



PIC: MICHAEL PRAVEEN

## Vivek Meneses

Last month, the intense and engaging (and extremely brilliant) data scientist Nilakantan RS gave the Goa Arts + Literature Festival an exclusive, highly illuminative preview of the national imbroglio that has been raging the past few days, as Tamil Nadu chief minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin – ably supported by his star cabinet colleague Palanivel Thiaga Rajan – launched an emotive public battle against the three-language recommendations in the National Education Policy (which they see as an imposition of Hindi), as well as prospective “electoral delimitation” to rearrange seats on the basis of population growth. All this, exactly as it is being debated at the highest levels in India today, was neatly laid out in Nilakantan’s superb, urgent 2022 book *South vs North: India’s Great Divide*, and this young engineer-turned-author, who says his “primary interest is designing stable decentralized systems - be they for political entities or business-related processes”, has had an immense influence on framing the discussion. Here’s what he wrote on Twitter/X earlier this week, “I am going to take credit for predicting this moment in politics. This will not end well.”

At his riveting GALF session, Nilakantan recounted how he started looking into the numbers to find out exactly how

# South versus North with Nilakantan RS

democracy worked for him – a voter in the South Madras constituency – and then to see how it compared with voters in other parts of the country. What he learned was so startling that he started writing long threads about the results on Twitter/X, until an editor got in touch to encourage him to write *South vs North: India’s Great Divide*. We all owe whoever that is our collective thanks, because this unlikely debut author has written an instantly invaluable book for anyone interested in the future of Indian democracy, and perhaps especially important for Goa, with its ultra-bizarre combination of the best of South India in terms of human development, and the very worst of North India when it comes to criminal misgovernance.

South vs North: India’s Great Divide makes its case from its first compelling lines: “Consider a child born in India. This child is, firstly, far less likely to be born in south India than in north India, given the former’s lower rates of population growth. But let’s assume the child is born in the south. She is far less likely to die in the first year of her life given the lower infant mortality rates in south India compared to rest of India. She is more likely to get vaccinated against diseases than the average Indian newborn, less likely to lose her mother during childbirth, more likely to get childcare services and receive better nutrition. She is more likely to celebrate her fifth birthday, more likely to find a hospital or a doctor in case she falls sick, and more likely to eventually live a slightly longer life. She will also go to school and stay in school longer; she will more likely go to college than her contemporaries elsewhere in India. She is less likely to be involved in agriculture for economic sustenance and more likely to find work that pays her more. She will also go on to be a mother to fewer children than her peers in the rest of India, and her children in turn will be healthier and more

educated than she. And she’ll have greater political representation and more impact on elections as a voter than those peers too. In short, the median child born in south India will live a healthier, wealthier, more secure and more socially impactful life than a child born in north India.”

How did this vast divergence occur, and what are its implications, considering everyone started from the largely the same position in 1947? Why did some states – including both Goa and Tamil Nadu – achieve outcomes comparable to OECD (developed) countries, while others – most notably in the “cow belt” – remained mired at the bottom of the global barrel? Most importantly, can democracy be sustained under such extreme conditions? Nilakantan writes: “The successes of south India have led to a really paradoxical situation: success in areas of health, education and economic growth is being met with a policy regime that penalizes it; success in population control will be met with a likely loss of political representation in 2026. How will the region cope with such an assault?”

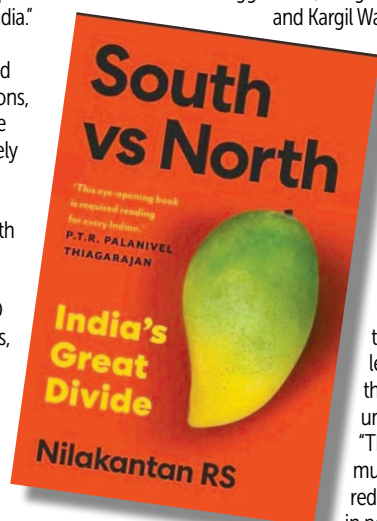
We have seen and heard some of the answers this past week, with his trademark forceful lucidity from Thiaga Rajan and in a series of unusually forthright statements from his party leader Stalin, who wrote this on Twitter/X on Wednesday: “Imposition of anything breeds enmity. Enmity threatens unity. Hence, the true chauvinists and anti-nationals are the Hindi zealots who believe their entitlement is natural but our

resistance is treason. The very people who glorify Godse’s ideology have the audacity to question the patriotism of DMK and its government that contributed the highest amount of funds during the Chinese Aggression, Bangladesh Liberation War, and Kargil War, while their ideological

forefather is the one who assassinated ‘Bapu’ Gandhi.”

The contrast with Goa’s craven, disgraceful political cadre – ever eager to sell off and sell out – is painfully stark, and it has been truly impressive to watch Stalin rally across the political aisles to lead an all-party meeting that passed these bold unanimous resolutions: “The Union Government must abandon any move to reduce, either absolutely or in percentage terms, Tamil Nadu’s current parliamentary

representation in any form. We will not accept any punishment for acting in the national interest by successfully controlling population growth. If parliamentary seats are increased, Tamil Nadu’s representation must rise proportionally as per the existing framework. No manipulation or dilution of our rightful political voice will be acceptable. Tamil Nadu’s existing percentage of seats, 7.18 per cent of the total, must not be reduced under any circumstances. Tamil Nadu is not against delimitation, but it cannot and will not allow it to be a disguised weapon against progressive states. All political parties (with MPs in South Indian States) will be approached to form a Joint Action Committee, to immediately take up this just cause as a battle in every forum and mobilise all necessary support.”



## A celebration of contemporary miniature art



The ongoing miniature art exhibition, An Alternative Contemporary, at Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, has garnered an impressive response, drawing visitors from educational institutions and communities across the state and beyond. The exhibition will be closing today, March 8. Curated by Waswo X Waswo, a pivotal figure in the regional miniature art scene, the exhibition reflects his commitment to mentoring artists and expanding the boundaries of this ancient art form.

An Alternative Contemporary features works that address themes

like feminism, oppression, and identity, while challenging traditional norms and exploring new perspectives on this ancient art form. The exhibition presents a rich variety of miniature artworks that fuse classical methods with modern themes. Themes of transformation, renewal, and the interplay between personal experiences and broader cultural narratives are present throughout. As this show draws to a close, it not only celebrates the rich legacy of this ancient form but also challenges traditional boundaries, offering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations.

### Legal Literacy Program

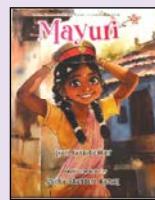
The Siolim Free Legal Aid Cell of VM Salgaocar College of Law is organising a legal literacy program for the general public. The guest speaker for this program will be Adv Eeshan Usapkar, who shall provide insightful legal knowledge. This program is coordinated by Jane De Souza, student in-charge and Pearl Monterio, faculty in-charge.

**Venue:** Panchayat Hall, Marna, Siolim  
**Date:** March 8  
**Time:** 4:30 pm

### Book Launch

Sahitya Akademy’s Bal Sahitya Puraskar-winning Konkani novel ‘Mayuri’ by Jyoti Konkoli, translated into English by Dr Smitha Bhandare Kamat will be launched by the chief guest PS Sreedharan Pillai, Governor of Goa, and the guest of honour will be Prof (Dr) Manoj Kamat, principal, Ss Dempo College of Commerce And Economics.

**Venue:** Old Darbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Dona Paula  
**Date:** March 8  
**Time:** 4 pm



### Soap and candle making workshop

Goa Science Centre will organise an International Women’s Day Celebration with two workshops. The soap making workshop will be held on March 8 and candle making workshop will be held on March 9. A total of 20 participants can participate. For registration send email to [gsconlineactivities@gmail.com](mailto:gsconlineactivities@gmail.com)

**Venue:** Goa Science Centre, Miramar  
**Date:** March 8 to 9  
**Time:** 3 pm to 5 pm

### Free breast cancer screening camp

Swasth Mahila Swasth Goa

Initiative will have a free breast cancer screening of women, organised by Awake Outreach India. The camp will include



breast cancer awareness session, self-examination training and screening by expert female doctors with complete privacy.

**Venue:** 706, Gera Imperium Grand, Patto - Panjim  
**Date:** March 8  
**Time:** 9 am – 1 pm

## FROM GRASSROOTS TO GROWTH:

# ASHA SADAN AND KIRAN NIKETAN’S LEGACY OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT



## Sr Molly Fernandes

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, it’s crucial to acknowledge the tireless efforts of organizations dedicated to empowering women at the grassroots level. In Goa, two such institutions, Asha Sadan Social Centre in Baina, Vasco, and Kiran Niketan Social Centre in Birla, Zuari Nagar, Sancoale, stand as witnesses to the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. These centres, working in distinct yet interconnected ways, have become vital lifelines for women facing multifaceted challenges, fostering their independence and flexibility. Both these Centres have stood tall during the last three decades and was the brain child of late Sr Mary Jane Pinto, the then Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth, Sancoale.

Asha Sadan, nestled within the bustling port town of Vasco, has been a steadfast pillar of support for women, particularly those from marginalized communities in Baina. The area, often grappling with socio-economic vulnerabilities, necessitates targeted interventions that address the specific needs of its female residents. One of their core initiatives revolves around skill development and vocational training. Recognizing that economic independence is paramount, Asha Sadan provides women with opportunities to learn skills such as tailoring, embroidery, and crafting. These skills not only equip them with the means to generate income but also instill a sense of self-reliance and confidence. The centre also facilitates access to microfinance and self-help groups, enabling women to pool their resources and invest in small businesses, fostering entrepreneurship and financial stability.

Beyond economic empowerment, Asha Sadan prioritizes the health and well-being of women. They conduct awareness programs on crucial issues such as reproductive health, hygiene, and nutrition. Recognizing the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse, they offer counselling and legal aid, providing a safe space for women to seek support and justice.

Kiran Niketan, located in the industrial township of Birla, Zuari Nagar, Sancoale,

adopts a similar ethos of empowerment, focusing on the holistic development of women. The centre serves a diverse community, including women from migrant backgrounds and those facing the challenges of urban poverty. They have created a nurturing environment where women can access education, skills training, and support services.



Education plays a significant role in Kiran Niketan’s programs. They provide literacy classes and remedial education for women and girls, bridging educational gaps and opening doors to new opportunities. Similar to Asha Sadan, Kiran Niketan emphasizes vocational training, offering courses in tailoring, computer skills, and other marketable trades. They also help women secure stable livelihoods. The centre recognizes the importance of mental and emotional well-being and provides counselling services to women facing personal and family challenges.

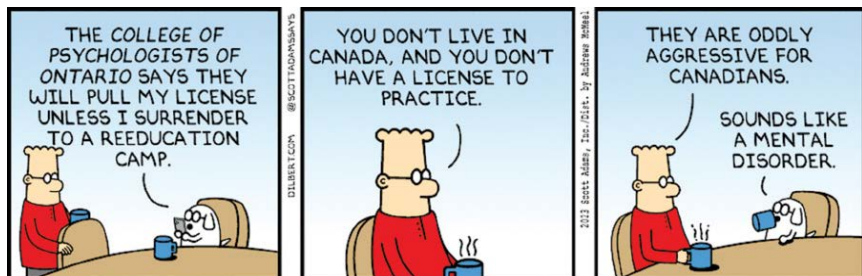
Both Asha Sadan and Kiran Niketan organize regular meetings and workshops where women can share their experiences, learn from each other, and build support networks. These platforms provide a space for women to voice their concerns, advocate for their rights, and collectively address the challenges they face. Women who are educated, skilled, and empowered are more likely to participate in decision-making processes, contribute to their families’ economic well-being, and raise healthier and more educated children.

By providing women with the tools and support they need to succeed, they are not only transforming individual lives but also building a more just and equitable society..



## Herald Gaming Console

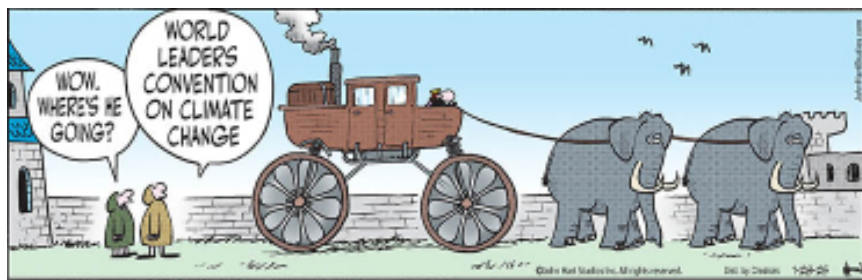
### Dilbert



### Garfield



### Wizard of id



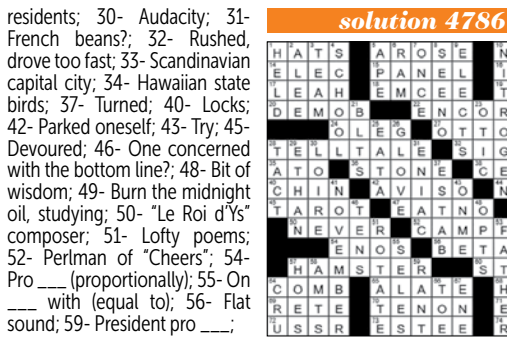
### crossword 4787

#### ACROSS

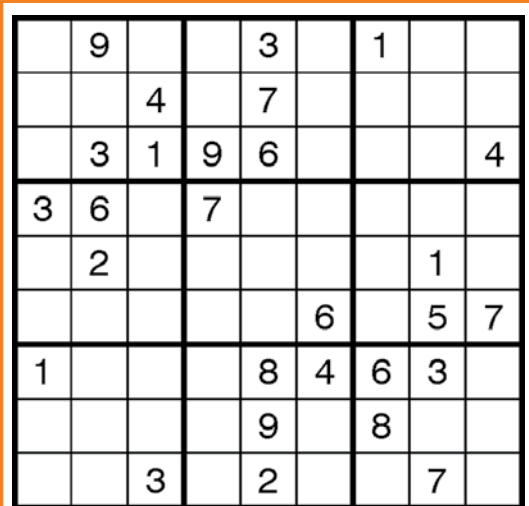
1- Pronto; 5- Latin love; 9- Moises of baseball; 13- Rootier; 14- Capital city of Yemen; 16- Henpecks; 17- Singer Vikki; 18- Office subs; 19- The world’s longest river; 20- Practice in the ring; 21- She raised Cain; 22- Like a parka; 24- Fictional Jane; 26- \_\_\_-bitty; 27- Folded food; 29- Evil omens; 33- \_\_\_ lunch; 34- \_\_\_ chance; 35- Profound; 36- \_\_\_-mo; 37- Cooperative race; 38- Numbered rd.; 39- Bits of thread; 41- Singles; 42- Rescued; 44- Performs surgery; 46- Satisfies; 47- JFK postings; 48- Actor Brad; 49- Broom room; 52- Rule, for short; 53- Historic times; 57- X-ray units; 58- Hawke of ‘Reality Bites’; 60- Charts; 61- Toward the sheltered side; 62- Caterpillar competitor; 63- School orgs.; 64- Rock clinging plant; 65- Boy or man; 66- Sailors;

#### DOWN

1- Pendulum puzzles; 2- Work up lather; 3- Razer brand; 4- Projecting; 5- Late bloomers; 6- ‘Circle of Friends’ author Binky; 7- Treats’s words; 8- Music style performed by Dr Dre and Eminem; 9- Peeved; 10- Placed down; 11- Give the eye; 12- Pre-owned; 15- Smokers receptacle; 23- Sluggish Mel; 25- \_\_\_-hool; 26- Bits; 27- Bell-shaped flower; 28- Make up for wrongdoing; 29- Warsaw



### sudoku 4787



#### Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

#### solution 4786

