a fuller understanding of history in these circumstances.

In this context, the only way to improve an understanding of history is to inculcate the habit of reading. I trust people: if you cultivate reading, they will themselves pick up books. It may not be books that I necessarily like, but by reading more you're expanding your mind. Not everyone may show an aptitude, but at least there is an avenue, a space, and the cultural conditioning to allow a more sophisticated image of things to develop in your mind. To become a thinking people, I believe we

must be a reading people.

On reductionism: this is an evil we live with. It's not something that will disappear easily, and frankly, governments can't be trusted. Even in a prosperous country like Britain they study only "good" things about the British Empire in school, not the less-flattering aspects of it. For them, empire is an age of glory, not an age when they went out and inflicted violence on people around the world. Because even a wealthy nation doesn't want its kids to be exposed to such embarrassing issues. There are always political connotations to what goes into a textbook, and I suspect there always will be.

In the end, the solution has to come from society, not governments. All of you are the answer.

**DSW:** As a historian who has worked with both traditional books and modern platforms like the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) and various other media fronts, how do you see the role of historians in the modern digital age? Where does it stand from a career point of view, as social interpreters?

**MPL:** I think historians need to rise above the seminar circuit. The seminar circuit, academic journals — these certainly matter and must be valued. But I think there is a case to be made for communicating good, well-researched and well-argued history to larger audiences, especially in our time and age. Publishing in academic journals alone will not be effective in the age of social media and technology. Academics must widen the platforms they use, speaking to larger audiences than just experts. Not least because those larger audiences are often the target of misinformation and what is called "WhatsApp history". There are already good public historians doing this, of course.

Social media — YouTube, Instagram — are powerful tools, and outside of classrooms can really inculcate a love for history. For example, there are many young people who are not necessarily scholars, but who are passionate about monuments and historical sites. The other day, someone I follow on Instagram was posting pictures from Pakistan, of old Hindu temples there. I can't go to Pakistan, but thanks to him, I could see a great deal of these centuries-old monuments — the kind of material used, the design pattern, and so on. So while social

*(Continued on Page 5)*

*(Continued from Page 4)*

media can be used for misinformation, it can also empower good, well-researched history.

Historians need to make the fullest use of these platforms and new technologies. Or they will be hijacked by other interests. And we would all suffer in the process.

**DSW:** How do you try to establish a balance between presenting the right news and the right history, and being a unique historian? E. S. Carr in his book, *What is History?* questions, how he could be an exceptional historian? Now it is hard to be a unique historian. The idea of history has always become banal because everyone has searched for it so much. So how do you try to be a unique historian?

**MPL:** The historian is a social creature. We are also products of society, and we bring our perspectives to the subject we study. Yes, we're trained in a certain way, and this allows us to distil a reasonable, well-argued picture of the past. But while using the same resources and tools, there's also an individual style one can bring to the manner in which one presents one's research. That is, while the methods of research have a certain predictability in order to be reliable, each historian can bring a certain distinct style of presentation. By this they can enliven the subject itself.

One thing that I weave through a lot of my writing, for instance, is irreverence and humour. It's not humour I'm inventing. The historical record has it already. It's just being able to use your words in a way, that now and then, the reader enjoys a chuckle. Because history isn't just about the serious and the

grim. There are funny, comical things in the archives as well. If you attended my talk this morning, I'd narrated a story about an 18th-century Maratha prince who wrote a satire around caste and beef-eating. It is hilarious. Most readers go into history assuming it's extremely boring. That's why they don't even give history books a chance. However, if you introduce a bit of humour and wear your scholarship lightly, there's a way to make the reading enjoyable.

One can be an accomplished scholar without saddling the reader with jargon, and I think this is a skill that needs to be mastered. I think in today's world, it matters more than ever.



*Nikhel Kochhar (ex 41-K, 1973) & Nivit Kochhar (ex 541-K, 2013), conducted a session on "AI in Education" for the teaching staff on Saturday, 9th of November, 2024.*

# The Week Gone By

Ganadhipati Aryan

The week started with a bang or rather, a list when the long-awaited prefect announcements finally dropped. The halls were soon buzzing with talk of the new “Big 21.” For the newly-appointed, there was a mix of pride, disbelief, and a dash of panic; some were even seen walking around with their chests puffed out and shoulders back, already perfecting the “prefect stance.” For those whose names didn’t cut, there were some philosophical sighs, dramatic eye rolls, and the usual: “It’s fine, I didn’t want it anyway.” Though the announcement’s timing couldn’t have been worse, landing right before exams — balancing

newfound authority with Macbeth and a pile of chemistry formulas is everyone’s ideal scenario, right?

As the reality of impending Trials dawned, students turned to their tried-and-true coping mechanism: coffee. Or at least, they tried to; until every machine on campus ran dry. A caffeine crisis soon erupted, and the usual late-night haunt — the coffee machine — looked more like a scene from a survival show. By mid-week, desperate students were shaking the empty coffee machines, hoping for a miracle brew. No such luck. A few brave souls have even started rationing their instant coffee sachets, treating each cup like liquid gold.

Meanwhile, the A and Sc Forms are neck-deep in pre-boards, channelling every bit of mental stamina they have left for what feels like an academic marathon. The S Form, on the other hand, is trying to keep it together as 25% of their final grade looms in the form

of November Trials. There’s talk of burning the midnight oil, but at this point, the oil is long gone, and most students are simply burning out.

And yet, amid all the Trials and Tribulations (capital T), the realization that this is the last leg of the term has dawned on everyone. There’s a “stick it till the end” spirit permeating the campus — even though most of us are running on empty (and, did I mention, no coffee?). The end is near, but it feels like a distant mirage as we slog through projects, last-minute cram sessions, and the mental acrobatics needed to survive each day.

So as we push through to the last stretch of term, let’s all hang in there. We’re so close. And remember, it’s not over till it’s over — or until you get to go on “temporary leave”.

## Sudoku

				8				
3		8	4			7	2	
6			1			9		
5			8	2				
	9		7		1		8	
		1		6	5			4
		3			4			2
	4	7			2	6		5
				7				

Key:

6	3	4	8	7	6	5	2	1
5	1	9	2	3	9	7	4	8
2	7	8	4	1	5	3	9	6
4	9	2	5	6	3	1	8	7
3	8	5	1	4	7	9	6	2
7	6	1	9	2	8	4	3	5
8	4	6	3	5	1	2	7	9
1	2	7	9	6	4	8	5	3
9	5	3	7	8	2	6	1	4

Source: <https://www.theteacherscorner.net/>

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