

Great Scientists

GREAT SCIENTISTS by Krishna Murty Kommajosyula, published by *Pustak Mahal*, 10-B, Netaji Subhash Marg, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002; 2012, Pages 143, Price Rs 150/-.

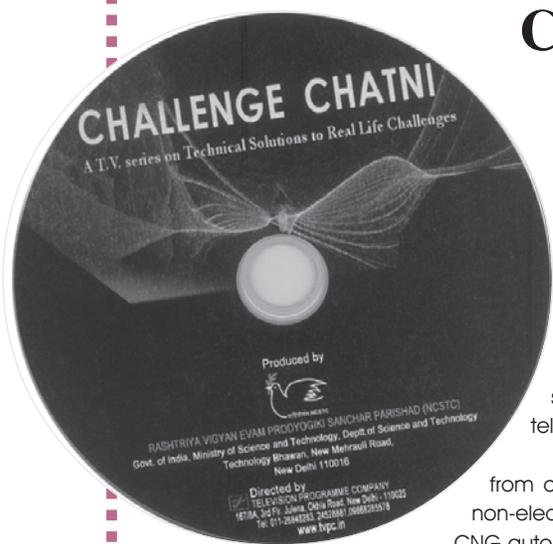
Lord Kelvin once said, "Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." Undeterred, however, Wilbur and Orville Wright went on to design a series of gliders flying them as unmanned and even piloted flights. Chester Carlson was rejected by almost 20 companies including IBM and General Electric, until a small New York company purchased his invention – the invention, Xerox, went on to revolutionize offices the world over.

And then there was Benjamin Franklin who in 1752, on a day of thunder and lightning, dared to fly a kite very high to get as close to the storm clouds as possible. As he attached a metal key to the lower end of the cord, he felt a strong spark and 'universal blow throughout my whole body'. Luckily, his curiosity did not kill him but went on to establish that lightning was after all electricity.

These and many more instances and interesting anecdotes form part of the exciting journeys that some of the world's best known scientists undertook in their quest for excellence and for satisfying their curiosity. Some of these exciting incidents are captured in the book *Great Scientists* – to be precise the book deals with the lives of eighty scientists.

The book, however, could have done with some bit of editing and an index at the end.

Challenge Chatni: 13-Episode TV Series



Can a motorcycle alert its owner on his mobile as it is being stolen? Well, some innovative wizardry in its circuits certainly enables it to do so. And coming up with such unique ideas are students of engineering colleges from twelve states of the country in a 13-episode TV serial to be telecast soon on Doordarshan's National Channel.

Challenge Chatni takes thirteen real-life challenges from a rural fridge, car for the physically challenged and non-electric washing machine to using a fused bulb again, CNG auto oil meter and puncture tolerant tyres. The challenges are posed to students in fifteen engineering colleges. Initially,

hundreds of students in groups of three at each of the fifteen colleges offer technical solutions. For each challenge, three semifinalist teams are picked up, all three then converging in the studio before a panel of judges. The panel evaluates the prototypes and the concept. The team offering the best technical solution is declared the finalist and the winner of the NCSTC Best Team Award.

But the episode does not end here. Before the conclusion of each episode, the participating students are brought face-to-face with a grassroots technological innovator, scouted by the National Innovation Foundation, who has tried solving the same real life challenge in his own unique way.

There is something for the audience too. They too can write in with their own innovative solution to the problem.

The TV series has been produced by the Rashtriya Vigyan Evam Prodyogiki Sanchar Parishad (NCSTC), Department of Science and Technology, and Directed by Matiur Rahman of the Television Programme Company.



Hasan Jawaid Khan