

Nobel Lessons

The theme for the month of October was continuity. We celebrated Diwali with GST cuts. The equity markets found their feet and kept going higher. Rains continued well past their expiry day. Trump kept us guessing.

The month was also about the Nobels —the coveted award that the most powerful man in the world wanted for himself, but could not get. Interesting back story – Nobel Prize was established by Alfred Nobel who made his fortune as the inventor of dynamite and realized he would be remembered only as a taker of human lives. The prizes, first awarded in 1901 to mark the fifth anniversary of his death, were his attempt at redemption – rewarding work done "for the greatest benefit to humankind".

What's remarkable to us is how the institution has endured for over 120 years with its credibility intact. The selection process remains insulated from external pressure, decisions are irreversible and the world simply accepts the verdict each October. That's institutional strength.

TOP COUNTRIES BY NOBEL PRIZES WON

Country	Number of Prizes Won
United States	428
United Kingdom	145
Germany	116
France	79
Sweden	34
Japan	33
Russia	30
Canada	29
Switzerland	27
Austria	25
Netherlands	22
Italy	21

INDIAN NOBEL LAUREATES

Year	Name	Field
1913	Rabindranath Tagore	Literature
1930	CV Raman	Physics
1968	Har Gobind Khorana	Medicine
1979	Mother Teresa	Peace
1983	Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar	Physics
1998	Amartya Sen	Economic Sciences
2009	Venkatraman Ramakrishnan	Chemistry
2014	Kailash Satyarthi	Peace
2019	Abhijit Banerjee	Economic Sciences

The interesting takeaway for us was the jury's ability to say no to the very public and vociferous demands that the peace prize go to a certain individual. If something has been working well for over a century through a consensus-driven approach, the same needs to be studied and learned from.

Back home, we have the Tata trusts where battle lines get drawn every time there is a change of leadership at the top. Contrasting behaviours at equally storied houses. Institutions can and should learn from other institutions.

Stock

PILANI INVESTMENT AND INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED

This month we cover Piloni Investment & Industries Corporation Ltd, a storied Birla Group holding company trading at a compelling 60% discount to its book value.

The company holds shares of the Aditya Birla Group: Grasim Industries Ltd (42.03%), Ultratech Cement Ltd (30.86%), Hindalco Industries Ltd (12.40%).

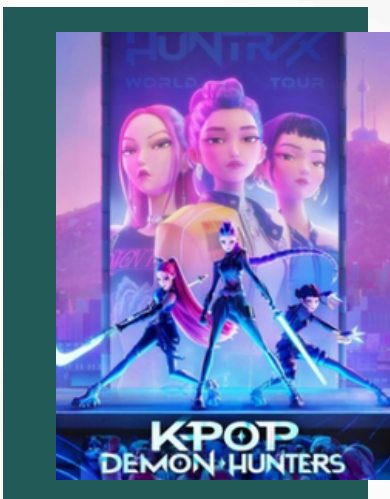
Holding companies are relics of the very high tax rates and complex structures of the socialist India of the earlier generation. Many holding companies of large and old business houses (Bajaj, JSW, Kalyani and multiple others) have been listed. These companies have no operating business and generally hold the shares of the group companies, that they never intend to sell.

Their only income is generally the dividend income from the shares that they hold and the profits from the investments of these reinvested dividends.

They generally quote at a 50% discount to the book value, factoring the tax leakage if the underline investments were to be liquidated and cash distributed to shareholders. Many of these holdings companies have compounded at more than 20% for the last decade reflecting the growth of these conglomerates.

Piloni offers an opportunity to buy at a good discount to the book value and wait for the discount to normalize and in the meanwhile, enjoy the growth of the underline companies.

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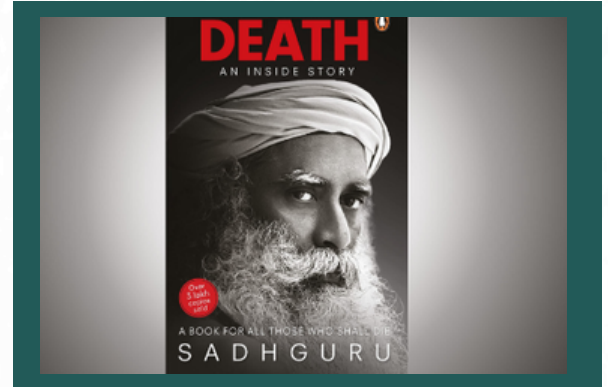


Movie



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Book



Death: An Inside Story by Sadhguru is a profound exploration of life's most inevitable reality and how understanding death can transform the way we live.

What struck us most was how Sadhguru makes the intangible tangible—explaining concepts like reincarnation, karma and the journey of soul with clarity and calm acceptance.

The book is as much about living consciously as it is about dying gracefully. It reminds us that when we understand death, we truly begin to understand life.

It becomes most pertinent when we come across stories of the elderly spending months in the intensive care units of hospitals, waiting for the inevitable. The book provides a very good description of how our culture handled this in the past and what should be done in today's times.

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Interesting backstory: The movie was produced by Sony and the same team behind Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse. At the last minute the studio decided not to release it in theatres, the rest is history.

The movie went on to shatter records, becoming the most-watched title in Netflix history. Its soundtrack also made history, placing four songs simultaneously in the US Top 10 on the Billboard charts.

In a world where many animated films play it safe, this one is an explosion of style, music and heart. Watch it on Netflix.

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