

# 'There were two prior attempts to assassinate Gandhi'

*Says Rajmohan Gandhi at lecture held at IITGn*

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Dr Rajmohan Gandhi, scholar-in-residence at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGn) and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi said, "Unknown to many, two unsuccessful assassination attempts were made by Orthodox Sanathanists on Gandhi, in Bihar and Pune around the 1930's." He revealed this at a talk titled 'Arundhati Roy and the Gandhi-Ambedkar debate' at the campus on Thursday.

The incidence were few of the many that he spoke of, describing the numerous efforts that Gandhi undertook



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to achieve equality for the dalits and untouchables, whom he called 'Harijans'.

The lecture was an academic correction to clarify serious omissions and flaws in Arundhati Roy's essay 'The Doctor and the Saint' published in early 2014 and as Dr Gandhi admitted, "an attempt of a grandson to be scholarly accurate about a historic figure".

He said, despite the struggle Gandhi undertook for

Dalits, Roy's book insisted that he was 'the saint of the status quo and favoured caste oppression.' "Roy is a very influential writer therefore it is very important to clarify the glitches because Gandhi was a very powerful weapon for justice for dalits and the weapon should not be weakened," reasoned the scholar-in-residence.

During the talk, Dr Gandhi revealed that many orthodox caste leaders had re-

peatedly threatened to side with the British, if Gandhi did not abandon his struggle of equality for the dalits. He also cited the different opinions people had about Poona Pact agreement between Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi.

It was a 1932 act that criminalised untouchability in Hindus and all citizens were granted same rights in social institutes as Hindus have.

According to Dr Gandhi, although Ambedkar had to give up a separate dalit electorate agenda, the Poona pact was a victory for him because Dalits were given 15% seats in social institutions after untouchability was criminalised.

**'India's Look East policy may be detrimental to NE'**

India has been aggres-

sively formulating policies for economic and strategic ties with her south-eastern neighbours.

However, during a talk at Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGn) on Thursday Samir Das faculty member at Calcutta University, voiced concerns on India's north-eastern states, how they are in the danger of losing their cultural and traditional identity and how the states may not benefit economically from the policies.

"The majority of the country's trade with South East Asia is undertaken by maritime trade through Visakhapatnam. However, the trade exchange between the North East and the neighbouring countries isn't significant at the moment" explained Das.