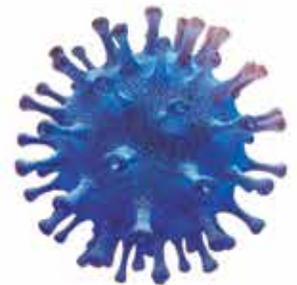
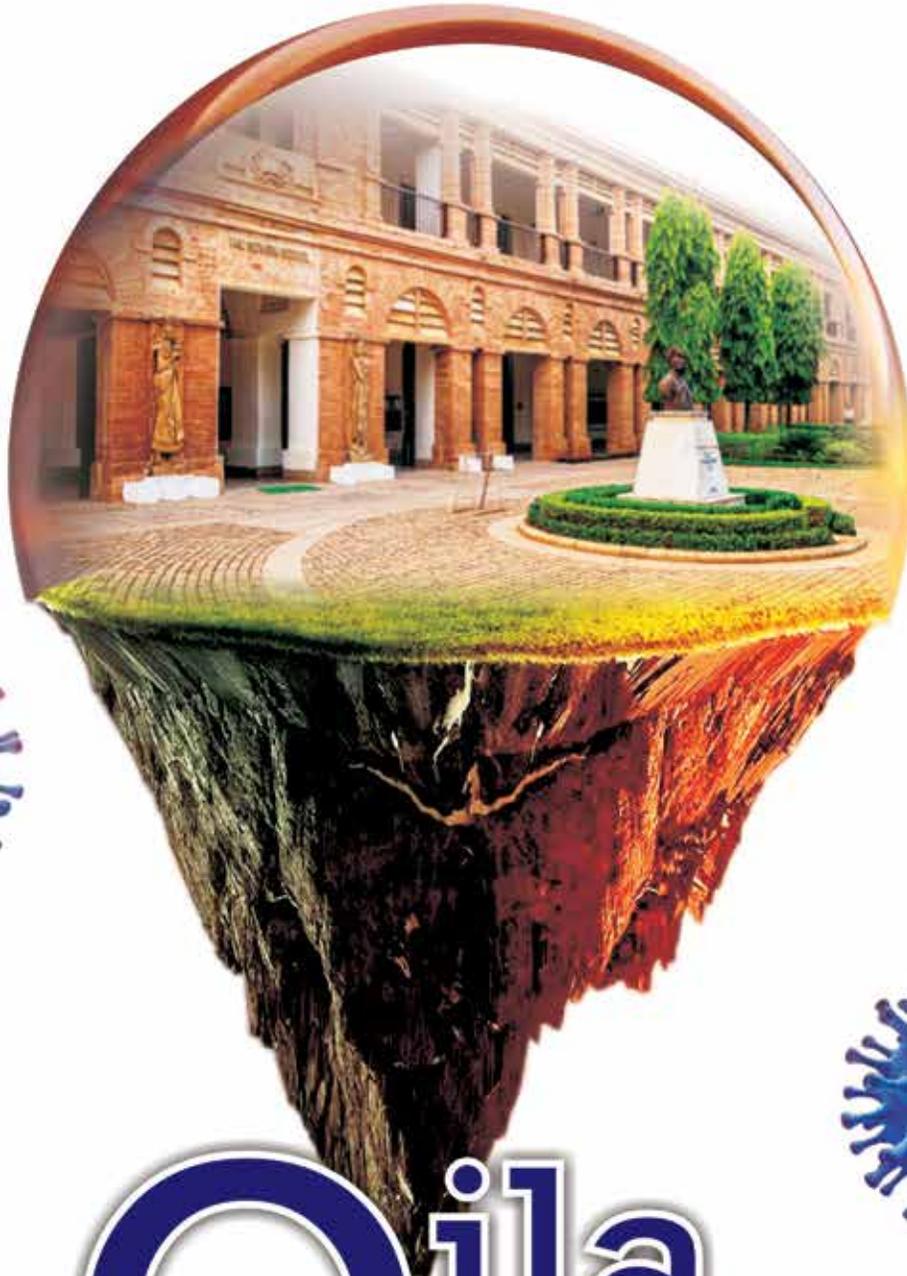




The Scindia School

TRIANNUAL PUBLICATION



Qila Quotes

Volume 43



Medical check-up on arrival



Sanitization on arrival

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Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information printed in this edition of the Qila Quotes. If an error has occurred, please accept our apology and contact the editor at visheshs@scindia.edu.



Class in progress



Seeking blessings before PT2 exam

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



Dear Readers,

The mesmerizing beauty of the Fort sways every beholder to pause and look, to admire the cascading beauty of nature. The Fort is lush green as the rainy season has settled its realm and the *taal sare* almost full to the brim. Beautiful yellow, white, and blue coloured wildflowers are blossoming at every nook and corner, and the fragrance of *Parijaat* breezes all over the Fort creating a mystical aroma.

Amidst such natural beauty, I am thrilled to receive more than 85% of our students back on campus; academic classes and non-contact sports & co-curricular activities are in full swing. While the School has left no stone unturned to create a safe and congenial environment for the boys, it is heartening to see that students have understood the gravity of the situation, and integrated Covid appropriate behavior into their lives diligently. They have taken charge of their own actions and are ensuring safety through self-accountability. Since students were at home for a long time so we decided to relax the dress-code. Students are allowed to wear jeans, white shirts, and sneakers during academic hours. Surprisingly, this minor change seems to have brought about a spring in their steps!

I extend a warm welcome to **Mr Dipak Haksar** and **Mr Rajeev Dubey** for they have joined as Members of the Board of Governors. I also extend a warm welcome to **Ms Rolly Choudhary**, a parent, who has joined as a Member of the School Management Committee; **Dr Laven Govinder** who has joined as the Resident Medical Officer and **Mr Atul Takle** as our new Director – Alumni Relations.

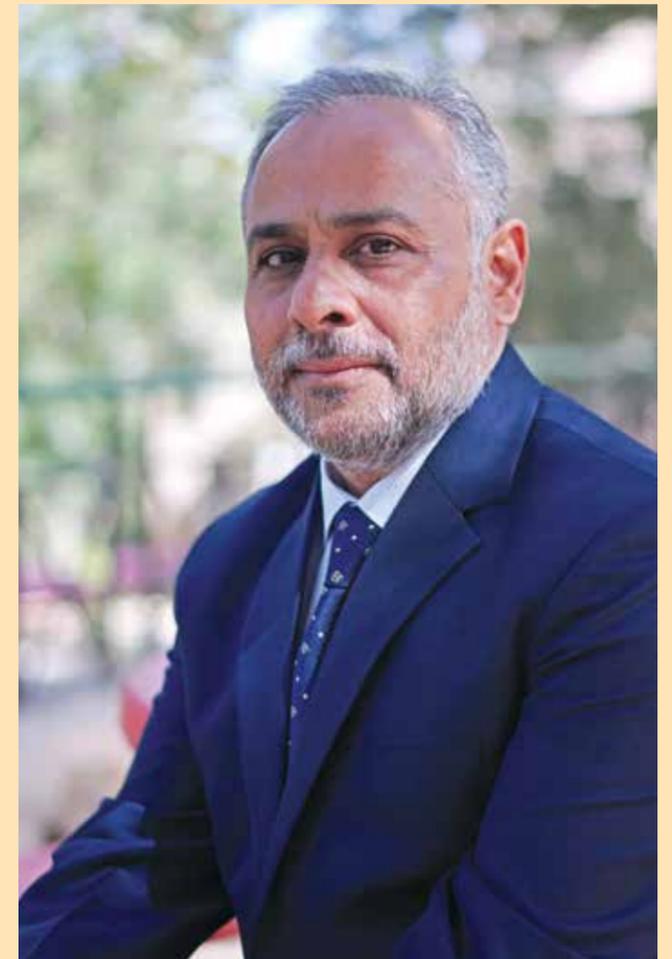
Moving on, further to our infrastructure development plans, renovation of Ranoji House is complete and boys and staff have occupied the building. We have also refurbished and remodeled our dining hall for enhanced safety and hygiene.

I shall forever remain grateful to the Board of Governors for their constant support and guidance. My heart goes out to the dedicated teachers and staff for without their 100% commitment we couldn't have reopened the school. I express gratitude for caring and co-operative parents for their unflinching trust in us.

This issue of the QQ is a mixed bag of flavours as it has something for everybody. Starting from an interview with our very own jewel **Mr Dipak Haksar** (Ex-MD, 1976); to an article by our Head Boy's mother – **Ms Nikita Mehrotra**; to what **Nissar Kumar** (Ex-MD, 2005) has to say about how he found his passion on the fort and more...Hope you enjoy this issue.

I wish you a very Happy Diwali.

Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat
Principal, The Scindia School





In the dining hall



In the library

EDITORIAL

We have received more than 85% of our children back into the portals of the school once again with all enthusiasm and necessary precautions. Right from the movement of the staff to the parking of vehicles, to the accommodation of the service staff inside the campus; nothing has been left to chance. We have accommodated students not Housewise but Classwise to reduce intermingling of boys across classes for further safety. We have hired an outside agency - 'Momentum India' which has helped us put stringent protocols in place for all categories of staff & students with every minute detail. Additional security personnel have been deployed to man the entry-exit points. Our priority now is Academics, Wellbeing, and Safety of our children. Students who have finished their quarantine period are now engaging in noncontact sports and fitness training.

Academics

The Board result for the academic year 2020-21 for Class X was 86% and for Class XII was 92.73%. School has done well in comparison to the other schools of the country. For this academic session, school has executed two goal-setting exercises till date for Periodic Test I and Periodic Test II. Targets were revised taking into consideration the analysis of the marks scored by each learner in the Periodic Test I. The syllabus for Term I was completed by 25 September 2021. School has also organized parallel classes for Basic and Standard Mathematics to provide personalized attention to learners and increase the overall percentage for Mathematics.

Well-being Initiative

To strengthen the symbiotic relationship between the teacher and the taught, the school had initiated, during the time when students weren't on the fort, an endeavour geared towards meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of students and the expectations of the parents. A team of counsellors comprising **Ms Niharika Kulshrestha, Ms Divya Verma and Mr Kamlesh Singh** led this initiative. This is an ongoing exercise.

Workshops

A Yoga Workshop for teachers titled - The Immunity Booster Programme, was organized by the Art of Living team on 'How to deal with Stress' during the times of the pandemic. The online programme was spread over three days, from 11 June - 13 June 2021.

Faculty members attended the webinar 'COVID and YOU, by **Dr Soumya Swaminathan**, Chief Scientist - World Health Organisation on 12 June 2021 as a part of the NIIT University's ongoing 'Learn from the Masters' webinar series.

Faculty members attended the 'Creativity for all- Level 2 Adobe Creative Educator (ACE)' training session conducted by Adobe on 23 July 2021 to expand their teaching toolset, integrate creative

projects into their curriculum, and drive key student outcomes.

Co-curricular activities

The 48th Platinum Jubilee Memorial Inter School English Debate was held online from 1 - 3 September 2021. Twelve highly reputed schools of the country competed for the coveted trophy. The Scindia School was declared the 'Winner' of the event. The Mayo College Girls' School was the 'Runner Up'.

The Science Department has started a new initiative titled 'HAYKA' which means 'Science in Russian language'. The main objective of 'HAYKA' is to provide the students with the 'Biopic at a Glance' of different Scientists along with their discoveries, role and achievements in the field of science.

Mayank Chaudhary, Anubhav Sachan, Prashast Pandey, Vidit Gupta, Aarush Atul Prabhu, Ayushman Rai, Bharat Jain, Siddharth Gupta and Shirish Mehra attended the virtual Doon School's Model United Nations Conference from 29 July to 31 July 2021. **Ayushman Rai and Shirish Mehra** won a 'Honourable Mention' in their respective committees.

Arjun S Bhatt, Krishna Gupta, Parv Rajesh Agarwal, Inesh Agarwal, Rudraksh Tapadiya, Tanish Agarwal and Pratham Kapoor virtually attended the Model United Nations Conference organised by the Mody School on 2 August 2021. **Shirish Mehra and Raghav Mahajan** virtually attended the Art Fest organized by Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar, from 3 - 4 August 2021.

Atharva Dharmendra Mishra, Anaggh Naduvath, Sahaj Agarwal, Atharva Tiwari, Arnav Joshi, and Sameep Mody participated in the 10th Annual Science Festival, Synapse, conducted by the Vasant Valley School on 16 July 2021. The event was organized online for students of Classes VI to X. A Workshop for middle school Science teachers by **Prof Ratnamala Chatterjee**, Senior Professor at IIT Delhi, was also conducted during the programme.

Singapore International School, Mumbai organized Confluence

2021, which included Debate, General Quiz and Speech writing as its elements. Several students from our school participated in this event.

On 30th September we organized His Highness Maharaja Madhavrao Scindia Inter-School Hindi Debate competition in which 12 reputed schools of the country participated. Scindia School won the competition, Daly College secured second, and the Doon School secured the third place. **Satyamraj** of The Scindia School was the best speaker from Pool 'A' and **Tanisha Sharma** from Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls School was the best speaker from Pool 'B'. The best speaker in the last round was **Parikshita Singh** of Scindia School.

Internationalism

Ms Niharika Kulshrestha presented a paper on 'How High School Teacher scan narrow the Gender Gap in STEM Education' in the Diversity and Out reach session of the 22nd International Workshop on Neutrinos from Accelerators (NuFact-2021) at Cagliari, Italy organized by CERN.

University of San Francisco, Michigan State University, and Temple University, USA, conducted a virtual session on writing recommendation letters for highschool counselors and teachers on 8 September 2021. Several faculty members attended the same.

Ms Divya Verma, Ms Mahvish Panwar, Mr Manoj Mishra and Ms Priya Bhagat attended a 90-minute taster session of NZGCC (New Zealand Global Competence Certificate - online program for school students) held from 19 July to 29 July 2021. They interacted with teachers from Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines.

The meeting for the German Exchange between The Scindia School and Neustadt was held on 21 July 2021. Few teachers from both schools participated in the discussion. **Mr Frank Uhl** and **Mr Gopal Chaturvedi** moderated the discussion.

Foreign Admissions

Following students have secured offers from top Universities across the world:

Student	Course	University	Word Ranking
Angad Sahani	Aeronautical Engineering	University of Manchester	27
Aayush Gupta	Mechanical Engineering	University of Manchester	27
Aansh Jaiswal	Economics	University of Sydney	40
Satwik Goyal	Applied Sciences	University of British Columbia	45
Vishnudeep Tyagi	Computer Science	University of California San Diego	54
Chirag Rathi	Computer Science	Georgia Institute of Technology	80

Akshat Karwa	Computer Science	Georgia Institute of Technology	80
Irish Rohra	Nano Science	Trinity College Dublin	101
Sukhyog Singh	Fine Arts	Savannah College of Art & Design	
Aaroah Sapkota	Computer Science	State University of New York	

Celebrations

The Fresher's Entertainment Evening was celebrated on 10 September 2021. Young Scindians showcased some amazing talent in music, poetry, acting, and dance to name a few.

The custom of *Ganesh Sthapna* was observed on 10th September 2021, amidst the customary puja, bhajans and chanting of *shlokas*. Next day the idol was taken to *Dhobi Taal* for *Visarjan*.

The 75th Independence Day was celebrated with great gusto and vigour at the Fort. **Ms Smita Chaturvedi**, Vice Principal, The Scindia School was the Chief Guest. The Vice Principal, in her address, emphasized on our understanding of the word 'freedom' especially during the times of the pandemic.

On 5th September, Teachers' Day Celebration was held with a lot of fervour and enthusiasm. The students put up a brief yet interesting online Cultural Programme and showcased their love and admiration for their teachers.

Welcome Aboard



We welcome **Mr Dipak Haksar**, as a Member, Board of Governors, The Scindia School. An alumnus of The Scindia School, he is the former Chief Executive Officer, ITC Hotels. His dynamic leadership has not only won him many professional accolades but also earned him the respect of industry peers. He was the Chairman of ASSOCHAM National Council for Tourism and Hospitality and Chairman CII National Tourism Committee on Tourism & Hospitality. While in school, he was a School prefect, Football Captain, Basketball Captain, earned Colours in Hockey, Football and Athletics & won the Cariappa shield.



We welcome **Mr Rajeev Dubey** as a Member, Board of Governors, The Scindia School. He currently serves as the Chairman of Mahindra Insurance Brokers Ltd, Mahindra Steel Service Centre Ltd and Mahindra First Choice Wheels Ltd, and is a Director on the Board of Fifth Gear Ventures Ltd. In the past 17 years that he has been associated with the Mahindra Group, his key focus areas were Human Capital initiatives of the Group, the After-Market businesses whose CEOs reported to him, Group Communications, Government Relations, CSR and Infrastructure.



We welcome **Ms Rolly Choudhary** as a Member of the School Management Committee. She is an educator by profession and

married to a distinguished army officer. She is a gold medalist in B.Ed. and CTET qualified. She is currently teaching in Sanskriti School, New Delhi since 2017. As an army officer's wife, she has been responsible for setting-up and smooth functioning of Family Welfare Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development. She is blessed with two children. Her son is in grade XI in The Scindia School and daughter is in grade V in the Sanskriti School.



We welcome **Dr Lavakumaran Govender** as the new Resident Medical Officer. He is a citizen of South Africa. He has served various Health-Care institutions across India. He has the experience of working with Daymed Hospital Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; Pondicherry Institute of Medical Science; Rajagiri Specialty Hospital, Kochi and various Island Resorts in Maldives as a medical officer (Resort Doctor). His last assignment was with Dhani Health Care (Indiabulls Company) as Senior General Practitioner Telemedicine consultation. We wish him a long and fruitful stay on campus!



We welcome **Mr Atul Takle** who has joined us as Director - Alumni Relations from 1st October 2021. In his just concluded role, Mr Takle was a Senior VP at Adfactors PR for over 8 years. During this period, he handled many key national accounts like Infosys, Vodafone, Tata, the Godrej Group, L&T and Cisco among others. He also advised the agency on strategic issues. Mr Takle is also guest faculty at a well-known University in the UK. Internal communications, mentoring, public speaking, and media training are other areas he specializes in.

OLD BOYS' NEWS

Rahul Dasgupta (Ex-Jayaji, 1996) has produced a couple of music videos in multiple languages for actress Ritabhari Chakraborty. The song is highly successful with more than two million views on YouTube in 30 days.

The BCCI has appointed **Harvinder Singh Sodhi (Ex-Ranoji, 1989)** as The Indian Junior Cricket Team Selector from Central Zone. Many congratulations!

Mr Dhruv Agrawal (Ex-Rn, 1992) is into the business of interior designing, under the name of Divine Interior Decorators. His wife, **Parul Agrawal** is also actively associated with him. They have recently received the Business Leadership Award 2021 from Eminent Research. They accept pan-India turnkey jobs for design and execution of projects, including restaurants, residences, commercial spaces etc. and wish to reachout to Scindians planning to build their homes and offices.

SOBA Kanpur organized a blood donation camp on 26th September 2021.

SOBA Gwalior organized a blood donation camp on 30th September 2021.

Dr Punit Boolchand (Ex-Ja, 1961) has edited a collection of papers on the Topic, "Topology of Disordered Networks and their applications" along with his colleague from Paris, Professor Matthieu Micoulaut, for the Journal, *Frontiers in Materials*. The reader does not have to subscribe to the Journal before he or she can access the paper. This

compilation is now available as a book. The copyright resides with the Editor not the Journal. To access a copy of the eBook, please open the site below, and then go to the top left corner and click on the icon Download.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/9016/topology-of-disordered-networks-and-their-applications>

Dr Sanjay Kolte (Ex-Md, 1983) has been elected as the Vice President of 'Indian Society of Organ Transplantation'. Many congratulations!



Dr Sanjay Kolte



SOBA get-together in Hyderabad on 3rd October

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Vedansh Bansal (Ex-DI, 2020) has cleared JEE mains with a percentile of 99.9 and individual scores being Mathematics: 99.8, Physics: 99.8, and Chemistry: 99.7. He has been offered scholarship by many prestigious colleges. Best of luck to him for all his future endeavors!

Shreyansh Agarwal (Ex-Sh, 2020) has cleared JEE mains with an AIR of 315 and has received Scholarship and cash awards from various institutes worth 3 lakh Rupees. Currently he is pursuing B.Tech. (Computer Science) from IIT Hyderabad. Congratulations!

Siddhanth Kaul, Vedansh Balasaria, Aditya Singh, Abhishek Chauhan, Ayushman Rai, Ashutosh Khemka, Prashast Pandey, Shaurya Prakash, Vidit Gupta, Memoy Mishra and Pranav Wadhwa participated in the IPSC IT Fest 2021 held from 22 - 26 July 2021 at B.K. Birla Centre for Education, Pune.

Vedansh Balasaria and Shaurya Prakash came third in the event, 'Alan Turing: IT Quiz'; **Memoy Mishra and Pranav Wadhwa** came third in the event, 'Ada Lovelace: User Interface & User Experience (Ui/Ux) Design'.

'Kamala Jeevan Hindi Antarvidyalayiy Vaad-Vivaad Pratiyogita' was held online from 12 - 14 August 2021 and was organized by The Doon School, Dehradun. From The Scindia School, a team of three students- namely, **Ayushman Rai, Parikshita Singh and Aditya Singh** participated. **Aditya Singh** was adjudged the Best Speaker in the first round, **Ayushman Rai** was adjudged the Best Speaker in 4th round and **Parikshita Singh** was adjudged the Best Speaker in the second as well as in the final round. Our School team secured first position and lifted the trophy of the 'Kamala Jeevan Hindi Antarvidyalayiy Vaad-Vivaad Pratiyogita for the year 2021-22'.

Satyam Raj and Siddharth Gupta secured the 2nd position in Quizathon conducted by Learning Links Foundation, ETS (World's leading educational testing and measurement organization). Quizathon 2021 covered Study Abroad, Basic Grammar Questions and TOEFL related questions. The participating institutions were St Columbus School, Delhi; NMIMS University and Meluha International School, Hyderabad.

Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls' School, Jaipur organised Technacks 2021 from 24 - 26 August 2021. **Toshan Agarwal and Shaurya Prakash** secured the first position in Smart Art : Multimedia Presentation and **Memoy Mishra** secured First position in Marquee : UI/UX Design. **Aditya Singh, Tanish Agarwal and Rohan Asrani** secured the third position in Episode : Podcast Hosting.

Our Chess team distinguished itself in the Chess competition organized by Unison World School, Dehradun. Altogether 163 students from 35 schools of the country participated in the online Chess Tournament. **Aarush Atul Prabhu, Shantanu Yadav and Prashant Agarwal** were in the top five players in the age group (IX to XII) and two players were in the top ten in the Tournament.

Ujjwal Mehrotra reached the finals of the Akhil Bhartiya Kavya Avriti Pratyogita out of 250 participants from all over the country.

Arnav Joshi secured the 3rd position in the Munshi Premchand Katha parv - Story Telling Competition by ACT Universal- UAE.

Aaradhya Shiv Shukla received the Best Speaker award in the first round of Sushri Linel Inter School Hindi Debate organised by Welham Girls' School.

Raghav Mahajan, Prithvee Rajswarup Pathak, Arnav Joshi and Khush Todicame 2nd and 3rd respectively in the Creative He ART 2021, an online Artcompetition.

Vidit Gupta received the Best Speaker award in the Prelims and Semi Finals Round of the All-India Oliphant Memorial Inter School Debate organised by the Welham Boys' School.

Sumedh Potdar and Mayank Choudhary won the Best Speaker award for the Quarter Finals and Finals, respectively in the 48th Platinum Jubilee Memorial Inter School English Debate. The school also organized the 48th Platinum Jubilee Memorial Inter School Quiz. Detailed Reports of the same are attached in the same edition.

Our school English Debating Team comprising **Aaradhya Shiv Shukla, Ansh Garg and Vidit Gupta** reached the finals of the Inter School Debate at Vivek High School.

Parv Rajesh Agarwal, Sameep Modi, Pratham Kapoor, Rohil Sharma, Ahana Bhattacharya, Tanish Agarwal, Arjun S Bhatt, Shaurya Prakash, Siddharth Gupta, Ayushman Rai, and Aditya Singh attended the Mayo College Girls' United Nations Conference from 9 - 11 September 2021. **Ayushman Rai** won the third position in Global Citizens Meet.

The Scindia School participated in Ms. Russell Science Fair 2021 hosted by Welham Girls' School, Dehradun from 16 -18 September 2021. In Gizmo champion event our team comprising **Keshav Jhunjunwala & Tanish Agrawal** secured the 2nd position. In Multimedia Mix upevent **Ansh Garg & Arpit Mittal** secured the 2nd position. In Art in scienceevent **Siddhartha Gupta & Ayushman Rai** secured the 2nd position.

Our school participated in 'TresorD' Artistes 2021', second online art competition organized by Wynberg-Allen School, Mussoorie held on 2nd September 2021. **Arjun S Bhat** of Class 11th and **Vasant S Bhat** of class 10th received 1st position in Watashi No Sozo - Face Painting.

Lakhaya Arora of Class 9th received 1st position in Assemblage - Fruits and Vegetable Sculpture

Shirish Mehra of Class 11th received 2nd position in Dream Catcher. **Abhey Khanna** of Class 12th received 3rd position in Komorebi - Watercolor Painting.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

'It takes a village to raise a child'. I am sure at sometimes in our lives we must have needed that helping hand, guiding force and a calm mentor, who could help us ride the ever changing wave of parenting the Z generation. I remember some where in 2017 while my child got back from school, a reputed day school of my city, he was exhausted, dull, and lacking the zeal of a youngster. He seemed busy with academics but not happy achieving those goals alone. We as parents were trying to manage his academics and co-curricular activities to help him have an all-round development. However, it wasn't going as planned, he became irritable and started facing weight issues, leading to reduced self-esteem. Since I am a follower of a life changing philosophy, I prayed fervently for my son's happiness and support from the environment. That very year I got to witness a program conducted by the boys of The Scindia School in my city and got an opportunity to interact with the teachers of the school, which further solidified the idea of sending my ward to The Scindia School. I felt as if my prayers have been answered in this form. Till this day we haven't regretted the decision even for a minute.

Initially the ride was not a smooth one, home-sickness, new environment, new food, new people and an absolutely new lifestyle. It's truly not easy to step out of our comfort zone and adapt to our new lives. However, he always got immense support from his teachers. The trained staff members of the school were strength pillars not just for the children but also in counselling the parents, towards the right ways of leaving the reins and trusting our kids towards independent living.

It's a big leap of faith when you turn your back to leave a part of you, into hands you have just heard of. I still remember meeting my son after 1 month of his stay, his transformation was noticeable. He had started to like the place and had made friends. I dropped off a plump pampered boy, and the one I met had grit, fire in his belly to take charge of his health and life. Within a few months I could see positive changes in my ward like his determination to try out new skills, improved focus, and his grit towards becoming a better version of himself. With every passing year he began to shine like a diamond, and I saw all the rough edges being smoothed. We witnessed a perfect all-round development in him, over the years. It was tough to believe and imagine how a closed environment with huge cultural diversity could provide a strong value system to be grounded to. This is where I got the best surprises from the school. I was amazed to see the ethical and moral values imbibed in these children. From the power of meditation to prayers, religious significance, importance of festivals, they thrive to internalize a value system that makes them into responsible young adults. A generation that will be ready to respect and lead the development of a compassionate society.



Ujjwal with his mother

I once read a quote "raising a teenager is like living with a bowling alley in your head". So true, you really can't predict, how many pins will fall, with which conversation and when you hit that perfect strike. Raising a teenager is a subtle art and the experienced minds of Scindia have nailed it for years.

While we wanted him to take risks, we were worried about the safety, while we wanted him to be open minded, we wanted him to have a grounded strong value system. Parenting young adults of the current generation, is definitely a challenging task. One thing that we learnt in the journey was, that experience is the best teacher. With experienced guidance across sports, public speaking, academics, multiple activities to build interpersonal skills and great opportunities for leadership responsibilities, the school environment provided everything needed for the important teenage years. Today he stands tall, as an independent, balanced and open minded, responsible adult, with his own analytical abilities to take risks and move towards a knowledgeable future.

In the words of - Ella Fitzgerald. "It isn't where you came from. It's where you're going which counts." Today I am so grateful that we chose to be a part of the Scindia fraternity. I genuinely believe that The Scindia School treasures every child by preserving their uniqueness and cherishing them to blossom in all areas of their lives. The values taught at the school keep the children grounded and connected with their traditions. This indeed was one of the best decisions in our lives and has changed my son's life for the better. With lifelong memories that my son made over the course of his stay, and the wonderful independent adult we saw our teenager transform into, my deep gratitude to the Scindia fraternity, we will truly be indebted for your unwavering support always.

Ms Nikita Mehrotra
(Mother of Ujjwal Mehrotra -SSP)



Ujjwal at the time of admission



Mrs Mehrotra with family



Ujjwal in class 12

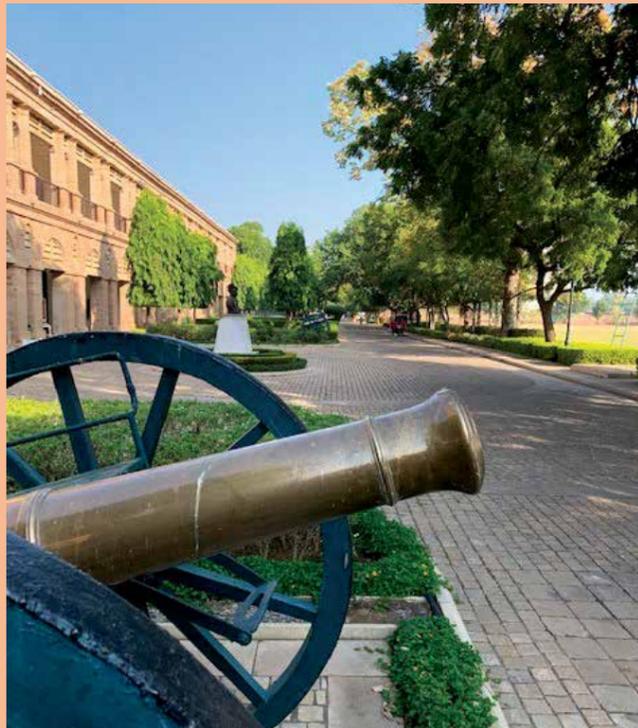
THIS WAS ONCE HOME. IT WILL ALWAYS BE THAT!

I was 9 when my parents sent me to study at The Scindia School, an institution established as the Sardar's School 124 years back. My father was also an alum, and so, when Kolkata became a difficult place to live in, with the Naxalite movement, he decided that I would be better off at Scindia. I hated the first term. I was fat and was teased endlessly.

Home for the first vacation, I refused to go back. Dad and I had a long chat, and it was decided to give it another shot. There was no looking back. I was still fat. But I figured out how to overcome that. The easier way was to 'get punished' and be made to run rounds of the cricket field, to lose weight. But I hated the thought. So, I decided that I would try and excel in areas where fat boys stood a chance. Debating, dramatics, elocutions... in sports, as a goalkeeper, or fielding in the slips, or being an opening batsman, were methods I resorted to. Fortunately, I excelled in those.



Having been recognized as someone who had talent, made the vacations bearable. I could not wait to get back to school. Eventually,



I was appointed as a school prefect. I was house captain when my residential house (Ranoji) won the General Efficiency Shield against all odds (raiding the tuck shop, having two boys expelled for ungentlemanly behavior and similar stuff). What made this achievement more special was that Ranoji House achieved this distinction in 1972. The only time before that was in 1944, when my father was the house captain of the same house.



I graduated and the years passed by. I visited Scindia only once or twice in the next 30 years. Then a call from an ex- Scindian changed all that. **Rajendra Pawar** was the Vice President of the school's Board of Governors and had got my number from another person. Mr Pawar, or Raji, as he is referred to, is also the Founder of NIIT Ltd – India's first computer education company, which was set up close to 4 decades back. He is also the co-Founder of the non-profit NIIT University, located in Neemrana, and a Padma Bhushan.

"Will you help drive the marketing and communications for the school", he asked?

I said that I would love to. (You don't say no to a Padma Bhushan awardee:-). And for almost the past two years, I have been visiting Scindia again and again. In fact, I now have an added responsibility. I am the Director – Alumni Relations for the school.



It has been an emotional experience for me, not just because the school, and the fort on which it is situated is home to the #1 boys' residential school in India – but it is also a place which is possibly safer than home, safer than any day school, with a dynamic curriculum aimed at holistic development of the boys even in these trying times. As my mother says even now, "Atul, I lost you when you were 9. You became independent and never asked us for any help or guidance in any decision you made."



I would like to say this to her on a public platform. "Ma, you and dad gave me not one but two homes. Scindia is one of them." At the time of writing this, I am at one of these homes. I am at Scindia. It is a beautiful place, as the pictures will vouch for. But these pictures will never tell the full story. Of the soul of Scindia, which resides deep within me.

Atul Takle
(Ex-Rn, 1973)

In Conversation with

Mr Dipak Haksar (Ex-Md, 1976)

Keenly perceptive and steeped in a sound value system, Dipak Haksar, former Chief Executive Officer, ITC Hotels, brings a dexterous touch to work ethics and business strategy.

With a GMP from Cornell University, he began his journey with the ITC Maurya and held various portfolios in the organization over the last 40 years managing both leisure and business hotels. His dynamic leadership has not only won him many professional accolades but also earned him the respect of industry peers. He was the Chairman of both ASSOCHAM and CII National Tourism Committee on Tourism & Hospitality.

Mr Haksar has always believed in the Indian value system. He is a firm believer that all tourism industry stakeholders must align their goals towards a larger sustainable agenda. One which is aimed towards protecting the environment, respecting local cultures, beneficial to local communities and conserves natural resources.

A man of many facets, he enumerates the mantras that have been his guiding beacon - the virtues of Passion, Perseverance, Patience, Commitment and Discipline. A strong believer in Vedanta, he credits this philosophy for guiding him through his professional and personal evolution.

While in school, he was the School Prefect, Football Captain, Basketball Captain, earned Colors in Hockey, Football and Athletics & won the Cariappa shield. He attributes his alma mater of being the perfect place, from where he drew many of his life's lessons from the time he spent in the school.

We present before you a candid conversation which our staff editor Mr Vishesh Sahai had with him.

Q What is that you like most about ITC?

As a lifer, having joined at a pupil stage, ITC has had a profound impact on my life. It is one of the rare organizations that invests heavily in employees preparing them to respond to the changing dynamics and complexities of business and competition. It imparts knowledge and prepares you for each job position and there is a both, transitional and succession plan that enables your growth in the organization. The adage 'people are the most valuable assets' and the 'best growth comes from within' are truly exemplified by ITC.

Q What are the three words you would like to use to describe yourself?

It is difficult to describe oneself and I feel reluctant to say something about myself which could stereo type me in a particular way. However, I have strived to live by the ideals of ethics and integrity, humility, and moral character. These values that I have shared are something you need to refine every day and ensure that you make the right choices. For any failures you must only blame yourself because these values are not dependent on others, but on the strength of your inner character. It is something that needs to be cultivated and practiced with sincerity and earnestness.



Q What does education mean to you?

knowledge is a burning quest that you gain everyday of your life. In a fast-changing world it becomes incumbent to develop yourself through an inquisitive mind, to ask questions and seek answers by a thorough analysis, and through a scientific temper. Knowledge that guides you in your life to be a better leader, good citizen & helps you to serve society and your country in a meaningful way, is what education means to me. Application of knowledge to find solutions to problems, resolve conflicts and make the world a better place is what education must do.

Q What do you look forward to as a member of the Board of Governors?

It is a privilege to be a member of the Board of Governors of your alma mater. It brings a sense of responsibility to contribute to the decision-making processes that will help the school to navigate through the challenges that it confronts in the 21st century. As a member, it will be my endeavour to share my experiences and understanding in the hope that decisions taken will help the school to become - India's best and Globe's finest.

Q What is the biggest challenge you overcame in your professional career, and how?

ITC hotels was at a cross road on how it should reposition itself and deliver experiences and the questions we asked ourselves were – What is our belief? What values were core to the business. As we were building bigger, better and luxurious hotels, the management had to decide the course that we should take. Should we take only the green route or should we focus on luxury. In the rebranding exercise, we undertook 'Responsible luxury' as the core of our business philosophy. That was in many ways a defining moment for us. To take two incongruent words, 'responsible' which means to conserve and reduce; and 'luxury' which means indulgence, excellence, and excesses was a difficult task. How do you blend the two concepts – luxury and sustainability & sensitize the rank and file towards this ethos and build experiences that deliver the brand promise was indeed a challenge! ITC Hotels blended the two and pioneered the concept 'Responsible Luxury'; integrating world class luxury with 'green best practices' to enable planet positive luxury experiences for guests. Blending contemporary green practices and luxury was indeed challenging with no precedents to emulate. Our mantra was to deliver experiences around this idea through eco-embedded products, eco-easy service design and eco-sensitized associates. Responsible luxury's relevance in today's time is undeniable, with eco-responsible practices at the helm of the agenda for both individuals and corporations. The fact that the concept gained acceptance and recognition by our guests and the global community at large, is evident in the many accolades that we have garnered since its inception. It is indeed a matter of great pride for us to be recognized globally as the 'greenest luxury hotel chain' and that we surpass international benchmarks on energy, water conservation, waste efficiency and carbon emission reduction; this is now a Harvard case study. Today ITC hotels with its trademark 'Namaste' symbol is committed to deliver on its

ethos of 'Responsible Luxury' with globally benchmarked services embedded in a culture deeply rooted in India's rich traditions and hospitality.

Q Having travelled extensively, what are some of your most profound lessons personally and professionally?

On a personal note, I found it amazing to recognize that we live in an interdependent and connected world and this thought has been further strengthened by the recent 'global pandemic'. Due to our mental constructs, we perceive nation states, cultures, religions, ideologies, and people as differentiated and independent. However, when we go deeper, we realize that these differences are at best superficial if not illusionary. Swami Vivekananda sums it up beautifully - "All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything." On the professional front I noticed while I was engaging with professionals at Cornell University, where students had come from across the world, that the many challenges and problems that they were facing, were at different stages in the evolution of that continent and country. When we discussed issues, we realized that with collaboration and sharing of knowledge and resources, one could find answers to many issues and challenges facing us, as somebody or the other had experienced it in their learning curve. It was all about sharing and adapting knowledge to that particular situation and finding answers to solve it in the most optimum manner. This brought about a realization that the world could solve so many of its issues without wasting time and money and instead the savings could be deployed for improving the standards of living and wholesome education particularly in the developing economies.

Q What is that you absolutely love about your school?

There is a lot that I love about the school, but I think what stands out is the sense of history that you get when you arrive at the *Urvai gate*. As you climb up the *ghati*, and you see the huge carved statues, your education starts right there. What I loved most about my time in school was the freedom to express and grow in an environment that encouraged you to be the true expression of your own unique talent. We were ably supported by our wonderful and committed teachers, great infrastructure, spartan upbringing and the values that were imparted to us through the unique culture and traditions of 'Scindia'.

Q Any message from your side for our students.

The year gone by has been full of challenges. Pandemic disrupted our life and caused immense hardship and uncertainty to our everyday existence. It is perhaps a time to pause and reflect on our learnings, to think about innovative solutions to preserve the finite resources of the planet; to realize that we live in an inter connected, collaborative and boundary-less world where technology, innovation and AI are changing the way we respond and make choices. Old paradigms are giving way to 'New Paradigms' and in all the ensuing change, chaos and uncertainty of future, we must remain steadfast in our quest for knowledge - a burning desire to soak in new ideas, concepts, habits and learnings that you acquire

directly from your school, from your teachers, your mentors, your seniors and from your daily readings.

This will keep you focused on the things that matter in a fast-changing world. Quoting Steve Jobs – "Your life is limited, so don't waste it".

In my journey of more than 40 years with ITC, I have been guided by ideals and principles that have inspired me and have been integral in shaping my career over the years. My council therefore to all of you today is –

- 1. Life is full of character-building experiences** – being focused and thoughtful at every step of the way will help to achieve the truest expression of your life. The cultivation of virtues of integrity, courage, honesty & sincerity is a lifelong endeavor. Our character is constantly formed by the choices we make in our life.
- 2. Do not seek success.... instead seek excellence and you will find both. Do the very best you can and leave the results to take care of themselves. There are no shortcuts to success** – it can only be achieved through hard-work, determination, and perseverance.
- 3. Watch your actions, they become habits** – watch your habits, they become your character – and watch your character for it becomes your destiny.
- 4. Making the right choices comes from developing inner strength** – learn to listen to the voice that guides you.

5. Do not fear failure – often the greatest strength and courage comes when you fail. Remember failure does not mean that you are not good.

6. Lastly remember that change is the only thing constant. We fear change the most – but when you stop changing, you stop growing. Embrace change for a better you and a better future.

Build a strong foundation while you are in Scindia school to become responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Care for the planet, care for the environment around you, build a better world which is better than how you found it. The proudest moment for the institution would be to see all you young men shaping into the finest gentlemen around. As a Scindian you are privileged to be part of a great institution. Use your time in a meaningful way, every moment counts. Wayne Dyer motivational guru observes "Now is all we have. Everything that has ever happened, anything that is ever going to happen to you is just a thought. Today well lived will prepare for both the opportunities and obstacles of tomorrow". My advice to you is to be fearless and Dare to Dream. The person who walks in someone else's track, never leaves his own footprint. Don't be a copy of someone – make your own impression.

Swami Vivekanand once said, "Believe in yourself, the world will be at your feet". Dare to be who you are and be the person you are meant to be. Finally, wish you all the very best in your journey to evolve yourselves into the best that any society can boast of.

Good luck and God bless!



MY JOURNEY OF PASSION

Music has always been very close to my heart. I am not sure how it happened and captured my senses. I have always felt comfortable and soothed by music and melody. Growing up as a kid who liked singing and may be dancing a little bit, I was the prime exhibit at home when ever guests (friends and family) came to visit. When I look back now, I marvel at how I was able to do that with so much ease. (some moments were embarrassing though. But let's keep that for another time, shall we?)

In no way am I saying that I am someone who was an outstanding singer/instrumentalist, and I am still not. All I knew was that I enjoyed music and had some connection which in my younger years I could not fathom or explain.

I joined Scindia in 1997, yes, the Centenary Year! I was in Grade 5 in Kanerkhed house. The two years that I spent in the Junior Section; I tried my hand at playing the tabla. In no time I realized that percussion was not my thing. I sincerely tried and tried but failed miserably. Most of Grade 5 was spent in just trying to come to terms with the fact that I was in a boarding school away from home. Too much for a 10-year-old to handle, I guess. Grade 6 I started some singing and participated in the inter-house singing competition where I sang a Bhajan called "Jai Govinda Gopala..". I remember practicing the song with **Mrs. Ahilya Shinde** (our music teacher at the time).

Things became interesting when I moved to the Senior Section. I joined Madhav house (because my brother **Saahil Kumar** - Batch of 1998 was in Madhav). **Mr Ramesh Sharma**, our Teacher in-charge of the School Brass Band at the time had some expectations from me to join the band because my elder brother was the Band Major in his time. I tried the bugle but miserably failed. Thereafter I defected over to music society and learnt how to play the Mandolin. I still remember, very vividly, **Mr. Raja Banerjee** teaching me the scales on the mandolin; my first experience at learning and playing an instrument. I kept my singing limited to house group singing competitions, bathrooms and house balconies. I got better at playing the Mandolin as I started to play in the morning assembly and Founder's Day orchestras.

All was usual until I graduated to Grade 11. One of my Batchmates **Surja Okram**, was playing the guitar in the Music Room Balcony. He was playing the chords to the song "The Last Kiss", the Pearl Jam Version. In part I was fascinated because the strumming chords had an appeal to them and that pulled me in, but mostly because it would feel cool to play a guitar and sing along and flatter the dames. (Trust me we all pick up the guitar for that one reason only!). That is where it started, I started to strum chords and sing along. One song then another and then another. It was around the same time that **Mr Vishesh Sahai** and **Rishabh Borah** (Batch of 2004) started the school rock band – PSYX. Rishabh reached out to me if I wanted to sing for the band, but I shied away from that opportunity and

kept my guitar playing and singing mostly to myself. It seemed too monumental to be a part of at the time.

Things really catapulted when I began my engineering at Kurukshetra University. I started to play and sing for the college rock band. Upped my skills at the guitar and vocals. What a cliché it was, as an aspiring engineer I spent most of my time in the music room preparing for College Festivals. In my opinion accessibility and opportunity are the biggest catalysts for something to happen with interest and determination being the prerequisites.



Nissar Kumar

Things reached a new high when I Moved to Canada in 2014. I was lucky to have opportunities to perform at various events and venues. Talent is natural but skill is only developed by hours and hours of beating all your craft. I truly believe in that. Music is my passion that I follow relentlessly so I've been at it alongside my work. I ended up building a small make-shift home studio where I do all my recordings for my Youtube Channel. I am currently a Solo Artist and I perform in and around the City of Mississauga at various events and sometimes you can even find me Busking out in the open.

I have had no formal training in vocals or guitars except for what I learnt in Scindia; the biggest catalyst facilitating this musical reaction in my life. I'd say this to you, if you like something just jump into it and let your intuition guide you sometimes. The gut feeling is more often right than wrong.

Nissar Kumar
(Ex-Md, 2005)



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of life, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." I cannot vouch for 18th century London, but Charles Dickens really did get it right about my second home.

Coming up the *Urwai ghati* as a little boy, I had a typical image of a boarding school in my head, a predicted cataclysmic collapse of human civilization. I was afraid. I sensed fear all around me that day. Today as I sit and pen down my emotions, my mind gets flooded with all the beautiful memories this place has given me and with it-truckloads of nostalgia. I mean, how does one ever get enough of this place? How does one get enough of the hues of blue in which we all seem to dissolve on a late October evening? And how does one get enough of the smell of rain which only seems to fade at 7:00 a.m. While every Scindian has it engraved in his mind that 'cats have nine lives, people have one', even a hundred lives will not suffice to ever get enough of this place. At this juncture, we contemplate that we were the 124th batch in the legacy of the Greatest School of All, and that destiny wronged us because we were separated from our home in our final year. But I beg to differ. We are probably the only batch that has seen it all. From yearning to use our electronics for seven years and wanting to throw them away in the eighth, the Batch of 2022 has experienced everything this place has to offer.

Six years ago, someone told me 'Scindia is not a place, Scindia is a feeling', and it is now that I finally seem to understand it. We all will feel a little bit of our home when we dance on any occasion, remembering fondly all the "co-ed" events we so longed for and meticulously dressed up for. We all will feel a little bit of our home when we eat a half-warmed *Aloo Parantha*, remembering the perfectionists we were at picking the most soft and stuffy ones on a sunny Sunday. And we all will definitely feel a little bit of our home as we sing together '*Rishi Galav ki Tapasthali*' in 2047.

Speaking for myself, I can never feel enough gratitude for what Scindia has taught me. It transformed a little boy who could not even differentiate between the pronunciation of 'blue' and 'blew' (yes, I was that bad at spoken English) into someone who is no more afraid of speaking up in front of nine hundred people at a competition. In retrospect, I have no regrets about a single day of my six years in school because each day, this serene fort has taught me something new and meaningful. After ten months, most of us will be away at college, striving to be the best in the most competitive institutions in the world. But before we leave the nest and fly into the real world,

I want all of us to take a moment and think what kind of people we want to be once we leave because hereafter, we're not just Kapeesh or Keshav or Pranay or Siddharth. We're Scindians and now, it means something different. In the future, the Batch of 2022 may be miles apart but there will be this heavenly magnetism that binds us all together, that binds us to the place that has given us everything-Scindia. We might not speak to each other on a daily basis but on 21st October 2047, as the football team plays the old boys match, we will still stand together as a family and when the sun shines over Siddharth Field, we'll be ready for a goal to be scored.

As for the batch of 2022:- My very own people who I will keep close to my heart in this life and the next. Six years of togetherness. A hundred people. A thousand snaps. A million smiles. A billion memories. But sometimes these memories sneak out of my eyes and roll down my cheeks. The sad part is saying goodbye to you all with whom I wish to spend an eternity. It isn't about the goodbyes that hurt, it's the flashbacks that follow. The greatest gift of life is friendship and I have received it. Finally, as we dash through the Last Swing of life striving to get to the Arch, the feeling of home will come rushing back to us and this time, it'll be there to stay.

Yanglem Arjun Singh
School Prefect



Arjun with friends



Friends for life

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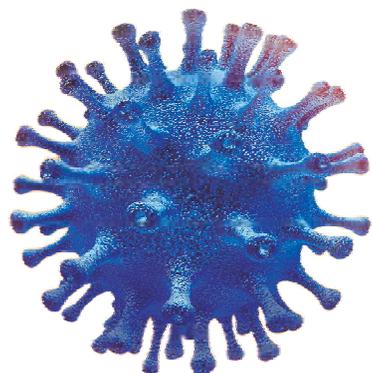
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+91-9826214644