

# NUKSA

## THE PINE CHRONICLE

NEWS, VIEWS & CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS

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**Celebrating Academic Excellence  
and Cultural Heritage: IIM Shillong's  
15th Annual Convocation**

### ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong.

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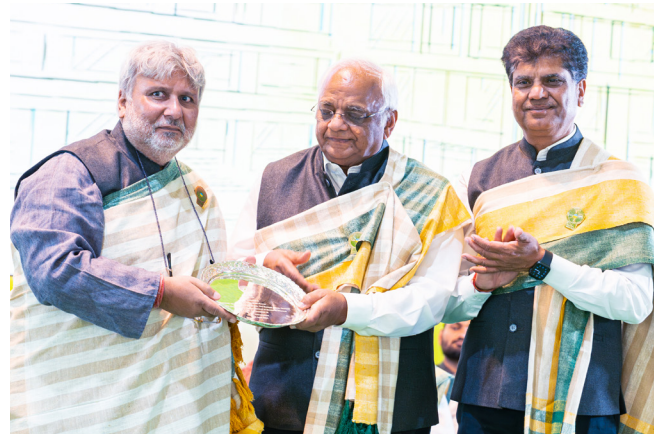
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# COVER STORY

## Celebrating Academic Excellence and Cultural Heritage: IIM Shillong's 15th Annual Convocation



The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Shillong proudly held its 15th Annual Convocation on Wednesday, marking a significant milestone in the academic journey of its students. In this grand event, five Doctoral Scholars were awarded PhD degrees, while 281 students from the PGP 2022-24 batch, 47 students from the PGPEX 2023-24 batch and 16 students from the PGPWE 2022-24 batch, received their well-deserved MBA degrees.

This year's convocation was not just an academic celebration but also a tribute to the unity in diversity that characterises northeast India's rich cultural heritage. In collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for Khadi (CoEK), IIM Shillong introduced a new convocation attire inspired by the traditional Khasi tribal wrap, 'Muka'. These unique body drapes, adorned in the institute's colors of white, green, and yellow, were crafted from Eri silk by the Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdaan Sangh, the oldest Khadi institution in northeast India. Each scarf symbolised the intricate artistry and heritage of the region, encapsulating the metamorphosis of the silk moth into a piece of cultural splendour.

During the ceremony, Shishir Kumar Bajoria, Chairman of IIM Shillong's Board of Governors, delivered a compelling address, congratulating the graduates and emphasizing the pivotal role of skill development in India's future. Drawing inspiration from Swami Vivekananda, he urged the graduates to embrace their social responsibilities and become the torchbearers of India's economic and cultural renaissance.

The Convocation Address was delivered by Narayanan Kumar, Chairman of the Group Corporate Board of the Sanmar Group and Honorary Consul General of Greece in Chennai. Kumar highlighted India's burgeoning global presence and encouraged the graduates to leverage their education for the nation's progress, emphasising the significance of their contributions to India's evolving story on the global stage.

Professor DP Goyal, Director of IIM Shillong, commended the institute's achievements over the past year, spotlighting its efforts to blend internationalisation with Indian culture. He lauded the institute's various initiatives aimed at



bridging global perspectives with local impact, including the signing of twenty-two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with prestigious global management institutions.

The convocation concluded with a heartfelt pledge by the graduating students, instilling a deep sense of pride and accomplishment. As they prepared to embark on their professional journeys, the knowledge and skills imparted by IIM Shillong equipped them to make significant contributions to their respective fields.

The event also recognised outstanding students for their exceptional performance and contributions. Among the PGP 2022-24 Batch, Savi Mahajan received the Chairman's Gold Medal and Rathindra Nath Datta Gold Medal for the highest CGPA, Kolapalli Bhargav Ram was awarded the Institute Silver Medal for the second-highest CGPA and Rohan Basak received the Director's Gold Medal and Professor Ashoke K. Dutta Gold Medal for Best All-Rounder. Akash Tiwari was honored with the Institute Medal for his positive contribution to campus life. In the PGPEX 2023-24 Batch, Dhavalkumar Khambholja received the Chairman's Gold Medal for the highest CGPA, while Surabhi Agrawal was awarded the Director's Gold Medal for Best All-Rounder. Mukesh Sharma received the Chairman's Gold Medal for the highest CGPA in the PGPWE 2022-'24 Batch.

The 15th Annual Convocation was a fitting celebration of academic excellence and cultural pride, setting the stage for the graduates to embark on their future endeavors with confidence and honor.



# FACULTY DESK

## Relevance of Chanakya Arthashastra for Modern India

According to a new world bank report, India is in an advantageous position to navigate global headwinds than other major emerging economies. The Indian economy is resilient and on a growth path, which necessitates a proper ecosystem for statecraft, where Kautilya's framework comes into play. Chanakya understood very early that money is king in Kaliyug and economic development of society is essential to bring harmony. Kautilya believed in giving equal opportunity to all in government positions and coined incentive-based contracts. There are a few things that we need to understand about Arthashastra: firstly the context, secondly it is very poetic and the style of communication is very different from the current time. The philosophy of the text should be translated and interpreted for the present time with proper valid assumptions in a non-partial manner without preconceived notions. India achieved the reputation of the most prosperous nation in ancient times for thousands of years, especially during the reign of the Mauryan Empire, which followed Kautilya's framework. Arthashastra emphasizes the systemic approach to managing the statecraft with a proper understanding of defense, economic development, trade, communal harmony, governance, taxation, landed resources, management of labour and ethics. We need to understand Kautilya Arthashastra to bring lost glory to our nation. We cannot apply the Western development model as famous management guru Peter Senge suggested in his quote, "My intuition is they (India and China) will move somehow together but in distinct ways. But I think the thing that will be common to both of them is that they won't be able to do this without reconnecting to their heritage. They will have to do this as Indians and Chinese. They have learned much from the West but don't have to copy; they can't create a Chinese or Indian version of a



Western model. The Western model itself is bankrupt. It doesn't give enough attention to the human side of development". We need to connect to our heritage to move forward, and Kautilya Arthashastra can be very critical for learning statecraft with the current situation in context.

As per Kautilya, he had three fundamental pillars of economic development: strong defense capabilities, communal harmony and robust governance. Strong defence capabilities require port building, a sizeable strong army, diplomatic effort and gathering and analyzing gathered intelligence. The fighting units needed infantry, cavalry, chariot and elephant divisions. There were six types of troops: Maulabala, Bhrtabala, Srenibala, Mitrabala, Amitrabala and Atavibala. Arthashastra distinguishes between fighters on land and water and describes various kinds of sea equipment. A strong foreign policy compliments defence forces through a six-fold policy, which has gotten extensive attention in the literature defined as vijigishu, i.e., the protocol for the expanding State. Economic development, good governance and national security are essential for a stable country where citizens can observe their Dharma in everyday life, which is the essence of Indian thought and is separate from religion. Arthashastra ensures everyone gets equal treatment and rights for a harmonious society through robust governance.

Public infrastructure is essential for strong governance. Arthashastra suggests that it is the responsibility of the State to invest in trade routes, irrigation channels, building forts, new mines and settlements or buildings. Trade was a significant pillar of the State economy in ancient times, besides agriculture and cattle farming. The State should remove all inter-state and intra-state trade barriers, providing significant revenue-earning potential. Again, to carry a corruption-free and clean administration, Kautilya was very serious about observing the law to fulfill Raj Dharma's needs and freedom of speech, ensuring transparency. The citizens have the right to complete information on the government and the kingdom. The concept is similar to RTI rules, where citizens are encouraged to ask basic questions within the administration to ensure transparency, freedom of speech and protection of property rights.

The State should have a good policy for economic development, for which Kautilya suggested five components that are relevant even today. These components are taxation, trade, labor, land and ethics. We can add Technology to the list of five elements in modern times. The first economic growth driver is Krishi, which is Hindi for agriculture; the other is Pasupalya and it is cattle lending. Land management is essential as agriculture and cattle lending depend on it. Vanijya or trade is vital, especially for mined minerals, resources, wealth, gold, et cetera, across the country and outside. Taxation is helpful for the generation of revenue for the government to be re-distributed for the well-being of citizens. Arthashastra says the tax rate should be one-sixth on the agricultural grown grains and one-tenth on money and other commodities. The king used the tax money for the welfare of the subjects and to help during crisis times. The Arthashastra states that the State should collect taxes only from the ripened economic activity ethically instead of from early, unripe stages of economic activity.

The tax rate should not be very high or low. The citizens may get frustrated or angry by the higher tax rate. There has to be a balance between revenue needs and taxation rates in the country.

The word "Kara" was used to define income tax. Residents must pay one-sixth of their income, similar to the current 15-20% tax rate. Bhaga was a term used for tax payment in cash and varies depending on the country. Arthashastra discusses the wealth tax on ultra-rich citizens for equal distribution of wealth in society. Kautilya understood that accumulating immense wealth with few individuals is a societal problem. There is mention of different types of taxes such as Sales Tax: Vyagi; occasional levy of taxes on the goods: Bali; and water tax: Udakabhaga. A house owner using water from a reservoir next to his house has to pay extra irrigation tax for the privilege of using a public facility. The State levied different kinds of taxes in ancient times. The Kautilya tax system raises questions about the Indian tax system, such as "No income tax for wealthy farmers," et cetera. Kautilya believed in the role of the State as the Sun, which evaporates water from all over the landmass to distribute at the place of need in the form of rain.

Arthashastra talks extensively about trade at a large scale and its utility in generating revenue for the State. Contrary to how we have evolved, Kautilya preferred imports far more than exports. Modern management gives more importance to export competitiveness. Kautilya proposed that accumulating resources leads to better value addition by citizens and suggested import exemptions on high-value items such as gold and gems. Kautilya believed in proper organisational structure to manage the trade headed by Panyadhaksha, the superintendent of trade. He has responsibilities like fixing the price of commodities and looking after investment capital considering the demand and supply in the market. A team of surveyors assists Panyadhaksha by visiting the various places in the kingdom. Sansthadhaksha helps him safeguard consumer interest, and Sulkadhyaksa ensures that customs duties for imports and exports are taken care of at the border. The customs tariff is regulated based on supply, demand and overall interest of the country. Arthashastra also talks about internal trade in the country, safety measures, insurance and standardisation of weights and measures used in the transaction.

Land management is discussed extensively in Arthashastra, where the land is owned by the State and leased to the citizens for general well-being



and revenue generation for the State. The citizen can use the land for agriculture, mining, setting up industry and more, through the sharing of revenue with the government. Although Arthashastra does not discuss the private sector, the philosophy is similar to the current public-private partnership (PPP) mode. Also, the government should occupy and restore the unoccupied land. The government can build infrastructure like an irrigation network on unoccupied land and lease with appreciated utility.

Kautilya describes in detail managing labour by providing the right mix of servings, sanctions, and job security to address the moral hazard issue. The ideas of incentives based on individual needs and capacity were innovative in those ancient times. The quote captures the essence of his concept of man management: "The miser should be won over through wealth, the proud man by offering respect, the fool by flattery and learned and won by fruitfulness." It shows that different people's needs vary depending on their skills and traits. Arthashastra describes the salary level of government officials in units of Pana, which was the country's currency around that time.

King is the most critical component in state management, as suggested by Arthashastra. The ruler should be knowledgeable, self-disciplined and have an ethical standard superior to ordinary people as he creates an example in society. The King should be a law-abiding citizen and absorb various kinds of knowledge. He should develop a critical thinking ability captured by the term "Anvishiki" in Arthashastra. Kautilya focused on Yogakshema or Lokakshama, which essentially talks about all country residents, such as citizens, foreigners, animals and flora and fauna. Kautilya believed that the security of citizens and the welfare of society is achievable by the rule of law. All the ministers and State employees also were expected to have higher moral and ethical standards to be part of state machinery. The State should conduct espionage on its employees to ensure that citizens' rights are not compromised and corruption is minimal, as it is nearly impossible to bring it to level zero. All the elements of

Arthashastra work towards creating a welfare society for the development of citizens. The philosophy of Kautilya's Arthashastra is relevant in the modern world, although we cannot apply all the rules mentioned in the current situation. India has lost territory, could not achieve the tag of a developed nation and is overly dependent on foreign powers for defence needs after our independence from colonial powers. On the other hand, the Chinese expanded their boundary, achieved self-reliance in defense and brought a significant portion of the population out of poverty through proper planning and long-term thinking. All the contrasts happened as we did not follow the wisdom provided by our ancestors through Arthashastra. We can use our ancient wisdom in modern times to achieve our lost glory, which India enjoyed for a long time in ancient times. Learning from Arthashastra can be instrumental in moving forward on the path of development and recognition on the world stage.

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**Professor Debasisha Mishra**

# PHOTO GALLERY

## GLIMPSES OF MARCH EVENTS





# TIMELINE

## The Symbolic Scarf: A Testament to IIM Shillong's Ethos



The scarf worn by students at the 15th convocation of IIM Shillong is not merely a piece of fabric; it embodies the institute's ethos of sustainability, compassion and reverence for local culture. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of Ahimsa silk, the scarf project is a fusion of art, sustainability and community support. Crafted by local artisans, the scarves carry stories of resilience and heritage, intricately woven into each thread. They symbolise the institute's commitment to nurturing a more



harmonious and inclusive society. Through this initiative, IIM Shillong honours the rich cultural heritage of the Northeastern region and promotes sustainable practices in silk production. By wearing these scarves, students not only celebrate their academic achievements but also embrace the values of compassion and interconnectedness, fostering a deeper sense of belonging to the institute and the community.

## Igniting Academic Excellence: IIM Shillong's Annual Faculty Strategic Retreat



IIM Shillong recently convened its Annual Faculty Strategic Retreat on the 5th of April, 2024, under the guidance of Mr. Emmanuel David. The event witnessed dynamic discussions and collaborative brainstorming sessions as faculty members united to chart the course for an impactful academic year ahead. With a focus on innovation, pedagogy,



and research, the retreat served as a platform for fostering academic excellence and setting strategic objectives to propel the institute's mission forward. As the faculty reaffirmed their commitment to excellence, the retreat laid a solid foundation for advancing education and leadership at IIM Shillong.

## IIM Shillong Launches New Fitness Centre and Promotes Green Initiatives

In a ceremony graced by Shri Shishir Kumar Bajoria, Chairman BoG, alongside members Shri Atul Kulkarni and Shri Nitin Sharma, a new Fitness Centre was inaugurated at IIM Shillong. The initiative aims to promote health and wellness among the institute's community. Additionally, the Chairman and members of the BoG furthered their

commitment to sustainability by planting saplings, symbolising a greener future. Joined by Professor DP Goyal, Director and the institute's faculty, officers and staff, the event underscored IIM Shillong's holistic approach to fostering both physical well-being and environmental stewardship.



## Shri K Moses IAS Advocates Tech-Driven Economy for Northeast India at IIM Shillong



Shri K Moses, IAS, Secretary of the Inter-State Council Secretariat, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, engaged with officials, researchers from the Dr. Kalam Centre, and doctoral scholars at IIM Shillong. His discourse centred on transforming Northeast India into a technology-driven economy, leveraging its abundant natural resources and human capital for sustainable growth.



Emphasising the region's potential, he underscored the imperative for strategic utilisation of technology to propel economic development. The interaction served as a catalyst for fostering innovation and development in the Northeast, aligning with the vision of a progressive and technologically advanced region.



# IIM Shillong PGPEX 2024-25 Inauguration: A Blend of Vision and Excellence

The twelfth batch of the Post Graduate Programme for Executives (PGPEX) at IIM Shillong was inaugurated amidst fervour and anticipation. Chief Guest of the occasion, Shri Aditya Mittal, CHRO of Citi India, delivered an inspiring inaugural address, highlighting the significance of leadership and adaptability in today's dynamic business landscape. Dr. Lajja Ram Bishnoi, IPS, DGP of Meghalaya, graced the occasion as the Guest

of Honor, highlighted the importance of ethical leadership and social responsibility. Professor D.P. Goyal, Director of IIM Shillong, along with the faculty, officers and staff, welcomed the new cohort, emphasising the institute's commitment to nurturing future leaders. The event marked the convergence of industry expertise, academic rigour and administrative vision, setting the stage for another transformative academic journey.



## Exploring Financial Frontiers: 'Meet the Editor Series' at IIM Shillong



In the 'Meet the Editor Series' 2024-25, IIM Shillong was delighted to host Dr. Jonathan Batten, Professor of Finance at RMIT University, College of Business and Law, Melbourne, Australia, on the 15th of April, 2024. Dr. Batten's renowned expertise in finance led to insightful discussions and valuable knowledge sharing during the event. Attendees had

the opportunity to engage with Dr. Batten, gaining valuable insights into contemporary financial trends and exploring new frontiers in the field. The event was a significant opportunity for finance enthusiasts and scholars to deepen their understanding and to exchange ideas in the dynamic realm of finance.

# Bridging Communities: NE-CCIE's School Connect Colloquium at IIM Shillong



The Centre for Community Impact and Engagement for North-East (NE-CCIE) at IIM Shillong orchestrated a momentous event, the 'SchoolConnect: Engagement through Reflection' colloquium. This gathering convened diverse schools to collaborate and innovate in education. With a mission to cultivate a collaborative platform, stakeholders from various schools actively participated, reflected upon and synergised efforts

to advance educational practices. The initiative aimed not only to foster partnerships but also to stimulate dialogue and collective action towards enhancing educational outcomes in the region. By bringing together educators, administrators and policymakers, NE-CCIE continues to play a pivotal role in bridging communities and driving positive change in Northeast India's educational landscape.

## ODE

### Thomshaphrang Laloo: An Officer and a Gentleman

It was a sunny summer day in 2009 that I decided to visit the (Rajiv Gandhi) Indian Institute of Management, Shillong on an invitation from the then Director, Professor Ashoke K Datta for an interaction with him. The moment I entered the gates of the Mayurbhanj Complex, I found myself in familiar terrain for this was the former NEHU campus where I had done my post graduate studies. As I walked into the director's office escorted by his PA, Biswajit Nandi, I felt at home. Nandi was known to me from my student days in NEHU as he was working in the history department when I had joined for my



MA. Jovial and helpful, Nandi made sure that our journey as students in the University was smooth and easy and soon became a friend to us all. Just before entering I asked Nandi about the Director. He told me that he was a quick thinking man, highly intelligent and someone who could take quick decisions. He also quietly added that he could be quite temperamental!

My meeting with Professor Datta was long and interesting. He sought my views on a number of issues including sustainability, before he suddenly requested me to interact with the students whenever I was free. Then he called someone on the intercom and that person happened to be the Academic Officer. He introduced himself as Thom. A burly young man with a thin moustache and a few straggling strands of beard he appeared confident and sure of himself. Professor Datta enquired of



him about the class schedule and a suitable day was found when I would come in. That was my introduction to Mr Thomshaphrang Laloo.

What was supposed to be a one day interaction went on for a week. By the end of this time I was asked if I would be interested in applying for a regular position and if shortlisted, sit for the interview. I did go through the process and joined as a faculty. Since I was not from a management background, I needed to learn the rules of the game such as designing courses, putting together a course pack, creating detailed class schedules with study materials for each individual class, 360° continuous evaluation, et cetera.

It looked like a formidable challenge. I confided in the Director that the task seemed beyond me. He smiled and asked me to take the help of the PGP office. I went to the office and was met by a beaming Thom. He was, I soon realised, the be all and the end all of the PGP office. He made light of my predicament and said, "Let's have a cup of tea before we get into business." That was the beginning of my friendship with Thom. He took me through the entire system that was being followed in IIM Shillong. He showed me samples of how others were going about their job and explained the importance of doing things in a particular format. In other words, Thom took me over the ropes and helped me establish my credentials as a good faculty. The basics I learnt then stood me in good stead when I subsequently went to teach at IIM Ahmedabad and Bangalore.

Just as Thom was there to guide, counsel and at times cajole me, I realised that he was playing the same role with other colleagues, both teaching and non teaching and most importantly for the students.

His felicity with language be it English or Hindi and his innate empathy for everyone was awe inspiring and worthy of emulation. His rough exterior and brusque mannerism and tone of speaking could not hide the goodness of his soul. You will probably not meet too many of his ilk in your lifetime. Each time I walked

in with a problem, be it an issue with a class schedule, a botched up invigilation duty, an issue with someone's missed class test or a tricky question of discipline, each time he came up with a solution that worked admirably. I remember him always telling me "Don't worry sir, no problem! We Shall sort it out."

For the first fourteen convocations when I acted as the Master of Ceremonies, it was Thom and I who walked through the minute details for a glitch-free event. On the day of the convocation, Thom would be like an army drill master, barking out orders to the graduating students to ensure symmetry for the customary group photographs and strict adherence to standing order in the academic procession and sitting arrangement. I would be at the podium waiting to make announcements and it was Thom standing at a vantage point who would signal to me that the procession was about to enter the hall and that I should begin with the announcements. When the event was over, he made it a point to come and shake my hand and we congratulated each other for a job well done and would then proceed to share a Kwai.

For the 15th convocation which took place on the 3rd of April, 2024, I had hung up my boots as the MC and witnessed it from the stage. Thom too, I am told, watched it from the audience gallery. I didn't meet him that day. Little was I to know that the Kwai we could not share that day was meant to be had in Heaven in the company of God! (bam kwai ha dwar U Blei is a Khasi way of saying someone has passed away). Thom left for his heavenly abode on 29th April 2024 after a brief illness. You will always be remembered as someone who brought sunshine to the lives of everyone you met. May you rest in eternal peace.

**- Sanjeeb Kakoty**

# CONGRATULATORY NOTE

## IIM Shillong Celebrates Team Oroshi's Success in National Case Study Competition

NUKSA proudly congratulates Team Oroshi - Satyam Kumar and Shivam Chauhan and Team Filo - Vipul Baid and Ruby Kumari Mishra, representing the PGP 23-25 batch. Team Oroshi secured the position of National Runner-up, while Team Filo emerged as Northeast Zonal Winners (National Finalists) in the Nation Building Case Study Competition. These achievements reflect their dedication, intellect and commitment to excellence. As they pave their paths forward, we extend our best wishes for their future endeavours. Their success adds yet another feather to the cap of IIM Shillong's legacy of fostering exceptional talent.







**Baruch** COLLEGE



**SUNWAY**  
UNIVERSITY



**CLARK**  
UNIVERSITY



**Carleton**  
University



**Frankfurt School**  
of Finance & Management  
German Excellence. Global Relevance.

**FPT** Education  
**FPT UNIVERSITY**

**W****O****S****O****N****G**  
UNIVERSITY

**Lubin**  
School of Business  
**PACE**  
UNIVERSITY  
Work toward greatness.

**Insper**

**G.R.E.A.T.**



**Alba**  
Graduate  
Business  
School



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SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT



**eada**  
business school  
barcelona



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