

Chikiti liquor tragedy: 1 more arrested

Total arrests rise to 11
RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMAPUR
The number of arrests in connection with the Chikiti liquor tragedy in Ganjam district is rapidly increasing. So far, a total of 10 people have been arrested by the K Nuagaon police while another woman has been apprehended by the Excise Department.
On Thursday, one Sudam Mallik (35) from Sarkta vil-

lage under the Digapahandi police station, was arrested. Sudam was accused of brewing illicit liquor and several materials used for preparing alcohol were seized from him.
According to his confession, Samudi root was mixed into the country liquor before being sold to give added punch to the brew. However, the root has not yet been recovered.
Brahmapur DIG Dr Sarthak Sarangi said the exact substances mixed into the liquor would only be con-

firmed after getting the sample test report.
Police are regularly conducting raids at various locations in Chikiti, Patrapur and Digapahandi blocks following allegations of sale of bootleg country liquor. In the past few days, 15 cases have been registered and hundreds of litres of country liquor have been seized and destroyed.
According to the DIG, five affected individuals are currently admitted to an ICU with two of them in critical conditions.

Subhadra Scheme also a jumla: Ex-MLA

PNS ■ JAJPUR
Reacting to the Odisha Government's Subhadra Yojana, former Minister Priti Ranjan Ghadei criticised it as an election gimmick and an injustice to women.
He noted that while the scheme was promised to benefit 2.25 crore women, only 70 lakh women will actually receive support. "This is just another election 'jumla,' similar to previous promises like 2 crore jobs and Rs 15 lakh in bank accounts," Ghadei said.
"Initially, it was promised that every woman would receive ₹50,000 in two years, but now only one out of three women will get the amount, and that too only ₹5,000. Over five years, this totals ₹50,000, which amounts to just ₹10,000 per year. What can women do with such a small amount?" he asked.
"The scheme's promise of Rs

50,000 per year was supposed to help women invest, but their plans have been thwarted," he added. Ghadei further criticised the current BJP Government, citing a significant loan burden on the State. "Under the present Government, the State's loan has reached Rs 42,000 crore. RS 5,000 every six months amounts to just Rs 833 per month or Rs 27 per day. What can a woman do with Rs 27 per day? With a female popu-

lation of 2.25 crore in Odisha, the scheme's limited reach to 70 lakh women represents an injustice," he said.
Ghadei further claimed that the money would be taken back from women with interest.
Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had earlier announced the approval of an initiative for women's empowerment, Subhadra, in the State Legislative Assembly. According to the CMO, the

Subhadra scheme will transform the lives of more than 1 crore women in the State. It will cover all eligible women aged 21 years or above and less than 60 years old. "A total of ₹10,000 per annum will be paid in two installments of ₹5000 each on Rakhi Purnima Day and International Women's Day (March 8). Thus, an eligible woman beneficiary will get Rs 50,000 in total in five years," the CMO said.

Pradhan unveils Adarsha Vidyalaya in A'mallik



PNS ■ ATHAMALLIK
The newly-built Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya at Banamalipur of Athamallik was inaugurated recently by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
Pradhan as the chief guest inaugurated six projects including newly constructed OAV, a 100 bedded girls hostel at Banamalipur and another girls' hostel at Raniakata at a cost of Rs 32.96 crore. He also laid the foundation stone of other four projects at a cost of Rs 61.87 crore.
On the occasion, the Union Minister discussed about the New National Education Policy-2020.

School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond joined as one of the guests and informed that 800 schools in the State have been included in PM Shri Yojana. Gond informed that the State Government was going to build 1,600 new hostels and recruitment of 16,010 junior teachers in the State very shortly.
Among the guests were former MLA of Athamallik Ramesh Chandra Sai, Angul MLA Pratap Chandra Pradhan, Chhendipada MLA Augusti Behera, Athamallik MLA Nalini Kanta Pradhan and Zilla Parisada Chairman Babita Pradhan. District Magistrate of Angul Abdaal M Akhtar presided over the programme.

Seafood units protest tariff hike by Tata Power

Dub reclassification as large industry, rate of Rs 5.85 per unit as unjust
SIBDAS KUNDU ■ BALESWAR
The seafood exporters of the district under the banner of All India Seafood Exporters Association, Odisha chapter (SEAIOR), are up in arms against a power tariff hike by the Tata Power. As a token of protest, the processing units stopped their production for a day and demanded rolling back of the hike.
In 2008, the seafood exporting units were categorised under agro industrial consumers and subsequently in 2011 as allied agro industrial activities (AAA). The tariff rate fixed by OERC was Rs 3 per unit.
"Recently before the general and State elections, taking advantage of the political vacuum, Tata Power went ahead with its deliberately conceived strategy to reclassify seafood processing cold storage units from AAI category to LI (large industry with tariff of Rs 5.85 per unit). They sent inspection teams to several seafood processing units



without prior intimation, with instructions to levy fines and penalty in crores of rupees under Section 126 of Electricity Act. Further, the representations for re-inspection were ignored in an illegal and unjust way and now, fines and arrears etc to the tune of crores of rupees were asked to be deposited with threat of disconnection notice," lamented All India Seafood Exporters' Association State president Sangram Das.
This was immediately brought to the notice of the Deputy CM and Energy Minister, KV Singhdeo. Though on his intervention, Tata Power has stopped coercive actions like disconnection for the time being, but the company's stubborn attitude of not withdrawing notices under Section 126 and reclassification of categories has led to a situation of uncertainty, fear and confusion, he added.
"At present though the seafood export of Odisha has grown from Rs 350 crore in 2008-09 to Rs 4,500 crore in 2022-23, the industry is passing through a very tough time because of recession in EU countries because of the Russia - Ukraine war, tough competition from Ecuador, and various other geopolitical factors. In such a context, the action of Tata Power is uncalled for," said another member of the association.
He added that it is unfortunate to experience the exploitation of a private company where the Government is also having 49 percent share and it is happening in a power surplus State like Odisha.
While the processing plants across Odisha including Bhubaneswar, Puri, Baleswar, Kendrapara, Malipada and Junktia etc observed the protest, they threatened to intensify the agitation ahead if Tata Power did not concede.
"We urge the Government to do the needful and provide respite from the monopolistic exploitation of the private company. If nothing happens, the 16 lakh employment created by the sector where more than 50 percent females have got employment will cease to continue as the exporters will be forced to close down their units or move to other States," they said.

6 CUO students clear Japanese language test

PNS ■ KORAPUT
Six students from the Central University of Odisha have successfully passed the N5 level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT).
They are Rituparna Bala and Abhipsa Patra from the Department of Agriculture, and Priyanshu Kumar Dhal, Stuti Mahima Khora, Subham Dash, and Jagadish Sahu from the Department of Mathematics. Their accomplishment was recognized by the Vice-Chancellor of the University Prof Chakradhar Tripathi, who extended his congratulations to the students, their course coordinator, and faculty members for their outstanding performance.
The JLPT, administered annually by the Government of Japan, assesses proficiency in Japanese language skills. The Central University of Odisha offered a one-year Japanese Language Certificate Course (JLCC) from October 1, 2023, to October 1, 2024. Out of ten students who took the N5 level examination, six achieved passing marks, demonstrating the effectiveness of the JLCC program.
Special commendations go to Stuti Mahima Khora and Abhipsa Patra, who excelled with scores of 120 and 112, respectively. The success highlights the dedication and support of the Course Coordinator, Dr Nirjharini Tripathy (Head of the Department of English Language and Literature); Prof Nabin Panda, faculty, Bithika Das and all the JLCC students.

Coir Board files FIR against misuse of grants

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The Union MSME Ministry gives grants under "SFURTI" programme for the promotion of traditional industries, artisans and producers all over the country. The Coir Board, under the MSME Ministry, is the nodal agency for promotion of traditional industry in the coir sector.
The scheme gives 90% Central Government grant and the beneficiary's contribution is 10%. The implementing agency (IA) has to open a joint account in a bank in its CEO's name along with the representative of NAFO (Coir Board Field Office) and utilise the grant.
One Samaj Kalyan Foundation, which is headed by Kasinath Jena and located in the Gop area under Konark Coir Cluster in the Puri district, received grant from the MSME Ministry and deposited it in Punjab National Bank, Gop branch. But during review, the Coir Board found that the organisation had forged the signature and the rubber stamp of NAFO and withdrew 11.50 lakh rupees from the bank in June 2024. An FIR has been filed in this connection at the Gop PS by the Regional Officer of Coir Board Bhubaneswar in August.

MoU inked between KABIL & OIL India



For collaboration in projects & exploration
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
An MoU was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) and Oil India Ltd at the NALCO Corporate Headquarters here on Wednesday. It was signed by Sadashiv Samantray, Director (Commercial), NALCO & CEO, KABIL and Ranjan Goswami, ED (BD), OIL in the presence of Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO and Chairman, KABIL.
The MoU aims at collaborating in existing and future projects of KABIL for fostering connections in the exploration and exploitation of critical minerals.
Patra said the MoU opens a new chapter in the progress of KABIL because the strengths of KABIL and OIL would synergise for opening fresh vistas in critical minerals exploration and exploitation in the country and abroad.
The KABIL is a Joint Venture Company of the three government enterprises, NALCO, Hindustan Copper Limited and Mineral Exploration & Consultancy Limited under the aegis of Union Ministry of Mines.

Implement welfare measures for tribals, CM urged

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMAPUR
A delegation comprising Dr Jacob Tundiyl, president of social organisation PFREM with Bidulata Huika, president of Odisha Tribal Manch met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at his residence at Bhubaneswar on Friday and held discussion with him on an array of issues relating to tribals, sources said.
During the meeting Dr Tundiyl reportedly apprised the CM that in the tribal populated areas students must be ensured their rights to education since they are backward and belong to primitive community. In order to strengthen their assured future sustainability, the myriad welfare measures need to be initiated for the overall wellbeing,



he added.
Besides, the State Government needs to identify the current state of basic amenities for the tribal population such as reopening of tribal schools which are currently defunct; distribution of forest land and its patta (RoR) to tribals; rehabilitation of tribals; imparting teaching in tribal language to tribal students; establishment of tribal language institutions at the district level and enactment and implementation of PESA law. Though the above law has been enacted for the tribals since 1996, the State Government of Odisha did not make any effort to implement the same in the State, he added.
CM Majhi reportedly assured the delegation to do the

Man held for killing wife in Brahmapur

PNS ■ BRAHMAMAPUR
One Rajendra Jena (58) of Rohigaon village under the Brahmapur Sadar police station was arrested on Thursday for allegedly killing his wife Jhunu (52).
The incident came to light after the deceased's brother Trinath Swain filed a complaint with the Sadar police. According to the complaint, the incident took place on August 28 when Rajendra, known for his habitual drinking, got into a heated argument with his wife. The altercation escalated, leading Rajendra to violently attack Jhunu with a crowbar, inflicting severe injuries. Jhunu succumbed to her injuries on the spot.
Getting information, a police team, along with forensic experts, rushed to the scene, where they seized the blood-stained crowbar, the accused's and deceased's blood-stained clothing and other biological samples. Jhunu's body was sent to the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Berhampur for postmortem.
Rajendra during interrogation confessed to the crime, following which he was forwarded to court.

'Rotary Club of BBSR Meadows holds 'Rangatuli'

Inter-school art test participated by 550 students from 105 schools
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR



The Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Meadows organised the inter-school art competition "Rangatuli-2024." The 3rd edition of the event brought together over 550 young artists from 105 schools across the city, competing in two categories with the theme of 'Krishna's Magical Childhood' for students of Std. IV to Std. VII and 'The Heritage of Odisha' for students of Std. VIII to Std. X.
The competition, held at the Odisha State Museum, was inaugurated by renowned Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer Dash Benhur, Superintendent of Odisha State Museum Bhagyalipi Malla and PDG Aswini Kar. The young participants demonstrated remarkable creativity and skill, creating artworks that reflected both their imagination and artistic talent.
The day's events culminated in a grand award ceremony at the Bhanja Kala Mandap. The dignitaries who graced the occasion included

Puri MP Dr Sambit Parta as chief guest, MLAs Babu Singh, Ashrit Patnaik and Rotary District Governor (2024-25) Rtn. Yagyansis Mohapatra.
Immediate past president Rtn. Surj K Raj managed the award ceremony with the help of the core team of Rangatuli-2024. Club secretary Rtn. Ramakrushna Panda coordinated the publication of the club bulletin, "The Meadows", with the esteemed guest.

In Jharsuguda

75-yr-old widow with 3 disabled daughters lives miserably

RAJKUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA
In a testament to a mother's unwavering love and resilience, 75-year-old Kisori Bhainsa of Bhanwarkhol panchayat under Lakhanpur Block, continues to take care of her three physically challenged daughters despite her advanced age and personal hardships.
Widowed for the past 20 years, Kisori, who has poor eyesight, toils day and night to run her family which comprise her daughters, Laxmi (52), Tapaswini (50), who is mentally challenged, and Bidesini (43), who is also physically challenged.
Living in a dilapidated thatched house with crumbling



walls and a leaky roof, the family struggles to make ends meet. Despite her frail condition, Kisori brings water from

a tubewell and cooks meals for her daughters, relying on Government rice and a stipend that barely lasts through the month. Their living conditions are dire, with the roof so deteriorated that they can see the stars through it.
Any rainfall floods their home, exacerbating their already precarious situation.
Despite her desperate need, Kisori has not received a pucca house under any Government scheme. She hopes for assistance from the district administration for better housing and medical care for her daughters.
Local authorities have taken notice of her plight. Sarpanch Minika Kumari Sahoo assured that steps would be taken to

provide a pucca house and financial assistance. Lakhanpur BDO Binay Kumar Patel and ABDO Gopal Krishna Mishra visited the family to assess the situation and promised immediate Government support.
They proposed relocating Kisori and her eldest daughter to the Gobindpur Old Age Home, while her other two daughters would be accommodated in a Shelter Home for the Mentally Challenged at H Katapalli.
However, Kisori wishes for her family to stay together in one place, emphasizing the deep bond and love she shares with her daughters, even in the face of overwhelming challenges.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A close contest!

The rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm could be crucial in deciding the Haryana assembly elections

As Haryana gears up for its upcoming elections, the state's political landscape is rife with complexities that reflect broader societal divides. Central to this is the rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm, both of which are poised to play a crucial role in determining the electoral outcome. The recent request by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to change the polling date has added another layer of intrigue to an already charged atmosphere. Haryana's political fabric is deeply influenced by the rural-urban divide, a reflection of the state's socio-economic disparities. The urban areas, particularly key centres like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rohtak, have traditionally been BJP strongholds. These cities, with their high migrant populations, represent a significant voter base for the BJP. However, the upcoming election is complicated by the timing of the polling date. Scheduled for October 1, the date falls within a period that could easily be extended into a six-day holiday, thanks to overlapping weekends and public holidays. The BJP fears that urban voters, particularly those in the NCR, may choose to use this extended break to travel, thereby potentially lowering voter turnout in areas where the party has a stronghold. Historically, rural turnout in Haryana has been higher than urban turnout, which could tilt the scales against the BJP if urban voters are absent.



Another crucial factor in the upcoming elections is the Jat-non-Jat divide. Jats, who form a dominant social group in Haryana, have traditionally been aligned with the Congress, especially in rural areas. The BJP, on the other hand, has found support among the non-

Jat communities, particularly in urban regions. This division was evident in the 2024 general elections, where the BJP won all five Lok Sabha seats in non-Jat dominated areas. The BJP's support base in rural areas has been eroded, particularly among Jats, who have been disillusioned by the central government's response to their protests. The Congress is working to capitalise on this discontent by consolidating a Jat-Dalit-Muslim alliance in rural areas, which could pose a significant challenge to the BJP. In light of these challenges, the BJP's request to change the polling date has sparked controversy. The party argues that the potential for a long weekend could lead to lower voter turnout, particularly in urban areas where it has a strong base. The Congress has dismissed the BJP's request for date change as a sign of nervousness. The Election Commission's decision on the date change will be crucial, as it could influence the electoral outcome in a state where every vote counts. With ten years of incumbency and a narrowing margin of victory, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to secure a favourable result. Whether the ECI will accommodate the BJP's request remains to be seen, but the upcoming elections in Haryana are shaping up to be a closely contested battle.

PICTALK



Visitors at India Gate enjoy the rains in New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Emotional intelligence: The secret of outstanding leadership

As the next era of leadership unfolds, the demand for emotionally intelligent leaders has never been clearer—are you ready to rise to the challenge?

Today's corporate climate is fast-paced and continually evolving. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the secret weapon that distinguishes great pioneers from average ones; it is accompanied by a long list of excellent technical qualifications. But what precisely is this elusive talent, and why is it becoming a defining characteristic of outstanding leaders? It is the ability to control our emotions and understand and empathise with others. It forms a link between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. To speak more specifically to leaders, emotional intelligence is not only desirable but even more crucial for leaders than the desire to influence others and inspire their teams to greatness. This is where EI comes into play, somewhat like the oil that keeps the motor of leadership running. Emotionally intelligent leaders express ideas with clarity and empathy, make judgements based on both logic and emotion and maintain strong team morale and productivity. They prefer to ride out the



storm rather than be tossed by it, and instead look to harness it for growth and innovation. But how do aspiring leaders cultivate this crucial ability? It begins with reflection. Frequent self-analytical practices, such as journaling or meditation, may promote insight. Encouraging feedback—even the difficult kind—and viewing failures as opportunities for improvement are also important components. The most critical aspect is empathy and listening to others rather than simply hearing them. This final trait will propel a good leader to new heights. Take, for example, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella. Since the beginning of his term in 2014, he has been considered as the driving

force behind the company's cultural shift from fierce competitiveness to collaborative innovation. So, what's the magic? A leadership style relies mostly on emotional intelligence. Empathy-driven continuous learning and development mindset not only rebuilt Microsoft's reputation but also its financial performance to unprecedented heights. Another excellent example is Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. Ardern's leadership style, which includes speaking with compassion, making clear tough decisions, and uniting the country in the face of tragedy, highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in political leadership. Looking ahead, it is clear that one aspect of good lead-



RACHNA LAKHPATI

ership will remain central: emotional intelligence. While the next wave of technology will undoubtedly replace occupations in the future, leaders in any area will need to possess increasingly humane qualities such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. The message is clear: to be an effective leader in the twenty-first century, we must continue to improve our emotional intelligence alongside our technical proficiency. Whether you aspire to be an established CEO or a team leader, investing in your emotional intelligence can pay you in terms of career success and personal fulfilment. Remember that developing emotional intelligence is a lifetime journey that promises to improve not only your leadership style but also your overall approach to life and relationships. As leaders, we commit to leaving a legacy based on how we make others feel and the relationships we build. The future of leadership is in emotional intelligence: isn't it time you took the initiative? (The author is a freelance writer, views are personal)

How media shapes public perception

In a world where sensationalism often trumps substance, it's time to rethink how we engage with the news and what it says about the society we've built.



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The last few weeks have seen some major convulsions at the basic level of the Indian society. The listing can be long, depending upon the predisposition and values of the person making a list, or indeed brief if this person wants to strike a judgmental posture on what he considers important. This debate can merit its own resolution but the common-sense approach would make it obvious that the NEET examination and the Kolkata rape and murder episode have touched a very large number of minds and people who are in touch with the media. This itself raises another basic question. That has to do with the role of the media in attributing to an episode both circulation and importance. The reach and mode of the media become critical in identifying an issue and formulating it. One of the farthest reach of a media is through the radio. By and large, the radio is controlled by governmental agencies. This is followed by television, which is controlled both by the government and by some powerful private media houses. Both clusters claim a popular following, and both are accused of biases. Hence, to a fairly complicated question on what constitutes much of the news, there is a plausible answer: that which the media of the day decides to project and sustain as news. Thus it is that the role of governance/ownership of the mode of the media, in the identification of news, and sustaining it becomes critical. This brings us to a basic question: what constitutes news and how is it maintained at the frontlines? What is projected in so-called news is impossible for a private citizen to verify. That raises the question of the credibility of a channel. The credibility of the channel is itself a matter of popular perception, and it is also nurtured by reputation and conviction. To understand the gravity and implications of the statements and exposures above, one has to realize that news is both essential and dependent



upon the larger intellectual culture of the community where the news circulates. If the community is mature, it has developed safe parameters of credibility and conviction, and therefore one can be reasonably sure that what is being circulated is true. By and large, globally, the media, also, has its methods of checks and balances, standards and credibility, of reach and sustenance. Hence, whereas it may be a worthwhile debate to consider what constitutes news: origin, sustenance, and dissemination of news has certain standards across the globe. These, are like many things in life, having largely acknowledged standards without much vagueness. These are considered givens of a civil society. Hence the conclusion that if the general media projects something, it must be the truth, or at least the truth in good faith. Reference has been made above to the NEET episode and the Kolkata murder and rape case. The jury is out on both cases, and a conclusions are awaited. The civil society is maintained on such pillars. However, two questions emerge: given the attention which both of these cases have received, is this the only news which affected



THE BASIC TRUTH IS ALSO THAT IT IS NOT SOME INTRANSIENT STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE MEDIA THAT SUSTAINS ITS LIFE BUT THE ECONOMIC FORCES WHICH NURTURE ITS EXISTENCE

the wellbeing of the people, and is there a question of the proportion and inter-se importance of news? To debate the importance of both of the two episodes mentioned above would be a pointless exercise. However, by the same token, it is true that there are other activities effecting every-day living and have been, in a manner of speaking, overlooked. Hence, after resolving the concerns related to credibility arises an issue of the relative importance of the items being reported. It would be a common place to say that sensational news spreads faster and catches more attention than routine news, no matter how important it may be. Good news travels slower and catches less attention. The healthiness of a society needs to be assessed against objective indicators of health, and clearly one of them would be how much mileage does a positive news get as compared to the mileage a negative news gets. The strength of a society comes not only from handling the unhappy episodes which lead to news but also from giving positive news the importance that it deserves. It is here again that the media need continuous help in introspection. The basic truth

is also that it is not some intransient strength and weakness of the media that sustains its life but the economic forces which nurture its existence. As indicated above, if the media disseminates sensational information, it is because that kind of information is read more widely and followed more avidly. The problem therefore originates not just with the media but with the people who use the media. Further, it becomes a question of mass contact and mobilization of mass opinion. The time has come when one needs to revisit what constitutes a civil society and how a civil society exercises its choices and preferences. The economic and financial flows merely run in the channels which have been created with such efforts. Essentially, therefore, a question is: what is the kind of society which one has given to oneself and how do its norms get modified and operated, also, through the media? As indicated above, this is merely the sub-structure to a much larger edifice that the society has built for itself. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A STATUE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY

Madam — The recently collapsed statue of Shivaji in Maharashtra, is a grim reflection of political expediency. That a statue of one of the most revered and respected figures of Maharashtra has collapsed barely nine months after its inauguration, speaks volumes about the malpractices that must have gone into the installation of a statue that was expected to last a good part of a century. Instead of expressing remorse and regret, the political class is doing what it knows best — ducking responsibility and pointing fingers. The pedestal and all that remains of the statue ought to be cordoned off, and preserved as a reminder of the gross failure of the present day dispensation. Near it, a stone plaque should read — This site is an admission of the government's failure to do justice to the memory of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose statue collapsed just nine months after it was dedicated to the people of Maharashtra. We promise that this will never happen again. We hope to be forgiven by the people of the state with whose money the statue project was commissioned. To atone for our grave mistake, another statue is being constructed nearby. We assure you that it will last many many years and be a fitting tribute to a historical figure who is so dear to our hearts. I know too well that the shameful episode will soon be forgotten by our netas as well as the public. Avinash Godbole | Dewas

IMPLEMENT MISSION SHAKTI

Madam — Many people are prone to depression due to the harsh realities of life like low income, pollution, bad relationships, lack of education, etc. During this post-depression, if a person does not hope to become well, then it is a sign of mental illness. The consequences of inaction are dire. Without effective support systems, women in the country are left vulnerable to violence, harass-

The logic of Changing election date



Haryana BJP's State Election Management Committee has logically put forward the view that there is a weekend holiday before the assembly election date on October

1 and there are some holidays after that. INLD has also agreed to postpone the assembly elections. Opposition parties are hell-bent on condemning every aspect of the ruling party. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar has expressed concern over low voting percentage where people use long weekend holidays on the day of polling. Shifting the election dates will definitely help in increasing the voting percentage. Earlier also, the dates of elections were changed in Rajasthan, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the change of date is not important but the change of mind of voters will be more meaningful. The election Commission is a statutory independent body and should remain firm on its stand rather than bowing to the political pressure which often times is self serving than for the public good. Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

ment and exploitation. Every day, stories emerge of women who have been failed by the very systems that were supposed to protect them. These are not just isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a much larger problem — a systemic failure to prioritise women's safety. It's time that the country wakes up to the harsh realities and takes a hard look at where we stand and acknowledge that we are failing our women. The outrage over the incident in Kolkata should serve as a wake-up call for the nation. We cannot afford to delay any longer. We need immediate action to fully implement Mission Shakti in a broader sense and the narrow minded approach of neglecting women must be a priority. In conclusion, addressing the root causes of depression and systemic failures is crucial to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of women in our country. The recent incident in Kolkata is a stark reminder that we cannot continue to ignore the harsh realities faced by women daily. It's time for collective action to fully implement initiatives like

Mission Shakti and move beyond narrow-minded neglect. Only by prioritizing women's safety and mental health can we hope to create a society where every woman is protected, respected, and empowered. The time for change is now. K Subramaniam | Mumbai

REVIVAL OF VIVACITY

Madam — As an avid reader of The Pioneer, I am delighted to see that Vivacity is being published regularly for the past few months. I always enjoy reading Vivacity and Agenda, the reviews about art exhibitions, culture and movies being my personal favourites. Your past few features have been great, especially the Rakshbandhan one. Today, I read about the Heritage Walk and I will definitely visit Purana Qila now. The food review section is and has always been great!!! Atharv Singh | Delhi

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FIRST COLUMN

UKRAINE: INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

PM Modi's historic Ukraine visit signals new foreign policy approach



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine, last week, comes at an interesting churn of events on the geopolitical landscape. The visit, a first, by any Indian PM since Ukraine was first carved out as an independent sovereign nation, had many layers of interpretations regarding India's new foreign policy approach. The timing was significant as this trip came barely six weeks after PM Modi's state visit to Moscow. The Russia trip was widely criticised by India's strategic ally US, primarily due to the timing. Even as PM Modi was in Moscow, the NATO leaders were huddled together in Washington, discussing military aid for Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia bombed a children's hospital in Ukraine leading to the loss of lives for civilians and children. President Zelenskyy had condemned India's PM's first visit to Russia during his third term and the US State Department had also issued stern statements regarding the trip. Indian PM had also avoided participating in the Peace Summit organised in June, to find a political solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The recent visit by PM Modi to Ukraine, even as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was in Washington DC was a statement regarding India's fine balance diplomacy in times of war. President Biden, called up the Indian PM soon after his visit to Ukraine to apprise him of the prevailing situation. The readout released from the White House read "President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to discuss the Prime Minister's recent trip to Poland and Ukraine, as well as the United Nations General Assembly meetings in September. The



President commended the Prime Minister for his historic visits to Poland and Ukraine, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in decades, and for his message of peace and ongoing humanitarian support for Ukraine, including its energy sector. The Leaders affirmed their continued support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law, on the basis of the UN Charter." Interestingly, the Indian PM also spoke to President Biden regarding the ongoing crisis in Bangladesh and expressed concern regarding the safety of minorities, especially Hindus, which was highlighted in the Indian statement after the telephone conversation. The Bangladesh situation omission from the White House readout did create some murmurs across Delhi corridors. India is now making efforts to have its own Europe policy, which is not curated with a Russia factor in mind. For several decades post-independence, the Cold War era, the block approach mostly guided India's foreign policy, especially where Russia was involved. Russia has been a long-standing ally of India and is also one of the biggest exporters of defence equipment. While maintaining silence on sensitive Russia-related topics has been India's long-standing approach, things began to change in the past few years. There is a growing sense of having an independent need-based foreign policy, amongst the top policymakers. PM Modi initiated the concept of "not a time for war" at multilateral platforms such as G20, which started finding global resonance when vocalising concerns regarding Ukraine and Russia. He upped the narrative with his clear message to Russia during his Moscow visit that permanent solutions could not be found on the battlefield. The joint statement issued post PM Modi's meeting with President Zelenskyy read "The Indian side reiterated its principled position and focus on peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi reiterated the need for sincere and practical engagement between all stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that will have broad acceptability and contribute towards early restoration of peace." The message to global leaders, particularly the US and Russia that the recent PM Modi visit highlighted was that India is willing to engage with any nation, even if they may be in opposite camps, to find the best possible outcomes for itself.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Prospects of privatisation of PSUs are bleak

As the Modi government shifts its strategy towards 'prudent public wealth management' the prospect of privatising PSBs are increasingly unlikely.



UTTAM GUPTA



Announcing Modi - government's policy on disinvestment of central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22 the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman had talked of privatizing two public sector banks (PSBs) and one insurance company. A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Central government has majority share holding of more than 50 percent. Disinvestment refers to sale of its shares to private investors. When, such sale results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to private entity, this is termed as privatization. The disinvestment plans have met with disappointing results so far. During 2021-22, against a target of Rs 175,000 crore, the actual proceeds from share sale of CPSUs were a meager Rs 15,440 crore. During 2022-23, against a target of Rs 65,000 crore, the actual was Rs 31,059 crore. For 2023-24, the actual was Rs 14,564 crore against a target of Rs 30,000 crore which itself was watered down from the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 51,000 crore. As for privatization, except for the sale of Air India to the Tata Group during 2021-22, the government has little to show. Apart from offloading 3.5 percent of its shareholding in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), it is selling its stake in the IDBI Bank. The process of selling the latter that started in May 2021 is likely to get consummated during the current FY. However, it can't be termed as privatization as already the bank was operating as a private lender even as the Centre became its passive shareholder consequent to capital infusions to manage former's bad debt losses. Currently, the government and the LIC collectively own 94.72 per cent of IDBI Bank with shareholding of 45.48 percent and 49.24 percent respectively (the remaining 5.28 percent is with Public shareholders). Of this, the Centre plans to sell a 60.7 percent stake, comprising 30.5 per cent of its own and 30.2 percent of LIC's. Will the Centre take up selling of PSBs and an insurance company - as promised in the 2021-22 budget? It seems unlikely. If, that were to be the case,



AS FOR PRIVATISATION, EXCEPT FOR THE SALE OF AIR INDIA TO THE TATA GROUP DURING 2021-22, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LITTLE TO SHOW. APART FROM OFFLOADING 3.5 PERCENT OF ITS SHAREHOLDING IN THE LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION (LIC), IT IS SELLING ITS STAKE IN THE IDBI BANK.

the government ought to have set a target for 'receipts from disinvestment' in its budget for 2024-25. But, it hasn't even as the FM has made a provision for Rs 50,000 crore under the head "miscellaneous capital receipts". This has happened for the first time in a decade. Second, Team Modi is reviewing its strategy to shift its focus from selling CPSUs to what it euphemistically describes as 'prudent public wealth management (PWM)', supporting not-for-profit enterprises, and ensuring strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors'. Banking, insurance and financial services (BIFS) were one of the four strategic sectors mentioned by Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech for 2021-22. BIFS also qualifies for not-for-profit enterprises categorization especially when it comes to PSBs which are expected to contribute to realizing social objectives such as reaching out banking services to remote and inaccessible areas; making concessional credit available to small and marginal farmers and other vulnerable/deprived sections of the society; funding infrastructure development particularly in areas (for instance, rural roads, housing for the poor etc) where private banks may not be so keen to come. Modi - government's commitment to a strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors juxtaposed with support for not-for-profit enterprises clearly signals that it has lost interest in privatizing PSBs and insurance companies. Third, unlike the previous two terms when BJP had an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, in the third term, it depends on the support from its major allies namely TDP and JD (U) for implementing far reaching decisions such as privatization. Moreover, in the current political environment wherein even a small move such as 'lateral entry' of specialists from the private sector (the sole intent

behind this step was to deliver more effective governance in sync with contemporary challenges) is opposed by the opposition parties forcing the government to retreat, it wouldn't be inclined to make a big move such as privatization of PSBs. About a decade back, many of PSBs were on the brink. The present dispensation has made a lot of efforts to them pull back. These included amongst others capital infusion, enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for expeditious resolution of non-performing assets (NPAs), banks consolidation into fewer entities for achieving scale and greater efficiencies, computerization of bank branches and so on. Today, they are robust and healthy even as the performance of some of them is even better than private banks. But, we shouldn't miss the big picture. Fundamentally, most of the ills associated with the functioning of CPSUs including PSBs have a lot to do with their continued majority ownership (share holding of more than 50 percent) and control by the government. This brings them under a plethora of controls and monitoring/surveillance/vigilance and has the effect of shackling its management. Armed with it, the political establishment makes all board level appointments viz. CMD/MD etc and deposes bureaucrats on a bank's board to represent its overwhelming ownership. In other words, the entire board is geared to listen to his master's voice (read the political bosses) when it comes to taking policy decisions or even in its day-to-day running. In the past, meddling in the affairs of PSBs took the form of what came to be known as the cult of 'crony capitalism'. The businessmen patronized by the ruling class managed loans on considerations other than merit and got them ever-greened (taking

a new loan to payback the earlier one). Neither, the banks insisted on repayment, nor the defaulters had any sense of fear as those who were expected to take action, chose not to. In the past, the political brass also rode piggy back on PSBs for absorbing losses/liabilities created by populist policies such as supplying power to farmers and households at subsidized rates, (or even free in some states). Be it a spate of bail-outs given to power distribution companies (discoms) or loan waivers given to farmers etc, these inflicted heavy loss on PSBs. The idea of disinvesting PSBs should be seen as a befitting response to the dire need for reducing bureaucratic interference and granting autonomy to their management for speedy decisions and improved functioning. It was first mooted by the NDA - dispensation under the then, prime minister Vajpayee (1999-2004). It had proposed reduction in government's shareholding in PSBs to less than 50 percent initially and eventually to 33 percent. In 2015, a RBI committee headed by P Nayak recommended setting up of a bank investment company (BIC) where all government shares in PSBs will be vested and divestment of its shareholding in all PSBs to below 50 percent. It also proposed setting up of an autonomous Bank Boards Bureau (BBB) to select their top management. In 2020, the RBI recommended reduction in the shareholding of the government in six top PSBs to 51 percent. In a follow up meeting, it went a step further to recommend reduction in government's stake to 26 percent. The 2021-22 budget announcement to privatize two PSBs was a good step forward, though belated. To put it on the backburner now doesn't bode well for banks' health in the long-term. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Global interference and India's economic sovereignty

As India rises to become a global superpower, it faces challenges not only from within but also from international entities that aim to disrupt its economic and political stability

The prosperity and progress of a nation hinge on the efficiency of its governance, particularly in upholding the rule of law by those in top constitutional, administrative, and judicial positions. This also involves the transparency and accountability of regulatory regimes across various sectors of law and economy. In our modern era, characterized by freedom, equality, and democracy, many developing countries have emerged from the shadows of colonialism. Despite independence, the remnants of colonialism persist in governance and social structures, and former colonial powers often carry a lingering sense of superiority. This is evident in their interventions in other countries, where they create



V K BAHUGUNA

political and economic crises under the guise of promoting cosmopolitan values. These interventions are particularly harmful to independent and dynamic leaders in Third World countries. A recent example is the destabilization of the Hasina Wazed government in Bangladesh, fueled by agitation with foreign backing. In recent years, such external forces have formed an international cartel, often

referred to as the "deep state." This group, supported by a segment of religious extremists and a political elite, acts against their own country's interests for selfish reasons. This insidious influence is spreading to stable democracies like India. Direct military intervention is difficult in modern times, so these forces resort to destabilizing social, political, and economic fabrics with the help of internal collaborators. They present themselves as the arbiters of morality, creating narratives to discredit certain groups, undermine social harmony, and ultimately destabilize economies. Their goal is to generate public unrest and overthrow democratically elected governments by eroding the state's capacity to manage public welfare. This is a fallout of globalization and an attempt to reassert hegemonic control. One prominent example is the Hindenburg Research firm, which targeted Adani Enterprises last year, leading to a severe crash in the Indian stock market and a major political storm just before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress party seized the opportunity, and the Supreme Court ordered an inquiry, which eventually discredited Hindenburg's report. However, this month, Hindenburg targeted the SEBI Chairperson, accusing her of investing in Adani companies abroad. Both SEBI and Adani Group denied any wrongdoing, explaining that the investments were made before she took on her



role at SEBI. Similar uproar was seen when the Rafale aircraft deal was signed in 2015. When Hindenburg first targeted Adani, it made a profit of \$4 million, while Adani lost \$153 million in market value. However, this time, the public saw through the ruse, dismissing it as the tantrum of a disgruntled entity. It is common for companies to

establish subsidiaries abroad, and such activities are always under regulatory surveillance, operating within the law. Historically, India lacked a robust private sector, with Tata being the only notable corporate entity during the era of the "license raj." However, thanks to economic liberalization under the Narsimha Rao government, the private sector has grown significantly and now contributes around 27% of the country's GDP. The Indian private sector is now a crucial engine for employment, service delivery, capital flow, and industrial growth. The public sector, on the other hand, focuses on activities serving the general public, funded by tax revenues. Gautam Adani's conglomerate plays a central role in India's ambition to

become the third-largest economy, with its involvement in key sectors like electricity, port management, mining, natural gas, and infrastructure. Among the top taxpayers in 2022-2023, only the State Bank of India (SBI) was a public sector entity, with Reliance Industries leading the list, followed by SBI and HDFC. The GDP at constant prices in May 2024 was tentatively estimated by the Indian Statistical Office at Rs173.82 lakh crore, with real Gross Value Added at Rs158.74 lakh crore for 2023-24, marking an 8% increase over the previous year. Various private sector industries played a pivotal role in this growth. Adani Group dominated the list of top value gainers in 2022, adding Rs 8.42 lakh crore to investor wealth.

When any country challenges the supremacy of these foreign powers, they attempt to destroy it by spending vast sums of money. The 'Make in India' initiative is gradually positioning Adani as a global industrial leader, alongside other Indian giants like Ambani, Tata, and Mahindra. India's technological advancements and the societal contributions of companies like Tata are gaining recognition. This is precisely why foreign forces forge alliances with frustrated leaders and international elements, funding them to gain control over governance. The current government must take stronger actions rather than merely offering rhetoric. (The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)

EXPLORING DELHI'S HIDDEN FORTRESSES

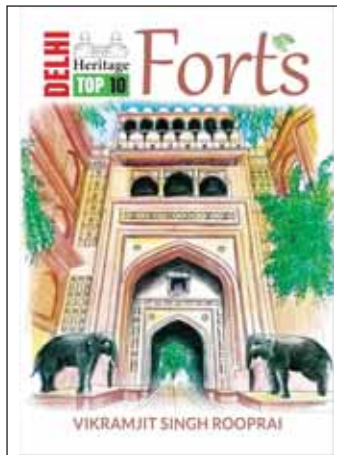
Photo: Pankaj Kumar

Discover the rich history and architecture of Delhi's forts in *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts* by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai, offering an engaging and insightful exploration of the city's past, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is an engaging journey of ten prominent forts in Delhi. As part of the Delhi Heritage series, this book dives deep into the architectural and historical significance of these forts, offering readers a comprehensive view of Delhi's rich past. Rooprai, a dedicated heritage activist and educator has put together a guide that blends historical facts with intriguing stories, making it accessible to both history enthusiasts and casual readers. One of the highlights of the book is how it sheds light on not just the famous forts like the Red Fort and Purana Qila, but also on the lesser-known ones, such as Qila-i-Rai Pithora and Nai ka Kot. Rooprai takes readers on a journey through

the history of these forts, detailing their construction, purpose and the events they have witnessed over centuries. The book stands out because it goes beyond the typical tourist information, offering a more detailed look at how these forts fit into the broader historical and cultural context of Delhi. The book opens with a vivid portrayal of the Red Fort, a symbol of Mughal grandeur. Rooprai captures the momentous day of 18 May 1648, when Emperor Shahjahan inaugurated this architectural marvel. The description of Shahjahan's grand entry, with Prince Dara Shikoh showering him with coins, sets the tone for the book's rich narrative style. The Red Fort's formidable outer walls, crowned with ornate chhatris and punctuated by five

principal gates, are brought to life through Rooprai's evocative prose. Following the Red Fort, Rooprai delves into the history of Purana Qila, a site steeped in both myth and historical significance. The fort is traditionally believed to be built on the grounds of Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas. Rooprai skillfully interweaves folklore with historical facts, recounting legends such as Lord Krishna's demand for Khandavprastha. The Bada Darwaza (large gate) of Purana Qila stands as an attestation to its historical importance and Rooprai's detailed descriptions make it clear why it has been a must-visit site since the British era. Tughlaqabad Fort, the largest surviving fort in Delhi, takes centre stage next. Commissioned by Sultan



Ghiasuddin Tughlaq between 1321-1323 CE, the fort's imposing ruins and its strategic significance during the Tughlaq dynasty are examined. Rooprai brings to light the fort's intriguing lore, including the

reputed curse by Sufi mystic Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya that condemned it to remain abandoned. The fort's role in defending Delhi from Mongol invasions underscores its military importance, a facet Rooprai explores with both depth and clarity. The book also highlights the contributions of Feroz Shah Tughlaq, whose focus on public works and irrigation earned him the title 'Father of the Indian Irrigation System'. Rooprai describes Feroz Shah's efforts to improve the lives of his subjects and his legacy of equality and prosperity. This section provides insight into the ruler's priorities and the architectural innovations that characterised his reign. Salimgarh, another significant fort, is

introduced as a strategic outpost built by Islam Shah Suri, son of Sher Shah Suri. Rooprai's account of Salimgarh's strategic location on a riverine island near the Yamuna and its role in defending Delhi adds a layer of understanding to the city's fortification network. Rooprai's narrative is enriched by his ability to convey the fort's historical and cultural significance. His engaging writing style and meticulous research offer readers a window into the past, highlighting how these structures reflect the evolving history of Delhi. The book is peppered with narrative and detailed descriptions that humanise the history of these fortresses, making their stories accessible and compelling. *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts* by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is more

than just a guide, it's a celebration of Delhi's rich historical and architectural heritage. Rooprai's engaging narrative brings these majestic structures to life, making it an invaluable resource for both history enthusiasts and those curious about Delhi's cultural legacy. Through its insightful and meticulously researched content, the book highlights the importance of preserving our historical landmarks and provides a compelling journey into the depths of Delhi's heritage.

BOOK DETAILS:

Book Name & Author: Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai
Price: INR 499
Pages: 214
Publisher: Niyogi Books

NEW ARRIVAL

The Battle of Haji Pir: The Indian Army's Cross-Border Surgical Strike



'The Battle of Haji Pir' by Kulpreet Yadav offers a profound exploration of the 1965 Indo-Pak war, focusing on the pivotal yet often overlooked Haji Pir battle, which was surrendered under the Tashkent Agreement. Yadav's book brings to life the valor and sacrifices of Indian soldiers, making the complexities of military

history accessible to all readers. Yadav's detailed account highlights the strategic maneuvers of the Indian Army during Operation Gibraltar and their critical role in defending Kashmir. The book also delves into the behind-the-scenes diplomacy and concessions made for peace, providing an insider's perspective on the conflict.

With over 15 books to his name, Kulpreet Yadav combines thorough research with engaging storytelling, making 'The Battle of Haji Pir' a compelling read for military enthusiasts and history buffs. Available this September in major bookstores and online platforms.

Human at Work by Richard Lobo



In 'Human at Work,' Richard Lobo, Chief People Officer at Tech Mahindra, delves into the evolving workplace, emphasising the importance of keeping humans at the center of technological shifts. The book explores themes like agile leadership, ethical decision-making, and human-centric technology, offering practical insights and real-world examples. Lobo underscores that every company today, regardless of industry, is fundamentally a tech company, driven by human expertise and strategy.

'Human at Work' highlights the power of micro-transformations to spark significant change, making it a valuable read for HR professionals, managers and anyone navigating today's complex work landscape. Lobo's approach is particularly relevant to the Indian market, with timely discussions on hybrid work models and managing technological disruptions. Available this September in major bookstores and online, this book serves as a roadmap for leading with a human-first mindset in an increasingly digital world.

Genetic Study Refutes Eelam Tamil Origins

A new genetic study reveals that Sri Lanka's Tamil and Sinhala populations are genetically similar, challenging claims of distinct Eelam Tamil origins and questioning the basis for separatist movements

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

An international team of scientists, drawn mainly from Sri Lanka and India, have demolished the concept of Eelam Tamils in the island nation through a comprehensive genetic study. A three-year long molecular biology research spanning across Sri Lanka and India have established that the population in the island nation is homogeneous in nature and there is no scientific basis for the claims by the Tamils that they had their origin in that country. The findings prove that the demand for a separate Eelam (country) for Tamils is bunkum and thousands of Tamils and Sinhalese massacred in the war for Eelam died for a non-existent cause. "The Sri Lankan population, mainly the Sinhala and Tamils, have massive genetic mixing. If the Tamils had their origin in Sri Lanka, their DNA should be visible and discernible. But it is missing," said Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, Department of Zoology, Banaras Hindu University who led the team of scientists in this path breaking research.

The peer-reviewed research paper "Reconstructing the Population History of the Sinhalese, the major ethnic group of Sri Lanka," has been published in iScience, a widely respected scientific portal. While Dr Chaubey led the team of Indian scientists, R Ranasinghe (Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo) led the researchers from the island nation. It may be remembered that Dr Chaubey and a team of researchers from Estonia, Harvard and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (Hyderabad) had demolished the Aryan and Dravidian linguistic theory and proved that both of these groups share the same forefathers. "The analysis based on



Dr Gyaneshwar Chaubey in discussion with a Sri Lankan student of his research team

the frequency of various genetic mutations showed a tight cluster of Sinhalese and Tamil populations, suggesting strong gene flow beyond the boundary of ethnicity and language. A further connection of Sinhalese with the West of India has been established based on the traces of DNA segments. Overall in the South Asian context, Sri Lankan ethnic groups are genetically more homogenous than others," said the team leaders.

The study also found that the Sinhala language spoken in the country is a combination of Konkani, Marathi, Sanskrit and Gujarati and reached the island nation through Arabian Sea. According to K M Raghavan, a Sri Lankan historian, the Tamils could have reached Sri Lanka as part of the Kaurava army units hired by the princes of the island nation to fight for them as private army warriors. The Kauravas, who were defeated by the Pandavas in the Mahabharata War took refuge in the East Coast of India and reached Sri Lanka at the invitation of various Kings in the island nation. Following the Portuguese occupation of Sri Lanka, the Kauravas converted to Christianity and their name was

changed to Karavas, writes Raghavan in his book. Ramaswami Wijayabalan, a plantation owner and Tamil scholar based in Colombo, told The Pioneer that the Tamils in north and north east of Sri Lanka are descendants of migrant workers from Malabar province in present day Kerala. "The Tamil they speak, their food habits and social life have their origin in Malabar. The priests in temples in North and East are addressed as Gurukkal as they had come here for teaching martial arts and offering poojas," said Wijayabalan. He asked how puttu, appam etc became the staple food of the Jaffna and Batticaloa Tamils. Interestingly, Ceylon and Colombo find mention in novels and short stories in Malayalam whereas the same is not that common in yesteryear literary works in Tamil, said Josephine Jayashanthi, leading novelist in Tamil Nadu. Dr S Kalyanaraman, Indologist of repute, concurred with the findings of Dr Chaubey and his team. "You may be able to distort history but you cannot distort science. The study by Dr Chaubey is based on pure science and no force can repudiate the same," said Dr Kalyanaraman who has deciphered the Indus script.

Revolutionising India's Dairy Industry: The Inspiring Legacy of Verghese Kurien

MS Meenakshi's "Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes" chronicles the transformative journey of the 'Milkman of India,' whose visionary leadership and innovative approach revolutionised India's dairy industry and empowered rural communities, writes **TEAM VIVA**

Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes by MS Meenakshi is a compelling tribute to the 'Milkman of India,' whose visionary leadership and relentless dedication transformed India's dairy industry and rural economy. This book, part of the Pioneers of India series, meticulously chronicles Kurien's journey from a young, unconventional engineer in Anand, Gujarat to becoming the architect of the White Revolution and a pivotal figure in post-Independence India.

MS Meenakshi vividly captures the essence of Kurien's pragmatic leadership and his many accomplishments in the development of cooperative societies, which became a bedrock of India's dairy sector. The book emphasises Kurien's commitment to sustainable development and social entrepreneurship, highlighting how he championed the interests of rural stakeholders. Through initiatives like the creation of AMUL and the Institute of Rural Management in Anand, Kurien not only revolutionised dairy management but also spurred significant changes in rural socio-economic structures, industries, and developmental policies. One of the book's strengths lies in its detailed portrayal of Kurien's partnerships with



entrepreneur whose initiatives under Operation Flood linked the entire country through milk, a staple necessity. Meenakshi's portrayal of Kurien's character is both respectful and intimate, offering a balanced view of a leader who was as astute as he was compassionate. MS Meenakshi's writing is both informative and engaging. Her expertise is evident in the way she presents complex economic and social concepts in a manner that is accessible to readers, making Kurien's achievements all the more inspiring. *Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes* is more than just a biography, it's an inspiring roadmap for future thinkers and leaders in sustainable development. It reminds us of the power of visionary leadership and the impact that one dedicated individual can have on a nation. For anyone interested in the history of India's economic development, social entrepreneurship or the story of a man whose legacy continues to feed millions, this book is a must-read.

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BOOK DETAILS:

Price: INR 299
Format: Paperback
Pages: 176
Publisher: Paper Missile Imprint, part of the Pioneers of India series by Niyogi Books.

