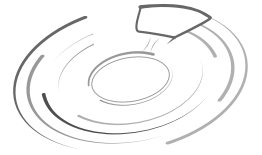


# THE ROSE BOWL



Since 1985



# DSOBS Vision

To foster fraternity amongst Old Boys,  
support School, and serve society.

THE ROSE BOWL   
SINCE 1985

NEWSLETTER OF  
THE DOON SCHOOL OLD BOYS' SOCIETY

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# Bawa and Shomie

## Days Gone By

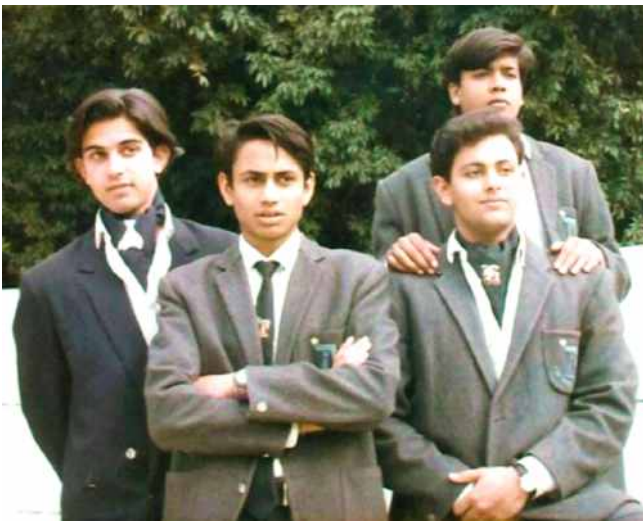
Pratik Basu (442 T, 1993)

Editor-in-Chief

Who would have thought it would be **Bobb (Jatin Dev Bobb, 411 T, 1993)** who would prove to be the prophetic one amongst us? He warned us at our last Batch Reunion, “Enjoy it now guys, not everyone’s going to be around for the next one.”

Sadly, he was right. We got the shocking message in December: **Bawa Harkirat Singh (419 H, 1993)** was gone.

I’ve heard other batches speak about this; it’s always a shock to the system when the first one from your group passes away, but I had never realised just how true that was. You only truly comprehend things like this when it happens to you.



From L-R: Bawa, Harsh Rohatgi (509 H, 1993), Nikhil Mehra (410 H, 1993), and Rohit Goenka (399 H, 1993)

I’d never have guessed that it would be Bawa. Bawa is one of those larger than life characters, the strapping young lad always ready with a pat on your back (more of a *thump!*, he was a big kid), a sarcastic comment ready to go, known to all, heard by all, and if not quite a bosom buddy to all, a friendly ear to all. The idea that a physical specimen like him in the prime of his life would be taken by a sudden cardiac episode

rattled all of us, and maybe even made us all question our own mortality.

Bawa always seemed to be around, a quicksilver quip at the ready. So, when he strode in one morning into our Tata House room (not exactly next door to his Hyderabad House), I didn’t bat an eyelid and kept my nose firmly in my textbook. “Well, bad news is that Rajiv Gandhi was killed. Good news is that you can stop *ratto-ing* Basu, they’ll probably postpone the exams.”

Wait, what?! But he was right, the former Prime Minister had just been killed in tragic circumstances, and the exams were postponed, and I could stop studying. It was a shocking event, and his moment of levity made all of it a little easier to bear.

One second, Bawa’s in front of you, the next he’s gone. The days, they go by quick.

We had all heard about **Mr Shomie Das (165 H, 1951, SRD, HM)** coming to School well in advance. After all, he was the *Founder’s* grandson! His arrival did not disappoint. With his patrician bearing, the beret on his head, his robe flowing behind him, the intimidating eloquence, somewhat brusque manner, a well-trained dog seemingly always at his heel... he was the platonic ideal of the “Headmaster.”

He may have come from age-old tradition, but he was no traditionalist. He shook things up, changed the calendar, removed the ISC subject restrictions, introduced the concept of the SC Leavers, and expanded our horizons to the wide world beyond the walls of Chandbagh. He called a few of us in to do a presentation on the fall of the Berlin Wall, which, he patiently explained to us, had changed the world around us. I was puzzled, it was a wall, it fell, bad contractors caused that in India all the time, what’s the big deal? Shomie looked over his glasses, “One day, when you’ve *finally* grown up, you’ll understand.” But

I detected an impish smile, and I would come to know that beneath that tough exterior lay a quietly devastating sense of humour. He gave as good as he got.



Shomie not particularly impressed by whatever small award it is he's handing off to me

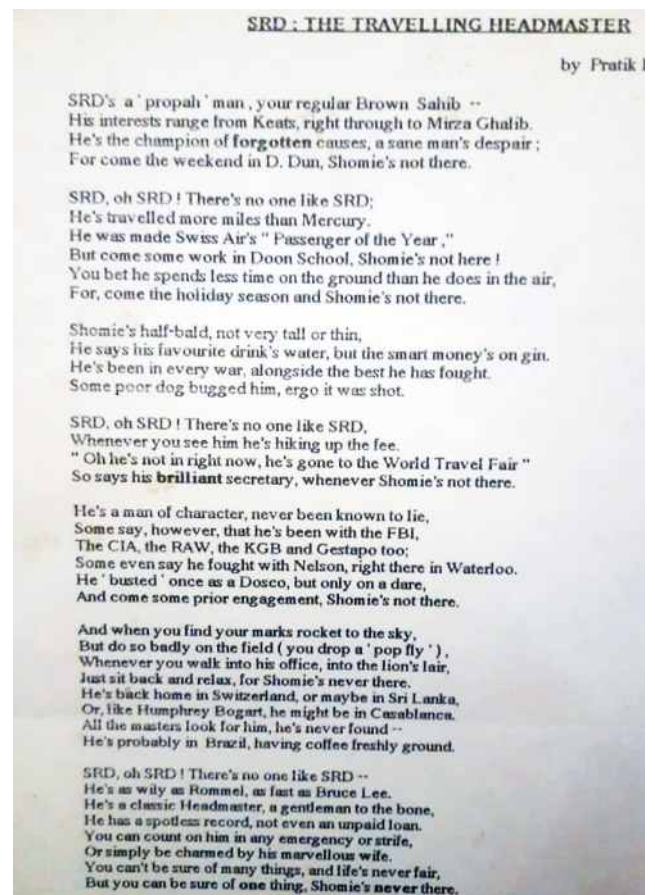
I also slowly came to understand that he let the boys be boys. He was more interested in sharpening our minds, not shackling us down with excessive disciplinary action. As was my wont, I started to take that yard once the inch was given. I mischievously asked him for a comic book when he was travelling to England for the Round Square Conference. I had forgotten about this cheeky request by the time he returned, and was suitably nervous when my name was amongst those called to the Headmaster's Office after Assembly. He let me sweat for a minute as I stood there stammering, trying to talk myself out of whatever it was I was in trouble for. Finally, with a flourish, he produced a comic book. He dismissed me with a casual wave: "You may go now." I couldn't believe it, the Headmaster had gone out of his way during an international trip to bring a comic book back to some Junior kid! Who does that?!

When I became an SC Leaver myself, I had to give up my duties at *The Doon School Weekly*. As a final act, I decided to write an impudent, satirical poem on the HM timed to release the day before we left School. I submitted the poem, finished up the dreaded ISC exams (I'm *still* haunted by them in anxiety dreams), and waited to ride off into the sunset. At lunch, I was informed by my successor at the publication that they had decided not to publish the poem. They thought it was too much. I was floored (how *could* they treat an ex-editor like that?!), and decided to take matters into my own hands. I printed out copies of the poem at the Computer Lab, had the Weekly Squad insert them into each *Weekly*, and handed the whole thing out as normal.

Bawa, as usual, had the perfect riposte: "Good news is you're leaving Basu, otherwise you'd be in big trouble." *Thump!* I had pushed my luck a bit too far past the proverbial yard.

Again, I was suitably nervous when I approached the Headmaster's Residence on my round of goodbyes the night we were leaving. Shomie looked at me sternly. I stammered out my goodbyes. We had both conspicuously avoided the matter at hand. Maybe there was a chance he hadn't read it. "A word of advice Mr Basu as you leave School..." "Yes, sir?" "I don't think poetry is in your future." It was then that I noticed the poem on his desk, and the droll smile on his lips. He gave as good as he got.

One second, Shomie's in front of you, ushering you off to the rest of your life, the next he's gone. The days, they go by quick.



The impudent poem excavated from Shomie's files, he had kept it all these years *Courtesy Rohit Das*

**PS. Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Corrections? Articles? Photos? Poetry advice? Please email me: [BasuRoseBowl@gmail.com](mailto:BasuRoseBowl@gmail.com)**

# Mentorship Programme



## Announcing The DSOBS Mentorship Programme 2025



**Give the gift of your experience by being a Mentor to future generations of DoscOs**

**Programme duration: April - September 2025**

Mentoring sessions over Google Meet at 7:30 PM IST

**Be a Mentor from anywhere in the world**

Email your LinkedIn profile/Resume, Batch year, School roll no. and House by February 15th, 2025

Avneesh S Sangwan  
Vishal N Sinha

avneesh.sangwan@gmail.com  
vishal @hermesindia.com

104 T, 2002  
206 H, 1984

Mentors already in pool need not apply again.

# We've Got Mail

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I have been asked by **Surendra Madan (176 K, 1943)**, who was born in 1928 and admitted to the School a few years after its founding, whether he is today the oldest living Dosco. Perhaps you might consider having this mentioned in *The Rose Bowl*.

Regards,

**Mani Shankar Aiyar**  
(55 T, 1957)

### ***The DSOBS Response***

*Dear Mani Sir,*

*Interesting that you should bring this up. But, let me bring you up to speed:*

**Maj Gen (Retd) Vijaykumar Vinayak Bhide (23 K, 1937)**  
*was born on July 10th, 1922.*

*He is the oldest surviving Dosco. May the Lord give him a long life.*

*Gen Bhide resides in Pune. He had a grand centenary celebration two years back. His army unit went to his home on his 100th birthday in 2022. On behalf of The DSOBS, I organised a cake and some memorabilia to reach*

*him on his big day.*

*Sincerely,*

**Ashutosh Goyal**  
(392 K, 1986)  
*Alumni Secretary, The DSOBS*

---

Dear Editor,

I just went through the Founder's Day issue of *The Rose Bowl* and was spellbound by how you presented the photo feature 'Glorious, Wild, Untamed.' You have wonderfully portrayed my vivid illustrated narrative, which carries my soul in it.

I hope it will inspire other Doscos to realize that medical conditions and age are not barriers to being passionate about your goals.

Thank you so much.

Regards,

**Sanjai Banerji**  
(387 H, 1976)

---

Dear Editor,

In School, during tennis there was one call made by the chair umpire which was, perhaps,

unique to Doon. What was it?

The answer is "through." This is when the ball would go across to the other side through the gaping holes in the net!

The chair umpire had to decide whether the ball had gone over the net or through it. The tennis nets were sewn up but would keep coming apart. Don't forget that School was hand to mouth then. Most of the sports and games budget would have been cornered by **Bond (Mr SK Vohra, SKV)** for cricket.

Sincerely,

**Midhatullah Khan Sherwani**  
(84 J, 1979)

---

Dear Editor,

While attending my Batch's 40th Reunion in Dehradun in October 2024, I was pleasantly surprised to discover the shield gifted by my late father Shri Nikhilesh Bhattacharyya to The Doon School for the Inter House Football tournament.

This gift was made in 1979 in memory of my paternal grandfather, the Late Durga

Prasanna Bhattacharyya. It was indeed a very nostalgic moment!

Best,

**Pradipta Bhattacharyya**  
(199 T, 1984)



Dear Editor,

My grandmother found an interesting picture in her album of my late grandfather who was also an Old Boy. She wanted to share this with *The Rose Bowl* and all readers who may be potentially interested in knowing that **Miangul Aurangzeb Khan (167 H, 1945)**, the last Wali of Swat State, was also a Dosco.

My grandfather, **Lt Gen BC Nanda (287 K, 1948)** was from the batch of 1948. The

picture is from the Golden Jubilee celebrations of School and incidentally, there were multiple eminent Old Boys who had been invited from Pakistan for the celebrations.

I hope this small, but extremely interesting, bit of information suffices for whomever is concerned!

Regards,

**CC Chengappa**  
(287 K, 2017)



From L-R: Miangul Aurangzeb (Wali of Swat), Leela Nanda, Naseem Aurangzeb (daughter of Ayub Khan, second President of Pakistan), and Lt Gen BC Nanda

Courtesy Anant Gairola (479 J, 1993)



# Old Boys' News



Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (second from right) receiving the IMF Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh

**Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh (GU)** was posthumously awarded the Nain Singh-Kishan Singh Lifetime Achievement Award by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF). The award recognised Mr Singh's position in the annals of mountaineering and exploration, as well as his generous mentoring of many generations of mountaineers. His nephew, **Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969)**, accepted the award in his honour. The Doon School continues to be proud of its long and storied association with Mr Singh and his family.



**Mr Arun Kapur (AKP)** was conferred Bhutan's prestigious *Bura Marp* (Red Scarf) and the title of Dasho by His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan. The Red Scarf is one of the highest honours conferred on an individual by the King of Bhutan for their contribution to public service. Mr Kapur is the Director of The Druk Gyalpo's Institute and had previously been awarded the Druk Thuksey medal for his work in setting up The Royal Academy school, and in developing the Bhutan Baccalaureate educational system. We thank Mr Kapur for his tireless service and wish him all the best.



The Royal Calcutta Golf Club recently honoured **Ashok Singh Malik (230 H, 1954)** with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his golfing achievements. These include winning the All-India Amateurs title a record five times, the All India Seniors Golf Championship six times, the Centenary Cup 23 times, as well as being the first Indian to win a National Championship outside the subcontinent when he won the Singapore Open Amateur Championship in 1977. Ashok represented India at the Eisenhower and Nomura Cups numerous times between 1958-1981. He was given the prestigious Arjuna Award in 1963. Incredible achievements all around!



**Ranjit 'Mony' Khubchand (315 J, 1959)** continues to defy time. At 81, Mony added two more medals to his glittering collection. He won Silver and Bronze for Delhi at the Swimming Federation of India's 20th National Masters Championships in Bhopal, proving that age is just a number when pursuing one's dreams. Keep shining, Mony!



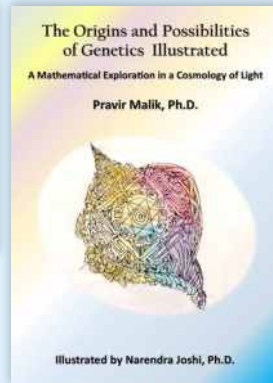
**Rahul Akerkar (404 K, 1975)**, Creative and Culinary Director Chef, Aditya Birla New Age Hospitality, opened his latest restaurant, Waarsa, at the National Centre for Performing Arts at Nariman Point in Mumbai. The restaurant highlights Awadhi cuisine and has been lauded for its unique dishes that taste "like something familiar, yet entirely new." All the best for continued success!



**Sir Anish Kapoor (385 T, 1970)**, the London-based artist, topped the Hurun India Art List. He achieved the highest sales among living Indian artists for the sixth consecutive year. The list ranks the top 50 living Indian artists according to the annual sales of their works sold at public auctions. He was earlier honoured by The Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, USA, which presented *Anish Kapoor: Reverie and Rupture*, the largest exploration in North America of his career. Congratulations!



**Shiv 'Fauji' Kunal Verma (182 H, 1976)** presented his latest works, *Yodha-I* and *Yodha-II*, a two-part illustrated military history of India, at the Valley of Words (VoW), the annual literature and arts festival in Dehradun. *Yodha-I* had been hailed as a "monumental work" while *Yodha-II* was recently honoured as *The Sunday Guardian's* Editor's Choice, and Shiv was congratulated for further enhancing his reputation as one of India's finest military historians. Well done!



**Dr Pravir Malik (909 J, 1982)** had his most recent book, *The Origins and Possibilities of Genetics Illustrated*, selected to be part of Forbes Councils Executive Library. This was Pravir's fourth book to be selected for the Forbes Library. Pravir is the author of 26 books, 20 of which are part of his *Cosmology of Light* series. Pravir is the founder and chief technologist at QIQuantum and the Forbes Technology Council group leader for Quantum Computing. All the best for his continued success!



**Rahul Malhotra (15 H, 1983)** was appointed as one of the newest members of Julius Baer's revamped executive board. Rahul is currently responsible for Julius Baer's India, Japan, and Asian clients, and will expand his role to include the Middle East & Africa, Central & Eastern Europe, Israel, Greece, and Turkey. He previously served as head of Southeast Asia for JPMorgan, and earlier worked at Merrill Lynch and Citigroup. Congratulations!



**Amir Zorawar Singh Pasrich (443 T, 1986)** has been elected Treasurer of the International Bar Association (IBA) and Secretary of the IBA's Legal Practice Division. This is a first for a member of the Bar in India. The IBA draws members from Bar Associations in 170 countries and is the largest conglomeration of lawyers through Bar Councils and Associations in the world. Congratulations!



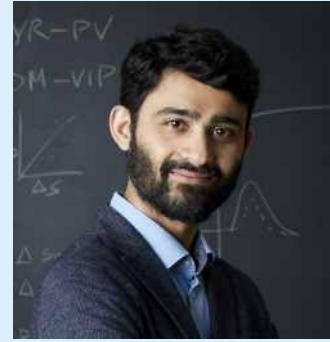
**Vibhas Kitchlu (24 T, 1983)** has been elected to the General Committee (Managing Committee) of the iconic The Saturday Club, Kolkata, for the third time. Congratulations!



**Rahul Khubchand (25 J, 1989)** was awarded the prestigious Pioneer In Sourcing Leadership Award by the Government of India at the 2024 Global Sourcing & Exports Leadership Awards. Rahul was awarded for his innovation, excellence, and exceptional contribution to the national Handloom and Handicrafts industry. Well done!



**Kalikesh Deo (344 T, 1992)** was elected President of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI). He had been the Senior Vice-President since 2017. The election was conducted by Justice Anil Dev Singh, retired Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court. Congratulations!



**Dr Adil Khan (494 O, 2000)** received the Wellcome Career Development Award for his research work as a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College, London, UK. The Award provides funding for mid-career researchers who have the potential to be international research leaders. Adil is hoping to solve fundamental problems about how the brain generates complex cognitive behaviour and has been praised for his exciting work. Well done and all the best with his groundbreaking research!



**Mani Shanker Singh (452 T, 2000)**, and his Bangalore-based fashion label Son Of A Noble SNOB, were one of three brands globally invited to participate in Lufthansa Airlines's prestigious Unhide / New Worlds of Fashion pop-up in London, UK. His work was noted for embodying minimalism and sustainability. Best wishes to Mani and his team!



**Sahajbir 'Sej' Singh Brar (10 J, 2002)** was appointed the Non-Executive Director of the Worcestershire County Cricket Club, Worcester, UK. A life-long cricket fan, he brings extensive experience in strategic consulting to help the Club strive to achieve its long-term goals. Congratulations and best of luck!



**Zubin Masani (439 J, 2000)**, in his position as General Counsel, Air India, helped accomplish the monumental task of merging two of the nation's largest airlines, Air India and Vistara. Zubin had overseen the building up of Air India's legal team from the ground up. Well done!



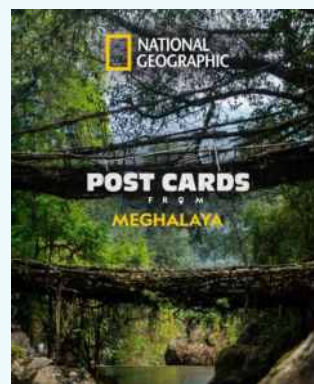
**Uttam Mukherjee (160 T, 2003)** had his restaurant, Spice Waala, featured in *Seattle Magazine*, the preeminent lifestyle publication of the Pacific Northwest in the United States. Uttam and his wife, Aakanksha, started Spice Waala while he was a brand manager for Procter & Gamble and she was a professor at Seattle University. Their goal was to introduce Americans to the broad range of Indian food that is often ignored there, and with the opening and operating of multiple locations, it seems they are succeeding. It is amazing to see a Dosco thrive in the culinary arts, especially given the precarious state of the post-Covid American restaurant industry. Keep it up!



**Feroz Khosla (435 K, 2005)** part of Goldman Sachs's financing group, was named a Goldman partner, the youngest member of the new class. Feroz earned this honour the hard way – starting off as a summer intern before making his way up the corporate ranks. He now leads the investment-grade-financing and corporate-derivatives business for healthcare and real estate. Congratulations!



**Rohanjit Chaudhry (74 J, 2007)** and his wife Radhika welcomed their daughter Raaya Rukmini Chaudhry in New York, USA, in September 2024. As a result, **Sumanjit Chaudhry (7 J, 1963)**, became a proud grandfather. Congratulations to the whole family!



**Arjun Gulati (109 H, 2008)** recently got to wear the hats of both Creative Director and Producer for *Postcards From Meghalaya*, a streaming series on Disney+ Hotstar. He has also taken a leap and started his own production studio, A Drifter Studio, working in the space of corporate films, documentaries, travel shows, podcasts, and other creative endeavours. Congratulations to Arjun and all the best with his new venture!



**Amit 'AKG' Gupta (290 T, 2010)** released the original song *Dil Se Jo Poocha* featuring **Rajiv Siddhartha (232 T, 2004)** and Siya Mahajan (Welham Girls' School, 2015). The song highlights animation adoption, and its music video was made in collaboration with Youth Organization in Defense of Animals (YODA) – an animal welfare organisation based out of Mumbai. All the best for continued success!

## Willingdon Indian Racketlon Open



Chandrashekhar Pitre with Gold in Men's 55+ Singles

DoscOs had a strong presence at the inaugural Willingdon Indian Racketlon Open at the Willingdon Sports Club, Mumbai, held November 29th-December 1st, 2024. This tournament was a

marquee event on the Racketlon World Tour 2024 (equivalent to one of the four Majors in tennis) with world ranking points at stake.

Racketlon is a combination sport where players play four racket sports in a circuit: one game to 21 each in table tennis, badminton, squash, and tennis. The player that wins the most cumulative points wins the match.

The tournament had 200 entries from 12 countries, including the current Men's and Women's World Champions. The tournament was organised by two DoscOs, the father and son team of **Ajoy Bhandare (286 J, 1964)** and **Nikhil Bhandare (634 J, 1995)**.

In addition, four DoscOs participated and all four got podium finishes – a testament to the strong sporting culture at Doon. Congratulations to: **Chandrashekhar Pitre (261 K, 1986)** - 1st in



Aditya Chandiook (in grey) and his father, Ashish Chandiook, with Bronze in Men's C+ Doubles



Nikhil Bhandare (in yellow) with Bronze in Men's 45+ Singles



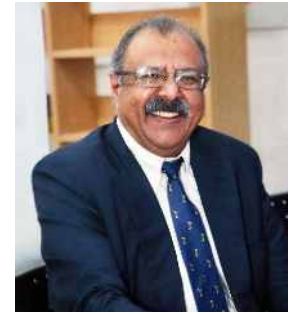
Chandrashekhar Pitre and Vishal Jhunjhunwala with Bronze in Men's 50+ Doubles (podium left), Nikhil Bhandare (right, in yellow), and Tournament Chairman Ajoy Bhandare (left, in red)



# From the Secretary's Desk

## Winter 2025 Round-Up

Ashutosh Goyal 392 K, 1986  
 Alumni Secretary, The DSOBS



Ashutosh Goyal

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We are proud to introduce a new feature where we receive regular updates from The DSOBS. First up, the Alumni Secretary updates us on all the goings-on from the previous quarter.

“The king is dead, long live the king!”

Monday, October 21st, 2024 – as the sun rose above the hills overlooking the Doon Valley, a new era dawned on The DSOBS. After 30 years, the Chair of President of the Society had a new occupant who had just turned 40, **S Junaid Altaf (209 O, 2003)**. The last “young” President being **Sunil Kant Munjal (180 K, 1973)**, who took the Chair in 1994 at just 37 years of age.



S Junaid Altaf  
 The Millennial President

Junaid’s team, including Vice President **Akash Puri (230 T, 1998)**, got into a huddle, actually several huddles, within the first few days after Founder’s to create a roadmap for the Society over the next two to four years. Plans were

discussed, debated, and put on paper; teams were formed; and within three weeks the first meeting of the Executive Committee was convened. Young minds, in a hurry to not lose any time! In the Chair was, after all, the first President to have graduated from School in the current millennium. We had our first Millennial President.

A brief of the events and activities over the last quarter, since Founder’s 2024, is being shared below. Some of the events will find space in the current, and subsequent, issues of your favourite magazine.

### The V Hensman Basketball Match



Team DSOBS and The Doon School Basketball Team

Team DSOBS played basketball against the School Team on November 9th, 2024. In a close contest that saw the see-sawing of fortunes, the greenhorns eventually got the better of the visitors 52-46. Going forward this fixture has been institutionalised, to be played as the V Hensman Basketball Match, on the same weekend as the SK Vohra Memorial Cricket Match, in mid-April every year. The V Hensman Trophy is a tribute to **Mr Viji Hensman**, the first Master-in-Charge of Basketball, when the sport was introduced in School in 1968.

### Tamil Nadu Region Monthly Meet-up (November)



Tamil Nadu DSOBS at TNGF

The Tamil Nadu Region had their monthly meet-up over lunch at Nandanam, Tamil Nadu Golf Federation (TNGF) in Chennai, on November 10th, 2024. The participants enjoyed themselves.

**Alumni Cricket Bash**

From November 21st-24th, 2024, Team DSOBS, our Men-in-Blue, participated in the Alumni Cricket Bash in Chandigarh. This tournament was played in the new Punjab Cricket Association stadium in Chandigarh. Our own **Dilsher V Khanna (110 T, 2008)**, Secretary, Punjab Cricket Association, helped facilitate the availability of the venue. Incidentally, Dilsher was Manager of Team India, which happened to win the T20 World Cup earlier in 2024!

**UAE Region Monthly Meet-up (November)**

Doscors of the UAE Region had their monthly meet-up in Dubai on November 29th, 2024.

**UK Region Christmas Party**



UK Doscors enjoying their Christmas Party

The UK Region Doscors had a Christmas Party in London the same evening (November 29th, 2024). A few countries apart – but the holiday (and Dosco) spirit remained strong!

**Karnataka Region Annual Get-together**

The Annual Get-together of the Karnataka Region was held in Bangalore on November 30th, 2024. The evening was hosted by the Baljee brothers (**Arjun Baljee, 306 T, 1998**, and **Keshav Baljee, 555 T, 2001**) at their Royal Orchid Hotel in Indiranagar.

**Tamil Nadu Region Monthly Meet-up (December)**

The Tamil Nadu Doscors swear by the food at Nandanam, TNGF, Chennai! They met up there again on December 15th, 2024.

**UAE Region Monthly Meet-up (December)**



Bipin Bhatia giving his farewell address

The UAE Region preferred to call their Monthly Meet-up in December 2024 ‘Farewell Bipin,’ to bid farewell to, and sing Auld Lang Syne for, **Bipin Bhatia (417 H, 1986)**. Bipin has been a Dubai stalwart, who, as the erstwhile The DSOBS Regional Rep, brought Doscors of the region together by curating regular get-togethers. President Junaid Altaf went all the way to Dubai to add to the Auld Lang Syne chorus for Bipin. After spending most of his professional life in the city, Bipin is moving back to Dehradun to drop anchor, and to continue playing golf!

**Madhya Pradesh Weekend – Indore**

The Madhya Pradesh Region, headed by **Jambo Bhandari (59 T, 1970)** and **Deepak Srivastava**

(464 K, 1987) curate weekend affairs every other year. After a most memorable weekend in Bhopal in 2022, they curated a weekend, this time in Indore, on January 4th-5th, 2025. A very nice dinner was held lakeside in the premises of Daly College (I suspect **Sumer B Singh, 299 J, 1968, SBS**, must have had some role to play in getting permission for the venue!). The next day, the Bhandaris hosted the DoscOs for a traditional Rajasthani lunch at their sprawling residence in the heart of the city. Young **Arihant Lohia (607 T, 2021)**, though not present in Indore over the weekend, curated special custom-made tea sets along with Darjeeling and Assam teas from his family’s brand, House of Tumsong, as giveaways for all who attended.

**Abhenav Khettry – Cricket Aficionado**

If there is a cricket aficionado amongst DoscOs, it is **Abhenav Khettry (159 J, 2003)**. Over the last couple of years, he has been organising an annual cricket fixture with the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CCFC), the oldest club in India. He supports the team’s uniforms and kits, organises audio and video recording, and the full live streaming of matches. This year, the Kolkata weekend consisted of three cricketing outings, along with Socials with the alumni of the Welham Girls’ School. Incidentally, as I learnt, in the 1980s and 1990s there used to be an annual cricket fixture between CCFC and a team that called themselves the ‘Gentlemen of Calcutta.’ It was composed mostly of DoscOs and some others from like-minded residential public schools. With time the ‘Gentlemen’ retired from their jobs and most moved back to their respective home cities, bidding Kolkata *adieu*, and this annual fixture saw



You’re in safe cricketing hands with Abhenav Khettry

its sun set. The background of starting The DSOBS versus CCFC annual match, apparently, lies in the revival of this fixture of yore. The Socials were held at the Glenburn Penthouse of **Anshuman Prakash (239 K, 1991)**.

Going forward, The DSOBS Calendar is literally choc-a-bloc full, with events taking place almost every weekend in some part of the world. Keep tuned in to your mailbox and Class and Regional WhatsApp Groups for such updates, or just get in touch with *moi*.

Until the Spring 2025 edition, stay well, and stay safe!

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*Ashutosh Goyal is an established veteran of the ITeS industry with more than 30 years’ experience in computer hardware and surveillance. At just 48 he handed over his entire business to his employees to pursue his passion. He joined The DSOBS Secretariat in 2016 and has been Secretary of the Society since 2019. You may reach him at [secretary@dsobs.net](mailto:secretary@dsobs.net)*



The DSOBS Team at the Alumni Cricket Bash

# DoscOs in Mumbai

## The Mumbai DoscOs Lunch Club

Pratim 'Peter' Mukerjea 17 H, 1971



Clockwise From Centre: Peter Mukerjea, Nakul Bubna, Rajnish Kapoor, Vivek 'Smiley' Varun Prasad, Mayank Kummar, Rajbir Singh, Vidhu Nevatia, Pradip Narain, Pashupati Advani, Bimal Bhavanani, Sher Shah Suri, Raman Kaicker, and Bala (guest)

A lunch get-together was held at The Willingdon Sports Club, Mumbai on December 4th, 2024, for local DoscOs.

The Mumbai DoscOs Lunch Club was established in 2013 by **Vivek 'Smiley' Varun Prasad (365 J, 1972)** and myself. After some quiet lunches at

Kumar Gaurav Restaurant, otherwise popularly known as Panchavati Gaurav restaurant in the Marine Lines area of South Mumbai, we realised we needed some noise!

As the founders of the Lunch Club were from the batches of 1971 and 1972, we inducted some of our batchmates. Other DoscOs join in as and when RWA (Ready, Willing, and Able). We fancy some grub and *gup shup* and here we are – almost 12 years later and somehow getting younger!

The Lunch Club attendees that December afternoon included **Raman Kaicker (424 H, 1971)**, **Sher Shah Suri (193 K, 1971)**, **Bimal Bhavanani (242 K, 1972)**, **Pashupati Advani (220 J, 1972)**, **Rajnish Kapoor (500 J, 1976)**, **Nakul Bubna (416 H, 1976)**, **Rajbir Singh (38 J, 1971)**, **Mayank Kummar (87 H, 1973)**, **Pradip Narain (431 T, 1973)**, **Vidhu Nevatia (292 H, 1974)**, **Vivek 'Smiley' Varun Prasad**, **Anil 'Ladoo' Advani (103 K, 1971)**, **Rajiv 'Sachu' Rai Sachdev (64 T, 1972)**, and Peter Mukerjea.

Here's to the next 12 years!



Clockwise From Centre: Vidhu Nevatia, Pradip Narain, Pashupati Advani, Bimal Bhavanani, Sher Shah Suri, Raman Kaicker, Bala, Peter Mukerjea, Nakul Bubna, Rajnish Kapoor, Vivek 'Smiley' Varun Prasad, Mayank Kummar, and Rajbir Singh

# DoscOs in Madhya Pradesh

## Unending Reminiscences

Ashutosh Goyal 392 K, 1986  
 Alumni Secretary, The DSOBS

Madhya Pradesh, as a State, is well represented in the Dosco community with about 75 DoscOs from the region. Apart from these 75, there are many who may not live there but have business interests in the State which keep them connected to the region. The bulk of the MP DoscOs are from Indore and Bhopal, with the rest scattered around the entire length and breadth of the State.



From L-R: Siddhraj Singh, Satish Bhandari, Jamboo Bhandari, S Junaid Altaf (209 O, 2003, President, The DSOBS), and Jasbir Bhandari



From L-R: Satish Bhandari, Ashutosh Goyal, Maj Gen Sachin Malik (536 J, 1987), S Junaid Altaf, Alok Arora (578 K, 2007), and Mukund Nyati

After a fabulous weekend in Bhopal in 2022, the MP Region curated another Dosco Weekend, this time in Indore. The first weekend of 2025 was designated as The DSOBS Indore Weekend. Our Regional Representatives for MP, **Jamboo Bhandari (59 T, 1970)** and **Deepak Srivastava (464 K, 1987)**, know a thing or two about organising get-togethers. They selected the Desai Lake area, in the campus of Daly College, as the venue for the event. The lakeside was converted into a nice, well-lit arena. Just perfect for the pleasant evening. A crooner belted out popular numbers through the evening. I must mention **Sumer B Singh (299 J, 1968, SBS)**, a former Principal of Daly College, who was instrumental in getting the permissions necessary to use the venue. Ms Jagmeet Bindra, the current Principal, also attended.



The DSOBS President addressing the gathering

Attendees included DoscOs from the 1960s all the way up to our youngest members from the Class of 2024. Like all Dosco get-togethers, the evening continued into the late hours. The banter, humour, reminiscences were unending.

The following day, the Bhandari family, three of whom were present, **Jasbir (61 T, 1969)**, **Satish (123 T, 1971)**, and Jamboo, hosted a lunch at their residence. The traditional Rajasthani fare was



The "compulsory" group photograph at Desai Lake

enjoyed by all. All those who attended were given a gift, curated by **Arihant Lohia (607 T, 2021)**.

It was very nice seeing the younger lot volunteering to help out the Reps, contributing in more ways than one. **Siddhraj Singh (433 K, 2000)**, **Nelson 'Nelly' Kumrawat (132 J,**

**2009)**, **Mukund Nyati (455 H, 2012)**, and **Arihant** were all an integral part of Team MP. After a great weekend, we eagerly look forward to the next event in Madhya Pradesh. For those who could not make it this time, we look forward to seeing you at the next such event, whether in our locality, or in other parts of the country and the world.



The DSOBS, Madhya Pradesh Chapter

## A Plea From The DSOBS

**Moved? Moving?  
Thinking About Moving? New Address?**

Please let us know!

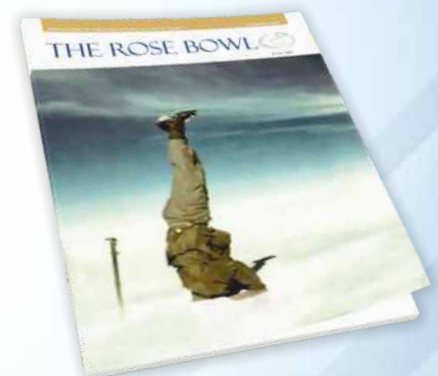
Last year, The DSOBS mailed out 3,700 copies of the Founder's edition of *The Rose Bowl*. This was a special issue, commemorating the life of the legendary Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh (GU).

Of the 3,700 copies sent out, as many as 500 copies were returned undelivered.

A lot of blood and sweat goes into creating and sending this fine product out to our fellow Doscobes, who wait to read it passionately. If Doscobes do not update their postal address with us, all of this time, effort, and money go to waste.

Please confirm your mailing address with The DSOBS and let us know if any of your postal address details have changed.

We thank the entire Dosco community for its attention to this important matter.



**Please let us know!**

WhatsApp: +91-98116-52456

Email: [secretary@dsobs.net](mailto:secretary@dsobs.net)

# SKV Memorial Cricket Weekend 2024

## The Doon School vs The DSOBS (The Doon School, Dehradun)

Abhenav Khettry 159 J, 2003

Raghuvendra 'Donny' Singh 878 T, 1982  
Convenor, The DSOBS Sub-Committee – Cricket

The SKV Memorial Cricket Weekend was played between the School Cricket Team and the Old Boys on April 13th, 2024, on the Main Field at School. The School Cricket Team was led by Rohan Jalan and the Old Boys by **Raghuvendra 'Donny' Singh**.



The DSOBS Team huddles before the match

The Old Boys squad comprised of the following:

THE DSOBS SQUAD FOR SKV MEMORIAL CRICKET WEEKEND 2024		
NAME	SCHOOL NO	BATCH
Raghuvendra Singh (Captain)	878 T	1982
Raghav Mallik	113 K	1984
Himmat Rana	464 J	1993
Pratyush Vaishnava	422 K	2000
Anandbir Singh	38 J	2002
Abhenav Khettry	159 J	2003
Shashi Vaish	205 K	2003
Amitoj 'Jhonny' Singh (Vice-Captain)	285 H	2004
Ankur Joshi	281 H	2004
Venkatesha Sharma	303 O	2004
Vedant Chandra	241 J	2010
Dinesh Reddy	413 J	2011
Rajdeep Deo Bhanj	355 T	2011
Fatehbir Singh Dhillon	22 K	2022
Ashutosh Goyal (Secretary, The DSOBS )	392 K	1986

## CONNECTIONS

The match was a 25-over white ball fixture on Saturday with a full-strength School team. The Old Boys won the toss and elected to bat first. **Raghav Mallik** and **Rajdeep Deo Bhanj** opened the batting with Arjun Prakash and Vedant Mangal sharing the new ball for the School.



Rajdeep gets ready to sweep one to the boundary

Raghav started attacking with two beautiful boundaries and a six, quickly putting on 26 runs for the opening pair before being caught by Arjun Prakash off the bowling of Vedant Mangal on 19 off just 13 balls. In came the School Cricket Captain of 2002, **Shashi Vaish**, who hit a quick 15 runs with two boundaries, before being caught by Arnav off the bowling of Rohan Jalan, making the score 58/2 in 6.3 overs. Rajdeep (28 off 22) who had been holding fort at the other end was soon bowled by Arnav, making the score 72/3.

**Vedant Chandra** (32 off 24) and **Anandbir Singh** (35 off 28) steadied the innings as the Old Boys kept losing quick wickets. Amitoj 'Jhonny' Singh (27) and Anandbir added 52 runs for the seventh wicket which helped the Old Boys post a decent and defendable 195/9 in 25 overs.

Arjun Prakash was the pick of the bowlers with 2/35 in his five overs. Daksh Jindal, with figures of 4-0-33-2, was the other good bowler for the School Team.



Both teams with Dr Jagpreet Singh (HM) and Mr Vohra

The School started its chase in earnest with Pranay Gupta and Rushil Aggarwal opening the batting. **Fatehbir Singh Dhillon** opened the bowling for the Old Boys, quickly dismissing Rushil. This brought in the School Cricket Captain Rohan Jalan, who along with Pranay Agarwal, played a fantastic knock, hitting the Old Boys bowlers to all parts of the ground. The pair had put on 133 runs for the second wicket when Fatehbir Dhillon got the better of Rohan, having him caught by Jhonny on an individual score of 72 off 56 balls. However, at 148/2 and with only 48 more runs required for victory, it was a little too late. Pranay Gupta (89\* off 66) added another 38 runs with Arjun Prakash, taking the score to 186/3. The School finished the chase in 23.1 overs. Fatehbir Dhillon was the pick of the bowlers with 3/39.

The Doon School won the SKV Memorial Match for the first time in five years.



The DSOBS Team

From L-R (Kneeling): Abhenav Khettry, Rajdeep Deo Bhanj, Shivansh Thapa, Fatehbir Dhillon, Vedant Chandra, Venkatesh Sharma, and Dinesh Reddy

From L-R (Standing): Ashutosh Goyal, Shashi Vaish, Mr Kamal Ahuja (DHM), Raghuvendra 'Donny' Singh, Himmat Rana, Raghav Mallik, Amitoj 'Jhonny' Singh, Anandbir Singh, and Ankur Joshi



The victorious Doon School Cricket Team receiving the SKV Trophy from HM

**Brief Scores**

**DSOBS:** 195 for 9 (25); Anandbir (35), Vedant (32), Rajdeep (28), Jhonny (27) | Arjun 2/35, Daksh 2/33

**School Team:** 196 for 4 (23.1); Pranay (89\*), Rohan (72) | Fatehbir 3/39

**Result:** The Doon School won by 6 wickets

**Individual Awardees:**

**Special Award – SKV Bat (Best Batsman):**

Pranay Gupta

**Most Valuable Player:** Rohan Jalan

**Man of the Match:** Arjun Prakash

**Best Bowler:** Fatehbir Singh Dhillon



Pranay Gupta receiving the Best Batsman award from Mr Vohra and his sons



Rohan Jalan receiving his MVP award from the Vohra family for his exceptional batting performance



Arjun Prakash receiving the Man of the Match award from Donny

# The Batch of 1964 Diamond Jubilee Celebrations Reigniting That Special Bond

Neerja (née Gupta) Raman 99 J, 1964

Ably organized by our class rep, **Surinder 'Sundi' Singh (215 T, 1964)**, a significant number of us from the batch of 1964 converged in Dehradun for our Diamond Jubilee Reunion. Diamond means sixty. *Sixty*. The world order has changed as we have aged. Yet, memories of escapades shared during our formative years have not. Almost the whole class, with families, traveled from far and near to celebrate, and in some cases reignite, that special bond that is The Doon School.



Arrival at Madhuban Hotel with 1964 Batch welcome sign  
From L-R : Ram Sitaram (11 T, 1964), Surinder 'Sundi' Singh, Manjit Singh, Vijay Thairani (81 K, 1964), Deepa Thairani, Vasan Raman



Pre-Jubilee festivities: Dinner hosted by Kapilesh and Sudha Manglik

We kicked off the celebrations with warmup meets in Delhi. Hosted by **Kapilesh Manglik (312 H, 1964)** and **Arjun Malhotra (325 K, 1964)**, we were able to meet those of us who could not travel to Dehradun. In Dehradun most of us stayed at the Madhuban Hotel. On the evening of our arrival, we all came together for a batch dinner hosted by **Kamal Nath (366 H, 1964)**. Along with greeting one another, Surinder also led a touching, heartfelt memorial honouring those in our batch who are no more.



Dinner at Madhuban Hotel hosted by Kamal Nath



The Batch of 1964 dinner at Madhuban Hotel

One of the highlights of our reunion was the formal dedication of the new Swimming Pool complex. Besides funds, some of our classmates have put in years of time, energy, and thought into bringing this project to fruition. Most of us had only seen the old swimming pool so what a treat it was to experience the engineering and aesthetics of the new complex. The new filtration system with artwork designed by a student was a delight. There had been some space constraints but they were addressed very well. The program of races and speeches organised by the school to mark the celebration was very enjoyable.

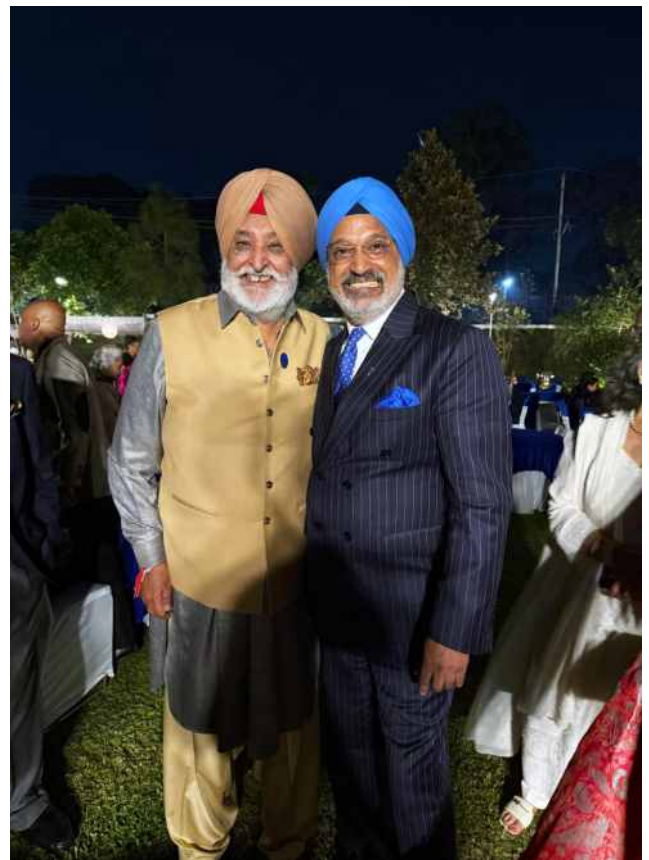


The Batch of 1964 Swimming Pool Inauguration Ceremony, sporting Diamond Batch Reunion memorabilia and shirts



Swimming Pool sculpture designed by current Dosco Shiva Mallikarjun, donated by the Batch of 64

The Headmaster's Dinner was a throwback to old world sophistication and gentility. We also got a chance to catch up with other batches celebrating various milestones. For me, the daughter of **Mr KC Gupta (KCG)**, a tour of Jaipur House was truly heartwarming as the campus was not only school but also home. Sixty years and the campus still felt like home. The campus is different now, but it retains the essence of Chandbagh.



Surinder 'Sundi' Singh (left) with Headmaster Dr Jagpreet Singh (HM) at the Headmaster's Dinner



Pravin Agarwal (265 J, 1964), Neerja (née Gupta) Raman, and Sandeep Bagchee (228 J, 1964) tour Jaipur House



Neerja (née Gupta) Raman at Jaipur House, the portrait of her father, former House Master Mr KC Gupta, can be seen in the top right corner of the array

The Chandbagh Debates, another School tradition at Founder’s Day, brought back fond memories, especially since as an invited judge I got a front row seat. The School Team was represented by Seniors and the Old Boys by the class of 1999. The debate centered around Mr Foot’s legacy and his vision for the School. It was a timely reminder of the skills we learned in School of being able to communicate and argue persuasively. I could not help but reflect that I was perhaps one of the few, if not the only one, present in the packed auditorium, who had known Mr Foot. A most pragmatic person, Mr Foot would have moved with the times.



The Chandbagh Debates: invited judge Neerja (née Gupta) Raman

Another highlight of the trip was a lunch hosted by **Michael ‘Mike’ Dalvi (370 T, 1962)** at his resort in Dehradun. We enjoyed his gracious hospitality and were glad to see him improved in health and spirit.



Batch lunch hosted by Michael ‘Mike’ Dalvi at his resort in Dehradun

From Dehradun, a smaller group went for a few days to Tehri. It was time to relax and reconnect at a deeper level and get to know the spouses. We stayed in a spectacular resort right on Tehri Lake. Every evening, as we sat on the patio, the moon rose behind the mountains and reminded us how privileged we are to be a part of Nature. The sunrise was equally spectacular. And spectacular, too, were four memorable milestone celebrations: Sundi’s wedding anniversary, two birthdays – **Manjit Singh (157 J, 1964)** and **Sheel Sharma (345 K, 1964, SKS)** – and the *Karva Chauth* moon sighting. Not sure how they managed it but cakes, savouries, and other special treats magically appeared at this remote outpost.



Celebrating a birthday (Manjit Singh) and a wedding anniversary (Surinder ‘Sundi’ Singh) in Tehri



Anil Agarwal (186 H, 1964), Sudha Manglik, Surinder 'Sundi' Singh, and Manjit Singh celebrating *Karva Chauth* at Tehri



Batch Lunch after leaving Tehri

Many thanks to the Headmaster, the School, and my batchmates for making our Diamond Jubilee truly memorable. In Dehradun, some of us met for the first time since leaving School but

the warmth was as palpable as those of us who have been able to meet more often. The Doon School is a special heritage indeed and we made a pact to attend the next celebration.

## The Swimming Pool Diaries

Surinder 'Sundi' Singh 215 T, 1964  
Representative, Batch of 1964



Batch of 1964 Swimming Pool Inauguration

FEATURES

Let me add my bit to what Neerja has described. Neerja is an accomplished scholar from Stanford, has written many books and is, perhaps most importantly for us, the daughter of an amazing Master, Mr KC Gupta (KCG). As Head of the Chemistry Department, he made time to shape the sports program in School. His encouragement and enthusiasm for Athletics was a source of inspiration to the students. Mr Gupta's devotion enabled the School Team to win and break records in the Dehradun District Sports Competitions.

The story of the Swimming Pool is long. Funding was an issue, though that was generously addressed by the Batch of 1964. A lot of discussion took place; should the pool be heated or were we thinking the present boys were too soft? Eventually, it was decided, correctly, that the heating will let the pool be used for a longer part of the year.

We now have a fabulous Swimming Pool but what we required was some sort of a mural. Plenty of ideas were tossed around and over a lazy afternoon tea with Kiran equally of Arjun Malhotra fame came the suggestion to check with the Headmaster, Dr Jagpreet Singh (HM), if the boys in School would contribute a suitable design. Thus, began the task of liaising with HM and **Arjun Bartwal (501 K, 2000, ARB)**, Head, Alumni Relations, to get a design. We were already in July with Founder's due to take place



Swimming Pool donation plaque with the names of the Batch of 1964

in October! We were worried whether it would be ready in time, but the Dosco spirit rose admirably to the challenge.

The journey of the sculpture was long but eventful. HM played a pivotal role. He promised to get the boys to enter a design competition in the Art School. Except the School was on summer break till July

2024! We had nine designs by mid-August leaving us just nine weeks to have the actual sculpture in place.

The selection was tough, but the classic design is in place for all to see: a diver diving into the lamp, now acting as a bird bath. While the design inverts the “flame,” it characterizes the essence of it. The artist, **Shiva Mallikarjun (37 T, 2028)**, has captured what the pool is all about. October 18th, 2024, was just round the corner. We were short on funds and our design was still on paper, needing to be translated into a sculpture.

We needed a mad dash on all fronts if we were to win the race against time. I was able to locate the artist Ram Sutar, a dear friend, along with his son Anil. Interestingly, Ram has curated the bust of **Mr Gurdial ‘Guru’ Singh (GU)** and **Mr Sheel ‘Bond’ Vohra (SKV)**, and is working on one of Tata, for Doon. This was most extraordinary since it meant the School knows Ram well. I discussed my delicate timescale with Ram and he assured me the sculpture would be ready by the end of September — an extraordinary gesture from this Padma Bhushan awardee.

The time till September was stressful, yet satisfying. From a mere sketch to 3D. Then a mockup miniature to a full-fledged replica. The transformation was exhilarating, but eventually seeing the real masterpiece was an unbelievable experience. The sculpture of the Lamp with Swimmer, crafted in bronze and copper, is a work of art. The time and effort put in by Kapilesh to visit Ram's studio is exemplary. Making time from his duties as Senior Tax Partner, Ernst & Young, and not hesitating to spend hours on this project, Kapilesh is a shining example of camaraderie and dedication to a deserving cause.



Sudha Manglik, Kapilesh Manglik, Sheel Sharma, Indu Agarwal, and Shiv Dev Datt (61 T, 1964) enjoying water sports at the Tehri Dam

I was on the lookout to raise funds when, during dinner with a batchmate, I happened to mention it. To my amazement, he offered to pay the entire cost of the sculpture! Such is the spirit in the Batch of 1964.

HM and Arjun Bartwal were kept in the loop with the developments when, one fine day, HM dropped a huge, delightful spanner in the works. HM suggested we change the location of the statue and place it on top of the filtration unit. Now more funds were required. Enter **Anil 'Chunti' Agarwal (186 H, 1964)**, an IIT alumnus with vast experience in bridge construction. He, along with the team of the School Engineering Department, gave us his firm assurance that, whatever it took, he would transform the filtration unit into a glorious fountain.

The tiles were chosen to blend with the surroundings and Chunti went about his assignment with precision and passion. The resulting fountain with the statue atop is a treat for the eyes.

Funds were still required and, out of the blue, came a call. We had yet another batch benefactor pledging financial support. Now it came time to organise the programme for the Swimming Pool Complex with HM.

Back in January, during the birthday luncheon celebrations of Arjun Malhotra, I had got a commitment from HM that we will run a swimming competition at the Inauguration. HM stood by his word and this became part of the event.

**Anoop Bishnoi (112 J, 1975)** was requested to do the inauguration, but he politely declined and insisted that it be inclusive of our Batch of 1964. It was then to be a selection between **Suman Bery (58 T, 1964)**, Vice-President, NITI Aayog, **Shekhar Bajaj (22 H, 1964)**, Chairman, Bajaj Motors, Arjun Malhotra, Founder, HCL, and Kamal Nath, former Union minister. Kamal was chosen for his wit and flippancy, but also because he was a favourite for being an absolute rascal in our school days.

The competition was to be a 4x100 Meter Relay between the five Houses. Word had got around about this, so Arjun Bartwal suggested the sixth lane be run by Old Boys. Notable amongst them was one



The Burgerama donation

who had swum the English Channel. This promised to be some race. Prizes were to be organised, and the Batch felt some refreshments should follow.

For the prize distribution, we chose trophies to befit the occasion and so replicas of the sculpture were commissioned. As refreshments there was a tie between McDonald's and Burgerama. Of course, Burgerama won, since it is Dosco-owned. Their onerous task was to prepare a thousand hot burgers, which they performed exceptionally well.

The relay was a spectacle. The Old Boys' team got off to a good start but, owing to an early cramp, just about managed to finish the race. They were, no doubt, delighted with their trophy. Kashmir House won the race comfortably. HM is committed to keeping this feature alive in line with the RLH Cricket Match. The magnificent trophy will act as a rotating Inter-House Relay Prize over Founder's. The Inauguration Plaque has all the names of our Batch. Amongst the prize winners we had a huge trophy for Shiva for his design of the statue.

The Batch of 1964 stands united to salute the School for moulding us and instilling in us strong values with a duty of care. From these flows an innate desire to be an Aristocracy of Service.

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*Neerja (née Gupta) Raman came to New York in 1970 as a graduate student in chemistry, and then moved to California for her first job in biochemistry research. She was the first woman of Indian origin to be inducted into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame. She is an award-winning author, and her memoir The Chemistry of Belonging: Stories of Inheritance and Upbringing is being released in 2025. Visit her at [neerjaraman.com](http://neerjaraman.com)*

*Surinder 'Sundi' Singh is the Batch Representative for the Batch of 1964.*

# Gyanoday: A Dosco Flame

Avinash Singh Alag 160 H, 1984

Shubika Khanna Intern, 2024



A Gyanoday scholar

Started as a community service initiative to supplement Blossoms School, Meerut-based Gyanoday supports childhood development by providing non-formal education in low-income neighbourhoods.

The idea for Gyanoday birthed itself in 2001, when a staff member residing near Madrasi Colony, Meerut, reported the deteriorating state of the neighbourhood. Baba Bharati, the village's chief, or *mukhiya*, became the first donor to Gyanoday, by donating his personal *jhuggi* to run a school in.

Gyanoday decided to address the issues faced by the poverty-stricken area at its core, by promoting literacy among underprivileged children. This was particularly important as we learned about the treatment meted out to children: they were reduced to mere sources of income through begging, rag-picking, pickpocketing, polishing shoes, selling and transporting illegal liquor, or even prostituting young girls. A key objective of Gyanoday emerged – the prioritisation of the gaining of meaningful skills to earn money with honesty, integrity, and dignity, in order to lead self-sufficient lives.

Thus, the term Gyanoday was coined, taking inspiration from The Doon School's motto, "Knowledge Our Light," as well as the School's commitment to being an aristocracy of service to young children and their futures. The child-centric approach has been the utmost priority since its inception, with the idea of a Gyanoday *Vatika* emerging when it was decided that the classroom must be taken to the children, and not the other way around, to provide the easiest access to education.

The *Vatika* exists as a sacred space of study and has historically adapted to a myriad of forms ranging from a cool shade under a tree to the cover of a tin shed by the pavement. The key tenet remains to nurture children and bring them to the forefront through engaging learning experiences.



Baba Bharati, the very first donor



An engaging learning experience

As Gyanoday expanded its infrastructure, the key issue these children faced in accessing mainstream education was identified. Even as they were enrolled in formal schooling, teachers realised that they were subjected to several adverse experiences, ranging from discrimination from children hailing from more affluent backgrounds to their attendance being affected by malnourishment and lack of proper hygiene at home. The crux of Gyanoday, then, became its holistic and engaging learning approach, following the 4 Hs of the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health to promote clear thinking, more sensitivity, and service which, ultimately, results in better living. As the curriculum expanded, a more regulated system evolved which was replicated in *Vatikas* running across Meerut, Delhi, and Dehradun. Three separate learning levels, kindergarten, middle school, and high school curriculum proficiency, were implemented within the centers. Additionally, in order to further their education, a scholarship program was set up so that these children could go to formal schools and enter mainstream education.

However, entry into these programs resulted in a dwindling number of hands contributing to their family income, and it was gradually realised that the children were not completely self-reliant, still, after high school. To tackle this, additional Vocational Centers were established to impart skills, especially to women. These included stitching and tailoring, *mehndi* design, beautician courses, and computer training, to improve their employment prospects. This also ensured that students were financially

independent by the time they turned 21 after completing these diploma-certificate courses. This was followed by a Careers and Livelihoods Programme, which conducts career counselling workshops, and also supports undergraduate degrees. The famous proverb goes, “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” This has been the guiding principle of Gyanoday.



Empathetic teaching

None of this is possible, of course, without the help of empathetic adults that bridge the gap between the organisation and the child. Since this is such a key role, teachers are chosen from among the local residents so that they are able to easily understand and effectively address the specific obstacles being faced by the children. They often organise extra curricular activities in their sessions to gain the children's trust, ultimately making the *Vatika* a safe space to address the problems that these children face at home. These problems are then tackled on a case-to-case basis, without rebuke, humiliation, or judgement. This also allows the *Vatika* to become a platform for pursuing one's hobbies and passions, often discouraged at home. These could be as simple as replicating a YouTube choreography, a play, or trying to learn art and music. Gyanoday is highly flexible in both its structure and functioning, a system that is made possible through the unwavering commitment of its staff members, who are all earnest and compassionate individuals trying to support this important cause.



Play time

Mrs Munesh Raj, a teacher at Gyanoday Mangatpuram Vatika recounted how she was approached by a girl in tattered clothes nervously asking if she could attend school after the girl heard about it from her neighbour. When Mrs Raj followed the child back to her home to formally seek permission, she found out that the only guardian was a grandmother who could barely walk, resulting in the girl begging for money to make the household's ends meet. Mrs Raj took the girl under her own wing, bought her a school bag and new clothes, and eventually helped the girl fulfill her dream of attending school through the Vatika. This story drives home the impact the staff has on the children and the diligence with which they carry out their duties.

The care of the teachers is combined with the unyielding resilience and perseverance of the students to empower themselves and their families and rise against the shackles of their circumstances. There are hundreds of inspiring accounts here, like Amravati, the first scholar from Gyanoday. She came from a conservative rickshaw-puller's family and defied the odds to reach her current position as an executive at Phone Pe in Bangalore.



Amravati, a formal Gyanoday scholar



Amravati, at her current job



Shami, during her time at Gyanoday



Shami, at her current job

Equally heartening is Shama's story, whose family relied on the selling of illegal liquor to survive. However, she was able to break free with the support and guidance that Gyanoday offers, and now works with MSC Cruises, an Italian company, where she has achieved her dream of sailing across the oceans. Even beyond these marvels, lie everyday stories of young students such as Umesh, who is able to support his family by selling candles on diwali, and Vishal, who hopes to pursue a career as an art teacher after his work gained praise during Gyanoday's Udaan Exhibition. Another student, Faizan, from the Dayal Vatika, felt great pride in filling out the hospital forms required to buy medicines for his mother. He brought his mother with him to thank the Vatika for helping him develop his reading and writing skills.

Within these anecdotes lies the ethos of Gyanoday – the transformative potential of



Vocational training

sharing knowledge and the revolutionary improvement this brings to each individual life. What Gyanoday has managed to achieve continuously is to emphasise education as a legitimate means to improve one's quality of life, and make people become less resistant to the pursuit of knowledge.

Currently, with 14 *Vatikas*, 4 Vocational Training Centres, and with approximately 1.25 million lives impacted, Gyanoday remains committed to its mission and the execution thereof. Almost everyone on the staff has been with the organisation for a long time, with acquired wisdom from the 23 years since the NGO's inception. The alumni are just as passionate, ending their days with visits to the *Vatika* they once belonged to, brimming with enthusiasm about their newest achievements, which,

evidently, there is no shortage of. They often joke that nobody who joins ever gets to leave, "*Jud gaya toh jud gaya*," a testament to the profound impact of Gyanoday.

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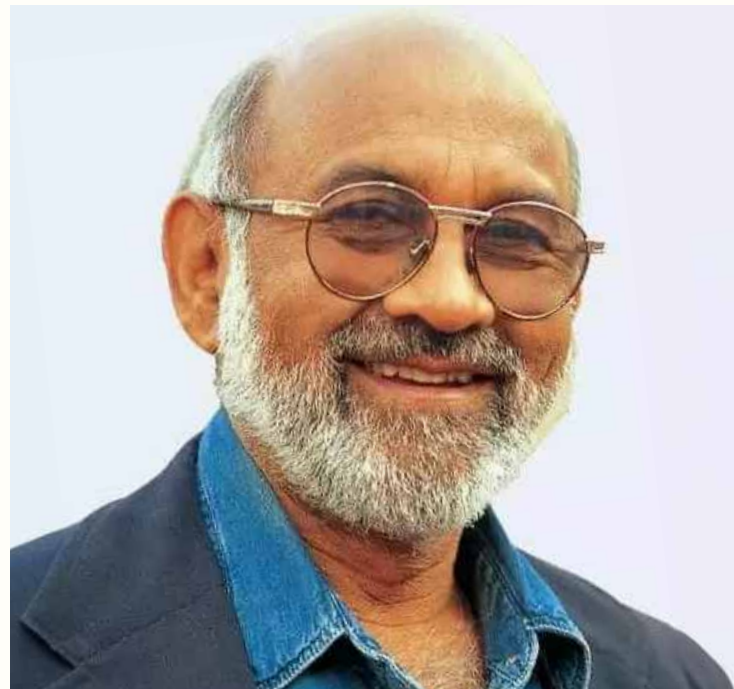
*Avinash Singh Alag, is an accomplished and seasoned educator. He is the Founding Headmaster of Blossoms School, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, and the Founder of Gyanoday, an NGO dedicated to the empowerment of marginalised children and their families. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his work uplifting the underprivileged.*

*Shubhika Khanna is an undergraduate student at Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana, currently pursuing a degree in Sociology and Anthropology. She likes to volunteer in her free time, and spent the summer working with Gyanoday.*



The profound impact of Gyanoday

# Tributes



Shomie Ranjan Das (SRD, HM) 165 H, 1951

## Shomie Ranjan Das (1935-2024)

### An Educationist Far Ahead of His Time

Jayant Hari Har Lal (JHH) 404 H, 1969



Shomie Das and guests enjoying a School function in the Rose Bowl *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

The first time I heard of Mr Shomie Das (165 H, 1951, SRD, HM) was in 1969. I was in my final year at Doon and my cousin was in his final year at Mayo. He always lamented the rather strict and rigid framework at Mayo as compared to our routine at Doon. By around the middle of the year, his letters started changing. He was suddenly a happier person, thinking of hobbies and activities not normally on his radar. On being questioned about his new mood, he indicated that Mayo had a new Head – a Mr Shomie Ranjan Das who was also a Doon School alum! He wrote about the new “mood” in the school – the hands-on, happier, and carefree environment thanks to this new Head recently returned from Gordonstoun.

The next mention of Mr Das was in 1988 when it was announced that upon Mr Gulab Ramchandani's (225 T, 1942, HM) retirement, Mr Shomie Das – the Founder's grandson – would be taking over as Headmaster. As The DSOBS Representative in Dehradun at that time, it was my job to organise a farewell and a welcome. I thought it might be better to combine the two. Everyone warned me that getting common dates would be a challenge. In fact it was quite easy. Mr Das agreed to whatever date we proposed. A great beginning! And a great party. Mr Das's easy and casual style of speaking put everyone at ease.



Shomie with family at The Doon School, circa 1993

*Courtesy Rohit Das*

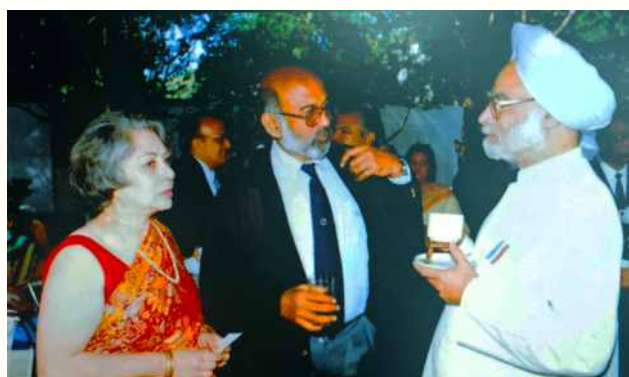
As I was busy with Basketball at Doon along with teaching Maths part-time, my interactions with Mr Das started on the courts. He would frequently visit practices during his evening walk. He encouraged me to get the team greater exposure. We were very Dehradun-centric at that time, so an outstation tour for the team was planned – unheard of for any sport other than the three major games. RP Devgan (RPD) was Chairman of the Games Committee and he backed the idea fully. If Doon saw great heights in Basketball over the next 20 years, the foundations were laid then. When Afzal Khan (494 T, 1987) tragically passed away, my idea of a basketball tournament in his memory was supported whole heartedly by Mr Das. By then, I had come to know him on a social level and he insisted that I call him Shomie.

The idea of a professional coach (our first was Daljinder) was approved by him and we had an excellent few years in the game. Our only nemesis then was DPS Mathura Road, Delhi. We finally got the better of them in an Afzal final. This idea of a professional coach initially met with a lot of resistance from some of our more senior staff members but those misgivings were overruled by Shomie.

Over the next few years one got to see his style and method of functioning. So long as one stuck to the mission, he allowed total freedom. We had the first Round Square International Conference in India at Doon in the early 1990s. It was a great success with Shashank Vira (2 J, 1983, SKV) taking the lead and managing the control room and every member of the staff contributing his bit. This “his” bit business was soon to change with some ladies being appointed to teach on a regular basis. I believe Purnima Dutta (PDT) was one of them.

Shomie always said that our time-bound hierarchical system of governance was outdated. He felt that commitment and merit must get priority. In December 1994, he asked me to join Doon full time. I was enjoying my stint and decided to give it a try. 1995 was our Diamond Jubilee year. Shomie asked me to coordinate the School's end of the event. His only instruction was to

get the whole staff involved. I was warned that I was biting off more than I could chew since the grand Golden Jubilee was still on everybody's mind. The Prime Minister (Rajiv Gandhi, 203 K, 1960) was the Chief Guest at that function. Could we match up to some semblance of that gala event? Shomie, as usual, was his unflappable self. He made me sit in his office and dialled Dr Manmohan Singh's office and reminded the gentleman of a commitment that Dr Singh, the then Finance Minister responsible for opening up the Indian economy, had made to Shomie when they had met at an event in Delhi. Shomie made it happen. Dr Manmohan Singh came as the Chief Guest. Later a Board Member commented about the event being “a lot more fun with a lot less hype!”



From L-R: Pheroza Das, Shomie Das, then Minister of Finance Dr Manmohan Singh, circa 1995 *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

Shomie left the running of the School's day-to-day activities to his number twos. He had complete faith in his team. On returning to School from a visit outside Dehradun, he saw some slogans written on the gates, which made him very upset. The slogans were painted over the same day. He promised action and soon changes in the School administration team were made. Brig BN Singh was brought in as the Bursar. I remember a cartoon in The Doon School Weekly showing a very athletic BN Singh with a machine gun in his hands shooting down “corrupt” people. The boys never missed a thing!

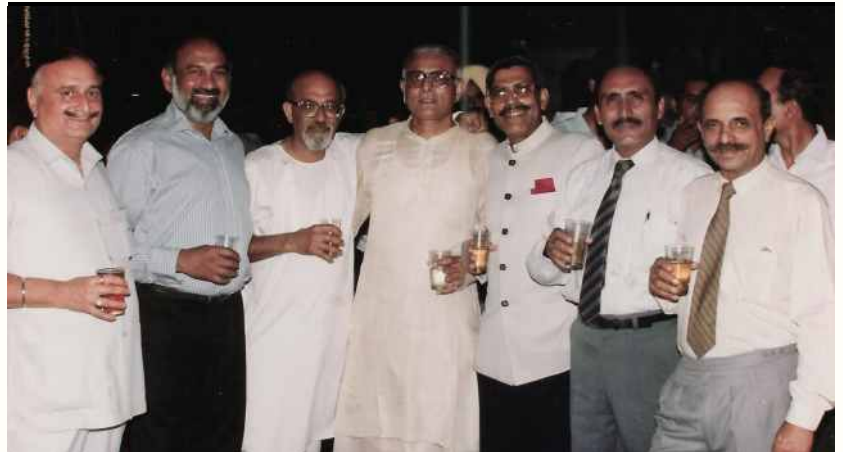
Shomie's ideas on education were far ahead of his time. Indian society was not ready for them. He advocated an upper form house where the senior boys would be housed separately and not subject to normal school schedules and norms. This idea was shot down at the last stage, just before implementation. If I am not mistaken, the introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, too, was proposed by him. Sadly, the financial situation at Doon being positively unhealthy, the idea was dropped.

It would be fair to say that Mr Shomie Das made me a teacher – from appointing me as a regular teacher (after seven years at one rupee a month), to then appointing me Housemaster of Jaipur B.

A word of advice he gave when I took over the House: "Let the boys be, don't crowd them."

At a personal level, Shomie was a fighter. Almost 30 years ago, he had a kidney removed. I went to see him in Delhi where he was recovering. He talked as though nothing serious had happened and, sure enough, he was soon back at work. The only change I could notice was that he switched to red wine. I saw him drink it at Samay Mangalagiri's (99 T, 2008) wedding reception in Vizag a few years ago – he was still full of stories and we chatted for a long time. Age, obviously, was catching up and he now used a walking stick.

I have very fond memories of Shomie and Pheroza, and of a very hospitable and gracious Headmaster's House, where everyone was welcome!



Shomie (second from left) with friends at his son Rohit's wedding reception, including Surendra 'Charlie' Kandhari (122 T, 1951, SKK) (third from left), circa 1993 *Courtesy Rohit Das*

Sir, you were sorely missed when you retired from Doon, though I am sure that you are still keeping everyone engaged and active – wherever you are.

Om Shanti.

## For Shomie Das

### Where The Mind is Without Fear and the Head is Held High

Kanti Prasad Bajpai (KTB, HM) 264 T, 1972

I remember reading somewhere – perhaps in one of the *Chandbagh* volumes or a piece in *The Doon School Weekly* – that Arthur Foot was the great systematiser who could take an idea and make it work and that his deputy, John Martyn, later Headmaster himself, was the great creative spirit, full of novel ideas on



Shomie with his family at the Lawrence School, Sanawar, circa 1975 *Courtesy Rohit Das*

education. For me, after Martyn, it was Shomie Das who was the creative spirit among Doon HMs. The book published about Shomie just after his passing, written by Naga Tummala, has got it exactly right. Tummala titled it, *Shomie Das: The Man Who Saw Tomorrow*. I haven't read the book yet, but when I do I know I will avidly turn the pages on the most dedicated, restless school educationist I met.

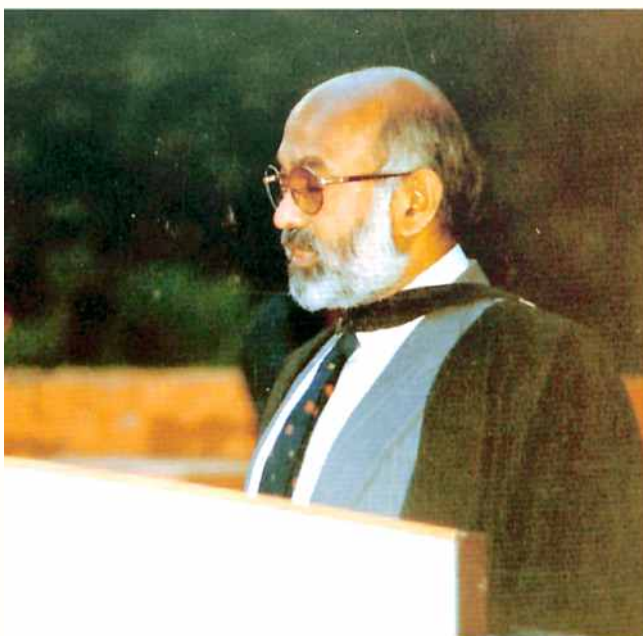
Speaking of which, I first met Shomie on a Doon School midterm expedition in 1981. Arun Kapur (AKP) and I led our tutorial groups on a joint trek in the Kasauli area and on the penultimate day ended up at the Lawrence School, Sanawar where Shomie was head. We were a dirty and bedraggled group, but he was a gracious host, gave us some wonderful whisky, and was nearly jumping out of his armchair with excitement about Sanawar. It was infectious, and though I left schoolmastering for academic life, I remember thinking that if I was ever to be a schoolteacher, it would have to be under someone like Shomie.

And it nearly happened. In 1993 or 1994, Shomie asked me to come back to Doon as an Assistant Master

and make a career at the School. I had a wonderful, bracing tea with him at the India International Centre (IIC) in Delhi, and he talked about his teaching career from Gordonstoun days to Doon days – stories and ideas on education tumbled out of him, shared partly, I think, to inspire me. For various reasons I chose to stay on at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) as a professor, but again, I went away slightly “buzzed” by Shomie.

IIC was the place of our next encounter, perhaps seven years later. I was walking out in search of a taxi, when I heard someone say “Kanti, have you ever thought about joining the IPSS?” I turned to see Shomie ambling along a few steps behind me. I had not seen him since 1993, and yet he spoke as if we had been in conversation all afternoon. He didn’t greet me in the usual way, he just went straight to what was on his mind which was to bring “younger” people into the IPSS (at 45, I was not that young). I realised that the school and education was so much on his mind, he had just dispensed with conventional chitter-chatter.

I did become a member of the Indian Public Schools’ Society (IPSS) – Shomie sponsored me – and three years later I returned to Doon as HM. By then, there were three former HMs in Dehradun. I had served under Gulab Ramchandani for a year as an Assistant Master. John Mason was my predecessor and a giant of school education. And there was Shomie. It was Shomie that I somewhat feared – he was profound and probing and he spoke his mind (though always courteously)! He would, now and then, just walk into the HMs office, and again, open a conversation as if he was picking up on something we had been talking about a few minutes earlier.



Shomie Das addressing the School in the Rose Bowl  
*Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

As HM, I often had to read back through the minutes of various kinds of meetings pertaining to the school – the Board of Governors meetings, the IPSS meetings, internal Doon School meetings – all the way back to 1935. And I marvelled at the role of our HMs and the quality of their minds. All these years later I cannot recount, and should not recount, what I read; but it has stayed in my mind that Shomie was an HM well ahead of his time. He was modest to a fault about his Doon headship, but for me he was a great experimenter and risk taker. Risk taking – as the movement for the creation of Uttarakhand gathered pace, Shomie led the boys and Masters of the School out onto the streets in solidarity with the people of the putative state. You may agree or disagree with his action, but I cannot think of a Doon HM who would have done that, other than Shomie.



SRD (seated, left) with Prince Charles (seated, second from left) at Gordonstoun

Would anyone but Shomie have thrown a duster at a future king? While I was HM, I was invited down to Delhi, to the British High Commission, for a small dinner with then Prince Charles. When we shook hands, I said I brought greetings from Shomie Das, his teacher at Gordonstoun. Charles’s eyes lit up and he said something like “I was an awful duffer at Physics. Once – or maybe more than once – after explaining something to me several times, he threw a duster at my head!” And of course, he sent fond regards to Shomie that I duly passed on. Shomie smiled at the Gordonstoun incident but didn’t dwell on it, and then went on to talk animatedly about his days as a Physics teacher.

I wish I had known Shomie better and longer, but at various points in my career he made a gentle difference which I cannot forget. Not just Doon, but our fellow boarding schools, Mayo College and Sanawar, and the many schools which he birthed or was a consultant for, owe him deep thanks for his energetic and ambitious guidance. Indian education will long miss him.

## A Mentor to Generations of Educationists

Sandeep Dutt 627 K, 1979



Shomie Das in front of the Main Building, The Doon School  
Courtesy Rohit Das

Let's take a moment to remember Shomie Ranjan Das and his profound impact – a life that touched the hearts of teachers and connected with countless children worldwide.

As an Indian educationist, he is perhaps one of the architects of independent India's education system. With a wealth of experience working with institutions,

boards, and schools, including serving as the Head of School of three of India's top schools, namely The Doon School, Mayo College, and the Lawrence School,

Sanawar, his contribution is unforgettable. He also taught at Gordonstoun School in Scotland and established the Oakridge International Schools as People Combine Educational Initiatives. Following his retirement from The Doon School, he became an educational consultant and contributed his vision to over 80 schools nationwide. I get tempted to add that for every year of his life, he built one school!

Shomie always emphasised the importance of learning and unlearning and how the schools he worked with have prepared students to excel in their pursuits. From a teacher to a headmaster and then a mentor to generations of learners and educators, his story is truly inspiring.

May we carry forward the light he ignited and strive to create a kinder and more compassionate world. It is ironic that *Shomie Das: The Man Who Saw Tomorrow* by Naga Tummala was published only ten days before his passing. The book beautifully honours his legacy and the joy he brought to others. Let's join together in offering our thoughts and prayers for Shomie and providing comfort to his family and loved ones.

## A Nurturer of Children's Curiosity

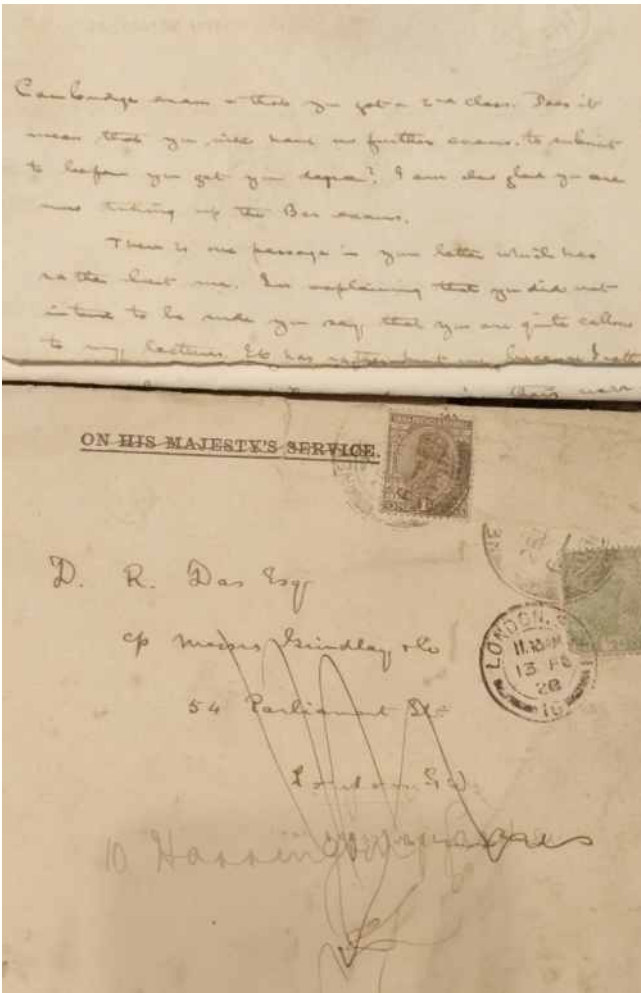
Bhaskar Vira 286 J, 1985



Shomie Das

My father-in-law, Shomie Das was an educationist who, following his formative experiences as a teacher at Gordonstoun boarding school in Moray, Scotland, set up schools in his home country of India.

Shomie spent 15 years teaching physics at Gordonstoun, where he was inspired by the founder Kurt Hahn's principles of a holistic, outdoor-based education. Among others, while there he taught the future King Charles III.



Letter from Satish Ranjan Das to Dhrubo Das, father of Shomie Das  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

Born in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Shomie was the son of Dhrubo Das, a lawyer, and Sujata (née Sen), who, unusually for a young Indian woman in the 1920s, had studied English at Edinburgh University. He was initially homeschooled by his mother before boarding at The Doon school (which was founded by his grandfather, SR Das), in Uttarakhand, before travelling to the UK to study natural sciences at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

Following graduation in 1958, Shomie joined Gordonstoun, eventually becoming head of physics. There, he was greatly influenced by the Nuffield Science Teaching Project, which led science teaching to focus more on experimentation and nurturing children's curiosity.

In 1961, he married Pheroza Choksey, and they had three children, Rohit (165 H, 1979), Nishad (950 H, 1982), and Shiraz. Shiraz later became my wife, and we settled in Cambridge.

Aged 34, Shomie returned to India with his family in 1969 to lead Mayo College in Ajmer. After six years, he



From L-R: Pheroza, Shiraz 'Sheshe' and Shomie at Shiraz's wedding  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

moved to the Lawrence School in Sanawar, in the hills of the Himalayas, where he was able to implement the ideas he honed at Gordonstoun for an outdoor-based, student-centred education. The girls at the school were also offered intellectual stimulation and freedoms that were rare in India in the 1970s and 80s. Pheroza was a real partner in his role as a school leader, and opened their family home to generations of students.

Shomie's teaching career culminated in leading his alma mater as Headmaster at The Doon school (1988-96). He was not one to hang around in retirement, however. He became an institution builder, advising a number of groups who were setting up educational establishments in the newly liberalised Indian economy of the 1990s. This third chapter of his life was defined by his work to establish the Oakridge group of international schools in Hyderabad, the fruition of a lifetime of educational experience and innovation.

Hyderabad became a home for Shomie, and he moved there at the age of 82. He continued to visit the UK regularly, to visit Shiraz and me, and for reunions at Emmanuel College.

Pheroza died in 2009. Shomie is survived by their three children and six grandchildren.

## The Importance of Being Shomie

Mahmood Farooqui 146 K, 1990



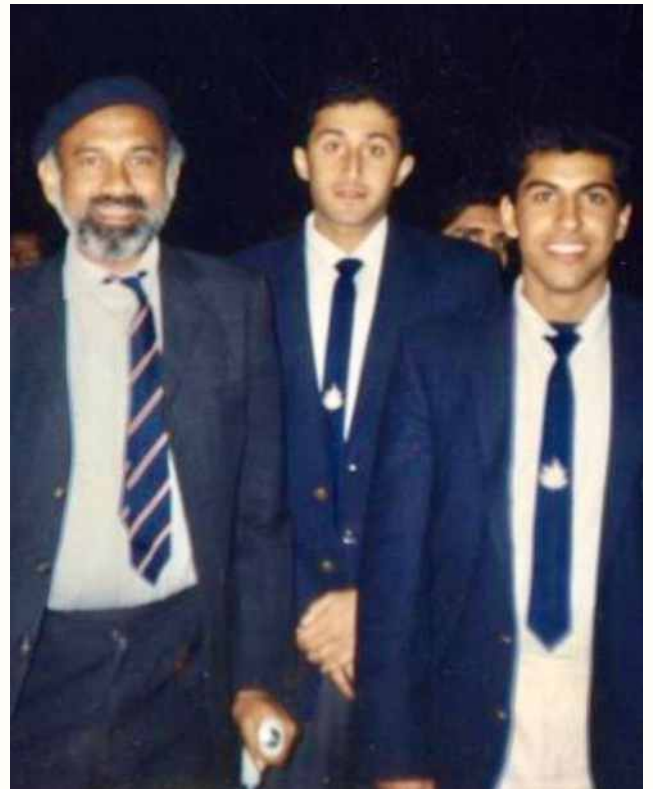
Shomie with his beloved dogs *Courtesy Rohit Das*

Some years ago I got his phone number and cold-called him. I wasn't sure it really was him so when somebody picked up, I said, "Is this Mr Shomie Das's number?" He shot straight without the slightest pause, "Hello Mr Farooqui, what can I do for you?" I was astounded. He had instantly recognised my voice, and had placed me, although we had not met for years, had not spoken much on the phone before that, and he was nearly 85 years old then. I said, "How did you recognise me?" And he said, "How could I forget your voice?" In the circumstances in which I had called him this meant the world to me.

My first memory of Shomie is at Skinner's, before he formally took over as Headmaster in the year 1988. He was in his shorts, with his stick, and was taking a stroll with his dogs. We knew that he was set to take over as the new Headmaster. Shomie's first impression on many of us was not striking. The general consensus was that Gulab Ramchandani, who was to retire, was dynamic, imperious, and had personality, the last of which was a big buzzword in my time at School. Personality could make up for lack of nous, or distinction, in the sports field or extracurriculars, the two prized arenas. Shomie strolled, where Gulab used to stride; Shomie was genial, where Gulab was authoritarian; Shomie was soft spoken where Gulab commanded or even, sometimes, bellowed; Shomie wore a slightly bemused air whereas Gulab appeared imperious. We were young then and used to making judgments which were facile.

Shomie's style, however, began to tell early on. One immediate difference was the look of the HM's office. The screens and partitions vanished, and along with them also disappeared the good Ms Minoo Dhand, whose name was imprinted on our juvenile hearts for many years. Instead, the office was now transparent and one could see the HM and see who he was meeting, and witness the goings on there, which was a big thing for us. His secretary, who happened to be his wife Mrs Pheroza Das, was consigned to the corner office on the first floor of the Main Building beside the cluster of classrooms where Hindi was then taught. I don't remember if a *chaprasi* sat outside his office or not. However, Shomie was visible and accessible.

I have written elsewhere about my experience of being the stage manager of *Oedipus Rex*, the first professional play I was ever involved in. My first direct encounter with Shomie followed this play. Flush with its success and with our performance at the Youth Quake festival in Delhi, and bursting with the righteousness of the marginal, I marched into his office one day. I demanded



Shomie Das with Doon School students

that we be allowed to go to Delhi to catch the groundbreaking play *Agra Bazar*. I had gone marshalling facts about how the English Debating people and English Dramatics people were allowed to travel freely, and the rich boys could make trips to Delhi for their bogus athletes' feet and more bogus dental check-ups, whereas we poor Hindi-wallahs were not even allowed to witness such a historic occasion. Before I could launch into my tirade, however, he simply said go, just speak to the Bursar and go, make a trip. By handling me with such ease he had veritably deflated me. The Bursar, Mr Manohar Lulla, arranged our tickets, we managed our accommodation, and four of us travelled to Delhi and watched the revival of one of India's longest running plays, still in performance in its 70th year. The experience of watching that play proved highly formative for me. Two decades later I translated the playwright Habib Tanvir's autobiography into English. Among those who travelled with me was Himanshu Tyagi (249 H, 1991) who worked closely with Habib Tanvir and later partnered with me in reviving Dastangoi.

Among the first things Shomie did after joining School was to prevail upon the Board to increase the school fees, which went up to Rs 12,000 Rs per annum from the Rs 8,000 it had been when I joined in D Form in 1984, if I remember correctly. This caused some disquiet. However, if we questioned him he answered rationally, as if we were adults. One afternoon, he explained to a bunch of us over lunch that he had to do it simply in order to increase the salaries paid to the Masters, which, at a cap of Rs 4,000 for the then Senior Master, Mr Sheel 'Bond' Vohra (SKV), was shamefully low. This at a time when teachers virtually stayed on in School for life. In my time alone I saw at least ten Masters with more than thirty, thirty-five, or forty years of service to the school, including Mr Hari Kunzru, Mr OP Malhotra (OPM), Mr Sheel Vohra, Mr HD Bhatt, Mr CK Dikshit (CKD), Mr AN 'AD' Dar (AND), and our own quixotic Chemistry teacher, Mr Mehrotra, who was rather fond of the word "pathetic."

Along with increasing the salary of teachers, Shomie also changed their functioning. He formed various councils and delegated authority to teachers who were, until then, more used to being commanded and being told what to do. Some of them were uncomfortable with their new independence. He also formed a committee of admissions thereby reducing his own power. He created the positions of Dean to deal with separate faculties and departments. He brought in full time career counsellors, for the first time, and encouraged female faculty. Masters and Housemasters came into greater power than they had before, which is exactly how a Public School has to be ideally run.

Shomie taught some Physics classes, and was more practical as a teacher than any I had seen in science till

then. He tried to show us objects, to let us conduct experiments, and to see and witness things rather than just being told about them. In our SC Form, Shomie and Pheroza had an accident and were bedridden for many weeks. I visited them so piously that I sometimes got on their nerves, I think, and Shomie candidly once told me to stay away for a few days, although Pheroza Ma'am was too polite to do so. We had many discussions then about School, about education, and about his past, and why he had chosen to return to India.

Shomie also gave me the only Yellow Card (YC). I ever had. In SC Form, I was the Midterm Party Leader and I let Varun 'Banana' Vij (111 J, 1990) go off to Delhi. The unfoolable Mr Vaishnava, who was a wizard with numbers and a brilliant, but maverick, maths teacher, was tallying our accounts. He used to do the very complicated classroom schedule for the entire School, for all Forms and all Masters, purely on paper, without any computers. He caught us and put us up for the YC. I was quite nervous about facing Shomie and losing my reputation. When I went up, however, he only asked me, "How many YCs do you have?" I said, "None." He said, "Oh, I had two, you should keep one, too!" That was it, no histrionics, no showing me down, no talk of standards or character, just a very casual exchange. His lack of histrionics, and his sense of perspective sometimes fooled people into imagining him to be casual, whereas, he really was being cool. Even then, many others, such as our Hindi teacher Mr MC Joshi (MCJ), a discontented man otherwise, and Mr Piyush Malviya (PMV), aka Phil Collins, who had just joined as a rookie history teacher, saw him for the visionary he was. Incidentally, PMV is the "Last of Mohicans," who is still on the payroll as a Dean, a term and position introduced to School by Shomie.



Shomie at dinner *Courtesy Sunamika Brar*

## LEGACIES

After the ISC exam I stayed on in School for a month to direct a play and he allowed me lodging and boarding, which was again an unusual allowance. Shomie instilled confidence, and gave me the strength to believe in myself as an actor-director. Without that boost I would probably have not made it to St Stephen's College, and would probably never have done the plays I did there which set me on my life course.



Shomie and the family on holiday in the UK Courtesy Rohit Das

Eventually, I decided to return to School to teach. I wrote to Shomie and he immediately offered me a position. Within a few days of my arrival, Shomie called me to his office and asked me to avoid smoking in front of the boys. I could smoke in his presence though, in his house, which I now frequented more often than I had done as a school boy. I also now enjoyed more than before the elegant company of Pheroza Ma'am. Simply by treating me as an equal, she gave this callow provincial youth a dose of respect which mattered a lot to someone who was, after all, a Government Scholar. Bhaskar Vira and his daughter Shiraz had started going out with each other by then. His sons Rohit and Nishad occasionally visited, as did his sister, Mrs Shanti Verma, who was the Headmistress at Welham Girls' School then. I used to look upon this highly anglicised family with the air of Pip from *Great Expectations*. I know how much it would have amused Shomie, me longing to belong and to impress, but also knowing how far away it all was.

By then, Shomie had also started an outreach program in an attempt to diversify the School's catchment area. He introduced school entrance examinations in centres across India, in Bangalore, Calcutta, the Northeast, and the deep South, to ensure a more diverse intake. He showed me a startling statistic: nearly 300 boys in that year came from within a radius of 200 kilometers around Dehradun! So much for our vaunted status as a school for all India.



Reconnecting after so many years

When, after so many years, we reconnected, he was his old hearty self. I went to Hyderabad and met him for breakfast. He told me the story of how two Andhra entrepreneurs had sought him out from retirement and persuaded him to move across the country. He was impressed by their sincerity and commitment and set up the first Oakridge International School which, predictably, became an immense success. Unsurprisingly, all the 70-plus schools he set up after retirement have been successful.

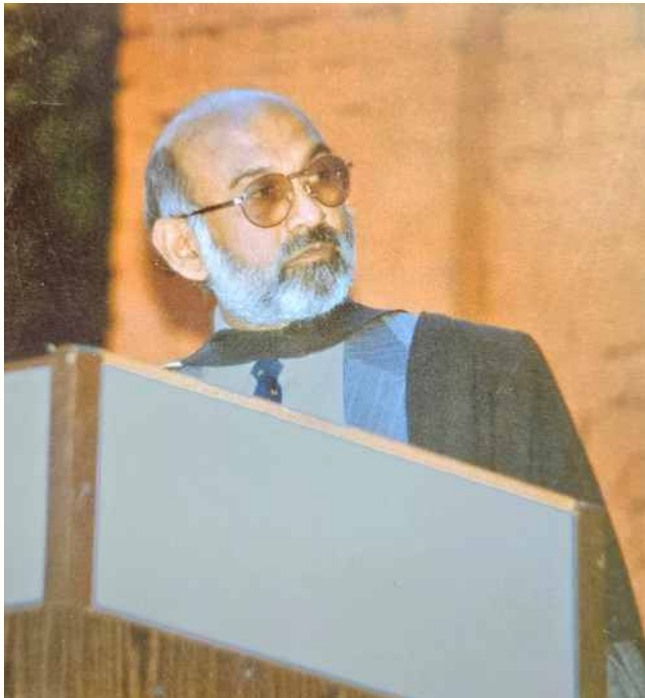
I feel terribly grateful for that meeting now. Had we not met I would have felt incomplete all my life.



Courtesy Anant Gairola (479 J, 1993)

## Selfless and Warmhearted

### AN 'AD' Dar (AND)



Shomie Das in the Rose Bowl *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

As I got up this morning, I read a message on my mobile from Shomie's daughter, Shiraz 'Sheshe' Das, about his passing away.

Shomie was my Headmaster in Doon at a critical juncture in my professional life. I could not have asked for any better HM than Shomie then. He has gone to rejoin his wife Pheroza in heaven next to our almighty where they both truly belong.

Shomie was then the Headmaster at the Lawrence School, Sanawar when I had bicycled to Sanawar from Doon with my HA Tutorial together with my daughter, Aradhana. All had gone well but short of Sanawar, Sheel Vohra (SKV) and I got separated from the party before Kasauli. I called up Shomie who told me not to worry as he knew that the party must be at Chaudhary Ka Dhaba. He drove up immediately and picked up Aradhana and put her up with him. That is Brand Das for me: selfless and warmhearted.

Before long, Shomie, as rightly, succeeded Gulab Ramchandani to become my HM at Doon. At the very first meeting of Housemasters with him to decide the School Colours, I proposed Satwinder Singh Minhas (72 J, 1989) but SKV, the Deputy HM then, objected.



Shomie with the family in Dehradun, circa 2003

*Courtesy Rohit Das*

Satwinder had saved a calf that was floating down the canal in Rajpur. I had proposed his name for saving the life of a calf. Shomie agreed. No wonder, I believed in Shomie for his simplicity and honesty.

I took over Hyderabad A (HA) from RD Singh (RD) to find Rohit, Shomie's elder son under my care and before long Nishad, his other son, also under my care. Within a short time after Nishad's entry into HA, boys were leaving for home for their vacation. Without bidding me a "Goodbye," Nishad proceeded to his mother after bidding the HM a goodbye. Pheroza came to me with Nishad to bid me a goodbye. My answer was simple: that Nishad need not take any permission from me, his Housemaster, as he had not come to me and was free to go. Pheroza offered a genuine apology and said that she would not take Nishad without his apology. This honesty and courtesy is the real brand of the Das clan that founded The Doon School, and still shines with all its trust and respect and courtesy.

One night, while on my round of the House, I found some wrappers outside my Prefect's room and some senior boys munching on pizzas. I discovered that they were homemade and I showed my disapproval to Nishad for this home food. However, after that occurrence, more than once Pheroza sent me my share of pizza. Look at the human touch!

I am 84 and Shomie was 89 as I noticed from the message from Sheshe. My wife and I cannot ever forget the kindness of both Shomie and Pheroza to us. When my mother passed away it was at night and in the morning Shomie offered us his vehicle to drive up the body to Haridwar for cremation. He even cancelled the

two pre-lunch periods so that the teachers might accompany the body in the bus. Pheroza sat through with the body and the family for much of the night. I wonder how many principals of schools and their wives would be so considerate and so very human?



Dr Manmohan Singh and Shomie Das enjoying themselves at Founder's Day 1995 *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

The time had come for Shomie to invite a teacher to lead the Round Square work in Doon. He called a meeting of UC Pande (UCP) and MC Joshi together with me and asked all three, by turn, if we would like to be in-charge of Round Square. Pande and Joshi declined. I said, "Yes, but I must go to England for the Conference." Shomie immediately accepted my request and asked

me to get two boys to accompany me for the same. I did go to the Conference and, in return, arranged a Round Square Conference in Doon that happened to be the first one outside the UK. Yes, thanks to Shomie, I learnt much from both conferences that helped me beyond being a school teacher to being a school leader.

That was Shomie. He did not teach but let you learn from your experience and respected and trusted your views.

While Leading Mayo, he got to know my father-in-law who was then Mayo's Medical Adviser. No wonder, Shomie invited my father-in-law to dinner at the HM's residence when he was on a short visit to me at Doon. These courtesies were in their blood. When I had just joined Doon, I was asked to escort Calcutta Party but did not know where to stay. Interestingly, MR Das offered to take care of me and put me up with him.

After I had left Doon, my son Gaurav Dar (575 H, 1988) completed his master's degree in physics from IIT Mumbai and wondered if he could join Doon. We went to Shomie and chatted with him. He advised Gaurav to complete his PhD. Gaurav went on to do just that, receiving his doctorate from IIT Kanpur, and is now a Professor of Physics in BITS Pilani, Goa Campus.

Thank you very much Pheroza and Shomie for being our mentors. May God give you both peace with Him where you truly belong.

## Shomie Ranjan Das – As I Knew Him

Dr S Ganguli (SLG)



The Headmaster of India's Trinity

As tributes pour in for the eminent educationist Shomie Ranjan Das, I wonder, "Do legends ever truly die?" In

fact, they leave behind a legacy that continues to influence the lives of those who had the privilege of crossing their path. Born on August 28th, 1935, Shomie was one such legend who has left his footprints on the sand of time. I remember him as an embodiment of the old-school ethos that has become increasingly rare in today's educational landscape.

Rightly called the 'Headmaster of India's Trinity,' for his leadership roles at Mayo College, the Lawrence School, Sanawar, and then, The Doon School, Shomie carried forward the vision of his grandfather, Satish Ranjan Das. His grandfather, driven by a passion for education, wanted Indian students to get exposure to a Western

style of education within India, a vision realised through the founding of The Doon School.

After completing his schooling in 1951, Shomie Das pursued further education at St Xavier’s College in Calcutta, followed by a degree in Physics from the University of Cambridge. In the 1960s, he taught at the prestigious Gordonstoun School, where he took great pride in having taught physics to none other than King Charles, then the Prince of Wales.

Shomie, whose tenure at The Doon School was from 1988 to 1996, joined as the successor of a larger-than-life-figure, Gulab Ramchandani, a stalwart in the field of education. Shomie, with his liberal outlook and openness to new ideas, made his own mark on the institution, while respectfully sauntering through the giant shadow of his predecessor.

More than just a headmaster, he was an innovator and a passionate educator, especially in the field of physics. Though his administrative duties limited his time in the classroom, he left a lasting impact by encouraging the establishment of a Physics Museum at The Doon School – an unconventional and out of the box initiative.

One of Shomie’s notable contributions was diversifying the faculty at The Doon School, an all-boys boarding school that had traditionally only employed male teachers. Drawing on his experience from Sanawar, a coeducational institution, he introduced the practice of hiring female teachers, a move that continued thereafter.

It was a remarkable coincidence that both Shomie and I hailed from the same place – Bikrampur in Dhaka. Despite spending significant time in Europe, he remained a true Bengali at heart, deeply attached to his roots. He relished Bengali cuisine and often gathered with his *Bong* circle, indulging in lively *adda*.



Shomie greeting guests at Founder’s Day 1994  
*Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

Our bond, both professional and personal, grew strong over time. In fact, when I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical to teach History at Aiglon College,

Switzerland, or pursue a Rotary scholarship in the USA, he was, perhaps, so fond of me that he could not bear the thought of parting with me, and never approved my leave! Instead, he entrusted me with bigger responsibilities. He put me in charge of the School Garden and Estate, a role previously held by Mrs Ramchandani. I continued in this position until my tenure ended. He also tasked me with organising the Founder’s Day exhibitions, a multifaceted experience that honed my administrative skills and proved invaluable in my future endeavours.

I will never forget how he stood by me like a pillar of strength when I lost my wife, Somita, in 1992. His emotional support during that difficult time was beyond words. Seeing my seven-year-old daughter, Shreya, struggling after her mother’s passing, Shomie went out of his way to request Shanti Verma, the principal of Welham Girls’ School, to admit her, even though Shreya was 18 months shy of the admission age. Verma, moved by his earnest appeal, immediately granted the request. Later, with Shomie’s blessing, I started a school in my wife’s memory. That school, Seven Oaks School, has since grown steadily, and both Shomie and his successor, John Mason, proudly remarked that “Schools like Seven Oaks are the need of the hour for a town like Dehradun.”

It was during his tenure that Shomie successfully implemented the pension scheme initially planned by Gulab Ramchandani, ensuring it ran smoothly and hassle-free.

It is often said that behind every successful man, there is a great woman. His wife, Pheroza, who predeceased him, was no exception. She was a tremendous source of inspiration, playing a pivotal role in both his personal and professional life. Pheroza managed the Headmaster’s Office with grace and professionalism, maintaining her individuality and dignity throughout. Despite her proximity to the Headmaster’s seat of



From L-R: SKV, Gulab, SLG, John Mason, and SRD

power, she strictly adhered to school rules, even going so far as to request my permission to take her nephew, Rishad Choksey (81 H, 1995), on an outing.

An excellent homemaker, Pheroza skilfully balanced her professional responsibilities with raising their children – Rohit, Nishad, and Sheshe – ensuring they received the best upbringing.

To pay my heartfelt tribute, I would like to say that the world of education lost a towering figure on Monday, September 9th, 2024. He was truly “The Last of the Mohicans.” With his passing away, an era has come to an end.

May his soul rest in peace.

## Spreading the Spirit of Seeking

Janajit Ray (JJR)



JJR and SRD

Seeking and the Seeker are spiritually and philosophically potent concepts – as old as humanity itself – fundamental to education of any kind, anywhere. Seeking is the quest for deeper understanding, knowledge, wisdom, or truth, and its processes are likely to cause not only personal and intellectual development but also fundamental shifts in understanding and even one's own existence. It involves growing the capacities to empathise with and ask profound questions about life, purpose, ethics, and reality as well as to engage with and explore experiences, inner reflections, texts, teachings, and all possible sources of knowledge to get to what one hungers to know. The journey of seeking must be undertaken by someone – the Seeker – humble enough to recognise one's own limitations and the vastness of what there is to learn but has the genuine desire to understand the world, the self, and the nature of existence. The Seeker should also possess the guts, drive, and determination to delve into different perspectives and question established beliefs even in the face of challenges or uncertainties.

Humanity brings into being prophetic personalities,



Pheroza and Shomie with their grandson Robin, circa 2003  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

shaped by both history and personal agency, who enable society to grasp the nature of the crises it faces and create the milieu for the correct solutions to be found. Shomie Ranjan Das (SRD), who passed away on September 9th, 2024 in Hyderabad, was one such ingenious educationist who contributed substantially towards both reinventing and establishing a large number of good K-12 schools that aspired to transform their students into Seekers and spread the spirit of Seeking far and wide. SRD considered the very process of seeking answers – whether in the spheres of science, philosophy, spirituality, or anything else – not just transformative and enriching in itself but a quintessential component of the binding spirit that unifies the infinite elements in every human being. So, the School Assembly was always a very precious ritual for him because, in spite of being an avowed atheist, it revisits and reiterates on a daily basis, the spiritual character of the school in sync with his unwavering conviction in humanism and its continuity. In an article entitled ‘Revamping of the Tutorial System: Suggestions for the Role of the Tutor,’ he wrote for the inaugural issue (October, 1994) of *The Academic Journal of The*

*Doon School* – a unique publication SRD conceptualised and, with the help of a group of very able colleagues, I had the fortune of giving shape to – he identified “stimulating the growth of spiritual and moral values consistent with...the Constitution of India” as a foremost Object in the mission of The Doon School.

One of the all-time greats of school education, Shomie Ranjan was born in Calcutta on August 28th, 1935, just before The Doon School began operating. SRD belonged to a renowned Bengali Brahmo family that had been profoundly stimulated by the Bengal Renaissance and produced several outstanding jurists, educationists, and freedom fighters. Dhruvo Ranjan, his father, a foremost barrister of Calcutta, was the younger son of the famous Satish Ranjan Das – the Advocate General of Bengal, a member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council of Lord Irwin and the Founder of The Doon School – and his mother, Sujata, was one of the most well educated and accomplished ladies of her time. SRD was born some years after Satish Ranjan’s passing but throughout his infancy and childhood, the Das family residence was agog with activity and discussions about Independence and establishing India’s first “public” school, thanks to his paternal grandmother Bonolota Devi’s pledge to fulfill her late husband’s dream project of The Doon School with the active involvement of the high-profile celebrities of that period.

**THE DOON SCHOOL**

**FORM OF APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION**

Name of boy SHOMIE RANJAN DAS

Date of birth year 1935 month AUGUST day 28th.

Name of father or guardian DHRUBA RANJAN DAS

Occupation of father Barrister - at - Law.

Full permanent address of parent or guardian 10, Old Post Office Street,  
Calcutta.

Mother tongue of boy Bengali

Religion Hindu (Brahmo Samaj)

Names of Schools previously attended None up to { Certificate should be  
and class in which the boy is now studying date. attached.

Names and addresses of 2 referees:—

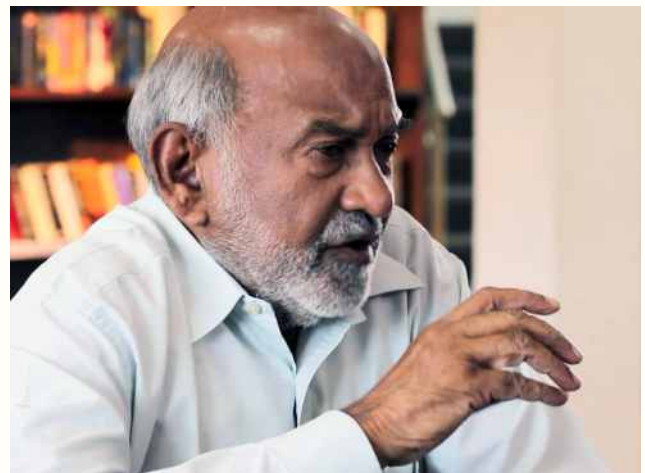
1. One of an official of standing E. Gupta Esq., I.C.S., 4, Lee Road, Calcutta.
2. One who will vouch for the present educational attainments of the boy. See attached N O T E.

I have read the prospectus of the Doon School and wish that my son/ward shall be brought up in accordance with the arrangements outlined therein. I can undertake payment of the fees in advance, in accordance with the requirements laid down in the prospectus.

Dated 6th, May, 1944. Signed ( D. R. DAS. )

Shomie Das registration form for The Doon School, May 6th, 1944; he was in School from 1946-1951 *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

Many treasures of SRD’s educational philosophy, the schooling paradigms and the processes for establishing “centres of excellence in holistic school education” he created and propagated, came from his being an ideal life-long learner – or Seeker – open to ideas from various sources. SRD started from the premise that a good school education delivered by a competent team of learning facilitators with a visionary educational leader at its helm, would empower its young learners with numerous positive traits: the capacity to be in love with life, to comprehend and empathise with its diverse aspects, to think about and question things, to select relevant as also credible data, to innovatively transform that information with self-directed learning as well as other competencies into one’s own knowledge and, finally, to imaginatively process such knowledge further into creative wisdom for agile as well as apt application to solve real-life problems. Each of the 70-odd schools he served professionally had their very own character due solely to his dazzling talents for recognising the special characteristics of his schools, the processes they needed for improvement and how to institutionalise the same in sync with the concerned school’s individuality. Even more valuable was SRD’s total concentration on the needs, interests, and learning styles of students of different eras, individually and collectively, as well as his brilliance in influencing many of them to commit themselves to serving their country in whatever way they could.



Shomie explaining his education concepts

In an interview published in *The Academic Journal of The Doon School* (Summer, 1996) SRD told me – “I always wanted to be a schoolteacher...because I had such a lot of fun as a boy in The Doon School where the learning process was very wide-spread. Not only did we learn so many things outside the classroom, which included learning about nature, learning to play Bridge, learning to climb mountains and appreciate the beauty of the Himalayas, learning about religions, learning Indian songs and musical instruments.” It is easy to identify the origins of his commitment to and inherent

empathy for schoolteaching, for setting up a fun world where children could be seekers of true knowledge by questioning things, for nature, for creative pursuits and much more. He further said – “I...remember helping...when I was only about seven or eight years old, people who were starving...food kitchens being run in our house and having – what in those days looked like hundreds of people but probably 50 to 100 people – eat there daily. I also remember seeing people scavenging in the garbage cans with dogs to get food those days...” These shocking images remained with him forever so vividly that he implemented the idea of “the aristocracy of service” in all his schools by compulsorily involving students in community work projects and serving communities devastated by natural calamities.

Every admirer of SRD would surely recall his fun-loving, creative personality, with a great if, at times wicked, sense of humour and the ability to laugh at himself. He wrote a short piece, again for *The Academic Journal of The Doon School* (Summer, 1995), which he titled 'Examinations Can Be Fun' and with extremely apt and innovative instances convinced nearly all his readers that – “Examinations could be fun if the teacher decides to make it so” – although I cannot specify how many staff members actually read it! Then, at a school where he was the consultant and I the head, the rather autocratic promoter made an unnecessary ruckus about my penchant for presenting tables pertaining to school projections being presented in the landscape mode and

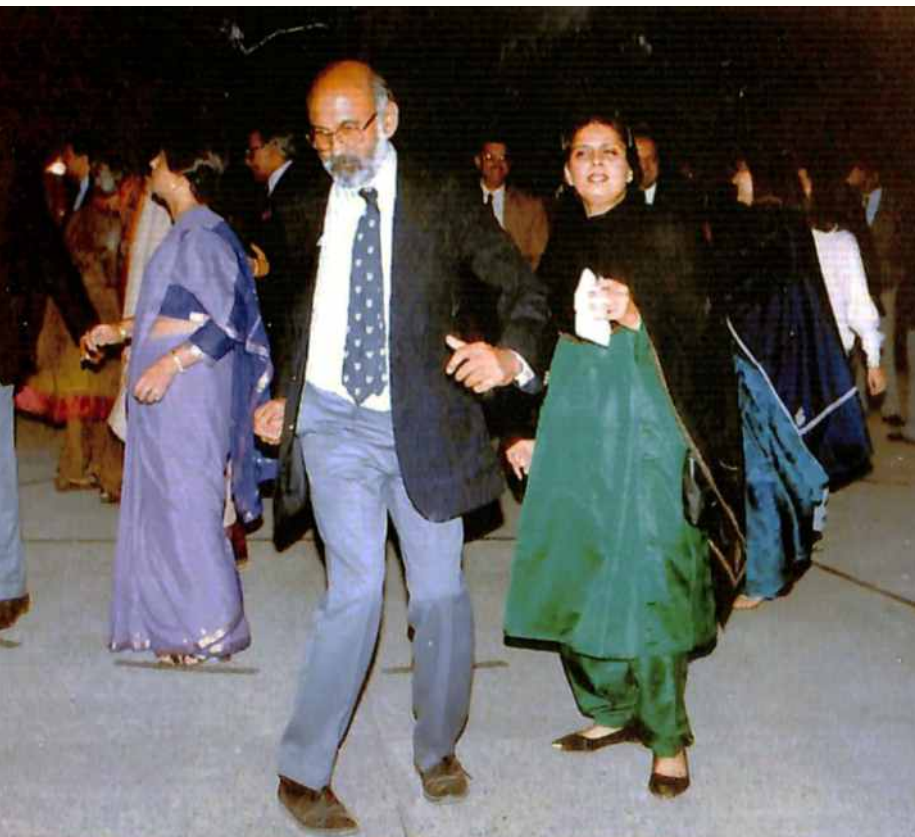
asked SRD in Hindi if I considered the gentleman to be a fool. SRD quipped, “There may be some truth in that,” – which sailed over the person’s head – and nonchalantly instructed me to present my school-related tables vertically.

Dinners hosted by the staff association entirely for staff and adults are a regular fun activity in residential schools. At such a staff dinner, many of my colleagues would remember, a certain lady member of the school community was conspicuously “(over)dressed to kill” which awakened the charming imp within SRD and he enchanted her so deftly with his refined, as well as subtle, manners that she revealed to him where he could buy such an attire to present to his wife, Pheroza! Then, I remember him guffawing and telling us very sportingly how a group of Sanawarians on the First of April (April Fools’ Day) once fooled him into biting into a bar of Cadbury’s chocolate which was actually made of clay.

A first cousin of mine who taught physics at the Lawrence School, Sanawar for many years as a colleague of SRD related to me the fascinating story of how the Grand Man of Physics got students interested in astronomy and together with them built a telescope good enough to start stargazing in that school. Again, in another school, where SRD was the consultant and I the head, he looked at a not-so-good-looking tree almost in the middle of a small play area obstructing its use and in an instant suggested that I get a tree-house placed there. This tree-house became the centre of the kids’ play zone.

SRD’s death cannot end the long association my wife and I have enjoyed with his family and him. Both of us being strong advocates of universal humanism, we shared the concepts of not only continuity but also rituals as central to the humanist value system. He actually told me so in the context of several spiritual functions he wanted me to organise for causes as well as in memory of people close to his heart. The love for Rabindranath Tagore’s songs and poems – especially those that were in the nature of a prayer – was another thing SRD and I shared. As I sadly bid farewell to my mentor in the sphere of school education, I quote from another Rabindra Sangeet sung often in the Brahmo Samaj:

“The end is not the end, who will say it is?  
Even if the song ends, the resonance lingers on.  
In the depths of silence, the music whispers  
In the rhythm of life, the melody continues.  
If you say it's over, the heart cannot accept  
For the dream carries on, in every breath we take.”



Shomie cutting the rug at a social gathering *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

## Remarkable and Progressive

Arjun Chakraverti 27 BT, 1974  
Mayo College



Shomie and distinguished guests, including John Mason (HM), enjoying a School function *Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

It was February 1973 and the whole school was agog with anticipation, and some trepidation as well, before the Annual Prizegiving Celebrations. Our Chief Guest for that year was the then President of India, Mr VV Giri. Mr Giri was well known to be a left-of-centre political thinker and had made a major political name for himself as an important Trade Union leader in years past. Our trepidation stemmed from the knowledge that a few years earlier, a decidedly more “Right-Wing” Congress politician, Shri Morarji Desai, had been invited as Chief Guest to The Doon School at Dehradun and had, in his address, derided not just the school in question but all residential Public Schools as elitist vestiges of the British Raj that had no place in independent India. Our concern was heightened by the knowledge that our own Mayo College, with its background as a school for princes was, perhaps, even more deserving of that kind of epithet.

As it turned out, we had no cause for worry. To our surprise and delight, President Giri, in his speech, waxed eloquent about what an egalitarian school we were. By way of elaboration, he said that where else in India would you find students serving other students at lunch as well as clearing the used plates. As I recall, he was served lunch on the BT House tables and one of his “servers” was my dorm mate Baldish Gill who came from a wealthy Indian family from East Africa.

Having joined Mayo in 1967 and graduated in April 1975 (we are counted as the 1974 batch), I got to see three principals: Mr JTM Gibson; Shomie Das; and Mr

SSN Ganju. I was at school for every day that Shomie Das was.

The legendary JTM Gibson had done extraordinary things to convert Mayo from a “Princes’ School” to a “Public School.” Although Mayo officially became a Public School in 1948 and Mr Gibson only joined in 1953, the intervening five years had seen little change in student profile, most of the students still coming from princely or associated feudal families. Mr Gibson tapped into his vast database of former Doon School students (he taught at The Doon School from 1935 till the early years of World War II), military officers with whom he served during WWII as well as those he taught as the first principal of the Joint Services Wing (JSW), the precursor to the National Defence Academy (NDA), and other government officials whom he had known over the years. I qualified under two such heads, my father having been taught by him at The Doon School and then having served under him in the Royal Indian Navy during WWII. When Gibson retired at the end of 1968, he left behind what was arguably India’s best boarding school, with a set of students who were in the years to come to achieve great things in life. But for all that, he had maintained the (somewhat feudal) status quo and we as students were pampered with bearers and attendants (called *Farashes*) still taking care of many of our needs. We travelled home and back to school by first class in our trains and the number of different kinds of uniforms we needed boggled the mind.



Shomie greeting guests during Founder's Day 1994  
*Courtesy The Doon School Archives*

This was the school that Shomie inherited when he joined as principal in January 1969. Shomie came to Mayo from Gordonstoun, where he had taught (and

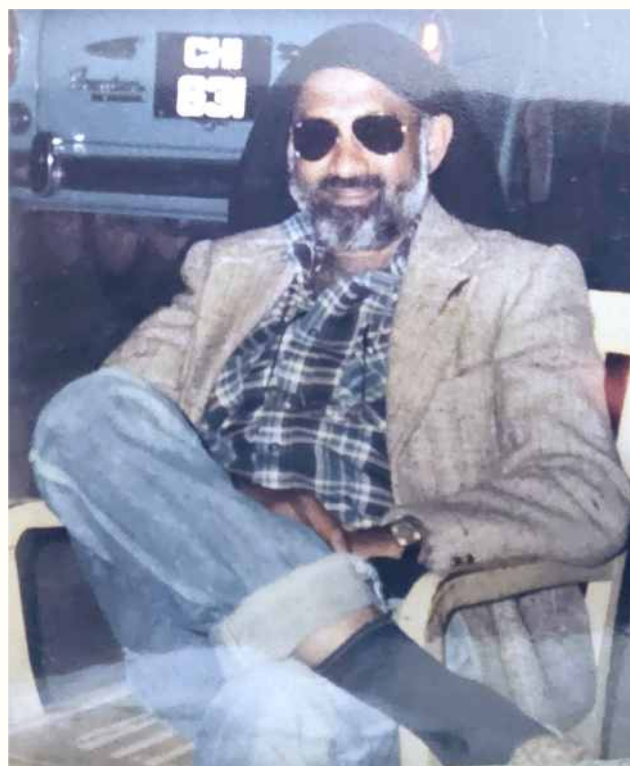
personally tutored) Prince Charles. He had, however, treated Prince Charles just like any other student at Gordonstoun, which was a non-denominational (one of the first such in Britain) and egalitarian (by ethos) Public School. There were no *Farashes* or equivalent, no first class travel, and not even hot water baths (which our *Farashes* toiled to arrange for us each morning).

He was only thirty-three years old at the time and brimming with ideas, the first of which was to make us a little less “privileged” and the second of which was to make our education a little broader. Instead of our playing games six days a week, as we had in Gibson’s time, he set aside one day of the week for Projects and another for Social Service. Predictably, we didn’t like the changes and grumbled quite a bit about them. He then reduced the number of uniforms that we required, which was broadly welcomed. Next, our travel was reduced from First Class train to “Cattle Class,” which we cribbed about. It must be remembered that “Cattle Class” in those days was called Third Class and did not have cushioned seats as today. Instead, we slept on hard wooden planks. Of course, we carried our ubiquitous ‘holdalls’ to ameliorate our plight, somewhat. Our *Farashes* were instructed to do less and less work for us. And then, in perhaps 1971, the blow fell! We were now to commence serving, in shifts, in our respective messes and, worse, to clear all the dirty plates as well! Now this was truly awful! But Shomie being Shomie, we had to grit our teeth and do it. Suddenly, I observed a change. Before we had to clear plates, it was customary for people to leave lots of leftovers on their plates. Now that we had to clean them ourselves, the dirt and inconsideration suddenly struck us. All of us became a lot cleaner and in several unrelated ways, more considerate to one another.

Today, when I look at the filth all around us in India, I’m tempted to believe that if someone like Shomie got all of us to clean our surroundings and clear all our own garbage, India would be a much cleaner place. It is because we expect someone else to clean what we leave that we leave our surroundings so dirty.

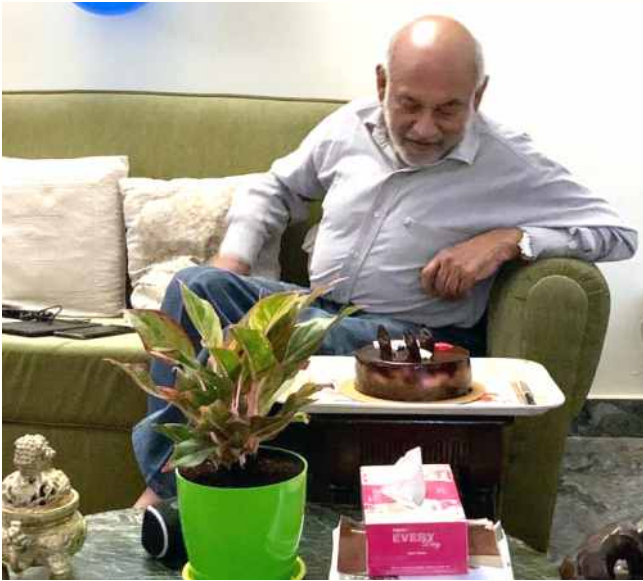
But Shomie was far more than a person who made us egalitarian and self-sufficient. He modernised our teaching systems and equipment. I personally witnessed the change from the antiquated equipment in our physics laboratories to the fancy new equipment from Nuffield College, Oxford, that helped us so much in our lab work. The young new teachers he brought in who taught us that nothing was “good enough!” We had to be the best! And that, however good we were in multiple things, there was always room to do better.

A remarkable and very progressive step that Shomie Das took was to democratise the school by giving teeth to the College Conclave. The College Conclave had been



Shomie enjoying some downtime *Courtesy Sunamika Brar*

around for several years, indeed since the time of Gibson, but not much was actually transacted. In 1969, Shomie Das invited a group of parliamentarians from Delhi, led by the veteran Lok Sabha member from Khunti, Mr Jaipal Singh, with a view to conducting a mock parliament at school. Our discussions with Mr Jaipal Singh gave us what turned out to be my first encounter with the basic processes of parliamentary democracy. Perhaps deriving from this, Shomie Das decided to create a Conclave using several of these processes, including the writing of a Constitution. The writing of the Constitution was completed in 1972 (as I recall, apart from Shomie, Vir Sanghvi of the batch of 1972 played a major role) and the first Conclave to be elected under the new Constitution took office in 1973. This Constitution had many unprecedented features, one of which was that the Chairman would, by definition, be a student. In addition, pretty much anything could be discussed, debated and put to vote in the Conclave as long as it was directly connected to student life at Mayo. Students constituted a majority of the members in the Conclave, although there were representatives from the teaching and administrative staff as well as “old boys” (former students of the school). The first Chairman was Aamir Raza Hussain (1973), I was the second (1974), and the third was Maroof Raza (1975). It was, at least in part, through this experience that we all learnt how to work in teams and elected organisations. Given the grounding that we received in helping manage the school, I consider it no surprise that the Batch of 1974 is so deeply involved, even today, in the running of Mayo College.



Shomie enjoying a birthday celebration *Courtesy Sunamika Brar*

I would be remiss if I were to leave unsaid the remarkable impact Mrs Das had upon us as well. Mr Gibson was a bachelor and in his time there was nothing feminine about Mayo. It was a boys' school, run for boys by boys! It was hard, it was tough and, at times, it could also get rough. We got to see no women at all and we had learnt to do without them. With Mrs Das (Pheroza to those who knew her well), each boy at school got a home away from home. We all recall

barging in to eat whatever tasty titbits there were in the huge (twelve bedroomed) Principal's mansion, much to the disapproval of major domo, Morris Napolius. In addition, she was an actress par excellence and taught us so much in terms of being able to get the best out of ourselves in any histrionic pretensions we may have had at the time. I still remember her playing Eliza Doolittle in a performance of *Pygmalion*, done in 1972 and how her uninhibited rendition of the part, in its cockney and upper-class versions, was to become for us a model in how to get into character. With Shomie Das, we learnt to become better citizens. With Pheroza, we learnt to become better, gentler people.

Shomie Das left Mayo to take the reins at the Lawrence School, Sanawar, in the second half of 1974. That year also happened to be the first (courtesy the Conclave) that boys in their final year were permitted to go on mid-term (Dussehra) holidays alone and unescorted by teachers. Some friends joined me in (among other things), going up to Sanawar to meet Shomie Das. We got to meet him as well as several of the boys (and girls!) who were in their final year there. We could see that he had already made a major impact there and were happy for Sanawar. In the subsequent years, he was to convert Sanawar into what was, arguably, the best boarding school in India. But we came away knowing that whatever he did for any other school, we would always be his first!

## A Man of Many Facets

Sunamika Brar H, 1995  
The Lawrence School, Sanawar



Shomie and Pheroza at the Lawrence School, Sanwar, circa 1980  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

Here are my words of appreciation for an extremely special Headmaster some of which I shared with him in 2020. He replied, "Your lovely description makes me feel like a mountain. Thank you."

My interaction with Mr and Mrs Das began before my sister Ritika joined Sanawar in 1985. Thereafter they were Uncle Shomie and Auntie P for me – my mother, Dr Amita Brar, was appointed the School Psychologist so I accompanied her every month for her counselling sessions and stayed at Heady's house. Immediately, we formed a rapport that stayed till I last connected with him on his 89th birthday on August 28th, 2024, mere days before his passing. He impressed my young mind. He was so easy to talk to, knowledgeable, jovial, patient, affectionate, and easygoing.



From L-R: Pheroza, Shomie, and Dr Amita Brar  
 Courtesy Sunamika Brar

He gave wings to my mother's career that started in Sanawar and then went on to many institutions. He was delighted to learn that me, an Old Boy's daughter, was joining Sanawar. He immediately looked up the Dosco directory – he had been in the same house as my father, Dipinder Singh Brar (91 H, 1967), Hyderabad!

Mr Das was a great educationist with a very broad futuristic vision. He was strict and very fair with a great sense of humour. His other great qualities I'm sure will be shared by many. However, I want to emphasise that a lot of the credit for his success as Headmaster goes to Mrs Das, who was an extraordinary person. Together they made a great team.

The Headmaster's home could have been an intimidating place but it was an open house and it never stopped students from flocking there when feeling homesick or hungry. Mrs Das also used to give free homeopathic medicines to the students who needed it. Her warmth and care was always abundant. The Das' were such warm and welcoming hosts. Lala, the cook taught by Mrs Das, turned out fabulous meals: shepherd's pie, mutton chops, *akuri*, *khao suey*, to name a few.

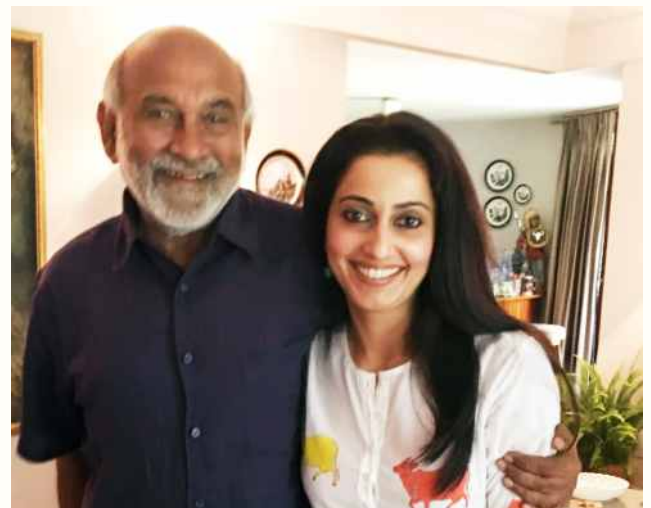
As an HM he was strict but he was humane, non-judgmental, and very humble. He was a man of clear thinking; he worked till the end despite his health. He was very observant with an amazing memory. He never forgot how my sister once devoured an entire chicken during the holidays!



Shomie and Pheroza with some of their beloved Labradors  
 Courtesy Rohit Das

They were diehard dog lovers. I will never forget their four Labradors – Fudgy, Linus, Shana, and Phum Phum. Unfortunately, they left for The Doon School in 1988, the year I joined Sanawar.

We have such fond memories of time spent with them in Sanawar, Chandigarh, Dehradun, and Clement Town. Uncle Shomie spent a few days at our farm in Punjab making it a very memorable Christmas.



Shomie and Sunamika  
 Courtesy Sunamika Brar

Our warm association continues till date with the family. Unfortunately, we lost Mrs Das in January 2009. They were both very special people. My heart goes out to Sheshe Didi, Brother Ro, and Nishi.

I would like to end by saying that I feel blessed and honoured to have known him, Mrs Das, and their wonderful family.

# Teaching and Education Were in His Genes

Rudrangshu Mukherjee

Ashoka University, Chancellor and Professor of History

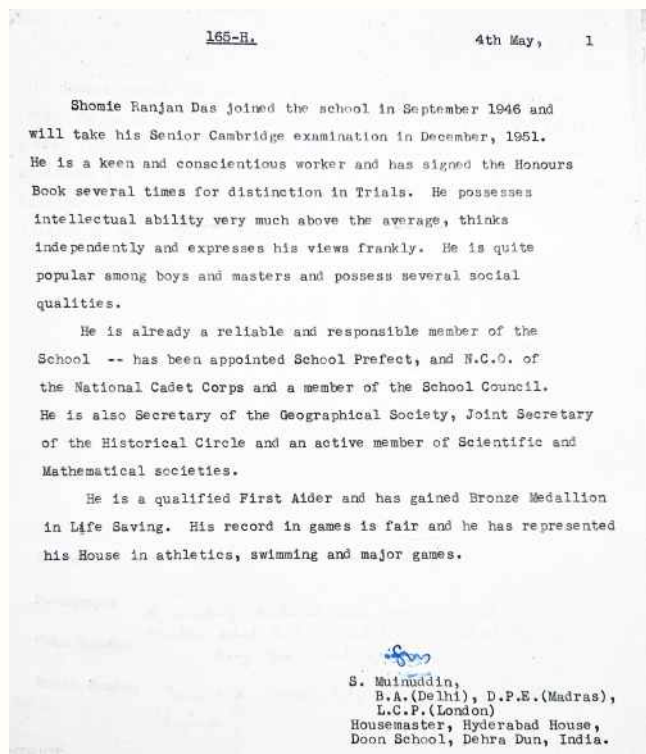


Shomie Das, circa 1970  
Courtesy Rohit Das

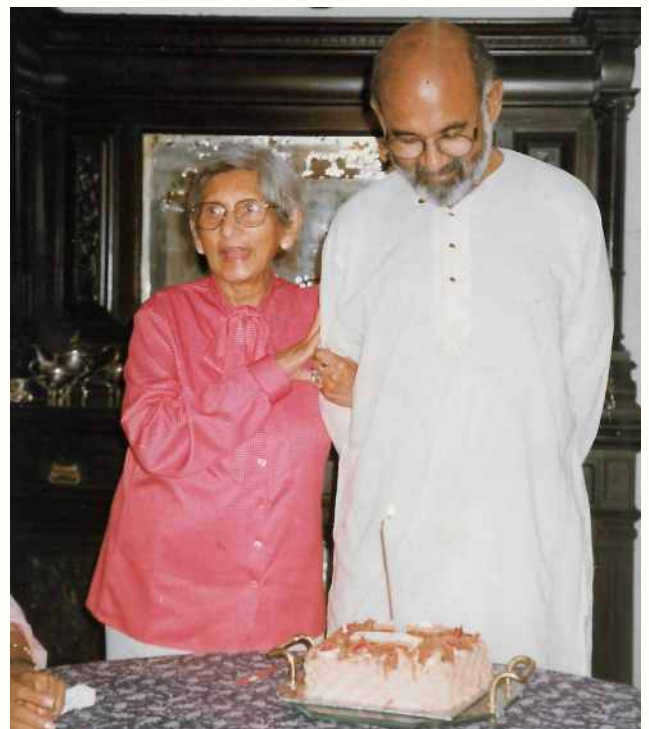
I should begin with two disclosures. First, my wife is Shomie's niece. My mother-in-law was Shomie's eldest sibling. Second, I did not go to any of the schools of which Shomie was the head. What I write about him is coloured by my personal relationship with him: we went back a long way and we got on very well and on my side there was genuine

respect for him. This respect was based not merely by the fact that in terms of family ties and age he was my senior; it was based also on my deep appreciation of his work in the field of education. This is where the second disclosure is important. I had no direct exposure to Shomie's work as a teacher, an educationist and an institution builder. But I heard from friends who had been his students or colleagues, and I observed.

Shomie had teaching and education in his genes. His grandfather, SR Das, founded two educational institutions: The Doon School and the Lady Irwin School in Delhi. What is less known is that SR Das's two sisters – thus, Shomie's great aunts – were also notable educationists in Calcutta. SR's eldest sister, Sarala (married to PK Ray, the first Indian principal of Presidency College, Calcutta) established Gokhale Memorial Girls' School; and his youngest sister, Abala (married to Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the eminent scientist) set up Brahma Girls School and helped in the making of Bethune School and College. What is even less known – because this isn't in the public domain – is that Shomie's mother was a very imaginative and innovative teacher within the household. Shomie and his two sisters remembered very fondly and admiringly how, when the family had moved from Calcutta to Ranchi during the Second World War, their mother used to organise regular lessons and used her imagination to sustain the interest and attention of the children who were more eager to go out and play. Joining the genetic dots it is clear from where Shomie inherited his abilities as a teacher and an educationist. The inheritance continues because Shomie's second son Nishad and his niece Dayita Datta are both very successful teachers.



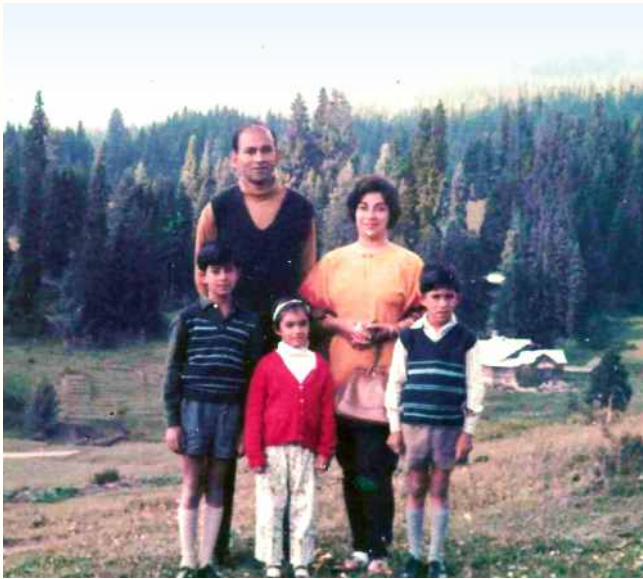
Shomie Das House Report from his time in The Doon School  
Courtesy The Doon School Archives



Shomie and his mother Sujata Courtesy Rohit Das

The previous paragraph should also alert readers that Shomie and his siblings were born into privilege: the family was part of the westernised Brahmo elite of Calcutta. It was also a family that was closely connected with the reformist momentum unleashed by what is referred to as the Bengal Renaissance. Shomie recalled to me how, when he was a small boy, he and his eldest sister had been presented by Sarala Ray to Rabindranath Tagore as well as to Jagadish Chandra Bose.

Shomie's father studied at the Bootham School in York, England, and then went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Shomie followed him there, after The Doon School and St Xavier's College, Calcutta. At St Xavier's and at Emmanuel, Shomie studied physics. He then *chose* to be a school teacher. I have deliberately italicised the word "chose" because, in the 1960s it was rare for someone from Shomie's family background to become a school teacher. When I first met Shomie, way back in 1974, it was this career choice of his that struck me as not only unusual but also made me respect him. I began to see him as an individual who thought differently.

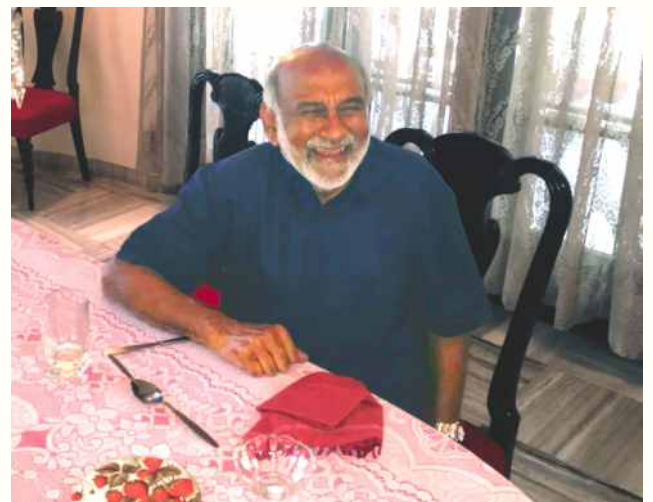


Shomie and family on holiday in Kashmir, circa 1972  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

Recommended by his tutor in Cambridge, Shomie began his career as a teacher at Gordonstoun, a school founded by Kurt Hahn. It could not have been easy for a young Indian, newly married, to be an assistant housemaster of a school in a remote part of Scotland. This was in the 1960s, when Britain wasn't as multicultural as it is today. From Gordonstoun, Shomie came as Headmaster of Mayo in 1969. At Mayo, Shomie's attitude to education and more generally towards society was somewhat out of tune with the "princely culture" of the school. He left Mayo to be the

head of the Lawrence School, Sanawar. Shomie transformed the school. He once told me that he thought his years in Sanawar were his best. I was a bit surprised at this because I thought he would say Doon which, in terms of family loyalties, was his natural habitat. But he confessed quite candidly that by the time he became the Headmaster of Doon, he was running short of energy. I felt that perhaps the heavy hand of tradition at Doon restricted him.

Shomie had the unique distinction of being at the helm of India's three top private boarding schools. The price of building these institutions was the loss of an outstanding teacher. As the Headmaster, he didn't get as much time to teach as he wanted to. But from all that I have heard, he was exceptional as a teacher because he had the rare gift of explaining complex scientific ideas from first principles. Moreover, he didn't believe that learning took place only in classrooms. He took students on treks to bring them closer to nature and to learn from nature. He set up a telescope to introduce students to the sky and to astronomy. In spite of the fact that he had spent a lifetime in boarding schools (and two of them all-male ones), Shomie was acutely aware of their limitations. I happened to be present when Vikram Seth (250 J, 1968) delivered his rather controversial address on Founder's Day at The Doon School to an audience jam packed in the Rose Bowl. Shomie was then Headmaster. He was one of the few Old Boys who was deeply appreciative of what Vikram had said. He told me as an aside from the usual merrymaking that what had been said by Vikram needed to be said. That was certainly not the general view among the alumni present.



An impish sense of humour *Courtesy Sunamika Brar*

I enjoyed being in his company. He had an impish sense of humour, he could laugh at himself, and was never pompous. He was a *bon vivant* with an ineffable charm. It will be well-nigh impossible, I think, to conjure up another Shomie Das.

# A Great Privilege: On Being Shomie's Son

Rohit Das 165 H, 1979

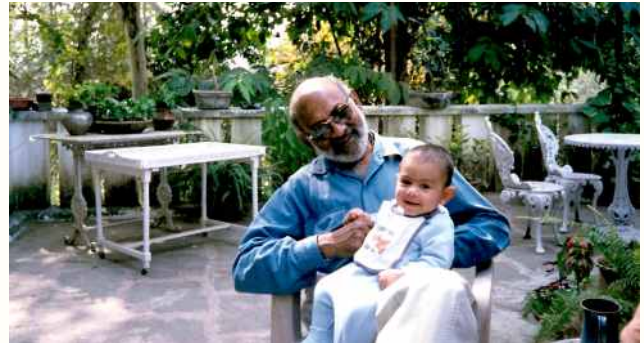


Shomie birdwatching with son Rohit and grandson Robin at Asan Barrage, Dakpathar, Uttarakhand, circa 2007  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

A lot has been written about Shomie Das's professional career. But what was it like to be his son? Were there any pearls of wisdom or bits of memorable advice imparted from father to son? I'm afraid not. He was always too busy for that. But there were other fun and interesting events in our lives. My earliest memory of interaction with my father was the bicycle rides to Duffus village, just outside the school gates of Gordonstoun, where on a Sunday we would ride down together, I on my little bicycle and my father with Nishad perched in the front on his. We would buy a brick of ice cream, some Coca-Cola, or some such luxury and ride home again. That was great fun until he decided to ride ahead and leave me behind, on the way home. I arrived back in tears at having been abandoned, but from that day on was able to ride independently and visit my friends! Shomie instilled in us a love for the outdoors at a young age, and I recall weekend camping trips where we would spend the night out in a tent and sleeping bags in the Scottish countryside by the river. Later when we returned to India, he never had the time for such activities.

The life of a school headmaster in a big public school is a busy one and time for one's family is limited. I recall several projects that we worked on as father and son being interrupted due to school visitors arriving to see him at all hours of the day. So, in the end, I gave up asking him for help.

My father never stopped us from making a little trip of our own into the outdoors, so I remember in Ajmer, as an 8-year-old youngster, I disappeared one afternoon on my own and



Shomie with his grandson Robin in Dehradun, circa 2003  
*Courtesy Rohit Das*

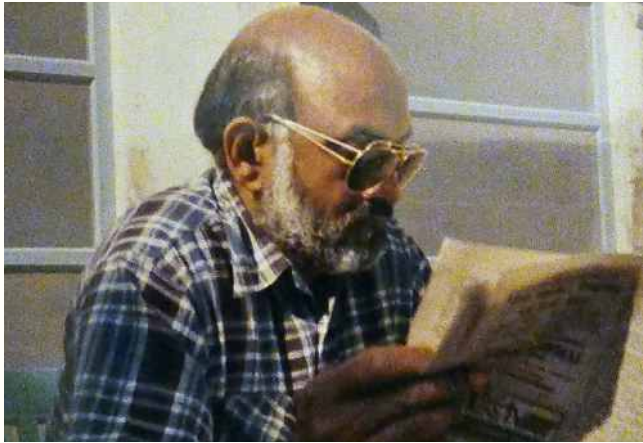
scrambled up Madar Hill behind our house at Mayo. Although my mother was furious at having left the house without informing her, my father never said a word and was secretly quite proud of my achievement. Later on from the Sanawar campus, we staff kids would wander off overnight, trekking in the local hills and valleys.

Growing up in the various school campuses with their wide open spaces, made for a great childhood, especially in the holidays when the whole campus became a playground. We had a blast.

Another interesting aspect of being the headmaster's son was the many distinguished personalities that visited the school on official visits. From VV Giri the President, to Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, dancer Sonal Mansingh, Shakuntala Devi the maths wizard, RK Laxman the cartoonist, high commissioners, musicians and actors, and many others whom I don't remember now but were equally distinguished. I got to sit in drawing room conversations and listen to these personalities. Contribution to the conversation was sparse from my end in case I made a fool of myself but that, in itself, was a great educational experience.

Personal advice was not very forthcoming. Most of it was gleaned from the various senior Prefect and staff meetings held at home where a bit of eavesdropping proved beneficial! In these meetings, he would talk about value systems and about being a good and useful citizen among other issues.

During my parents' tenure at the various schools, the headmaster's house was always the school guesthouse as well, so there was never a time when we didn't have house guests. I remember my mother, besides engaging in various school extracurricular activities, was very busy arranging meals for guests. Evening dinner was



An avid newspaper reader *Courtesy Sunamika Brar*

always an interesting affair. Otherwise, my father was an avid newspaper reader and would spend most of his free time behind them and one hardly ever saw his face. So when people came over, and that was almost daily, conversation was a useful source of information.

Winter evenings at Sanawar meant walking our four labradors so we would set out on a 6km walk with them. This is something he never missed and the walk was a daily fixture of his.



From L-R: Pheroza, Shomie, younger brother Ranjan, and mother Sujata *Courtesy Rohit Das*

Shomie was a very keen hobbyist and his favourite was radio astronomy. This is a project he had started while at Gordonstoun and he had continued it up at Sanawar. His observations were solar and we would spend many hours in the hot sun adjusting his homemade parabolic antenna, made from chicken mesh and aluminum frame to obtain the best readings. This entailed standing rather still holding the antenna and the strong ultraviolet in the hill sunshine would burn and the heat make us feel like passing out! I backed out from this assistance pretty soon, so generally some poor hapless student who had come visiting for something entirely different would be engaged in this task for a while.

Besides the radio astronomy and its squiggly graphs, he had a little workshop where he did many electronics projects with the boys. So he would do the odd one with me as well. He also helped foster my love for HAM radio which I had picked

up through my Physics Master at The Doon School. In this study of his, he also had a fantastic collection of science and math textbooks and magazines which, before the advent of the internet, was a very useful reference source for me as a student. All these books were donated to the Oakridge School Newton Campus Library and I do hope the children there explore and enjoy these books as much as I did.

He was very strict with us regarding school routine and we were told off if we were found hanging around at home when, in his opinion, we should be engaged in some other school activity. Otherwise, he never paid much attention to my academics other than to scold me at the end of the term for a dismal performance and then bundle me off to one Master or the other for extra work during the holidays.



Shomie and Rohit enjoying the winter sun at Doon *Courtesy Rohit Das*

By the time he went to The Doon School, I had long finished and would only come for occasional visits. Somehow, that was a time of unpleasant conflict between father and son but it smoothed out in a while to an amicable relationship. We would go out in the evening and he would take me to meet somebody interesting for a drink. Life went on.

Looking back, it was, of course, a great privilege to be Shomie's son. We got to go to three of India's great schools thanks to him and we had a pretty grand life as his children. We had some lovely travels courtesy of various parents who would invite us over during the school holidays.

Last, but certainly not least, we also got to enjoy all the love and affection that was showered on Shomie and my mother Pheroza by his old students, parents, and school staff. I think that has been the greatest privilege of all and we continue to enjoy it. Thank you all.



Shomie and family enjoying love and affection after his retirement *Courtesy Rohit Das*

# *In Memoriam*



With deep regret and profound grief, we inform you of the passing of **Lt Col (Retd) Anand Kanwar 'Nandi' Khanna (99 H, 1942)**, father of Arun Khanna (90 H, 1973) and Varun Khanna (417 H, 1974), on January 6th. Arun joined School in February 1936, a mere few months after it had opened its doors. He got into the Cricket Team as a first term in F Form – which is probably a record. He was also School Captain and School Cricket Captain for two years as he returned to School to do his Intermediate. Arun played Cricket for the Services in the Ranji Trophy, scoring a century on debut and a double century the next year. Our heartfelt condolences to Arun, Varun, and all members of the family.



With regret, we inform you of the passing of **Ranjan Roy (199 T, 1949)**, father of Sanjoy Roy (25 T, 1983), on November 15th, 2024. Our heartfelt condolences to Sanjoy and all members of the family.



With grief, we inform you of the passing of **Bharat 'Habi' Dev-Verma of Tripura (113 H, 1957)**, on November 19th, 2024. He is survived by his wife Moon Moon Sen and daughters Riya and Raima. Our deepest condolences to all members of the family and his loved ones.



**Indresh Narain (288 K, 1961)** passed on January 17th. Our heartfelt condolences to all members of the family, friends, and loved ones.



With deep regret, we inform you of the passing of **Dr Subhash Garg (380 H, 1964)** on November 1st, 2024. Our deepest condolences to all members of the family and loved ones.



**Sudhir Prakash (283 K, 1965)** passed on December 18th, 2024. Our heartfelt condolences to all of his loved ones, friends, and family.



It is with profound grief that we inform you of the passing of **Dr Jigish A Ruparelia (118 J, 2008)** on September 17th, 2024. Our heartfelt condolences to all members of his family, friends, and loved ones.



With profound regret, we inform you of the passing of **Prof Latika Katt (260 H, 1965)**, sister of Sudhir Sharma (249 H, 1959) on January 25th, 2025. Latika was an award-winning sculptor who created the famed bust of founder Mr Satish Ranjan Das that still stands outside the Main Building today. Our heartfelt condolences to Sudhir, all members of the family, and the art community for their loss.



With deep regret and profound grief, we inform you of the passing of **Bawa Harkirat Singh (419 H, 1993)**, brother of Bawa Mohit Singh (172 H, 1997), on December 8th, 2024. Our deepest and heartfelt condolences to Mohit and all members of the family and his loved ones.

## Notice under Rule 7 of The DSOBS Rules

### Inviting Applications from Prospective Members for the Executive Committee of The Doon School Old Boys' Society

1st January 2025

Dear Members,

This year, **EIGHT vacancies** will arise in **The DSOBS Executive Committee** which are to be filled at the Annual General Meeting, expected to be held tentatively on Saturday, 18th October 2025.

Detail of vacancies:

Sl. No.	Age Band	Vacancy
1.	Above 60 yrs.	ONE (1)
2.	50-60 yrs.	THREE (3)
3.	40-50 yrs.	TWO (2)
4.	30-40 yrs.	TWO (2)

Please note: 40-50 years means, the applicant must have completed 40 years on the date of the forthcoming AGM or earlier and not completed 50 years on the date of the forthcoming AGM, tentatively 18th October 2025.

As per Rules 7.2 (a) & (b) of the Society, the process of election/selection of Executive Committee Member(s) is to be initiated by the President by or before 31st January of the year in which the vacancy(ies) is/are to arise and Notice of such vacancy(ies) is to be posted on the Society's website, sent out by e-mail or other means of communication and also published in the appropriate issue of *The Rose Bowl*. Hence this Notice.

The current procedure as per rule 7.2(c) postulates that **all those individuals from amongst The DSOBS who wish to offer their candidature for becoming a member of the Executive Committee shall confidentially send their applications to the President of The DSOBS through any member of The DSOBS as a Proposer and two other members of The DSOBS as Seconders. The Proposer and the Seconders must be from the same age band (but not the same batch) as the candidate. The five age bands are: below 30 years, 30-40 years, 40-50 years, 50-60 years, and above 60 years.** No other recommendation in favour of a prospective candidate, apart from the one sent by/through the Proposer and Seconders referred to above, shall be either considered or given any weightage. The Proposer or Seconders

cannot nominate or recommend the name of any other candidate that year.

**Rule 7.2(d)** - The Proposer and Seconders, along with their recommendations, should also briefly state as to why the candidate they are recommending should be a member of the Executive Committee.

**Rule 7.2(e)** - The applications should be accompanied by the following:

- (i) *A brief Curriculum Vitae*, also stating their School Number, House and Batch.
- (ii) The candidate's contributions to The Doon School and The Doon School Old Boys' Society in the past.
- (iii) The candidate's strengths and the areas in which he expects to contribute to The Doon School Old Boys' Society in particular, and to the society at large, in general.

Age eligibility for nomination will be the age of the nominee as on the date of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, which is expected to be held tentatively on Saturday, 18th October, 2025.

The term of an Executive Committee Member is two years with the option to extend it by another two years, totalling four years, should he like to continue.

**Rule 7.2(f)** - All applications in conformity with the above and the provisions of Rules 7.2(c) - (e) **shall be submitted by or before 5 pm on 30th June 2025.**

Once all applications are received, I shall constitute a Committee to examine the applications and deliberate thereupon with the objective of arriving at a consensus and recommend the name(s) of one or more candidates, as vacancies permit, for the Executive Committee to place before the House for approval at the Annual General Meeting. In this process, the Executive Committee, the Committee constituted by me, and I shall

follow the procedure postulated by Rules 7.2(g) - (m).

I accordingly invite applications from The DSOBS fraternity for Membership to the Executive Committee in the age groups of:

The detail of the vacancies are:

Sl. No.	Age Band	Vacancy
1.	Above 60 yrs.	ONE (1)
2.	50-60 yrs.	THREE (3)
3.	40-50 yrs.	TWO (2)
4.	30-40 yrs.	TWO (2)

Such applications can be delivered (receipt to be obtained) or mailed to:

The President

The Doon School Old Boys' Society

A1/41 Panchsheel Enclave  
New Delhi 110 017

Kindly super-scribe "**Application for Executive Committee**" on the envelope.

Alternately, you may send the nominations via e-mail, together with all attachments directly to the President (me) at **president@dsobs.net**

Yours sincerely,

S Junaid Altaf

(209 O, 2003)

President - The Doon School Old Boys' Society

(2024-2026)

## Intimation of Process for Selecting Candidates to Represent the House in the Selection Committee for Election/Selection of Members to the Executive Committee [as per Rules 7.2 (g)-(m) & 7.3

1st January 2025

Dear Members,

I have, by a separate Notice issued today, invited applications for membership to the Executive Committee of The Doon School Old Boys' Society, in the following age groups, in respect of which vacancies will arise from and after the next Annual General Meeting of the Society, expected to be held on Saturday, 19th October 2024.

Detail of vacancies:

Sl. No.	Age Band	Vacancy
1.	Above 60 yrs.	ONE (1)
2.	50-60 yrs.	THREE (3)
3.	40-50 yrs.	TWO (2)
4.	30-40 yrs.	TWO (2)

The existing Rules and procedures to conduct the process of election/selection are given below.

Rule 7.2(g) - On receiving all applications by 30th June, of the concerned year, the President shall constitute a Selection Committee to examine the applications and deliberate thereupon with the objective of arriving at a

consensus and recommend the name(s) of one or more candidates, as vacancies permit, for the Executive Committee to place before the House for approval at the Annual General Meeting. During this process of election, the Selection Committee may also request the candidate(s) to meet with the Selection Committee informally to enable it to understand his/their vision and suitability for the post.

Rule 7.2(h) - The President shall constitute the Selection Committee by 15th August of the year in which the vacancy or vacancies arise.

Rule 7.2(i) - The Selection Committee shall comprise of the President and Vice President of The DSOBS and two members of the Executive Committee as decided by the Executive Committee. The serving President will also request the Collegium to nominate two members to the Selection Committee. Apart from these six members of the Selection Committee, six other members will be chosen from the five age bands referred to in Rule 7.2(c). One (1) volunteer will be chosen from the age band of below 30 years, one (1) from the age band of 30 to 40

years, two (2) from the age band of 40 to 50 years, one (1) from the age band of 50 to 60 years and one (1) from the age band of above 60 years. Since the total number of the Selection Committee is an even number i.e., twelve (12), in case of a tie in voting, the Vice President of The DSOBS shall have the deciding vote.

Rule 7.2 (j) - The six volunteers to serve on the Selection Committee, from the previously mentioned five age bands of The DSOBS members, shall be selected as follows.

- (i) The DSOBS database shall be utilised for the purpose of selecting such volunteers with each member being tagged with their batch year, and date, month, and year of birth. This database will be kept updated at the The DSOBS Secretariat.
- (ii) This database shall be exported into Excel, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software, and used to create the afore said five age bands based on the date month and year of birth of a member.
- (iii) The President and/or the Vice President of The DSOBS will use the Excel RANDBETWEEN, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software, to randomly select 100 potential volunteers for every one volunteer required to serve on the Selection Committee. For instance, since one volunteer is required from the age band of below 30 years, the names of 100 potential volunteers from this age band shall be selected at random using the Excel RANDBETWEEN function, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software. On the other hand, since two volunteers are required for the age band of 40-50 years, 200 potential volunteers from this age band, shall be selected at random using the RANDBETWEEN function, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software.
- (iv) Once 100 potential volunteers from the age band of up to 30 years, 100 potential volunteers from the age band of 30-40 years, 200 potential volunteers from the age band of 40-50 years, 100 potential volunteers from the age band of 50-60 years, and 100 potential volunteers from the age band of above 60 years have been selected at random, the Secretariat shall write to each of the said potential volunteers enquiring as to whether they would be willing to serve on the Selection Committee and form a final list of the first 15

to accept via email.

- (v) Once all potential volunteers are in place, then one volunteer will be selected using the RANDBETWEEN function, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software, in an age group where one volunteer is required and two volunteers shall be selected using the RANDBETWEEN function, or similar, equivalent, appropriate, or better software, where two volunteers are required to constitute the six members of the Selection Committee.
- (vi) However, both rounds of the said selection process as postulated by Rules 7.2(j) (iv) and (v) shall be conducted within one month of each other with the first round being held on or before 11th July and the second round by or before 11th August in the presence of the Executive Committee Members and other members of The DSOBS who wish to attend the selection process. For this purpose, a notice will go out to all members, one week in advance, intimating the times dates and venues when the first and second rounds of selection will take place.
- (k) Any member who is a relative, whether by blood or marriage, to a potential Executive Committee candidate, shall automatically stand disqualified from being a member of the Selection Committee. Similarly, any person who has been a Proposer or a Secunder of any candidate shall also stand disqualified from being a member of the Selection Committee. Any person, apart from the President and Vice President of The DSOBS, who has earlier been a member of the Selection Committee shall also stand disqualified from being a member of the Selection Committee for four years. Additionally, the said six Selection Committee members shall be ineligible to apply for membership to the Executive Committee or for the chair of Vice-President for the next two years.

I eagerly look forward to your interest and active participation, should your name be shortlisted for becoming a part of the Selection Committee to select members to the Executive Committee.

Yours sincerely,

S Junaid Altaf  
(209 O, 2003)  
President - The Doon School Old Boys' Society  
(2024-2026)

## Timetable for Complying with the Process of Election/Selection of Members to the Executive Committee as per Rule 7 of The DSOBS Rules

S.No.	Description	Deadline	Rule
1.	Process for election of Executive Committee Members to be initiated by issuing Notice of vacancy, to be posted on the Society's website, sent by email or other means of communication, and published in <i>The Rose Bowl</i>	31st January	7.2(a)-(b)
2.	Applications from prospective candidates to be part of the Executive Committee, in conformity with Rule 7.2(c)-(e)	5.00 pm on 30th June	7.2(f)
3.	Notice inviting members to witness first round of selection of volunteers representing the House	4th July	7.2(j)(vi)
4.	First round of selection of volunteers representing the House	11th July	7.2(j)(vi)
5.	Notice inviting members to witness final round of selection of volunteers representing the House	4th August	7.2(j)(vi)
6.	Final round of selection of volunteers representing the House	11th August	7.2(j)(vi)
7.	Constitution of Selection Committee	15th August	7.2(h)
8.	Selection Committee to recommend name(s) for post(s) of Executive Committee Member(s) to the Executive Committee	15th September	7.2(p)
9.	Meeting of Executive Committee to be convened to consider recommendation of Selection Committee	29th September (but in no event later than 5th October)	7.2(q)

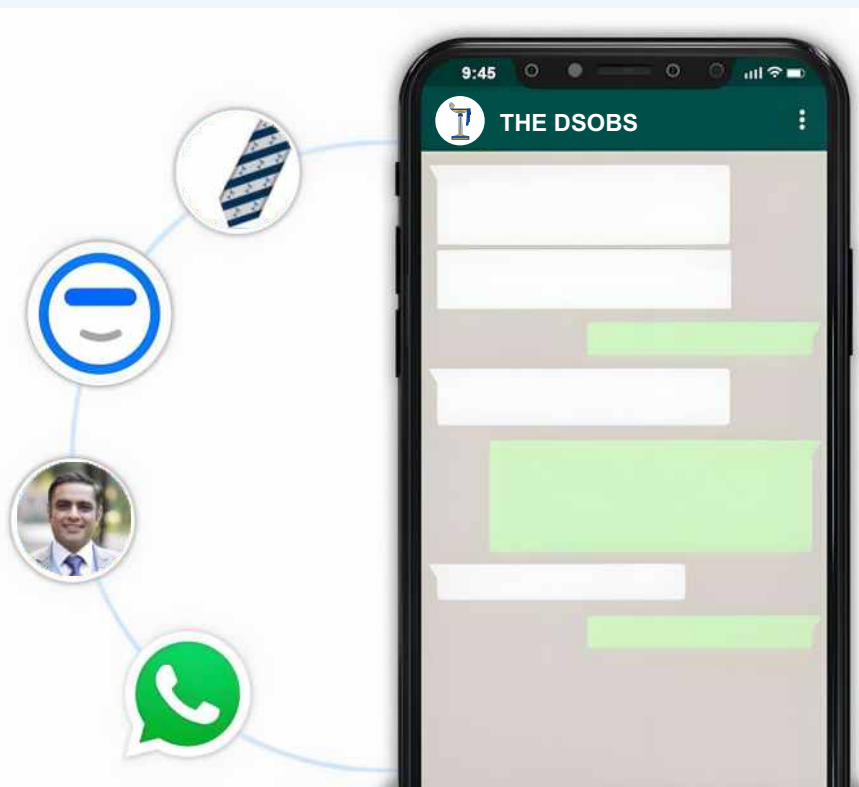


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