



# THE PINE CHRONICLE

News, Views and Creative Expressions

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## ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong which seeks to provide to the world outside, News, views and Creative Expressions from members of the IIMS family. Nuksa is a Khasi word meaning example or sample and as the Pine Tree is almost synonymous to Shillong and our beautiful campus, hence the name Nuksa, The Pine Chronicle.

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#### Disclaimer:

*The Views expressed here are not necessarily reflective of the views of the Editorial team or of the Institute*

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### Vision

To become an internationally recognized management Institute with a global outlook grounded in Indian values.

### Mission

To generate and disseminate knowledge in all aspects of management education for sustainable development and to develop innovative leaders with strong ethical values.

### Core Values

- ❖ Openness to new ideas and experiences
- ❖ Intellectual freedom
- ❖ Self-experimentation and creative pursuit
- ❖ Adherence to fair, just and ethical practices
- ❖ Compassion for others

## EDITORIAL

Though every mortal is intrinsically aware of his or her own mortality yet it is probably in the nature of things for humans to behave as though they were immortal. Hence for some, power, position, wealth, and possessions are all that seem to matter in life, little realising that none of these would make an iota of difference after their death. In the race to possess more of these material symbols, humans often sacrifice the essentials of humanity and promote strife, pain, anger, suffering and even death. Thankfully, a miniscule number of mortals are gifted with the insight to achieving immortality by creating institutions that will endure beyond their own mortality. These institutions are based on lofty idealism and principles worth emulating. So generations of individuals become part of these institutions for no other reason than to hold aloft the philosophy of the institution. Such principles and philosophies are so designed that individuals subscribing to those values and working for it automatically become a part of a process of both self-elevation and achieving larger social good. For a country the size and antiquity of India, the number of institutions that have been created in its recent history is amazingly far and few between. A Chance meeting between Jamsetji Tata and Swami Vivekananda, on a ship in 1893 travelling from Japan to Chicago, resulted in the planting of the seed of an idea about a

Science Research Institute which led to the founding of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 1911. It is considered to be one of the finest institutions at a global level. The story of IIM Ahmedabad is linked to the vision and passion of primarily two remarkable individuals, Vikram Sarabhai as Chairman and Ravi Mathai as its first full time director. The philosophy and practices laid down in the nascent institute ensured that it emerged as one of the best management institute and create an army of individuals who have provided management leadership to organisations all over the world. AMUL and the IRMA display in their DNA the contribution of Verghese Kurien, the man who brought about the white revolution in India. Interestingly, he happened to be the cousin of Ravi Mathai. Both AMUL and IRMA are institutions par excellence and numerous countries have sought to emulate these institutions. Some of the other great institutions of Modern India are the ISRO and the DRDO. To both these institutions was linked the name of the missile man of India, our late President Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam. By some strange sleight of fate, he was also associated with IIM Shillong as a visiting faculty and breathed his last while delivering a lecture. This unfortunate incident gives us the necessary traction of being associated with his name. But would it also provide the necessary impetus for laying the right foundation for creating a great institution? Would that institution be based on values and philosophies comparable to those of IISc, ISRO and IIMA or shall we be happy to emulate form and show rather than content, happy with the delusion that content would follow form and not the other way round. It is this delusion that helps create a mindset that believes that if a headache can be mitigated with a pain killer why look deeper as to what caused it at the first place! All great institutions have believed that excellence is a journey and not a destination and every action or even inaction, great or small, contributes towards it. Are we ready to embark on this journey of excellence yet?

## TIMELINE

### IIM Shillong welcomes Director Prof D P Goyal



IIM Shillong welcomed Prof D P Goyal who joined as its third Director on 27th March 2019. Before joining IIM Shillong, Prof Goyal, had been associated with MDI Gurgaon, IMT Ghaziabad and Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala in various capacities. With 32 years of teaching, research and administrative experience with advanced training from IIM Ahmadabad, IIM Kolkata and IIT Bombay, accentuated by recognition received in excellence in academics and research, Prof Goyal is a recipient of exemplary merit certification and scholarship, including Best Professor award and best research paper award. Prof Goyal has successfully supervised 14 PhD research scholars, and has over 60 published research papers in refereed national and international journals of repute.

### MDP on “Change Management “

A MDP on “ Change Management ” was organized in the Campus for Executives and Officers of POWERGRID from 05th to 09th March 2019. Altogether 22 participants attended the training program. The program was coordinated by Prof. Sonia Nongmaithem and Prof. Rohit Dwivedi.

The 5 days programme was facilitated by in house faculty. The program was designed to facilitate development of capability through reflection and learning from one another and delivered critical learning points on change in behavioral aspects, values and ethics, technology and future of work, strategy and achieving operational excellence at work.

The participants also celebrated International Women’s Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at the Campus along with other Faculty and Officers.

The five day MDP ended with the valedictory function graced by Prof Keya Sengupta, Director-In Charge IIM Shillong, Prof. Harsh Vardhan Samalia –Chairman MDP & Consultancy, Shri B. Anantha Sarma -Executive Director NERTS, Shri Borthakur-GM HR, POWERGRID along with Faculty and Officers from IIM Shillong.



## FROM THE BOOK SHELF

### Gas Wars - Crony Capitalism and the Ambanis

*Paranjoy Guha Thakurta with Subir Ghosh and Jyotirmoy Chaudhuri*

*Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, New Delhi 2014, 570 pages.*

One often reads of authors for whom the issue becomes larger than the self and soon their work takes a life of its own. Probably *The Gas Wars* of Paranjoy Guha Thakurta qualifies as one such work. Written along with Subir Ghosh and Jyotirmoy Chaudhuri, *The Gas Wars Crony Capitalism and the Ambanis* is no ordinary book. The 570 odd pages is certainly a weighty testament to the conviction and grit of the authors, to tell the world a story, that not many would have had the courage to do. The book recounts in minute detail the sordid saga of powerful corporations, and in this case the largest corporate house in India, the Reliance Group, using its formidable clout to corner huge petroleum reserves in the high seas and the Krishna Godavari Basin, and using the same clout to ensure favourable terms that were often conveniently reinterpreted from a pliant government that seemed to bend over backwards to allow Reliance business interests to ride rough shod over sovereign national interests! In the backdrop to this, is added, the tale of the two Ambani brothers engaging in a deadly duel for control of the company and the political alignments and ramifications that it triggered off.

It is often said that the devil lies in the detail and this book goes into extraordinary details, often at the cost of disturbing the flow of the narrative. The minute details of deals, agreements, reports, interviews and what have you, provides the reader with a compelling picture of how government functions (by often dancing to the tune of corporations) and ignoring its mandate of ensuring equity and justice. The authors succeed in establishing, without an iota of doubt about the existence of Crony Capitalism and how it is like a cancer eating into the very foundations of Indian democracy. How political decision making at the highest level including the allocation and change of portfolios of powerful central ministries were being dictated by business considerations are sought to be proved by providing amazing background details. The fact that the authors have vast journalistic experience is quite in evidence here. Though it must be admitted that the details, at times, tests the attention of the reader. But considering the sensitivity of the allegations and the power and clout of the principal protagonists against whom these allegations are made, probably required that a huge mass of minute details was made available in order to establish the legitimacy of the allegations beyond any doubt. In this, the books seems to have succeeded.

That the book deals with incidents, events, personalities and happenings that are still current, as with the gas pricing policy, gives the reader an immediate connect. One also does not fail to notice that the book was ultimately self-published by Paranjoy making one wonder if it is an indication of the reach and power of the corporation! Interestingly, a day after the book was launched in

New Delhi on April 15, 2014, lawyers for RIL and Mukesh Ambani served the first notice on all the three authors and the publishing facilitator Authors UpFront, distributor FEEL Books, the printer, the Internet retailers Amazon, Flipkart and Kobo, and even Deepshikha Shankar, who had forwarded an electronic invitation for the launch function to various people! The notice alleging defamation described the voluminous book as a "pamphlet" and called for a stop on the sale, publication and its distribution and suggested that all existing copies be destroyed, that online publicity be stopped, and an unconditional apology tendered .

A week later, on April 22, 2014, a second legal notice was served, this time from lawyers representing the younger brother Anil Ambani and the conglomerate he heads, ADAG. This notice asked for the removal of the website promoting the book, [www.gaswars.in](http://www.gaswars.in), besides an immediate halt to the sale, publication, distribution and circulation of the book. The authors were also asked to pay "token damages of INR 100 crore" within ten days.

What is probably intriguing is the follow up to this. As Paranjoy writes in the book's dedicated web page <http://www.gaswars.in/reviews.html> " Contrary to what some may presume, Khaitan & Co., representing Mukesh Ambani and Reliance Industries Limited, the country's largest private corporate entity, and Mulla & Mulla, Craigie, Blunt & Caroe, representing Anil Ambani and the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group, have not filed any legal proceedings against me, my co-authors and my associates, in any court of law in India or anywhere else, since the legal notices were served on us in April-May 2014."

Probably, the last chapter on the matter is yet to be written. Be as it may, the book will certainly go down as an example of individual courage and conviction to speak out the truth in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. With people like Paranjoy around Crony Capitalism might still be challenged and democracy might yet survive in India!

#### **Review by:**

*Prof. Sanjeeb Kakoty*

### OFF BEAT

#### A Dive in the Ocean

Ocean, at times, is a metaphor for education. Education, which is not only confined to books and thoughts of scholars but also to the exploration required to build pragmatic, broader outlooks. Such an approach and its output is possible in depths where undercurrents are felt and realised by confluence of streams from varied directions and locations: the confluence of various disciplines, objectives, nationalities and cultures with a common objective of attainment of knowledge.

"Ocean Embraces Streams All and Exploring Promises Reaching Far"- is the motto of the Ocean where we are having a dive, to give

a practical facet to our programme of Managing Business in India and China.

Surrounded by calm hills and piety of peace, located in the realms of the Qingdao city, ZhōngGuó Hǎi Yáng Dàxué (the Ocean university of China), in all its splendour, is a sojourn for the students from around the globe to study, collaborate and enrich their mottos.

And as for us, after an average of 7-8 years of experience, back to the university life, among of numerous departments, disciplines and their pursuers, and an environment as enriching as that of the Ocean University, is no less than the thrill of a plunge in the mighty waves of an ocean.

20th March, we started our journey with inauguration and address by Professor Daihua -Director of OUC followed by speech by the class representative Paras Utkarsh.

As an integral part of the Chinese culture, post inauguration we were invited for a feast with our faculties and programme coordinators. The day ended with warm exchanges and interactions which would further lay a foundation for strong rapport with our Chinese mentors and guides.

From the next day, sessions on areas of Chinese Business Culture, Business Chinese Communication, Marketing studies in China, and China and the World economy commenced in order to help us develop the Chinese perspective of the culture, business and most important, building business relations.

Since mandarin is the language of the region and for us english is no more the medium of communication, even our daily chores demands from us to hone our communication skills in mandarin. Besides, qualifying HSK Certification (Level 1) provided our batch with the impetus to try for next level.

Moreover, here, learning is not only confined to communication and transaction with people, (especially when there is language barrier) but also to make friends. Somewhere, we have to subdue the transactional behaviour and upheave the relation building and harmonious approach!

We seem to receive help everywhere, whether it be a university student or a chauffeurs, a storekeeper or a passer-by, as if they love to help us understand their language and its beauty.

"Change is the only constant in life".

Although there is a time zone gap of only two and half hour, yet a change in overall routine (as we adapt according to the Chinese culture), seems to trigger a state of mindfulness.

Moreover, a change in the variety, recipe and taste of the food available, no matter how cumbersome it is, gives a break to the monotony of the ease of eating, and throws a challenge upon us, to explore, pick, choose and be our own dietician. And definitely, towards the mid of the second week, we are able to find some sustenance, though not without unease.

The Strategy of Kuaizi”, includes the quiet acceptance of our surroundings, the adaptation, and self-control our some of the important milestones for building business relationships with any civilization of the world and cross – cultural exchanges.

Meanwhile, we had a business excursion tour to Tsingtao Beer museum, which not only is a repository of facts, figures and antiques but also displays the working machinery and models, live process of beer manufacturing, marketing strategies and methods adopted to make the Tsingtao the top most brand in China. The museum in itself showcased innovative ways of visitor’s/ customer’s engagement via 3-D experience and giving visitor’s a taste of the raw ingredients (the different grains from which beer is produced).

The cultural complexity as described by the American Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, is like an iceberg with three levels of understanding -the Visible Culture, the Unseen Culture and the Deep Culture. And for a successful cross cultural exchange, its indispensable to understand vivid dimensions of the ice berg.

Apart from the business tours organized by the institute, we have also covered the local markets, high -end malls and tourist spots.

It’s enriching to observe, analyse and experiment what we have learnt in theory so far.

It has been just a few weeks of the immersion, but a plethora of imminent opportunities are yet to be leveraged during this 4 months of our stay in deep Ocean of China: opportunity for take away and avenues to research, innovate and implement.



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## ALUM SPEAK

### Internet of Things and Emergence of Business Analytics



We live in a world today where everything has become available at the click of a button. Bygone are the days when we had to go to a store or be physically present to get things done. Technology has taken over the world in an unprecedented fashion. Multiple movies and documentaries have been released over time on

how this change, if not controlled, might end-up impacting human race. Though the final outcome of this digital revolution is debatable, the immense utilisation of technology in our day today life opens up a unique set of opportunities from education, research and application point of view.

Evolution of digitalisation also brings about a fundamental shift in how businesses operate and make decisions. From a point where we are taught to treat “customer as king”; we are now in a society where the customer is nothing but a “digital identity”. He/she is a being with no face or one with many faces. All we know of this customer is what is presented to us in this digitalised world through browsing history information, social media presence, interests expressed in the digital space and so on. Though this raises an interesting question of how reliable such digital identities are and if we should trust them; it becomes all the more challenging for businesses to reflect on this data, figure out the nuances and subsequently take impactful business decisions.

Given this scenario; new fields of research and science have taken a front-seat in the industry and renewed focus is seen in roles related to digital marketing, cloud computing, big data, machine learning and the likes. Correspondingly, new opportunities are on the rise, especially in the field of data sciences and business analytics. The interesting point about these evolving sciences is how close research and industry work in ensuring that the best and the latest practices are followed. The key reason for this chemistry is the corresponding increase in the “bad users” of the internet or the mal-practioners. They have created adversarial ways to flout the business intelligence in place which in-turn helps them game the system. This close tug-of-war between the good versus abusive users of the internet is what makes this evolving field extremely interesting and rewarding to explore from a learning stand-point.

With the increase in industry opportunities, we should also strive for a system where our business education adapts and includes such learning practices in our curriculum. From a point where we have Finance, Marketing, Strategy & Operations and HR as the key verticals in business education; the future demands for a new science to be included in education which is Data Science and Business Analytics. Let us strive to equip ourselves with enough knowledge to make the internet a safe and trustworthy place to be.

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