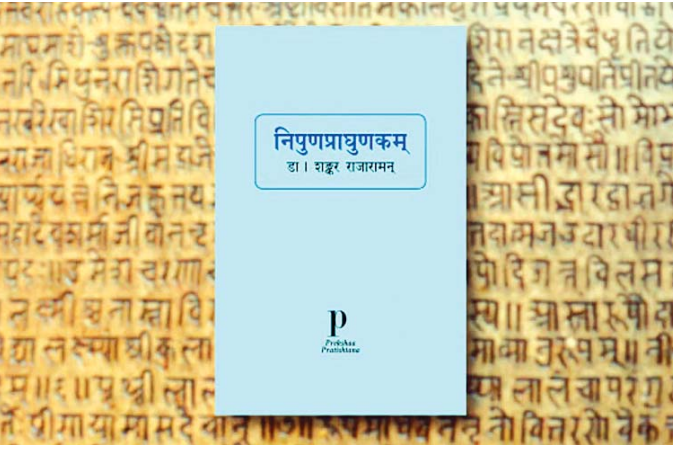


#NIPUNAPRAGHUNAKAM

Sanskrit  
Recounting of  
Nightlife

Imported liquor, intoxicating  
fragrance, loud music, foreign  
visitors, dancing, flickering electric  
lights, and poor visibility



Sanskrit is generally associated with ancient Indian traditions, religion, philosophy, and classical literature. Yet, its expressive power is equally capable of describing the realities of modern life. A fascinating example is found in Dr. Shankar Rajaram's Sanskrit satirical play *Nipunapraghunakam*. The play presents a striking picture of modern metropolitan nightlife, bar culture, imported liquor, dancing, music, and artificial lighting, all through the medium of Sanskrit.

One of the most remarkable scenes takes place in a drinking house resembling a modern nightclub. A young foreign couple is dancing freely on the dance floor, intoxicated and completely absorbed in the moment. The poet describes their movements vividly:

अग्रे परस्परं कटी निहितकहसौ,  
हस्तान्पर्यग च गृहीतपरस्परमसौ।  
मादवीकषानमदमन्त्रणदपतौ,  
कामं पनूयन्त इमौ युवानौ।

The image is both romantic and comic. The couple has one hand placed around the other's waist, while their other hands remain joined. Their feet have become unsteady because of intoxication, yet they continue dancing freely and enthusiastically to their heart's content. The scene captures not only youthful intimacy but also the comic consequences of excessive drinking.

The atmosphere of the drinking house is equally vivid. It is filled with the fragrance of liquor imported from different countries, while music, singing, crowds, and flashing lights create the characteristic atmosphere of a modern nightclub.

इदं नानादेशीयनीत-  
मस्तिरासौरभाहुतमुह्यं  
पुरः पानागारम्।  
प्रकामोत्तालब्धिभिः  
मुखरितहर्द्रितेतिभिर् यवनैः  
तडिदीपावलोकैस्तरलतरलैः  
किञ्च दुष्येक्ष्यमन्तः।

The description is remarkable because virtually every char-



acteristic feature of a contemporary nightclub is present: imported liquor, intoxicating fragrance, loud music, foreign visitors, dancing, flickering electric lights, and poor visibility. The rapidly changing lights make the interior almost difficult to see, creating an atmosphere of sensory excess and disorientation.

The word *panaagara*, meaning a drinking house, is especially significant. Instead of simply borrowing modern terminology such as "bar" or "nightclub," the playwright uses Sanskrit vocabulary to recreate a distinctly modern environment. This demonstrates the adaptability of Sanskrit and its capacity to absorb new experiences.

The scene is also deeply satirical. The intoxicated young couple, the imported liquor, the loud music, and the dazzling lights together form a humorous caricature of modern cosmopolitan culture. The playwright observes contemporary pleasure-oriented urban life with wit rather than merely condemning it.

The true literary achievement of *Nipunapraghunakam* lies in showing that Sanskrit can describe modern life without losing its own identity. It can portray not only temples, royal courts, and hermitages, but also bars, dance floors, foreign liquor, electric lights, and intoxicated youth.

Thus, the play demonstrates that Sanskrit is not merely a language of the past. In the hands of a creative modern writer, it can become a vivid mirror of contemporary life, capable of portraying even the noisy, glittering, intoxicated world of the modern nightclub.

AfD victory in German  
state sends shockwaves  
across Europe

If voters are turning to the AfD because they believe that the mainstream parties cannot deliver economic security, affordable energy, competent government and control over migration, simply warning them about the dangers of the far right may no longer be sufficient.



Asif Ullah Khan  
A veteran journalist who has written for The Khaleej Times and The Brunel Times

Saxony-Anhalt, a relatively small eastern German state, has the population of just 10 lakh. But the victory of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), once regarded as a fringe populist force, has sent shockwaves in Germany and across the Europe.

Although AfD got 44 per cent of the vote, nearly 27 percentage points ahead of Chancellor Friedrich Merz's Christian Democrats (CDU), still, it fell three seats short of an outright majority.

The significance of its victory is that for the first time, a far-right party will rule a German state government since the Second World War. The result is not simply another victory for the European far right. It represents a direct challenge to the political architecture that Germany built after 1945, particularly the determination of mainstream parties to keep extremist forces away from government.

AfD's federal co-leader Alice Weidel called the result a historic responsibility and has already set her sights on the next federal election, saying the party is targeting 40 per cent nationally. The AfD is already polling at about 27 per cent and won the second-highest number of seats in the 2025 federal election.

The message from Saxony-Anhalt is therefore not confined to one state. It is seen as a revolt against the political establishment.

The most important feature of the election may be that immigration was not the only, or even necessarily the dominant, reason voters

turned to the AfD. Saxony-Anhalt remains one of Germany's poorer states. More than three decades after reunification, parts of the former East continue to experience lower incomes, unemployment, demographic decline and a sense that political and economic power remains concentrated in western Germany and Berlin. This has given a fertile ground for protest politics.

University of Cambridge historian Marcus Böick described the result as an unprecedented blow to Germany's established political system, arguing that voters in rural areas feel neglected by the elites in Berlin. This is the central message behind the AfD's success. A far-right party does not necessarily need to persuade voters that they have suddenly become ideological extremists. It can win by convincing them that the traditional parties have failed them. That is a much more dangerous proposition for the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and other established parties.

If voters are turning to the AfD because they believe that the mainstream parties cannot deliver economic security, affordable energy, competent government and control over migration, simply warning them about the dangers of the far right may no longer be sufficient.

For Chancellor Friedrich Merz, the result is particularly damaging. The CDU had governed Saxony-Anhalt for 24 years. It received only 17.2 per cent this time, compared with 37.1 per cent in the previous election. Merz himself admitted that the result had shocked him.

But the bigger problem is not that the CDU lost one eastern state. It is that the result exposes a widening gap between the federal government and voters who feel that Germany's economic and social problems are not being addressed quickly enough.

Merz came to power promising



to revive Germany's sluggish economy and restore fiscal discipline. Yet, voters are confronting high living costs, expensive energy and anxiety about Germany's industrial future.

The AfD has been able to turn those frustrations into a political weapon. That puts Merz in a difficult position. If he moves sharply to the right on immigration in an attempt to recover AfD voters, he risks legitimising the AfD's agenda and alienating centrist voters. If he refuses to change course, he risks allowing the AfD to monopolise the anger of voters who feel abandoned by the political establishment.

The CDU therefore faces a strategic dilemma that goes beyond Saxony-Anhalt. For decades, Germany's mainstream parties have maintained a political "firewall" around the AfD. They have refused to enter coalitions with it or rely on its votes.

The principle is rooted in Germany's postwar political culture and the country's determination to prevent a repeat of the conditions that allowed the Nazis to destroy democracy.

But the mathematics is becoming increasingly difficult. The AfD's enormous lead in Saxony-Anhalt makes it much harder for the other parties to construct the kind of ideologically improbable coalition that has previously been used to keep the AfD out of government.

The AfD, meanwhile, is openly testing the firewall. Its candidate Ulrich Siegmund has said that the party will approach individual parliamentary groups and lawmakers

#WORLD POLITICS

to determine whether anyone is prepared to support it in governing the state. This is potentially more significant than the election result itself. If mainstream politicians eventually decide that governing with, or tacitly relying upon, the AfD is preferable to another election or an unstable coalition, a political taboo that has held since the war could be broken. And once broken at state level, it becomes much harder to defend at federal level.

The question is will power change the AfD?

An AfD-led state government would not have unlimited power. German federalism restricts what individual Länder governments can do.

But control of a state government would nevertheless give the party something it has never possessed: the opportunity to demonstrate that it can govern rather than merely protest.

The Saxony-Anhalt AfD has promised "remigration," a term associated with mass deportation policies, separate classrooms for refugee children and a ban on Pride flags in schools. The biggest consequence of Saxony-Anhalt may ultimately be outside Germany.

Across Europe, mainstream parties are struggling with the same combination of pressures: immigration, high energy costs, inflation, industrial decline, dissatisfaction with established political elites and fears about the future.

The AfD's success demonstrates that these issues can be fused into a powerful anti-establishment elec-



National Hot Cross Bun Day

National Hot Cross Bun Day celebrates the delicious and traditional hot cross bun, a sweet, spiced bread marked with a cross on top. Usually enjoyed around Easter, these buns are made with ingredients such as flour, spices, dried fruits, sugar, and sometimes citrus zest. The cross is traditionally associated with the Christian celebration of Good Friday. This special day gives people an opportunity to enjoy hot cross buns with family and friends while appreciating their rich history and cultural significance. Whether served warm with butter, toasted for breakfast, or enjoyed with tea, hot cross buns are a tasty treat loved by many.



toral coalition. Oliver Schmittke, a political scientist quoted by CBC, described the result as evidence that frustration with the old parties remains profound and that momentum continues to favour right-wing populists. That message will not be lost on Europe's other populist parties.

Germany has long been regarded as the country least likely to succumb to a powerful far-right movement because of its historical experience with Nazism. If even Germany's political barriers can be breached, other European populists can argue that their own advance is no longer an aberration.

The danger for Europe's mainstream parties is therefore not simply that the far right wins elections. It is that the far right begins to redefine what mainstream politics is allowed to say.

Immigration policy moves rightward. Foreign policy becomes more sceptical of Ukraine. Climate policies are challenged. Welfare systems are recast. National identity becomes a more central political issue. The centre may remain in government while the political centre itself moves.

The next test comes quickly

The timing makes the Saxony-Anhalt result even more consequential. Berlin and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania vote on September 20. The AfD is already leading or competitive in both political contests, with particularly strong support in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Another strong performance would transform Sunday's election from a spectacular regional upset into evidence of a national trend.

For Merz, that could be politically devastating.

For the CDU, it would raise questions about whether its current strategy can stop the AfD.

For the SPD, it would intensify pressure to respond to economic

and welfare concerns. And for the AfD, another strong result would provide precisely what it needs most: momentum.

The party has spent years portraying itself as the victim of an establishment conspiracy designed to keep it out of power. Every electoral breakthrough weakens that argument's effectiveness, because voters can increasingly see the AfD not as a protest movement but as a potential governing force.

Germany's political earthquake

Saxony-Anhalt has therefore produced three messages.

The first is a message to German voters: the political system is changing, and the AfD can no longer be dismissed as a fringe phenomenon.

The second is a message to Germany's ruling parties: warnings about the far right will not substitute for economic performance, effective government and a convincing response to voters' concerns.

The third is a message to Europe: the populist right is not retreating. It is becoming electorally entrenched, and Germany, despite its history and its famously strong political firewall, is not immune. The AfD has not yet taken control of Germany. It has not even necessarily secured control of Saxony-Anhalt. But the psychological barrier has already been weakened. And that may ultimately prove more important than the number of seats won on Sunday.

Germany's postwar political order was built on the conviction that democracy must never again permit extremism to capture the state. The question now is whether that order can defend itself not simply against an extremist party, but against millions of voters who increasingly believe that the parties protecting the firewall have failed to protect them.

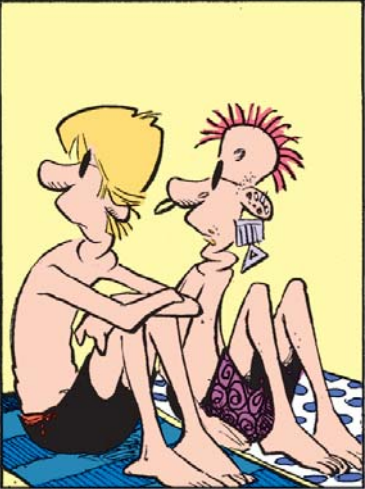
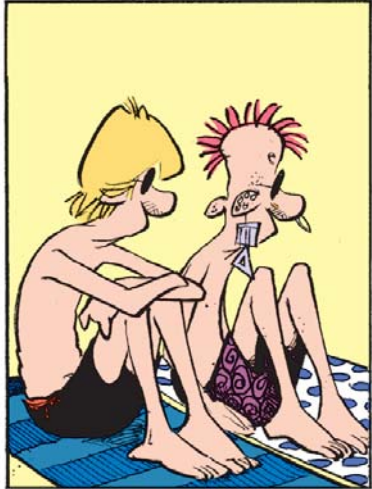
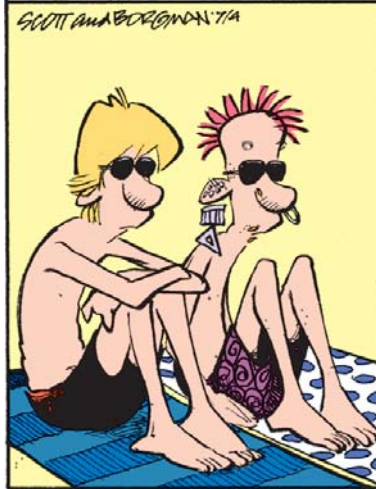
The key was the hard coating. Mars eventually partnered with Bruce Murrie, the son of Hershey's executive William Murrie. Together, they developed a method for producing chocolate pieces covered in a durable sugar shell. Then, history changed.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

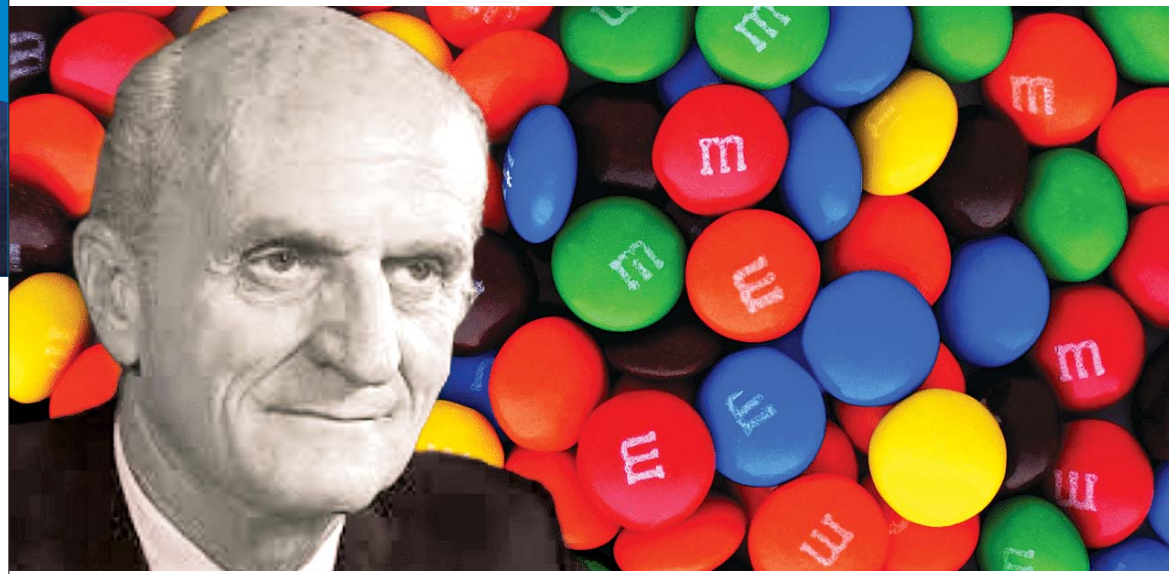
ZITS



#M&M'S

The Chocolate That  
Survived the Heat

The concept was remarkably simple: Chocolate  
inside. Hard sugar shell outside



1941: War Changes Everything

By 1941, World War II was underway. Sugar was rationed, supplies were tightly controlled, and soldiers needed food that could survive harsh conditions. Ordinary chocolate had a major weakness: heat.

In tropical battle zones, a chocolate bar could quickly turn into a sticky mess. The new coated chocolate solved that problem. In 1941, Forrest Mars received a patent covering the manufacturing process. The product was initially produced primarily for the U.S. military, rather than being sold widely to the public.

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The chocolates were packaged in simple containers designed for soldiers and placed into military rations. The concept was remarkably simple: Chocolate inside. Hard sugar

shell outside. The coating protected the chocolate from melting and made it possible for soldiers to carry the candy through hot and humid environments. The famous slogan would eventually capture the idea perfectly: "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand."

From Battlefield Rations to Supermarket Shelves

The little chocolates became a familiar part of military life during the war. Soldiers carried them across some of the world's hottest battle zones, where ordinary chocolate would have been difficult to handle.

And then, the soldiers came home. They had developed a taste for the candy they had eaten during the war. They wanted more. The demand helped push the product beyond military rations and into civilian life. The candy company eventually began selling it to the general public, and the colourful little chocolates appeared on supermarket shelves.

What had started as a solution to a battlefield problem became one of the world's most recognizable candies. Today M&M's are sold around the globe. But their story began with a simple problem:

How do you keep chocolate from melting in the heat?

The answer was a tiny piece of chocolate surrounded by a hard sugar shell. A battlefield observation became a manufacturing breakthrough. And a wartime ration became a candy empire.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman