# EDUCATIONPIUS

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A. Joseph Dorairaj

uman beings are complex and composite wholes. This complexity can be addressed only by holistic education. Unfortunately, the kind of education imparted in most higher educational institutions is piece-meal and fragmented, with a preponderant focus on rationality. The emotional, spiritual, political and ecological dimensions are glossed over. This is a fallout of the Cartesian paradigm with its excessive emphasis on reason (Cogito, ergo sum).

Holism, which incorporates the idea of the 'whole', is at the roots of holistic education. The UN-ESCO document Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development emphasises that "Education must contribute to the all-round development of each individual - mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values". Holistic education emerged in the 1980s in North America as a reaction against the mechanistic paradigm that resulted in a fragmented, reductionist model of education that left out the meta-rational dimensions of life, among other issues. John P. Miller's book *The Holistic* Curriculum (1988) and Ron Miller's journal Holistic Education Review, launched in 1988, formally inaugurated the campaign

Based on the 'whole' Holistic education is a learning model that helps students develop their intellectual, ethical, and life skills and prepares them for today's world

for a holistic education in the West. In What Are Schools for? Holistic Education in American Culture. Miller cautions, "Holistic education is not to be defined as a particular method or technique; it must be seen as a paradigm, a set of basic assumptions and principles that can be applied in diverse ways". In other words, it is not just another concept or theory, but a way of thinking and

#### Design and implementation

Teachers have a crucial role to play in both the design and implementation of a holistic curriculum. They should ensure that it is multi-disciplinary with a fine balance of core papers and electives, especially those from across disciplines. Care should be taken to include art subjects for a science programme and conversely a couple of basic science subjects in an arts programme.

In addition to languages, a foundational course in Philosophy should be introduced so that students are trained to think critically. Second, teachers should promote experiential learning. There is no point in filling students' minds with information bytes

that have no direct relevance to life. On the contrary, learning by doing not only stimulates the students but also makes learning fun-filled, inferential. and lasting.

Third, teachers should

be both indoors and outdoors people. Traditional classrooms required teachers to operate within four walls. But a holistic curriculum will liberate them from these narrow confines by inviting them to accompany their students on field trips. In fact, they should occasionally shed their professorial garb and spend time with their students in the cafeteria doubling up as friends and mentors discussing literally everything under the sun. In other words, they should be connected to their students and be a beacon as the latter navigate life's narrow lanes and alleys.

Finally, a holistic curriculum demands re-defining of evaluation procedures, which should be designed to test students' thinking skills. In addition to subject knowledge, life skills should also be tested. Teachers should move away from the traditional roles ascribed to them and re-invent themselves as mentors and catalysts.

#### **Benefits**

Imparting a holistic education has many benefits. The primary ones are: helping students develop into well-rounded individuals, interconnectedness, and a global citizenship with a multicultural outlook.

Today, in a world torn asunder by religious, cultural, linguistic, caste and geographic sectarianism, a holistic education can serve as a balm.

Quite a few students are being reduced to intellectual monsters with poor emotional quotient. Many lack a strong ethical base as well. Holistic education can, to some extent, heal fragmentation and divisiveness by taking into account the head, the heart, and the soul, and the synergy that fuses the different elements into a composite whole.

Gandhi's views on holistic education are profound. He declared: "unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair" and added that "a proper and allround development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds pari passu with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child" (All Men Are Brothers).

The writer is Emeritus Professor at Gandhigram Rural Institute Deemed-to-be University, Chinnalapatti, Tamil Nadu. Email:

# **SCHOLARSHIPS**

**NSP Scholarships for Top Class Education for Students with Disabilities** An opportunity offered by the Department of **Empowerment of Persons** with Disabilities (DEPWD). Eligibility: Open to Indian nationals with a disability of 40% or more (as defined in the Rights of Persons with

diploma course in a recognised institution. Annual family income must not exceed ₹8 lakhs. **Rewards:** ₹3.000 (maintenance allowance), ₹2,000 (special allowance), plus benefits.

Disabilities Act, 2016) and

are pursuing a UG, PG or

**Application:** Online Deadline: October 31 www.b4s.in/edge/STCE1

#### Sitaram Jindal **Foundation Scholarship Scheme**

An initiative by the Sitaram Iindal Foundation. Eligibility: Open to students in Class 11 ad 12 or in an ITI, diploma, UG, or PG programme and have met the minimum percentage requirement in their previous qualifying

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**Application:** By post to: The Trustee, Sitaram Jindal Foundation, Jindal Nagar, Tumkur Road, Bengaluru -560073

Deadline: Round the year www.b4s.in/edge/SJS2

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tuition fees **Application:** Online Deadline: January 31, 2025 www.b4s.in/edge/DIPB4

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

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#### Off the Edge

Do you feel uncertain about your career options? Want to understand how to choose your subjects for higher studies? Are you low on self-confidence and doubting yourself? Send your questions to Nandini Raman, practising counsellor and trainer. Write to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with Off The Edge in the subject line.

# Aligned to your goals

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help



Nandini Raman

I have a UG degree in Biochemistry and want to do an M.Sc. Medical Biochemistry in the U.S., the U.K. or Canada. But I don't want to take an English language test. Is there some other solution? If not, how can I prepare for the IELTS? Bavadharini

Dear Bavadharini,

Avoiding an English Language Test is rarely possible. Some universities may waive the requirement if you can submit a letter from your college confirming that English was the medium of instruction for your UG degree. Others offer pathway programmes or pre-sessional English courses that may exempt you from taking standardised English tests. A few offer conditional admission where you first enroll in an English language course and then proceed to your degree programme upon successful completion.

The IELTS has four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Familiarise yourself with the format and types of questions in

Enrol in a coaching class that provides structured guidance and feedback. Listen to English podcasts, news, and lectures regularly; read a variety of English newspapers, journals and books and practice with IELTS listening and reading practice tests. Familiarise yourself with the IELTS writing tasks and .practice regularly. Speak in English with people and record yourself to evaluate and improve your pronunciation and fluency. Take practice tests to assess your progress and get used to the test timing.

I finished Mechanical Engineering in 2021. I have been taking the **UPSC** and other state service exams but have not cleared any. What are my options? Arjun

Get a career profile done to identify your interest and passion skills and certifications. Focus on specific development across technical areas relevant to your field (e.g., CAD/CAM software certification, Six Sigma certification), management and soft skills, as these will make you more job ready. Check out core Mechanical Engineering openings in the private sector across technical, sales, marketing, and operations and identify the

Explore research programmes that align with your career goals and opportunities for scholarships or financial aid.

Consider pursuing a Master's degree (M.Tech or MBA) to specialise in a specific area or to change career tracks once you are clear about the current market need/gap you want

Network and connect with professionals in your industries through LinkedIn, industry events, and alumni networks to gain insights and potential job leads.

My daughter finished the six-year Pharm. D. course in Bengaluru and worked in a start-up for 13 months. But she feels the job is that of a regular pharmacist (which requires only a diploma). What are the career prospects for Pharm.D? Satyanarayanas

Dear Satyanarayana, She could be a clinical pharmacist in a hospital, clinic, or healthcare institution; a consultant pharmacist in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or home healthcare agencies; a pharmacovigilance specialist in a pharmaceutical company, a regulatory agency; a clinical research associate in a contract research organisations (CROs), pharmaceutical companies, academic research centres; a medical science liaison (MSL), who acts a bridge between pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers, providing scientific and clinical expertise; or an academician or researcher in

colleges, universities, and research

I have not cleared the UPSC exam in three attempts. I am out of touch with programming skills. I am interested in social service. How can I get jobs in NGOs or in schools? Deepanshu

Dear Deepanshu,

Given your background, you can consider jobs in NGOs under Technology and IT Support and provide technical support, manage IT infrastructure, and implement technology solutions for NGOs or as a Data Management Analyst where you might need to collect, analyse, and report data to support NGO programmes and initiatives. Social media and digital marketing are sought-after today to manage social media platforms, create digital content, and run online campaigns for fundraising and awareness. You could also be a project coordinator and manager or programme development officer.

Jobs at schools depend on their need but you could look at being an IT support specialist, educational technology coordinator, and so on.

You will need to upgrade some of your current skill sets, brush up your concepts in areas relevant to the roles that you are interested in (e.g., IT skills, data analysis, project management) and get some new certifications if possible to be current and relevant. Start by offering your skills as a volunteer in NGOs or schools to gain practical experience and demonstrate your commitment. Check job portals specific to NGOs (e.g., DevNetJobs, Idealist) or school websites for job openings. Create a professional LinkedIn profile highlighting your skills and interests in social service and connect with professionals in NGOs and schools.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

Shylaja Menon

ccording to a 2023 National Library of Medicine study, the excessive screen time that youngsters are being exposed to today during critical phases of their development will lead to mild cognitive impairments as they enter early to middle adulthood. Even worse, the study predicts that this will cause an increase in the rates of earlyonset dementia at a later stage. While health authorities currently estimate a twofold increase, this study expects a potential four-to-six-

fold spike in dementia rates. But this projection is more than just statistics on a page. It is embodied in the digital behaviour of today's teenagers who are tethered to a smartphone or digital device for an average of six hours a day. The effects of this are already being felt. Educators and student advocates have sounded the alarm over how an over-reliance on screens can undermine the foundations of learning.

Another study by the National Library of Medicine revealed that, for secondary students, pivotal learning experiences - concentration, engagement, ability to grasp concepts, and even selfworth as learners – suffered significantly when classes were held online rather than in physical classrooms. Countless students grapple with distracting devices, struggling to disengage from Help them disconnect

As students navigate an increasingly digital world, it is up to educators to help them reconnect with the real world



the constant pull of entertainment, social media, and even educational apps.

# Steps to take

In this digital muddle, educational institutions are uniquely positioned to guide students in striking a healthy balance by seizing this opportunity to facilitate true disconnection and meaningful reconnection with the physical world.

Among many remedies, the most powerful is to protivities within academic curricula. Not only does this provide a much-needed respite from screens, but also offers a multitude of benefits for overall well-being. This can be done by mandating daily physical education or activity periods for all classes; fostering a culture of sports through inter-class competitions; integrating mindfulness practices into the daily timetable; and over-

hauling outdated play-

mote sports and physical ac-

advocate and inspire an active lifestyle. Apart from this, student

grounds into fitness hubs that

achievements outside academics should be recognised and celebrated. Inviting role models and ambassadors of healthy lifestyles to motivate students is another step. Outdoor initiatives such as hiking, camping, environmental stewardship and more can be developed through programmes and partnerships with local organisations.

All this will help youngsters cultivate invaluable life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and social interaction and help them develop into well-rounded individuals. Crucially, physical exertion allows release of pent-up energies and alleviates stress levels. Numerous studies have shown that regular exercise increases focus and concentration, and improves cognitive function.

As students continue to navigate an increasingly virtual world, educational institutions need to take a proactive approach. Students must be educated on the benefits of moderation while being given opportunities to disengage from devices and reconnect with the physical world.

Educators can thus help create a generation of balanced grounded individuals who can thrive academically while leading physically and mentally vibrant lives.

The writer is Principal, The Shri Ram Universal School, Bengaluru

# **SAVE THE DATE**

# Education fair

Education in Ireland is holding an Education Fair in Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru as part of its #StudyEmeraldIsle campaign to offer information on courses, post-study work opportunities and study visa application process. When and Where: September 28 at The Lalit, Delhi; October 5

at Taj Connemara, Chennai;

https://t.ly/P3b4R

# Admissions and

The University of Essex, the U.K., invites applications for its Master's programmes in Public Policy, Business Analytics, Applied Science, Data Science, AI, International Law and Psychology. Last date: November 11

For eligibility criteria and other details, visit www.essex.ac.uk/

October 6, Taj Vivanta, Bengaluru The University of Auckland

High Achievers Scholarship for the 2025 intake. Available to Indian students enrolling in undergraduate degrees, PGDip or Masters programme.

For details, visit

https://t.ly/RPshi

invites applications for its India

Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development (SCMHRD) invites applications for its MBA programme. Eligibility: Bachelor's degree from a recognised institution

with at least 50%; Valid score in Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP) 2024 www.snaptest.org/

The Indian School of Business

(ISB) has launched a Post **Graduate Programme for Young** Leaders (PGP YL). Eligibility: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in any discipline. Valid GMAT or GRE (centre-based test only) or CAT

Details at https://t.ly/9tz5S

scores.

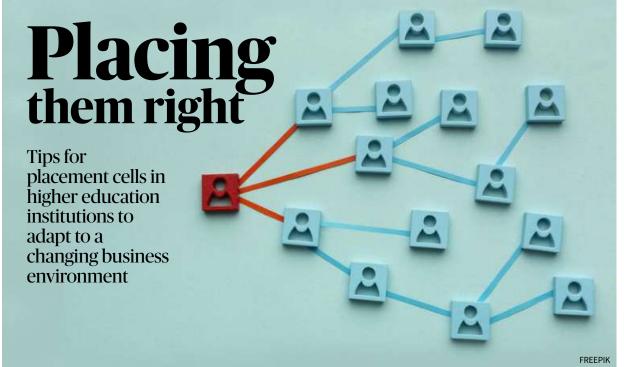
#### Mathew C.D. **Chunkapura**

oles and designations and industry mands lead to changes in the recruitment processes. Therefore, placement cells in higher education institutions also need to reorient their operations to help students get ahead in a changing environment.

#### **Improve visibility**

The first step is to improve the visibility of the placement cell. This can be done through an effective use of social media. Tools like LinkedIn and Rocket Reach can help the institute improve their net-

With the increasing use



of webinars in the post-CO-VID era, this is a useful mechanism to familiarise students with modern trends and hear directly from experts.

With the referral system now in wide use, HEIs must make use of their alumni network. Former students play a pivotal role in enhancing placements. This offers students an edge over other candidates. Therefore, building and maintaining a rapport with alumni becomes crucial.

#### **Partnerships**

Industry-academia collaborations through memorandums of understanding (MoUs) helps the institute host live projects and labs to improve the skills of both faculty and students. Industry-academia inte-

grated projects give students a stepping stone into the companies that are already associated with the institute.

Events such as conclaves and seminars help the institute get their name known. Doing at least one event in a year benefits the academic community and the students by helping build the institute's brand.

Often, the syllabus in a HEI may not cover industry-relevant topics. Therefore, it is important to enable focused internships where students can go beyond the curriculum and gain knowledge and insights into specialised areas.

Apart from facilitating all this, the placement cell should keep in regular contact with the HR departments of various compa-

nies, maintain an updated database of potential recruiters.

It is also important to have a proper placement policy in place so that the institute becomes an equal opportunity provider.

Most corporate companies assess an institute on the basis of student quality and responsiveness of the placement cells.

All placement processes begin with a pre-placement talk that gives students an idea of the company, its application processes and job profiles. Students need to be apprised of the importance of these sessions.

Following these steps will help institutions place their students successfully.

The writer is Assistant Professor and Placement Officer at IIIT Kottayam

# Across time and space

Why MBA programmes need to be recalibrated to get students ready for freelancing and remote working



Srinivasan K.

magine a world where your boss is in another country, your colleagues spread across different time zones, and your office happens to be a corner of your living room. This is not a prophetic vision of the future. It is reality for many people today, as the gig economy and remote work are changing how people think about jobs, careers, and business. As traditional 9-5 jobs fade into the background, there is a need for business education – more specifically for MBA programmes – to refocus on the new

environment. Gig economy (characterised by short-term contracts and freelance work) and remote work (where staff can work from anywhere) are leading trends in the job market worldwide and bring flexibility and independence. But they also pose a number of challenges. As more companies adopt these models, MBA graduates need a fresh set of skills in order to stay ahead. This means that business schools should be revisiting curricula to prepare the student for a changing workplace. Rather than lecturebased learning models, envision classes that mimic the gig economy, where students work on real-world projects that enable them to portray their abilities better. This methodology could involve working with peers situated in different places, teaching students how to communicate, and managing tasks remotely, all of which are essential workforce skills.

# **Digital literacy**

In addition, with technology being at the heart of remote work and the gig economy, it would be useful to explore digital literacy and technology in MBA programmes. This should include understanding new tools and platforms that drive remote working, such as Slack for communication, Trello for project management, and Upwork for freelance jobs.

The programme should include training in basic skills for independent practice, such as forming a business entity and running a small back office or negotiating prices and contracts for consulting. It can also provide further motivation for students to build their portfolios through various small side gigs that could be inculcated in existing courses to help students outline their competence and achievements beyond what a traditional transcript

Finally, business schools can make practical experience more available to students simply by increasing career services to include gig opportunities. Instead of trying to place students in full-time jobs, career services can assist in acquiring project work and even side gigs. Career services should also incorporate education and training to understand the dynamics and benefits of the gig economy.

#### **Skill development** Thus the future of work im-

poses the need for a recalibration of business education. Only then will institutions be better placed to integrate flexible learning models that focus on developing digital and entrepreneurial skills and soft skills as a way of better equipping students to work effectively and be empowered for the challenges that come with working in a dynamic and diversified global workplace.

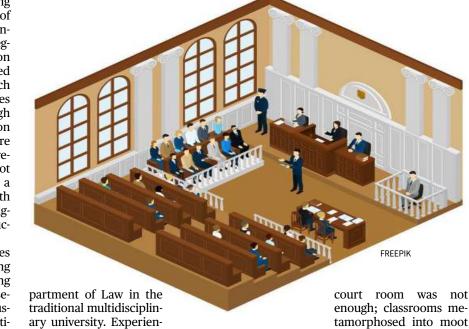
As the boundaries between work and life blur, business schools are given an opportunity to help develop those who are going to lead, innovate, and drive meaningful progress in business. Success will be demarcated by those who adapt and thrive in the ongoing shift. So it becomes incumbent upon educators to pave a way through this new era of opportunity.

The writer is the director, MBA ESG

#### Sujata Bali

o moot or not to moot has never been a debate for law students anywhere in the world. As experiential and immersive learning take over the world of education, the Bar Council of India (BCI) - the regulator of legal education in India - has included mandatory exercises such as moot court exercises and internships through the Legal Education Rules, 2008. Every centre of legal education is required to have a Moot Court Room, which is a replica of a real court with an elevated dais for judges, seating for court officers and witness boxes.

While law colleges have various teaching methodologies, including lectures, case studies, seminars, tutorials, discussions, debates, and practical training on drafting, pleading, and conveyancing, they stuck to the 'lecture method' for a long time. This was because teaching law used to come under what was called Law Faculty or De-



No debate on this

Moot courts provides a vibrant environment for law

students to develop a range of crucial skills.

tial learning was left as best suited to 'on-the-job training' under experienced advocates, while the classroom focused on theoretical learning.

In 1988, with the advent of five-year integrat-

ed course, and the resulgrowth stand-alone centres such as national law universities and private law colleges, the 'mooting culture' gained momentum. Suddenly, a single moot

enough; classrooms metamorphosed into moot court rooms catering to many enthusiastic law students participating in intra- and inter-university moot court competitions. So much so that at present, every law institute hosts a flagship moot court competition individually or in collaboration with law firms or other stakeholders. The prize money is attractive, and facilitation the world-class.

#### **Honing skills**

A law professional must be capable of understanding facts and law, thinking of innovative solutions to legal problems, and presenting those thoughts to another law professional both in writing and by speech. A moot court competition creates a vibrant environment for this entire skillset to deve-

Analytical thinking, indepth research, succinct writing, healthy competition, collaborative teamwork, networking, leadership, composure, resilience, critical thinking, memory, negotiation, consciousness, time management, structured planning, and public speaking - all prized virtues of a law professional – get polished in a moot court

In a moot court exercise, a raw legal problem is shared with the students, who must analyse, research, and write submissions representing both sides of a question of law. Students usually work in teams of three. At the next level, two speakers from opposite sides argue the best way possible for each side. In the next round, they may be asked to represent the opposite side. As mind-boggling as it may sound, this represents an important principle: a proficient ad-

vocate will think on both

sides of a dispute.

While the entire education system is planning to use gamification to teach, moot courts were the first game in which law students participated by role-playing. All this fun, excitement, and thrill happen while students learn valuable and indelible lessons for life. Legal education has various approaches to learning, but nothing creates a topnotch law professional like a moot court exercise.

The writer is Dean, IILM Law

The second volume in the

# Count on experience

Internships and practical experience are essential to unlock the full potential of Accounting students



**Sunil Deshmukh** 

he world of accounting and finance transcends mere numbers and spreadsheets; it embodies problem-solving, strategy, and tangible impact. In this dynamic field, where the stakes are high and precision is paramount, practical experience is essential to unlock one's full potential. While textbooks and lectures provide foundational knowledge, internships and hands-on experiences transform theoretical understanding into professional expertise and not only enhance technical skills, but also immerse individuals in the realities of the accounting and finance professions, including managerial accounting and strategic financial management. Here are a few ways in which internships help:

**Strong foundation:** A robust internship programme typically includes a comprehensive induction and orientation phase where interns are familiarised with the organisation's operations, culture, and expectations. They are then assigned to various functions within the finance department, where they receive both on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

**Mentorship:** Guidance from experienced professionals helps them navigate complex scenarios and develop into well-rounded financial leaders. Mentorship fosters technical proficiency and leadership skills, preparing individuals for managerial roles where decision-making and strategic insights are paramount.

**Skill-building:** Interns are often tasked with projects that require them to analyse financial data, prepare reports, and make informed decisions based on their analysis. This hands-on experience helps them to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions that are backed by data and analysis.

**Exposure to technology:** As technology evolves, proficiency in accounting software and tools like SAP, Oracle, and MS Excel becomes crucial. Internships provide exposure to these industry-standard technologies, en-

hancing technical acumen and adaptability in a rapidly changing financial landscape. Workshops and training sessions during internships keep interns updated on technological advancements.

Networking: Interns get the chance to interact with professionals across various departments within an organisation and build relationships and gain insights. This opens doors to new opportunities and provides a support system for their professional development.

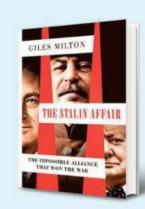
Employability: A well-structured internship programme often serves as a gateway to full-time employment. Many organisations evaluate one's performance during the internship period and offer full-time positions to those who demonstrate exceptional skills and a strong work ethic. Interns who secure full-time roles benefit from a seamless transition into the professional world, having already familiarised themselves with the organisation's operations and culture. Employers also value candidates who have hands-on experience and can hit the ground running, as they bring a wealth of practical knowledge, problemsolving abilities, and a proactive attitude to their new roles.

# **Continuous learning**

An accountant's learning journey does not end with an internship. It is important to view internships as the starting point for continuous learning and professional development. Accountants must stay abreast of changes in accounting standards, tax laws, and industry trends. Aspiring professionals should actively seek internship opportunities and leverage experiences gained to excel in accounting, finance, and managerial roles.

The writer is a Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and Chair, Institute of Management Accountants (IMA)

# ON THE SHELF



#### ■ The Stalin Affair: The **Impossible Alliance That Won** the War

In the summer of 1941, as Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, Stalin's forces faced a catastrophic defeat which would make the Allies' liberation of Europe virtually impossible. To avert this disaster, Britain and America mobilised an elite team of remarkable diplomats with the mission of keeping the Red Army in the war.

Into to the heart of Stalin's Moscow Roosevelt sent Averell Harriman, the fourth richest man in America and his brilliant young daughter Kathy. Churchill dispatched the reckless but brilliant bon vivant Archie Clark Kerr - and occasionally himself to negotiate with the Kremlin's wiliest operators. Together, this improbable group grappled with the ingenious, mercurial Stalin to make victory possible. But they also discovered that the Soviet dictator had a terrifying masterplan for the post-war world.

Based on unpublished diaries, letters and secret reports, The Stalin Affair reveals troves of new material about the most unlikely coalition in history. **Author:** Giles Milton **Publisher:** Hachette **Price:** ₹999

Cauldron, Sword and

Story of the Sikhs series takes the reader across the tumultuous decades of the eighteenth century, the red-hot crucible in which the Sikhs were born. Featuring a star cast of seers, mystics, conquerors and kings, this is more than just history and politics at play. This is a stage set with war, faith, schemes and intrigues. The first volume on the subject retold the history of the venerated Sikh Gurus. Now, the author turns his attention to Guru Gobind Singh, the scheming emperors of Delhi, and the conquering ambitions of Nadir Shah. Bringing these volatile and clashing characters to life, the author takes readers on travels across the length of



the eighteenth century and the breadth of what was then the continent of Asia, as the Sikh chiefs engage with the British, the Marathas, the Jats and the Rohillas, sometimes as allies and sometimes as adversaries. The book is based on a mix of

secondary sources, eyewitness accounts of the Sikhs (written originally in Persian) as well as translations from Brai and Punjabi poetry. **Author:** Sarbpreet Singh **Publisher:** Penguin

Victory: The Rise of Sikhs **Price:** ₹599