

Flogging of couple: BJP seeks resignation of Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The BJP on Monday demanded the resignation of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who is also the State's Police Minister for failing to control the "deteriorating law and order situation" which according to the saffron outfit was evident from the public flogging of a couple at Chopra in Islampur block of North Dinajpur district on charges of extra-marital relationship.



Termed the viral video of the incident as "horrific" BJP national president JP Nadda wrote on the social media that the incident reminded of the "brutalities that exist only in theocracies. To make matters worse, the TMC cadre and MLAs are justifying the act. Be it Sandeshkhali, Uttar Dinajpur or many other places, Didi's West Bengal is UNSAFE for women."

endorsed by the TMC leadership... which should be condemned and the Government should be made accountable for this," Bengal BJP president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar said. The TMC leadership however refuted the BKP charges saying it was an isolated incident and was common in many parts of the country including the BJP-ruled States.

Reasi locals see sinister pattern behind terror attacks

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Reasi district, which is fast emerging as one of the 'hot spots' of Jammu and Kashmir with a successful trial run of rail services via the world's highest railway arch bridge over river Chenab, is becoming the cynosure of all eyes. The recent incident of the terror attack on a pilgrim bus near a famous Shiv Khori shrine and the vandalisation of a religious place in the same area have created a sense of fear among the residents as they see a sinister pattern behind these incidents.



administration has decided to prepare a list of all temples for installation of CCTV cameras to work as a deterrent against such incidents. Normal life remained paralyzed and in several places strong protests were organised seeking punishment for the perpetrators behind the incident. The place of worship was found vandalised by a visitor in a village in the Dharmari area on Saturday evening, sparking tension and protests.

intervening night of Sunday and Monday. The total number of those taken into custody for questioning in the case stands at 15, a police officer said. He said the SIT is working on various clues to crack the case and requesting people to maintain law and order. Police and paramilitary forces were deployed in strength in the sensitive areas as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order.

HC to hear Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest by CBI

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court will hear on Tuesday Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest by the CBI in a corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam. The petition, which was filed on Monday, has been listed for hearing before Justice Neena Bansal Krishna.



refused to declare his arrest illegal, as sought by the defence counsel, saying "the timing may be circumspect but it is not the clear criterion for declaring an arrest illegal." "Investigation is the prerogative of the investigating agency, however, there are certain safeguards provided in the law and at this stage, on the material on record, it cannot be said that the arrest is illegal. The agency, however, should not be overzealous," the trial court had said.

Army ready to face all challenges: Gen Dwivedi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army is ready and capable to face all current and future security challenges facing India, new Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi said on Monday amid the lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh. A day after he assumed charge of the 1.3 million-strong force, General Dwivedi said working towards ensuring synergy among the Army, Air Force and the Navy would be one of his priorities.



challenges," he said. The newly-appointed Army Chief also said he will encourage induction of indigenously-built military hardware into the force to boost self-reliance in defence. "The geo-political landscape is changing rapidly and technology is evolving at a very fast pace," he said. "The Indian Army faces unique operational challenges and to remain prepared for such threats and distinct requirements, it is crucial that we continuously equip

would focus on ensuring that the Army is ready operate in the "full spectrum of conflict". "It will be my endeavour to ensure that the Indian Army is always ready to operate in the full spectrum of conflict, maintaining complete synergy with the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and other stakeholders," he said. "This will ensure that India's interests are secured and we become a major pillar of nation building to achieve the vision of 'Viksit Bharat-2047'."

FMCG: Patanjali Foods' Home and Personal Care acquisition to boost its portfolio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Board of Patanjali Foods Ltd has approved the proposal of Patanjali Ayurved Limited's ("PAL") to acquire its Home and Personal Care ("HPC") Business, accelerating the Company's transition into a leading FMCG company. The HPC business of PAL currently has strong brand equity in India's FMCG space and enjoys a loyal consumer base across the country.

Delhi IGI canopy fall...

From Page 1

The Indra Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), operated by a GMR Group-led consortium DIAL, has three terminals -- T1, T2 and T3 -- and handles around 1,400 flights daily. In response to a set of detailed queries related to T1, DIAL on Sunday said its cross-functional teams are actively evaluating the situation and engaging with various stakeholders to ensure passenger safety and convenience.

Rahul...

From Page 1

The former Congress chief also slammed the government over farmers' issues, saying it did not want to give a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for crops. Referring to a row involving medical entrance exam NEET, Rahul Gandhi said students do not believe in the exam because they feel that it is for the rich people and there is no place in it for meritorious students.

Government returns...

From Page 1

BJP's partner in NDA, LJP leader and Union minister Chirag Paswan also slammed the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha saying the Congress leader started opposing the devotees of Lord Shiva in his attempt to oppose the government. Paswan also accused the former Congress president of lowering the dignity of the post of the leader of Opposition.

Hand symbol replica of presiding deity of Kerala's Hemambika Temple: Congress

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



The Congress led by Indira Gandhi selected The Hand as the symbol of the Congress (I) in 1978 after the party was split following its debacle in the 1977 Lok Sabha election. The claim by Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition, that the Congress' election symbol The Hand represents Abhaya Mudra of Lord Shiva and Guru Nanak is not correct, according to persons who were close to Indira Gandhi.

Extension of trains for benefit of passengers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to clear the extra rush of passengers, it has been decided to continue the services of few special trains. These trains will run with the existing days of service, timings and stoppages. Accordingly Train No 07029 (Agartala - Secunderabad) Special will run on every Friday from 5 July to 4 October, 2024 and in return direction, Train No 07030 (Secunderabad - Agartala) Special will run on every Monday from 01st July to 30th September, 2024.

NEET toppers tally...

From Page 1

Sixty-seven students scored a perfect 720, an unprecedented number in the NTA's history, with six from a single centre in Haryana, raising suspicions of irregularities and the role of grace marks. NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS,

Indicative of repressive State: TMC on three new laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has once again condemned the BJP Government for "imposing three anti-people" laws --- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNA), 2023, The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023, and The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 --- which were implemented from Monday --- "in order to perpetrate a repressive State."



she asserted. "Ethically, I believe that it would be in the fitness of things to place these significant legislative changes before the newly elected Parliament for fresh deliberation and scrutiny. Given the wide-ranging reservations expressed in the public domain regarding the hurriedly passed new laws, fresh Parliamentary review of these attempts would demonstrate a commitment to democratic principles and foster greater transparency and accountability in the legislative process."

New criminal law: Street vendor booked in first FIR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the three criminal laws came into force on Monday, Delhi Police registered its first FIR under provisions of the new criminal code...



Ranjan Dimri

Delhi Police sources said that they will initiate the process of cancelling the FIR registered against the street vendor...

The Delhi Police has imparted training to its 30,000 personnel, from the ranks of assistant sub-inspectors and inspectors...

IMD predicts overcast skies, heavy rainfall in coming days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted overcast skies and heavy rainfall in the coming days.



which caused significant disruptions, was not due to a cloudburst but was close to one. The IMD's Chief, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, provided insights...

Atishi directs officials to tackle overflow of Central Delhi's drain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi PWD Minister Atishi on Monday directed officials to find solutions for addressing the overflow of a drain...



Ranjan Dimri

near ITO. When Delhi received 228 mm of rainfall on June 28, the drain overflowed and caused waterlogging...

AAP Government responsible for flooding in city, says BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Monday held the Arvind Kejriwal led AAP government responsible for creating flood like situation...



diesel," Sachdeva said.

Additionally, he said, "465 pumps are installed in Delhi by the Delhi Jal Board, the Flood Department, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi...

porary water drainage pumps are rented and installed, but this year not a single one has been installed. He claimed that the Kejriwal government's argument...

1,100 trees felled in Ridge: Probe committee already formed, says official

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a three-member fact-finding committee of Delhi Ministers was constituted over the felling of 1,100 trees in the Ridge area...



examined by the Apex Court," Singh said. He added that the committee has furnished preliminary report before the court...

"If a committee is required to be constituted to inquire on the initiative of the Department, the same requires approval of the Council of Ministers," he said.

mittee has been constituted under the signatures of Saurabh Bharadwaj without any due authority or sanction from the Council of Ministers," he said.

NIA consent for Rashid Engineer to take oath as LS member on July 25

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) gave consent for jailed Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, known as Engineer Rashid...



from Baramulla who has been arrested in a 2017 Jammu and Kashmir terror funding case, had moved the court seeking interim bail...

Rajiv Dhankher appointed DMRC's new director of projects and planning

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has appointed Rajiv Dhankher, an Indian Railways Service of Engineers (IRSE) officer...



Before taking up this role in the DMRC, he was the DRM in the Ajmer division of Indian Railways. During his tenure, the Udaipur-Himmat Nagar railway section was commissioned...

Implementation of three new criminal laws revolutionary step of Govt: GGSIPU VC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With three new criminal laws implemented from Monday, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University Vice Chancellor of the University Mahesh Verma here called it a revolutionary step of the government.



planned by the University to play a key role in this area. The Vice Chancellor added that in these new laws, the word 'Nyay' has been used in place of 'Dand'...

who seek justice. Full provision has been made to ensure that their plea is heard carefully at every level. Special Secretary of National Security Council Secretariat Praveen Sinha said the changes made in these laws are quite progressive and are focused on the interests of the citizens...



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cosmetic makeover

The new criminal laws have retained old laws with minor changes while others could impact civil liberties harshly

India has finally shed its colonial legacy in jurisprudence, embracing a new era with indigenous criminal laws. The big question being asked is whether it has truly moved beyond nomenclature or if it's merely a name change. The archaic Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Indian Evidence Act, and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) have been replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, respectively. This historic change, taking effect from July 1, 2024, has stirred considerable debate among legal experts, practitioners, and the broader public. While some provisions break from the past, others are just old wine in new bottles, adding a layer of confusion in the legal system. The IPC, established in 1860, and the Evidence Act, enacted in 1872, have long been the cornerstones of India's criminal justice system. Both were products of the British colonial administration and have been criticized for their outdated and colonial-era perspectives. The CrPC of 1973 also formed a significant part of the legal framework governing criminal procedures in India.



The new legal laws Replacing the IPC, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita aims to update and Indianise the criminal code. There are some provisions that are definitely new while others are mere replicas of the old ones. One notable change is the adoption of the definition of terrorism from the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). This new definition encompasses a broad spectrum of activities intended to threaten the unity, integrity, and security of India. However, critics argue that this broader definition could lead to misuse and the criminalisation of legitimate dissent. Another stark departure is Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam which replaces the Indian Evidence Act and seeks to modernise the rules of evidence in line with contemporary technological advancements. A significant change is the new stance on electronic evidence. Last but not the least, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, replacing the CrPC, introduces several changes aimed at streamlining criminal procedures. The new law redefines the use of handcuffs and expands the scope of police custody beyond the initial 15 days, a change that has sparked considerable concern regarding potential misuse and the risk of increased custodial violence. So far, the legal fraternity has been rather jittery about the new laws. Prominent legal luminaries, State Bar Councils, and Bar Associations have expressed apprehensions about the potential implications of these changes. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has commented that the new laws could create a positive impact only if there are concurrent investments in infrastructure development and capacity building for forensic experts and investigating officers. The expanded powers of the police and the handling of electronic evidence are areas of particular concern, highlighting the need for careful implementation and oversight to ensure that the new laws do not lead to increased misuse of power or injustice.

PICTALK



Pilgrims wait in a queue to get themselves registered for the annual Amarnath Yatra, in Jammu

A new dawn in Tibetan diplomacy



PRAFULL GORADIA

A seven-member American delegation led by US House Representatives met with the Dalai Lama, indicating a shift in the US stance on Tibet

A seven-member American delegation led by Michael McCaul, and Nancy Pelosi, both leading lights of the US House of Representatives, recently met the Dalai Lama at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh; this is a particularly significant event. They delivered a clear message that the USA no longer accepts Tibet as a part of China; and the US Congress will be soon passing an Act to be made into a law, called the "Resolve Tibet-China Act". The delegation told the Tibetan spiritual leader that "things have changed now". This American message has unmistakably resisted in Chinese ears. This US delegation first called on His Holiness at Dharmashala, indicating they were calling on the Tibetan government-in-exile, calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi only thereafter. The Government of India has not hesitated to welcome the delegation. Xi Jinping may have forgotten that Mao Zedong's regime had first claimed 'suzerainty' over Tibet.

Before long, it asserted that Tibet was a Chinese province, before attempting to erase Tibet's culture, heritage and language. These events have their roots in what happened towards the end of World War II. By allowing Stalin's Red Army to enter Berlin first and occupy it, the US made the Russians believe that they were the prime victors of WWII. In 1949, the Soviet Communist regime, by hook or crook, acquired the atom bomb. This made them believe even more they were now a superpower. Eco-militarily though, the Soviet Union was no 'super' but only a Eurasian power, as it had historically been. Similarly, the US overestimated the Communist Chinese as well. Compared to Chiang Kai Shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) on the mainland, the Maoists were much more committed. That, however, was no reason to dump the KMT as well as Formosa, now Taiwan from the UN as an official member. In fact, India should have been the correct replacement, but the Nehru gov-



ernment was insistent on giving the right of way to Red China, believe it or not. The USA, or at least its State Department continued to believe for years that the Soviets and the Chinese were a single communist bloc. The extent of the animosity between the two was fully realized only after the Sino-Soviet clash along the Ussuri River in 1969.

It was only thereafter that President Nixon decided to call on Chinese Premier Mao Zedong in 1972, which brought a great deal of prestige to Dr. Henry Kissinger. The ultimate beneficiary of this resumption of relations was China, when Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms, emphasizing manufacturing and exports. The surplus of trillions of dollars accumulated by China came largely through exports to America. The course of these events explains why the State Department of the USA until now ignored the treatment of the hapless Tibetans by successive Chinese regimes over the last seven decades, beginning in 1959. The question is: is this because of repeated provocations over Taiwan, or could there be some larger reason unknown to us? The intentions should become clearer with the unfolding of time. India's stand has also been important.



XI JINPING MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT MAO ZEDONG'S REGIME HAD FIRST CLAIMED 'SUZERAINTY' OVER TIBET. BEFORE LONG, IT ASSERTED THAT TIBET WAS A CHINESE PROVINCE, BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO ERASE TIBET'S CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE

Unfortunately, the Leftists and communists in the country had clamoured for the (then) newly formed Red Chinese regime, which had requested its recognition within a few days of its winning the civil war. Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, on the other hand, was of the clear view that there was no hurry to recognize the new Chinese regime. In November 1949, Patel invited the American charge d'affaires Donovan to verify if there was an urgency in the recognition of Red China.

Knowing the Sardar through his long correspondence with Jawaharlal Nehru on the subject of China, uppermost in his mind must have been the concern that the Sino-Indian border should be mutually recognized. But Jawaharlal Nehru was in a hurry and without consulting the Sardar, informed the Chinese of India's decision to recognize their regime in the December of that year itself. While expressing its delight at Nehru's message, China also laid down a few preconditions. India would pass on to the new regime all properties and assets of China. Secondly, India would not recognize any members of the KMT. Thirdly, India should support the expulsion of Nationalist China from the UNO, as well as its replacement by the

communist regime. China's perfidious intentions can be gauged from the fact that its communist regime announced the 'liberation' of Tibet as the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) task just one day before the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Tibetans had expelled the Chinese Amban, although he had been a Kuomintang government appointee.

The Chinese blamed India for it, abusing Nehru as "a lackey of British imperialism" and complicit in the British humiliation of China, which Mao sought to reverse. The People's Daily of China in an editorial denounced the concept of suzerainty as feudal and oppressive—the very thing China demanded over Tibet. It even called on the UNO to examine India's relationship with Bhutan. The reality, which the Nehru government chose to ignore despite even Ambassador K.M. Pannikar's warnings was that China was eyeing Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan too. But India's first prime minister, a votary of international peace and brotherhood was oblivious to this. The sufferers were from Tibet and India.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REFORMING JUSTICE

Madam — India is poised to undergo a transformative shift in its criminal justice system with the implementation of three groundbreaking laws starting July 1st, 2024. However, the primary concern lies in the readiness of our institutions to handle these changes, necessitating a nationwide audit. There has been no thorough assessment of the preparedness across various criminal justice institutions in different states. Additionally, the transition from old laws to new ones is likely to create significant confusion. It would be prudent to postpone the implementation of these laws until a comprehensive and independent audit of institutional readiness is conducted. Alternatively, a phased implementation to test the waters would be a more sensible approach.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

A DEMOCRACY IN DISARRAY

Madam — The signs were clear for all to see. We eagerly awaited the end of the elections and patiently anticipated the results. Yet, once Parliament convened, it quickly became apparent that walk-outs and paralysis were the order of the day. The drama of democracy played out in full view, with heightened agitation across the country. On the anniversary of the Emergency, Parliament was divided, and the opposition was relentless in disrupting proceedings at every turn, reflecting the turbulence within our so-called democratic framework. Opposition leaders harshly criticized President Droupadi Murmu's address, dismissing it as a government-scripted speech riddled with falsehoods. They accused the government of imposing an undeclared emergency and challenged its claims of economic growth and investment.

Leaders highlighted issues facing farmers, unemployed youth, and recent national events. The true nature of our parliamentarians has been laid bare,

India's T20 World Cup victory



India celebrated a momentous victory over South Africa in the T20 World Cup 2024 final, marking a glorious return to World Cup triumph after a 13-year hiatus since their last ICC trophy win in 2011. Under the astute leadership of Rohit Sharma, the team showcased exceptional prowess

and resilience, dominating the tournament with consecutive victories. This win was particularly poignant as it marked a grand farewell for two Indian cricket stalwarts, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, along with head coach Rahul Dravid, who had not previously won a World Cup trophy. Both Rohit and Virat announced their retirement from T20 internationals, making this victory an emotional and proud moment for all Indians. Rohit's tactical brilliance and Virat's consistent performances have been instrumental in India's cricketering success over the years. Their departure signifies the end of an era. The Indian cricket team displayed outstanding skill and determination, ensuring that they lifted the ICC trophy and gave their beloved captain and star player a memorable send-off. This victory will be cherished as one of the most emotional and proud moments in Indian cricket history. Bishal Kumar Saha, Murshidabad

Bishal Kumar Saha | Murshidabad

farewell to a coach whose wisdom has guided Team India to new heights. Dravid's tenure has been marked by unforgettable victories and moments of cricketering genius, from nurturing young talent to instilling a culture of discipline and resilience.

His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of cricketers, embodying the values that define our beloved sport. A World Cup win would be the perfect capstone to Rahul Dravid's remarkable journey. As we celebrate Rahul Dravid's contributions to Indian cricket, we also honor a figure whose integrity, dedication, and humility have left an indelible mark on the game. His departure marks the end of an era, but his legacy will continue to inspire and shape the future of Indian cricket for years to come. What a distinguished man and an outstanding cricketer!

Jayanthi S Maniam | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Unveiling the deception: Decoding food labels for healthier choices

It's vital to scrutinise food labels beyond their claims. Decoding the fine print ensures that what we eat aligns with our health goals

Decoding Food Labels As a dietician, I strive to provide the best possible tailored meal plans to my clients, so why would I not stop and flip food packages to scrutinize labels to ensure what goes on my plate and my family's? Albeit, every time I do that I stop to think about the actual intent of documenting the ingredients on the package and I feel deceived. The idea behind all this 'extra work' was to keep the consumer informed and help them make intelligent choices for themselves. But then

I see a granola bar labelled "whole grain" and "healthy snack," only to find sugar listed as the first ingredient! Has the food industry turned food labels into a game of hide-and-seek with our health? Food manufacturers have become masters of a deceptive language game. Over time, they've developed tactics to maximize sales and keep their customers hooked, often at the expense of health. Buzzwords like "natural" and "low-fat" create an illusion of health, while hidden sugars and cleverly disguised serving sizes make it difficult to deci-



pher the truth. These tactics paint a picture of a healthy snack, obscuring the reality which can be quite different. So, does this mean we're doomed to fall victim to marketing tactics? Absolutely not! With a little knowledge, we can become empowered to decode food labels, making informed choices about what purchases we make.

Here are a few key areas to focus on during your next grocery run and fill your shopping cart with what is right for you: As I said earlier, don't allow the food companies to trick you into buying their products just because they claim to be "natural," "low-fat" or "multi-grain." Low fat doesn't alone mean that literally. The term also implies added sugars and the use of unhealthy fillers. For the longest brown

rice has wooed Indian buyers, but this does not mean that brown rice syrup is any good and a healthy replacement for sugar! High fructose corn syrup, agave nectar, palm, etc are scattered through the list of ingredients keeping even the most discerning customer, from grasping the true sugar content. When you see "sugar-free" on the label, know that other forms like sugar alcohol or artificial sweeteners might be in play. The latest in line is, "natural sweeteners" or "fruit extract" which again is sugar; no less, no more.

The biggest gamble lurks in the Serving Sizes. As a standardized directive laid down by the FDA, it is ideally meant to help consumers compare the same products from different brands, empowering them to make the best choice for themselves. But, most manufacturers shrink the serving size per package, compared to what an average consumer would typically eat. Consider finishing a whole bag of munchies in one go while the manufacturer suggests two servings per container. All ingredients are specified per serving and

you ended up twice what you thought was good for you! Ensure you keep a tab of serving size and calculate your portion and calorie/sugar intake accordingly. "Rich in protein," "Fiber-rich" etc are another set of crowd pullers that mostly tend to divert customer's attention from other not-so-healthy ingredients. Bearing these points in mind, your next trip to the supermarket will be a game-changer for your household. Don't get carried away by big claims made on the face of the package, TURN IT AROUND & be sure to read the numbers. Whether it is calories, saturated and trans fats, sodium or added sugars, learn the limits and decide for yourself what suits you best. Employ help from label-reading apps that can demystify tricky labels and provide additional information about ingredients. See-through those marketing gimmicks and bring to the table what is healthier and more wholesome for you and your family.

(The author is a dietician and Clinical Nutritionist Ambassador of FIT INDIA Movement of GOI; views are personal)



KOMAL PATEL



FIRST COLUMN

THE EVOLVING PATH TO SUCCESS WITH UPSKILLING

Success is more than just good intentions. It's a journey paved with education and skill



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

The saying "Where there's a will, there's a way" offers a reassuring belief that sheer determination can overcome any obstacle. However, navigating the complexities of real-world success involves more than just good intentions. It requires a foundation built on education, experience, and often, a blend of both. The path to achievement is multifaceted, demanding a strategic combination of willpower, continuous learning, and specialization. Enter the upskilling advocate. These individuals champion the importance of lifelong learning, asserting that the pursuit of new knowledge can unlock doors that even traditional qualifications cannot. The argument holds weight, especially in an era where technology evolves at breakneck speed. The ability to adapt to these changes is crucial. However, the journey of upskilling can sometimes feel like an endless treadmill—each completed course leads to another, creating a perpetual cycle of learning without a clear endpoint. On the other hand, we have the specialist.

Specialists possess targeted expertise, backed by rigorous education in a specific field. Their qualifications often serve as a shortcut past initial professional hurdles, providing a clear and direct path to success. Yet, this path can be fraught with its own challenges. As industries transform and new technologies emerge, specialization that once seemed advantageous may become obsolete. The clear road that once led to career success can abruptly end, leaving the specialist in need of new directions. So, who holds the advantage in this dynamic landscape? The truth, as with many aspects of life, is that the ideal path is a balanced



one. The most successful individuals often embody a blend of both approaches. They possess a solid foundation in a core discipline but are equally committed to continuous learning and adaptation. For instance, someone with a degree in marketing might pursue courses in digital analytics to stay relevant in an increasingly data-driven world. This duality—rooted in depth of knowledge but flexible in acquiring new skills—is what makes them particularly valuable. Employers who recognize the importance of this balance are making the smartest investments. They seek out candidates who not only have the expertise to excel in their current roles but also the agility to navigate the shifting landscape of the professional world.

These employers understand that a blend of foundational knowledge and a willingness to upskill can create a workforce capable of responding to change with confidence and competence. The key takeaway? While willpower is essential, it must be channeled effectively. Start by building a strong educational foundation in a chosen field, then continually seek opportunities for growth and learning. This approach fosters a mindset of perpetual improvement, positioning individuals to thrive amid the uncertainties of the modern workplace. Yet, the journey doesn't end with acquiring new skills. The future of work demands the ability to unlearn outdated practices and embrace new paradigms. The most successful professionals will be those who approach each challenge with a growth mindset, eager to expand their knowledge and reshape their skills. They understand that change is the only constant and that adaptability is the ultimate competitive advantage. Rather than seeing your career as a ladder to climb, envision it as traversing a vast, ever-shifting landscape. The willingness to learn and grow continuously is key to unlocking a fulfilling and successful career in an ever-evolving world. So, abandon the notion of being a finished product and embrace the journey of lifelong learning. It's a marathon, not a sprint. With the right mindset, you'll be well-equipped not just to survive but to thrive in the ever-changing world of work. Are you ready for the adventure?

(The writer is an author and has penned three books; views are personal)

Focus shifts to prudent public wealth management



UTTAM GUPTA

The new Govt is overhauling India's disinvestment policy. It is supporting non-profit enterprises, and maintaining a strong presence of State-run firms in strategic sectors

The new National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reviewing the existing disinvestment policy to shift its focus from selling central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) to prudent public wealth management (PWM), supporting not-for-profit enterprises, and ensuring strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors'. A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Union government has majority share holding meaning it holds more than 50 percent of its shares. Disinvestment is fancy nomenclature for sale of these shares to private investors. When, disinvestment results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to private entity, this is termed as 'strategic' disinvestment or privatization.

The extant policy on disinvestment was announced by the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22.

Under it, CPSUs were classified into two broad categories i.e. strategic and non-strategic. The strategic group covers atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services. The non-strategic category includes all other sectors viz. industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing and so on. The government's intent was to sell all undertakings in the strategic sector with the caveat that at least one (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector.

As for undertakings in non-strategic sectors, it wanted to reduce its shareholding to below 50 percent in 'all' of them. Put simply, they would all be privatized. All loss-making undertakings in this category would be closed.

Also tagged to this policy was government's intent to use the proceeds from disinvestment for meeting its fiscal deficit (excess of total revenue over total expenditure) or FD target. This part was a continuation from the past when the Modi - government started selling its shares in CPSUs in 2015-16 with particular focus on 'strategic' disinvestment. In the backdrop of devastation caused by Covid-19 pandemic and debilitating effect on its finances during 2020-21 (in that year, FD had scaled to 9.2 percent of GDP), in the budget for 2021-22, Sitharaman had put even greater reliance on proceeds of disinvestment by setting an ambitious target of Rs 175,000 crore. During that year, the government had planned big ticket disinvestments such as Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), IDBI Bank, NMDC Steel and Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and so on.

But, the process has remained stuck in the slow lane even as the targets of proceeds from sales were missed year-after-year. Only during two years viz. 2017-18 and 2018-19, it achieved the target. That was primarily because, in those years, it had conducted two big-ticket sales of its shares from one CPSU to another. During 2017-18, the government sold



51.11 percent of its shareholding in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) yielding Rs 37,000 crore. In the following year, it undertook the sale of its 52.63 percent stake in the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) yielding Rs 13,000 crore. But, those sales can't be termed as strategic as the purchaser being another CPSU namely ONGC/PFC, the Government continues to have effective ownership over the divested entity viz. HPCL/REC.

The results during 2021-22 and 2022-23 were particularly disconcerting. During 2021-22, against a target of Rs 175,000 crore, the actual proceeds from disinvestment were a meager Rs 15,440 crore. During 2022-23, against a target of Rs 65,000 crore, the actual was nearly half at Rs 31,059 crore. For 2023-24, the FM had lowered the target to Rs 51,000 crore which during the course of the year was further revised downwards to Rs 30,000 crore. Even against this, the actual proceeds were a meager Rs 14,564 crore.

What does the interim Budget for 2024-25 say?

In a briefing following the presentation of the Budget by Sitharaman on February 1, 2024, Finance Secretary TV Somanathan had stated that the "government no longer views disinvestment from the perspective of balancing the budget". Can it be taken to mean that it has shed its age-old stance of using proceeds from share sale for reducing FD. The answer is 'No' as it has set a target of Rs 50,000 crore for 2024-25 under the head "miscellaneous capital receipts" which includes disinvestment proceeds besides receipts from asset monetization.

The very idea of garnering resources from the sale of government shares in CPSUs is inherently flawed. This is because unlike tax revenue, which can be projected with a degree of certainty based on the existing tax rate and a reasonable assessment of the growth in nominal GDP, the same cannot be said about proceeds from disinvestment. In this case, a lot depends on the market scenario and, in particular, the perception of investors about the company in which share-sale is contemplated.

In cases where the strategic sale is mooted, the Government faces a bigger challenge as apart from a favorable market, it needs bidders with deep pockets. The lengthy and cumbersome process of approval and bureaucratic red tape further undermines the chances of its kicking the ball rolling just around the time when the strategic investors are ready to put in their bets.

The Niti Aayog identifies companies for disinvestment which are then considered by the Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD), a long-drawn process by itself, which takes it to the Alternative Mechanism (AM) - a group of ministers, including finance, road transport & highways, administrative reforms, etc., for approval. After AM's approval, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) moves a proposal for in-principle approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

In view of above, the government shouldn't put any number to

receipts from share sale while preparing the budget as the end of the year, slippage is inevitable. Even so, the government's tax revenue is buoyant (for three years in a row since 2021-22, these have exceeded the target) and it is getting higher dividends from CPSUs as also higher dividends from the Reserve Bank of India (for its FY 2023-24, the RBI has made a huge dividend transfer of Rs 210,000 crore to the Centre for latter's use during 2024-25) and public sector banks (PSBs). These positive trends should be good enough for managing fiscal deficits; hence, no need to depend on 'miscellaneous capital receipts'.

What happens to strategic sale? From the emphasis on public wealth management (PWM), strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors, one gets sense that the government has completely abandoned the path of privatizing CPSUs in these sectors. As it is, under the 2021-22 policy, it had intended to retain at least one (and a maximum of four) undertakings in the strategic sector. Now, it seems it won't privatize even one. The government's decision to drop its plan for sale of BPCL which was on its agenda since 2019-20 is an indication of things to come.

Changing horses midstream won't be in the best interest of the country. Fundamentally, the State shouldn't be in the business of running enterprises. There always remains a risk of political interference and bureaucratic red tape which can seriously hamper the working of CPSUs. The government should continue the process of share sale and focus on de-bureaucratizing it.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)



IN CASES WHERE THE STRATEGIC SALE IS MOOTED, THE GOVT FACES A BIGGER CHALLENGE AS APART FROM A FAVOURABLE MARKET, IT NEEDS BIDDERS WITH DEEP POCKETS

Surviving the scorch: Strategies for managing heat waves in India

The summer of 2024 has seen record-breaking temperatures. It is imperative for policymakers to understand the underlying causes and implement effective measures

The country is in the midst of intense heat waves causing severe hardship in the entire North, Central and Western India for more than a month. India may have recorded the hottest-ever temperature in 2024. On 29th May 2024 Delhi recorded 52.3 Degrees Celsius temperature at a weather station in Mungeshpur a suburb of Delhi though later on it was proved that it was slightly on the higher side. Even cooler places like Dehradun have noticed the highest temperature of the last 53 years this year. More than 30 crore people in India are prone to high risk due to lack of means to escape heat waves. The people are feeling severe shortages of power and water and many grids are collapsing due to overload lead-



V K BAHUGUNA

ing to prolonged outages. Several people have died due to heat waves across the country. According to official sources, 150 people have died due to heat waves and around 30,000 people suffered heat stroke from March to mid-June 2024. The people from Delhi and other adjoining areas are rushing to hill stations of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and other hills to escape the heat torture

and in the process causing heavy traffic jams and throwing in disarray the civic amenities in several towns and cities. The River width of Ganga in Varanasi has reduced by 35% and similar reports are forthcoming of the narrowing of other streams and rivers.

The experts have been warning the government and the society at large about the changing weather trends of the country. The policy makers, professionals and administrators is to assess the causes of such an unprecedented rise in temperature and how to mop up resources to deal with it. If the mandarins in power in the centre and state do not change the way to deal with it efficiently and effectively many disasters will be ruining the stabil-

ity and cohesiveness in the society.

One thing all must learn is the fact that high temperatures are the results of the combined effects of global warming, increasing urbanisation/concretization leading to changing weather patterns. As far as Delhi and nearby areas are concerned the dry and warm westerly winds from Rajasthan and Haryana are the causes of the heat wave. Now these winds continue during the night and do not allow the night temperature to fall and this is further accentuated when these westerly winds lead to cloud formation in the sky which prevents cooling the temperature. To find the solution our planners and civic administrators in cities must meet the challenges of the

'urban heat island effect'. In nature trees and other vegetation in the landscape along with green roofs help in reducing the urban heat island effects by releasing moisture through transpiration, and by shading reflecting the sun radiation back into the atmosphere. Therefore, the massive dense urbanisation, buildings, roads and pavements absorb and retain the heat and hence the urban heat island effect with disastrous consequences. On the other hand, the effects of heat waves in rural areas are different; there is less or minimal heat island effect but the heat effects mostly relate to health issues like severe dehydration, heat stroke, heat exhaustion and gastro-intestinal diseases exacerbated by the long power cuts and water

shortage. India is not the only country affected by heat waves. Europe is also suffering from heat waves since April 2024. The temperature is above 30 degrees Celsius in south Europe, particularly in Spain. This year in Europe the highest temperature was noticed in Zeneca and Bosnia at 33.3 degree Celsius on 14th April 2024. The European country's architecture is such that they cannot cope up well with continuous heat waves. The objective of this article is to stress that in India the Central and State governments should jointly devise a policy to effectively deal with summer weather.

The first thing to be done is to declare the temperature beyond a certain limit as a nat-

ural disaster/climate emergency and put in place standard operating procedures to deal with it for the different cities and rural areas. In rural areas, the government must ensure a supply of potable water and electricity as well as a mobile dispensary to provide quick health care services. In each village lakes and ponds should be created compulsorily so that people including farmers and cattle get water. It needs short-term planning risk assessment and early warning systems based on the India Meteorological Department forecast.

One of the fundamental requirements is the need to remould the district administration by creating an integrated and holistic approach so that climate-resilient develop-

ment is ensured and preparations are made in advance to deal with any emergent situation.

However, real change in the entire civic administration is essential in urban areas. The town and country planning needs complete overhauling as also revisit the power-centric civic bodies. The drainages are in shamble and must be protected so that the next emergency in rainy weather does not derail the life and property. Will the Urban Development Ministry set up a task national force to recommend action?

(The author is the former Director-General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and Chancellor of FRI University; views are personal)



NEERAJ CHOPRA OPTS OUT OF PARIS DIAMOND LEAGUE: REPORT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Olympic and world champion javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has opted out of this Sunday's Paris Diamond League, citing the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months, according to a report. Speaking to 'ESPN', Chopra said he is focussing on training and strengthening his blocking leg. "I need to strengthen my blocking leg when I throw because that's when my groin gets pulled. We're working on that to see how we can reduce the impact on the groin and control the pressure on it," he said, explaining the issue for which he will consult "different doctors"

after the Paris Games. "I could have competed in more events for sure and that was the plan. But I have realised that my health is paramount, that comes first. Even if I feel the slightest discomfort or like I am pushing myself too much in training, I've learnt to pause for a bit," he added. The block phase is a crucial maneuver as it is the point at which the pace generated by the run-up is transferred to the hip and then to the throwing arm before the javelin is sent flying. Chopra, who topped the field in last month's Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland, with a throw of 85.97m, said he has become wiser over the years and no longer puts

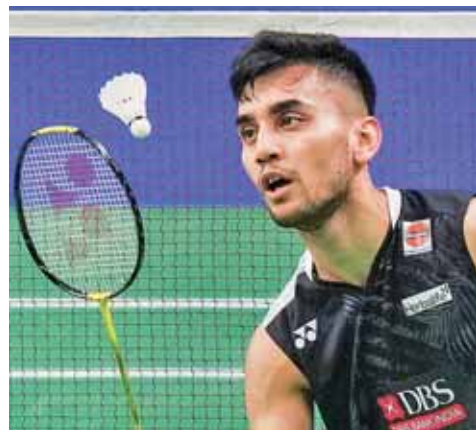
himself at risk to fulfill commitments like he used to do before his Olympic gold. "Back then, if I had an entry in a competition, I would definitely go and compete no matter what happened. But now with more experience, I am better placed to make correct decisions," he said. "I was happy with my performance in Turku, but I felt there was more work to do. I was slow on the runway compared to my normal speed. "I want that speed back and for that, I need proper confidence that I am fully fit and that my groin is fit. I want to feel confident when I run on the runway," he pointed out.

All three white ticked off; one red to go, tick it: Dravid to Kohli



PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN
Staying true to his no-nonsense taskmaster image, outgoing India head coach Rahul Dravid had an assignment for star batter Virat Kohli even on his last day at work and within hours of India winning the T20 World Cup. "All three white ticked off, one red to go. Tick it," Dravid told Kohli in a video of the Indian dressing room celebrations shared by the ICC on its Instagram page. By three white he meant the limited-overs global trophies -- the T20 World Cup, the ODI World Cup and the Champions Trophy -- all of which Kohli has collected as a player. What's left now is winning the World Test Championship Final. India have lost the WTC Final twice (against New Zealand in 2021 and Australia in 2023). The 35-year-old Kohli, who retired from T20 Internationals after the World Cup triumph here on Saturday, merely smiled at Dravid as he repeated himself to assert his point, albeit with a warm smile on his face. "Go tick it." The 51-year-old Dravid, who was appointed India coach in 2021, ended his tenure with this event. India defeated South Africa by seven runs in the humdinger to claim their second overall T20 world crown, having won the title in

its inaugural edition in South Africa back in 2007 under Mahendra Singh Dhoni. In the ODI format, India won the 1983 and 2011 World Cups before snaring the 2013 Champions Trophy. The congratulatory video also featured Suryakumar Yadav, whose blinder of a catch to dismiss David Miller proved crucial in the final here. The Mumbaier said it would take him at least two days to fully grasp the enormity of the achievement. "No feelings right now, I don't know what to say," he said. Pacer Arshdeep Singh flouted a couple of polaroid shots of his, one taken on the morning of the final and the other with the winner's medal around his neck and the trophy in his hands in the afternoon. "This is what belief can do," he said. The Indian team is currently stranded here as Barbados has been shut down due to hurricane Beryl, originating in the Atlantic. The category 4 hurricane has intensified with maximum sustained winds of 210 kmph. The Indian team was supposed to take an Emirates flight from New York via Dubai. A source told PTI that the plan now is to take the team back to India on a charter flight. The Indian contingent, including support staff, families, and officials, consists of about 70 members.



Canada Open: Fourth seed Lakshya Sen hopes to regain form as defending champion

PTI ■ CALGARY (CANADA)

With fond memories of his past, defending champion Lakshya Sen will look to end his title drought when he begins his campaign at the Canada Open badminton tournament here on Tuesday. The world No 14 Sen is the only Indian competing in the BWF World Tour Super 500 meet who will compete in the Paris Olympics. The reigning Commonwealth Games gold medallist's form has slipped since his Canada Open triumph around this time last year as he is yet to win a title since then. Sen will look to find his rhythm back as he gears up for the Paris Olympics, which begins in less than a month's time. With a No 4 seeding, Sen finds himself in the bottom half of the draw which also features the Japanese duo of Kodai Naraoka (WR 6) and Koki Watanabe (WR 20). The former world championship bronze medallist Sen will start off against a qualifier and may head into a potential quarterfinal clash with Hong Kong's WR 23 NG Ka Long Angus. There are three other Indians in the men's singles main draw. Priyanshu Rajawat will face eighth seed Rasmus Gemke of Denmark. Rajawat recently had a notable last-eight finish in the US Open Super 300 event, wherein he lost to Lei Lax Xi. Kiran George will take on Yushi Tanaka of Japan, while Ayush Shetty is the fourth Indian in the draw, starting his campaign against the sixth seed Watanabe (6). On a high after her semifinal finish in the US Open last week, Malvika Bansod will face Julie Dawall Jakobsen of Denmark in her opening women's singles fixture. Malvika is also in the bottom half of the draw which has WR 14 Nozomi Okuhara as the second seed. But her immediate next challenge may be against WR 21 Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of Denmark. The Danish player has got a fourth seed and could be Malvika's last-16 challenger. If she is able to overcome the pre-quarters hurdle, Malvika may face fifth seed Sung Shuo Yun, who is WR 24.

Six Indians in ICC Team of Tournament

PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council has picked six Indians in its 'Team of the Tournament' for the just-concluded T20 World Cup but there was no place for star batter Virat Kohli, who played a match-winning knock in the final against South Africa. In his new role as an opener, Kohli had an underwhelming World Cup before rising to the occasion in the big final where he was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 59-ball 76. India pipped South Africa by seven runs in a sensational comeback in the death overs to win their second T20 World Cup title after 17 years. The ICC XI featured Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel and two pacers in Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh. Rohit led from the front with 257 runs at a splendid strike-rate of



156.7 to his name. He was the second most leading run-getter after Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz. The Player of the Tournament and India's trump card in their title win, Bumrah returned with 15 wickets. But more than his wickets, his impact in restricting the scoring rate of teams made Bumrah India's most important player right through the tournament. His economy rate of 4.17 was the best ever by any bowler in a single edition of the men's T20 World Cup. Following their historic semifinal finish, Afghanistan found three players in the ICC team, including left-arm quick Fazalhaq Farooqi,

who topped the wicket-takers chart jointly with Arshdeep (17 wickets each). Wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who topped the runs scorers' list with 281 runs as an opener for Afghanistan, also found a place alongside skipper Rashid Khan. The crafty leg-spinner brilliantly led Afghanistan in their historic run and returned with 14 wickets with a tidy economy of 6.17. Marcus Stoinis of Australia and Nicholas Pooran of the tournament co-hosts West Indies completed the XI. Runners-up South Africa did not find a player in the XI and pacer

Anrich Nortje was named the 12th man. Nortje began the tournament with a brilliant 4/7 against Sri Lanka and took at least one wicket in all but one match. In the final, he was the pick of South Africa's bowlers with figures of 2/26 from his four overs. **ICC TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT:** Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh (all Indians); Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Rashid Khan, Fazalhaq Farooqi (Afghanistan); Marcus Stoinis (Australia) and Nicholas Pooran (West Indies); 12th man: Anrich Nortje.

Nainital : Monsoon pitter-patter sounds like lullaby for weary souls

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Afzal Hussain Fauji
Nainital

Nainital, the lake town known for its peerless beauty world-wide, assumes a kind of ethereality when it starts raining. As the monsoon breezes gently blow, the old, tall trees-covering the hills with eye-soothing greenery- cheerfully swing. Nainital beckons tourists all the year round, but its charm peaks when the summer heat singes the plains. However, its beauty in monsoon, according to many, soothes the weary souls, rejuvenating them with verve and vigour with the romantic pitter-patter of the bounteous monsoon.

We love rain because it is supposed to wash away the old, making life look new again. Rain not just washes away the dust and dirt; it washes away fear and anxieties that gnaw at us from within and once these are washed away we are filled with new energies and if we are a little spiritually inclined we feel as though we are living in the infinity and eternity, away from the space and time our life is limited by. This is what Nainital becomes during the monsoon, a perfect setting to suddenly feel revived physically, intellectually and even spiritually. With raindrops sounding as lullaby, strolling amidst light drizzling along the lakes and the fog-wrapped hills may transport one to an idyllic plane where everything appears beautiful, pure and pristine. Another beauty that is lurking in this lake town is the colonial vestiges still visible. Once the summer capital of the United Provinces, it still boasts of its cluster of beautiful and sprawling bungalows and villas where the summer-scorched and nostalgic

Britishers would come and spend days in quaintness. The Naini Lake, the crescent-shaped, natural, freshwater body appears as the prima donna of this hill station. Indulging in a boat ride on this placid, sapphire-hued lake surrounded by vibrant greenery significantly adds to its attraction. And in the monsoon months, the charm of the lake and the delight of boatrips are said to reach their acme. No wonder, tourists who love to spend alone time away from noise and clamour with themselves or with their near ones through this iconic hill station in the monsoon time when the sunshine exhilarates, rain refreshes and wind resuscitates. In the three monsoon months, the tourist footfall drops significantly, but this deepens the serenity of the place.

Importantly, hotels based in Nainital give huge discounts to the tourists in the monsoon months. Besides, they enjoy numerous facilities during their stay in monsoon which are not available for the summer-time tourists because of the rush and push.



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