

OPINION 6

WHY TECHNOLOGY CAN'T EASE PEOPLE'S SUFFERING

WORLD 8

HURRICANE MILTON SLAMS FLORIDA, CAUSES DEATHS AND FLOODING

MONEY 10

UPI TRANSACTIONS SURGE IN FIRST HALF OF 2024

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FAREWELL BHARAT'S RATAN

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the nation mourned the passing away of the legendary industrialist Ratan Naval Tata, hundreds and thousands of Mumbaikars on Thursday bade an emotional goodbye to the former Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, as his mortal remains - wrapped in national tri-colours - were taken on a 12 km final journey from the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) to Worli crematorium for his last rites.

After solemn prayers and rituals performed as per the Parsi traditions at a brief ceremony, Ratan Tata's body was consigned to a combustion chamber at the Worli electric crematorium, amid full-State honours and a fun salute accorded by the Maharashtra government.

The funeral held at an electric crematorium reflected the changing traditions in the Parsi community members living in Mumbai who in the past would make it a point to consign the remains of their loved ones to the Tower of Silence, or Doongerwadi at Malabar Hill in south Mumbai. Ratan Tata breathed his last at the Breach Candy Hospital at around 11.30 pm on Wednesday night, following age-related health conditions, after a week of media speculation about his worsening medical condition. A bachelor all his life, Tata was 86 at the time of his death. Given that he had touched the people from all walks of life across the country, the news of Ratan Tata - who despite having built a Rs 3,800 crore Tata group's business empire remained a humble man till the last day - plunged the nation into a state of mourning, with people grieving his demise and speaking in



glorious terms about his contributions to Indian industry and also nation-building.

While thousands of people turned out at the NCPA to pay their homage to the legendary industrialist, more than a couple of lakhs of people had either lined up along the 12 km funeral procession route from the NCPA to Worli crematorium or bade adieu from atop the buildings located along the route.

Hours before his funeral, the Maharashtra Cabinet adopted a resolution at a special meeting, recommending to the Centre to confer Bharat Ratna, country's highest civilian award, posthumously to Ratan Tata, who was bestowed with Padma Vibhushan by the Indian government in 2008. As a sign of State mourning, the national Tricolour on government offices in Maharashtra were flown at half-mast on Thursday. Earlier, after his death on Wednesday night, the veteran industrialist's body was taken from the Breach Candy Hospital to his Colaba residence in south Mumbai.

RATAN TATA
28 DECEMBER 1937
9 OCTOBER 2024

Jamshedpur mourns its man of steel

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ JAMSHEDPUR

It was not only the more than one lakh workforce of Tata Group of companies, its subsidiaries and ancillaries which mourned Ratan Tata's passing, but a pall of gloom descended in each and every household of the Steel City of Jamshedpur which Tata was so fond of.

From spending time on Shop Floor Management of the then TELCO, rechristened as Tata Motors by Ratan Tata himself, for a global



pursuit to make it a point to be part of the famous March 3 Foundation Day (anniversary of JN Tata) celebrations at Jubilee Park near

Sakchi Market, Ratan frequented the lovely city where the Tatas dreamt from making salt to software, tea to trucks and from car to business czar since early 1900s. The city of Jamshedpur is also known as 'Tatanagar', and the fondness of the Tatas for the city made the Jharkhand government declare a day of State Mourning as a mark of respect for industrialist Ratan Tata. As a young trainee, Tata resided in Room No. 11 of the Dealer's Apprentice Hostel at TELCO.

the pioneer
Tribute

Goodbye, Mr Tata

Ratan Naval Tata, the Rdoyen of Indian industry, inheritor of one of the greatest corporate names in India passed away peacefully on October 9, and was laid to rest on Thursday. Even though he was 86 years old and had been suffering health issues for the past few years, his passing has been mourned across the board. But it is surprising just how much the general public in India has mourned his passing, especially in a country where capitalists are still not celebrated.

Ratan Tata's immense contributions to philanthropy, his love of dogs including strays, have endeared him to Indians like few others have managed, with the possible exception of his uncle, JRD Tata, whom he succeeded as Chairman of Tata Sons. Following the horrendous 26/11 attacks when the flagship Taj Mahal hotel was desecrated by terrorists, he not only ensured that all employees

who had lost their lives or loved ones did not lose hope and he paid compensation to all and he was determined that the hotel rise again to the top, which it has.

Ratan Tata is a poster child of post-liberalisation India. Under his leadership, the expansion of Tata group's ventures began

aggressively. Whether it was the success of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in the Information Technology space, the acquisition of Jaguar

Land Rover and Tetley Tea, the global reach of Tata Steel as well as the growth of Tata Motors in the Indian passenger car space starting from the late-1990s with the Tata Indica.

The fact that Indian Hotels, operators of the Taj Group is today India's largest hotel chain is in no small part thanks to his leadership and the fact that he surrounded himself with extremely capable managers.



National Conference President Farooq Abdullah, Vice President Omar Abdullah and others during the party's Legislature Party Meeting after Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election result, at the headquarters Nawa e Subha in Srinagar, Thursday

Omar Abdullah elected legislative party leader

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Thursday set into motion the process of government formation by 'unanimously' electing its Vice President Omar Abdullah as leader of the legislative party. The announcement was made by the senior Abdullah and party chief Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Addressing the media after the National Conference MLAs met at its headquarters to elect the leader of the legislature party Dr Farooq Abdullah stated that the pre-poll alliance partners (National Conference, Congress, CPI-M, Panthers Party) will meet on Friday to take the government formation process forward.

Omar Abdullah thanked the National Conference (NC) legislators for electing him their leader so that he could stake claim to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir. "You are aware of the decision that was taken. A meeting of the NC legislature party took place, the legislature party has decided on its leader and I am thankful from the bottom of my heart to the NC legislators that they have reposed their faith in me and given me a chance to stake a claim for government formation," Abdullah told reporters after he was elected the leader of the legislature party here. On the question of the timing of the government formation, Omar said, "Talks are on with the Congress. They have been

given a day to decide. Once they give us a letter of support, I will stake a claim for government formation." In another significant development, four independents (all from the Jammu region) expressed their support to the National Conference on Thursday. Pyare Lal Sharma, Satish Sharma, Choudhary Mohammed Akram, and Dr Rameshwar Singh - who won the Inderwal, Chhamb, Surankote, and Bani seats - have backed the NC. "Now our number is 42 plus the four independent MLAs. After receiving the letter from the Congress, we will go to the Raj Bhavan to stake claim to form the government," Omar added.

Inside reports suggested that the National Conference may go ahead and stake claim for government formation on Friday even in the absence of a letter of support from the Congress party. In a house of 90 members, NC along with independent candidates has magic numbers in its kitty. Political observers opined Congress has been relegated from a junior partner in the incoming Jammu and Kashmir government to a relative non-entity after four independent MLAs extended support to the National Conference. Meanwhile, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday accused the NC and CPI(M) of indulging in hooliganism after victory in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections.

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time in its fiscal history, Delhi is on the brink of a severe financial crisis in the current fiscal, with its expenditure likely to cross the limit of receipts. Data from the Finance Department show its earnings through non tax revenues, tax revenues may drop to Rs 62 415 cr as against the budgetary estimate of Rs 64142 cr

Rafael Nadal bids adiós

by the end of fiscal year 2025.) Delhi has historically been a revenue-surplus state and this would be the first instance of a deficit since the reconstitution of the Legislative Assembly in 1993. Notably, data shows a continuous streak of fiscal surplus from the fiscal year 2017-18

through the projected budget of 2024-25. As per the data, Revenue expenditure is expected to rise from Rs 60911 cr to Rs 63911 cr. The revenue receipts have consistently been higher than the revenue expenditure starting with a surplus

of Rs 4913.25 crores in 2017-18, which further increased to a significant surplus of Rs 14456.91 crores in 2022-23. Even for the fiscal year 2023-24, a healthy surplus of Rs 6462.29 crores is anticipated. However, the forecast for 2024-25 presents a potential

challenge: while the initial Budget Estimates (BE) show a surplus of Rs 3231.19 crores, the possible inclusion of additional demand could lead to a deficit of Rs 1495.48 crores. Notably, the Arvind Kejriwal government is giving free ride to women in DTC buses, free water up to 20,000 litre per family, free electricity up to 200 units per family, free pilgrimage to senior citizens to the people of Delhi.



Dear Shareholders, I am pleased to address you as the Chairman and Managing Director of your company, NMDC Steel Limited (NSL), as we mark a significant milestone in our journey. NSL stands as a testament to India's industrial prowess, representing a strategic initiative by the Ministry of Steel to augment the nation's steel production capabilities. On August 12, 2023, the company achieved its First Blow-in of the Blast Furnace and within three days, produced Hot Metal on August 15, 2023. NMDC Steel Limited produced its final product - the HR Coil on August 24, 2023, only 9 days after the production of Hot Metal. In the journey ahead, NSL achieved 1 million tonnes of cumulative Hot Metal production in a record time of 226 days. It has now been a year since that momentous event, and I am proud to announce that as of July 21, 2024, NSL produced 1.5 million tonnes of Hot Metal from its Blast Furnace. On August 11, 2024, the Plant crossed 1 million tonnes of Liquid Steel production and on August 20, 2024, NSL achieved the milestone of 1 million tonnes of HR Coil production within a year of commissioning. The Plant recorded 40 heats, 6967 T Liquid Steel and 6519 T HR Coil production on August 15, 2024, which marks the highest production in a day at NSL.

Over the past year, NMDC Steel Limited has made steady progress in ramping up production and stabilizing operations. The Steel Plant's design integrates energy-efficient technologies such as Continuous Casting, Pulverized Coal Injection, Coke Dry Quenching, and Top Recovery Turbine to minimize environmental impact and optimize resource utilization. Our commitment to sustainable development is further reflected in our adoption of a zero liquid discharge system, recycling initiatives, and waste heat recovery options. By focusing on optimizing our processes, enhancing efficiency, and maintaining high safety and quality standards, we have achieved significant improvements across all areas of production, setting new benchmarks and achieving our initial targets ahead of schedule.



Physical and Financial Performance

The financial year 2023-24 witnessed impressive achievements in terms of physical production for NSL. The company achieved production of 4.94 lakh tonnes of Hot Rolled Coil within a span of 7 months, considering that NSL commenced commercial operations on August 31, 2023. Sales of Hot Rolled Coils were recorded at an impressive 3.52 lakh tonnes, generating total revenue of Rs. 3,049 crores for the company. During the year under review, the company incurred a loss of Rs. 2,201 crores and incurred a capital expenditure of Rs. 1,226 crores.

NSL has recorded the highest production, in a single month, of Hot Metal - 1.7 lakh tonnes; Liquid Steel - 1.3 lakh tonnes; and HR Coil - 1.25 lakh tonnes in August 2024. We have successfully commenced PCI operations on May 24, 2024, and produced LPG-grade steel sheets for the first time, marking our entry into the market for specialty steel products. We have begun taking orders from OEMs and are developing customized grades of specialty steel, including high-strength, low-alloy steel, which has been well-received by our customers. NSL is on the threshold of breaking even.

Currently, we are producing close to 1.25 lakh tonnes of HR Coil, which is marginally below our breakeven point on a month on month basis. On our way forward, we

Building on a Strong Foundation

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that commissioning and operating a steel plant is both challenging and rewarding. The experiences and lessons learned have established a strong foundation for our continued success. Moving forward, our focus will be on leveraging these insights to drive further improvements, enhance operational efficiency, and maintain high safety and quality standards.

Corporate Governance

NMDC Steel Limited adheres to the highest standards of governance, aiming to create long-term value for all stakeholders, including shareholders, customers, suppliers, creditors, the Government of India, State Governments, governmental agencies/departments, and society at large. The company is committed to conducting its business ethically and responsibly, guided by the principles of accountability, transparency, fairness, and effective stakeholder management.

Looking Ahead: A Path to Sustainable Growth

As we move forward, we will continue to emphasize on operational excellence, strategic growth, and sustainability. The Management is committed to charting a path forward for NSL, focusing on continuous improvement, innovation, and value creation for all stakeholders. We remain dedicated to driving long-term growth while upholding our responsibility to the environment and the communities we serve. In conclusion, I would like to extend my gratitude to our dedicated team, MECON and technology partners, shareholders, bankers, lenders, suppliers, and customers for their steady support and confidence in NMDC Steel Limited. I would also like to acknowledge the support, cooperation, and guidance received from the Ministry of Steel, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and other departments of the Government of India and the State Government of Chhattisgarh. As we continue on this exciting journey, I am confident that the company will move from strength to strength and scale new heights. Jai Hind!

Amitava Mukherjee
CMD (Additional Charge)
NMDC Steel Limited

Excerpts from the CMD Speech at 9th AGM of NSL held on September 27, 2024.



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Arambag Puja Committee Durga Puja Pandal



Kali Bari Temple Mandir Marg, Connaught Place Durga Puja Pandal



Devotees visit 115 years old Kashmere Gate Durga Puja Pandal

Ranjan Dimri

City Cabinet approves 50 per cent hike in MLA-LAD Fund

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet on Thursday approved a 50 per cent hike in MLA-LAD Fund with each MLA's local area development fund increased from Rs. 10 crores to Rs. 15 crores per year. Announcing the increase in the funds at a press conference, Chief Minister Atishi positioned Delhi as the state with the highest MLA Fund allocation in the country. "Today, the Delhi Cabinet has made a significant decision by increasing the MLA Fund from Rs 10 crores per year to Rs 15 crores per year. No other state in the country provides such a large MLA Fund as Delhi," she asserted.

Highlighting comparisons with other states, she noted that Gujarat allocates Rs 1.5 crores per MLA constituency, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka provide Rs 2 crores, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Rajasthan allocate only Rs 5 crores.

"Now, Delhi will provide Rs 15 crores per year, not only the highest in the country but also three times more than most states. For the past ten years, under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi government has been working for the people of Delhi—whether they live in slums, unauthorized colonies, or big bungalows. In the coming years, the Delhi government will continue to work for the people of Delhi,"



she stated.

Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj stated, "Today, there was an important meeting of the Delhi government's Cabinet at the Delhi Secretariat, where a major decision was made regarding the MLA-LAD Fund. The MLA-LAD Fund is a very important fund in a democracy through which local residents can get small or large development works done through their MLA."

In light of the damage caused by this year's heavy rains, he said,

"This year Delhi has experienced a lot of rain, which has caused damage to the roads, parks, walkways, and walls. MLAs have been regularly bringing these issues to our attention, and the increased MLA Fund will enable them to quickly provide relief without waiting for long departmental sanctions."

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP said that the announcement by Chief Minister Atishi to increase the annual MLA fund in the last moments of the government and the assembly's tenure is nothing but a deception. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva stated, "This increase in MLA funds is less likely to be spent on solving local problems and development, and is more likely to be misused on the ruling MLAs' commission minting, as well as being misused by contractors and officials." Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta added the government should ensure that only development work is carried out within this time frame using the additional MLA funds. "Additionally, there should be complete audit supervision of all MLA fund expenditures made within the final 100 days," he said.

DU sets sights on range of initiatives including launching own satellite

Only allowing e-vehicles, free lunch some of other initiatives

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University has set its sight on a range of ambitious initiatives, including launching its own satellite, implementing a policy to allow only electric vehicles on the campus and introducing a free lunch scheme for the students.

These plans are part of the varsity's long-term goals mapped in its Institutional Development Plan (IDP) 2024 -- a perspective plan document which charts out the broad goals and objective the Delhi University (DU) wishes to achieve over a period of time.

According to the set goals, the university aims to establish a DU satellite system that could play a major role in scientific research, telecommunications, GPS navigation as well as remote education. However, if financial limitations arise, the DU may consider hiring services from organizations like the ISRO to make this plan a reality, the document states.

In addition, the DU is eyeing environmental sustainability with plans to introduce a zero-emission target by restricting fossil fuel vehicles on the campus. The university hopes to phase in electric vehicles, starting with areas like Chhatra Marg, to create a cleaner and greener environment for the students and staff.



The modalities of these projects and feasibility of their implementation will be decided as and when they are considered for rolling out. Another major initiative the DU plans to introduce is a working lunch scheme for underprivileged students, offering free meals in the university cafeteria in exchange for work. The canteens will follow strict food safety standards and could collaborate with self-help groups for food procurement to support local communities, the IDP envisions.

Alongside these plans, the DU is looking at creating a "University Haat", on lines of the universities abroad, to set up a commercial shopping area where products developed by the university's student-led start-ups can be

showcased and put up for sale.

The university's massive population of nearly six lakh people presents a unique market opportunity, the document states.

The university's other long-term vision includes developing a 'University Alumni Angel Network' where successful alumni can provide mentorship and financial support to student-led start-ups, offer reverse internships where students hire industry professionals and establish the special Chair for multinational companies, which can promote research at the university in their interest. The Institutional Development Plan has been tabled for consideration before the Academic Council members, who held a meeting on Thursday.

DU-St Stephens college tussle: VC constitutes committee to hold talks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a tussle between the Delhi University and its affiliate St Stephen's College, Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh has constituted a committee to hold talks with the college administration.

A three-member panel of the Academic Council members will communicate with college principal John Varghese over alleged discard of the university rules by the college administration, said an official statement.

The Delhi University (DU) and St Stephen's have been at loggerheads for long over policy implementation disputes. Recently, the two were at the center of a controversy after the college denied to admit 12 students over its sanctioned seat limit under the DU's newly introduced single girl child quota. Several students under the unreserved category were also refused admission disregarding the DU's extra allocations formula adopted for optimal filling of seats.

After a legal battle, some of these students were admitted by the college following the Delhi High Court's order. In an Academic Council meeting held on Thursday, the vice-chancellor constituted a committee, which includes Professor Harendra Nath Tiwari, Alok Pandey and Maya John. They will communicate with the college principal for resolution on the issue, the statement said.



Besides, during the meeting DU's Institutional Development Plan (IDP) 2024 and Strategic Plan -- two key perspective plan documents of the university which charts out its short term and long term plans for future were approved and passed amid objections by a section of the professors.

However, the vice-chancellor has constituted a committee to review the IDP draft and asked to make revisions based on the raised objections after which it is slated to be tabled before the Executive Council members, the highest decision making body of the university, in their meeting on October 14, the statement said.

A proposal on revisions made in a general elective paper titled 'Delhi Through Ages: Making of its Early Modern History' was also passed in the meeting. The revision includes replacing the text Purana Qila with 'Indraprastha-Hastinapur' and removal of a text by historian Irfan Habib from the suggested readings, according to the Academic Council members.

Vigilance department arrests constable for accepting bribe



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Vigilance department arrested a constable of Vasant Kunj (South) police station for demanding and accepting a bribe.

According to the police on Thursday, they nabbed the alleged constable, who has been identified as Amit, red-handed while he was accepting a bribe. A senior police official said, "The Vigilance Unit of Delhi Police while acting on a complaint filed by a citizen over the vigilance helpline no. 1064, arrested a police personnel posted in Police Station Vasant Kunj (South), for demanding a bribe of Rs.50,000/- and accepting a part amount."

He added that on Wednesday, a call was received from the complainant wherein she informed the helpline staff that a local area's beat staff demanded a bribe from her upon initiating civil construction work in the Rangpuri Pahadi area for allowing continuation of the construction work. "Aggrieved by the unjust and

illegal demand, Ms.X, who is a homemaker, called on the helpline number and sought action against the culprit. The information shared by the complainant immediately got verified on ground through a discreet enquiry by the Vigilance Unit's team, which prima facie confirmed the genuineness of her grievances," another police officer said. Accordingly, a police team, along-with public witness, laid a trap in coordination with the complainant. "The alleged police personnel had directed the complainant to deliver the first instalment of the demanded bribe money (the sum of money arranged by the complainant till that time), as a designated place in the local area," he said, adding that the team nabbed him. An FIR under the relevant sections of Prevention of Corruption Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita has been registered at Police Station Vigilance. "The arrested accused Constable has been produced before the Special Court, Rouse Avenue Courts, and has been sent to judicial custody," the officer stated.

AAP shares photo of CM Atishi signing files at her Kalkaji residence



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday shared images showing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi signing files at her Kalkaji residence surrounded by packed cartons of her belongings, a day after the party claimed she was made to "forcibly vacate" the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow in the national capital. Posting the images on X, AAP lashed out at the BJP, saying it cannot take away Atishi's commitment to work for the people of Delhi. Later, Atishi accused the BJP of attempting to encroach upon the "CM's residence" at 6, Flagstaff Road in the Civil Lines area. Atishi at a press conference said the BJP was frustrated as it was not able to defeat the AAP in elections and was thus resorting to desperate measures. The BJP responded by saying that the AAP was indulging in a "drama" and playing "victim card" over the property to gain sympathy. Responding to the pictures, BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition in Delhi

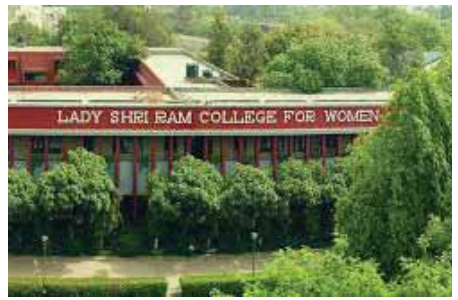
Assembly Vijender Gupta said Atishi already had a bungalow in her name on Mathura Road and termed the party's complaints as mere antics. "She is trying to play the 'victim card' to gain public sympathy like her predecessor and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Atishi has a bungalow allotted in her name on Mathura Road which was earlier used by Sheila Dikshit for 10 years as Delhi Chief Minister. Also, Atishi can work from her full-fledged office at Delhi secretariat but she was making a futile attempt by playing the victim card posing with empty boxes," he said. Gupta asked the AAP leader the need to occupy the Chief Minister residence despite having an official residence at AB-17, Mathura road which was allotted to her as a minister. "Why Atishi, a despise having such a beautiful and luxurious official residence at AB-17 and a lavishly renovated Chief Minister office worth crores, still wanted to illegally occupy the 'Sheesh Mahal' at 6 Flagstaff Road,

Kejriwal's residence?" he questioned. Attacking Atishi over the social media posts showing her work around boxes, Gupta asked, "Despite having a splendid residence and office, Atishi, who staged a drama by sitting amidst empty boxes at her personal residence, is trying to fool whom? Why does she not want to work from her official residence and office?" Accusing the BJP, Atishi said the BJP is in tension because they haven't been able to defeat us at the polls. "They couldn't even secure double-digit seats in the assembly, and their 'Operation Lotus' to break our party also failed. Even jailing our leaders didn't work," she said. Atishi said the AAP was not in politics for cars and bungalows. "If for BJP gets peace by encroaching on the CM house, they are welcome to it. Our party isn't in politics for bungalows or cars. If necessary, AAP ministers and MLAs are ready to work from the streets," she said.

Olympians honoured at LSR college

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Olympians Manu Bhaker and Maheshwari Chauhan were on Thursday honoured by their alma mater, Lady Shri Ram College (LSR) for Women, for their "exceptional performance" at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The Delhi University college organised a special ceremony to celebrate their achievements and their contribution to Indian sports. Bhaker, who completed her Political Science (Hons) degree from LSR, made history by becoming the first Indian female shooter to win an Olympic medal and the first Indian athlete to win two medals in a single Olympics. Chauhan, who graduated in Philosophy (Hons), also made the country proud as the first Indian woman skeet shooter to compete in the Olympics, narrowly missing out on a bronze medal.



Rhythm Sangwan, a current third-year student at LSR and a shooter, was to be honoured for her performance in the Paris Olympics, where she finished 10th in a team event and 15th in an individual air pistol event. However, she could not make it. The college also honoured Jaspal Rana, who is Bhaker's coach.

Minor boy raped by neighbour

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A minor boy was allegedly raped by a neighbor who used to show him adult pictures in Delhi's Bindapur area. According to the police on Thursday, a complaint was received on Wednesday night about sexual assault with a child. The accused, who is a resident of Bihar, was residing nearby to the family of the victim child and is currently absconding, according to police sources. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said, "A PCR call was received at Bindapur police station at around 9:29 pm about sexual assault with a child. On this police reached and met mother of the child." He added that during police enquiry, it transpired that victim has been sexually assaulted by one neighbour who has run away from the rented house. "Victim was taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) hospital for medical examina-



tion where he was medically examined with A/H/O sexual and physical assault," Singh stated, adding that the mother said that her son was having problem in rectum while going to bathroom. The statement of mother was recorded in the case where she stated that her son had problem in rectum while going to bathroom and later revealed that one neighbor who was staying on rent in same building sexually assaulted him and used to

show him porn pictures on mobile. A case under section six of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and 351(2) (Criminal intimidation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has been registered. "Sincere efforts are being taken to nab the accused and further investigation is ongoing," the DCP stated. A police source said that it is still unclear if the accused was a major.



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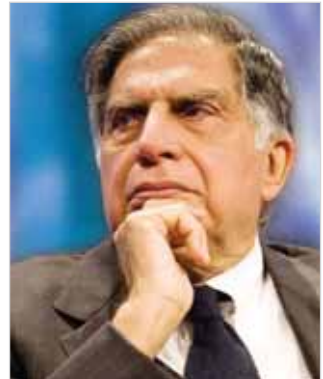
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PAPER WITH PASSION

India loses its 'Ratan'

Ratan Tata not only redefined Indian business practices but also set new standards for ethical leadership and corporate responsibility

The passing of Ratan Tata, one of India's most influential and revered business leaders, marks the end of an era for Indian industry and philanthropy. A visionary who transformed the Tata Group into a global powerhouse, Ratan Tata not only redefined Indian business practices but also set new standards for ethical leadership and corporate responsibility. His demise has left an indelible void in the Indian business landscape and his contributions will continue to shape India's socio-economic fabric for generations to come. Ratan Tata's leadership of the Tata Group from 1991 to 2012 is widely recognised as a period of extraordinary innovation and growth. He was instrumental in leading the conglomerate's diversification, moving it beyond its traditional industries like steel and textiles into sectors such as information technology, automotive, telecommunications and hospitality. Under his stewardship, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) became a global leader in IT services. Tata Motors expanded its reach with the acquisitions of British automotive giants Jaguar and Land Rover in 2008. Tata's vision of making India a global player was rooted in a deep sense of nationalism, combined with a keen awareness of global business trends. Ratan Tata's most cherished moment came when Tata Motors launched the Nano in 2008 despite all odds. Though the Nano did not achieve commercial success, the boldness of the vision highlighted Tata's commitment to solving Indian problems with innovative solutions and realising the aspirations of Indian middle class. Known for his humility and discretion, he always emphasised that businesses should serve society at large. "We have to touch the lives of people in ways



that matter," Tata often said. Nearly two-thirds of Tata Group's profits are directed to social work through Tata Trusts, a remarkable legacy in Indian philanthropy. The Tata Trusts, under his guidance, funded several initiatives in healthcare, education and rural development. Tata maintained a reputation for being soft-spoken and modest, rarely allowing his personal life to take centre stage in the public eye. His leadership during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, where the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel was one of the primary targets, showed his resilience. Tata visited the families of affected staff members, providing support and ensuring that the hotel was rebuilt, symbolising the spirit of survival and recovery. Despite numerous achievements, Tata faced failures with grace. His decisions, such as the Nano, received criticism, but he handled setbacks with the dignity that defined him. His resilience and forward-thinking approach is his legacy that would inspire many. Ratan Tata's life was not just about business. His love for architecture, aviation and cars was well known. Despite his status as one of India's richest individuals, he led a simple life, often seen without an entourage, and known for driving himself. With Ratan Tata's passing, India has lost a visionary and a kind hearted leader who would be remembered for his achievements and resilience. Rest in peace!

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PICTALK



People purchase decorative items from a shop ahead of 'Ayudha Pooja' festival, in Bengaluru

PTI

MSMEs and food processing: A path to economic growth

Revitalising the MSME and food processing sectors in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, can boost economic growth, raise farmers' incomes and strengthen food security

Both Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have been advocating for special government packages, emphasising the importance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) as a key driver for development. The governments of these states, as well as the central government, recognise the significant potential in the MSME sector, particularly in food processing, and have prioritised it accordingly. Chief Ministers N Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar share concerns over the stagnation of the MSME sector in recent years, and both are committed to reviving it through various initiatives. In Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Naidu has acknowledged the struggles faced by MSMEs over the past five years, emphasising the need to revitalise the sector. He highlighted the slow progress of MSME parks and raised concerns over pending government incentives, which have hampered the sector's growth. His administration aims to address these challenges by ensuring the release of overdue incentives and enhancing the participation of



farmers in MSME parks. By linking farmers directly to these parks, Naidu envisions a system where agricultural stakeholders can benefit directly from business opportunities. Similarly, Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has voiced concerns about MSMEs and infrastructure development in his state. Kumar has aligned with Naidu in recognising the critical role of MSMEs in driving economic growth and ensuring regional prosperity. The coincidence of Bihar's representation in the central government, with ministers like Jitan Ram Manjhi and Chirag Paswan, has further fueled efforts to secure the necessary support for these initiatives. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi has encouraged these ministers to focus on fostering connections between DWCRAs groups and MSMEs to enhance economic opportunities for small enterprises. A significant allocation of Rs 100 crore as a credit guarantee for MSMEs has been announced, underscoring the importance of ensuring financial support for these small businesses. However, meaningful progress in the MSME sector is unlikely unless strong linkages are created between MSMEs and the food processing industry, as these sectors are highly interdependent.

The food processing industry, in particular, has been recognised as a powerful engine for economic growth. India is one of the largest producers of various food items, including milk, fruits, vegetables, millet, tea and fish. This creates a robust foundation for the growth of the food processing sector. India's position as one of the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world is bolstered by the significant role played by the food processing industry in ensuring food security and driving economic expansion.



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries reported that by the end of FY 2022-23, the sector contributed 7.66 per cent of the gross value added (GVA) in manufacturing and 8.45 per cent of the GVA in agriculture. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector has been strong, with Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2,934.12 crore in 2020-21. However, challenges remain, as processed food exports saw a 17 per cent decline in FY24, dropping from \$13,078.3 million in the previous fiscal to \$10,881.81 million.

To address these challenges and promote growth, the government has implemented several initiatives, including the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY), Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industries (PLISFPI), and Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME). By increasing processing levels and creating employment, these programs also aim to raise farmers' incomes.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

RATAN TATA IS NO MORE

Madam — A true gem can only be distinguished by its value and brightness. However, if a gem is hidden within a person, its value and sparkle are not visible to recognise it. Ratan Tata, India's famous industrialist, was another such figure whose contributions will be remembered for centuries to come. Everyone knows about his outstanding social efforts and affection for pets. Ratan Tata had a heart that beat for dogs till his last breath. Ratan Tata was nothing short of a deity to the stray dogs roaming the streets, which others looked down on or ignored. The doors of his Taj Hotel were always open to dogs. Ratan Tata asked for aid by posting a photo of a dog on his Instagram account on June 26, 2024.

He posted a lengthy post requesting a blood transfusion for the seven-month-old dog. After that, several people brought their dogs to give blood transfusions. Ratan Tata founded the Small Animal Hospital Mumbai (SAHM), the first of its kind in the country, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for 24/7 care, inspired by his struggle to find advanced treatment for his dog abroad. He encouraged people to adopt stray dogs rather than buying pets, promoting animal welfare.

Amrapali Roy | Jamshedpur

KASHMIR REJECTS BJP

Madam — This is in response to the report titled 'Victory for Democracy'. It is strange why one and only the 'reverberations' of the Haryana mandate would travel 'far and wide', but not that handed out by the Jammu and Kashmir electorate! Despite so zealous chest-thumping revolving around the "peace" in Kashmir Valley following the "historic" saga of 5th August 2019, the BJP simply gets thwarted in the region. However, the result is far from surprising, as no self-respecting Kashmiri Muslim will ever vote for a party swearing in the name of Hindutva in this

The rains were here. They were here for a long time-if one goes by the weeks and months, the news channels were reporting their havoc from one end of the country to the other. From streets in Surat to fields in Biral of Darbhanga, water was found everywhere. From the hills of Himachal to the banks of Kavery, water was found in all the wrong places. Physical devastation and human tragedy were writ large. Rains are not new, and equally clearly, technology is progressing by leaps and bounds.

One wonders when 'the train shall meet'. One would have thought that repeated experiences, such as what Kosi has caused in north Bihar, would have changed the contours of its effects. It would not be the same in terms of embankments breaking in the same style, and it would not be the same manner of misery caused by the devastation of fragile huts and repeated breaking of embankments over and over again. Surely the country that boasts the landing on the moon and explorations of the planet can better respond to the devastations of nature.

There is a missing link somewhere which is so close to all that it's not even visible to the affected people. In some other countries, people are talking and doing as it were. They are changing the course of rivers and planning habitation in a manner that makes life less vulnerable and the potential for tragedy more manageable. To get back to the example of Bihar, whether it be the neighbourhood of the Budhi Gandak River or Kosi, habitations have been built to keep them away from the reach of floods.

However, the devastations have their ways of surprising. Consider the recent claim of the UGC Chairman in the printed world about the citations of Indian research in international forums. Consider the pronouncement of the political elite on the scientific breakthroughs of leading centres of science and

technology in the world of research.

All of them are legitimate claims duly annotated and evidence tested. The question remains how much of this technology has altered the quality of life of the people? It is not all a dreary story. Technology has changed the lives of several crores of people, especially in matters which have to do with the supply of clean water. This is as true as the story of the fury of floods.

However, somewhere the coexistence of such opposite experiences remains an enigma and difficult to explain. Science and technology cannot be bereft of responsibilities to society at large. Equally clear is the fact that death and destruction experiences would serve as the bottom line of the outcomes of devastation.

Somehow a bottom connection between technological progress and its tangible effects needs to be established. Somewhere the definition of progress and growth

Why technology can't ease people's suffering

While advancements in technology have improved lives in many areas, the failure to mitigate the destruction caused by recurring floods exposes a glaring disconnect



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM



THEY ARE CHANGING THE COURSE OF RIVERS AND PLANNING HABITATION IN A MANNER THAT MAKES LIFE LESS VULNERABLE AND THE POTENTIAL FOR TRAGEDY MORE MANAGEABLE

has to cover elimination of the same stories of destruction and death in the same regions over and over again. So long as the devastation of Kosi remains an annual affair with the same results most of the time, there is something in the developmental agenda that needs to be addressed. It is not an easy question to answer, especially after decades of application of the prescriptions whether it be a Planning Commission or the Niti Ayog. These questions need to be flagged and repeated till answers are found. In a country filled with bright people like India, there must be actionable solutions to mitigate human misery. Perhaps the part answer would lie in empowering local people with skills, resources, and more to handle local problems. Higher levels of administration, like the district at the state level, have to deal with issues of connectivity, coordination, mobilisation of resources, and using the skills of the people with commitment in

that part of the country to work for the welfare of the local context and the local circumstances. Far too much have rewards been focused on recognition gained abroad and talking of the big and the grand.

While there may be nothing wrong with that recognition and solutions to local problems should be picked up by the decision making system, the influential clientele, and the political elite. A culture has to be built to identify the local problems and use means of technology and resources to handle them at a local level. Interventions of this variety should recognise the same approval and celebration as an invitation from abroad or for that matter making of the great in a foreign institution. Somewhere a paradigm change would help the mitigation of local problems. It can be done and needs to be done.

(The writer is an internationally acclaimed management consultant; The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Press freedom is sacrosanct



The Supreme Court's recent ruling affirming the right of journalists to criticise the government without retaliatory action comes as a breather for the media's honest warriors-journalists-who do not want to join the bandwagon in sucking up to those in power. However, doubts remain as to how far this momentous judgement will

hold water. The "one man show" that we have witnessed over the past decade offers very little hope that the SC's verdict will be honoured (remember how the SC's dictate that bail, not jail ought to be the rule is being flouted almost to the point of being ignored).

If the PM has a grudge against a "colonial mindset," ordinary Indians have a lot to complain about a "post-colonial mindset," as displayed by not only the present dispensation but the Congress before it. Even before Modi took over in the year 2014, the media was not as independent as expected in a nation that is supposedly rooted in democratic principles. Modi has only picked up from where the Congress left, as far as freedom of the press is concerned.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

EXIT POLLS FAIL

Madam — It is not for the first time that the exit polls have proven wrong and detailed methodologies for the recent election surveys were not used. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, exit polls overestimated the BJP-led NDA performance, projecting over 400 seats when the alliance actually secured 293. A large number of pollsters in India now failed to accurately predict election outcomes in Haryana and J and K. In Haryana, most agencies had forecast fewer than 30 seats for the BJP, but official results showed the party winning 48 out of 90 seats. Pollsters had predicted 10-year anti-incumbency but proved altogether wrong. Voters in J and K kept parties guessing till the very end. For all the speculative intrigue ahead of J and K's much awaited election, J and K (NC 42, BJP 29, Cong 6) spoke as one-no-hung verdict. Pollsters got it wrong.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

multi-religious secular nation and also would never forgive such elements who had made a mockery of federalism not only by unilaterally abrogating special provisions and rights guaranteed by the Constitution itself but also dividing the state and relegating it to a mere Union Territory. Kashmiri electorate have transmitted a clear message that communal forces should be thwarted not only by protesting against it but also through wise tactical voting so that secular votes get polled in favour of the strongest party/coalition by preventing division of votes. And surely if the victory of the BJP in Haryana is "Triumph of democracy," that of the National Conference-Congress alliance in Jammu and Kashmir also demands the same epithet! Let the mandate of the Union Territory (especially Kashmir Valley) reverberate and travel far and wide, giving the secular force renewed vigour and hope that the Idea of India can still be saved by standing in a united wise way.

Kajal Chatterjee | Chennai



FIRST COLUMN

SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS

We must focus on solving our own problems objectively without going into cyclic thinking



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

This is very wise to do. Because we must be the prime movers for this. But we are in denial or wish to make a good impression on others. Mostly, we don't. We go into cyclic thinking; and get obsessed with our problems. This is not solving our problems. On the contrary, we are making them worse. Surprisingly, we have solutions to the problems of others, societies, nations, etc. Some of them may be good because we are likely to be objective about them. This is great except that we are not being asked. Then, there are other limitations. When it is our problem, we see mostly the dark side and do not think about how solving it will benefit us.

Regarding issues of others, we are also not seeing the nature of the person. We assume that they will be perfect without any faults like being ignorant, egoist, etc. Their circumstances may be very different from ours. In short, it is a complete waste of time to think of the problems of others. I have realised this, and now I try to focus on my problems; I have plenty. Out of them, I have chosen the six most important ones. As in my habit, I seek solutions from the Bhagavad-Geeta – the book of eternal wisdom. I will begin with the most pressing, which is being fearful. What has Lord Krishna instructed about this fundamental matter? (Verse # 2.40) In simple language, it means that one should take shelter from God to reduce fears.

I have done this and my fearful tendencies have reduced appreciably. Whenever I become fearful, I pray for guidance and help from



my Lord. Believe it; He guides and helps. My next serious problem is getting sexual thoughts and feelings. Lord Krishna has given its solution too. (3.43) I have realised that I cannot reason my way out of it. For example, I use lots of internet for useful information. What does pop out in between? I am getting good practice to press the Back – button. For the younger lot, the Lord has a solution too. He has allowed 'kama' (passion) in beings according to 'dharma' (religious principles). The third problem I seriously face is not being sincere about taking shelter from God. The tapasya (austerity) required defeats me.

The reason of course is the nature of my body. The mind, the senses and the intelligence all are material, and the tapasya required is spiritual. What is the solution? Pray for help and keep praying. That itself is a spiritual act. You will succeed as I am getting better. The fourth problem, which is a serious challenge for me is my 'ahankar' (ego). With success comes Shankar, i.e. I am superior. What is the solution according to the Geeta? What did Lord Krishna tell Arjuna, "If you don't heed my instructions due to your ahankar, you will perish." (18.58) I try to remind myself whenever I get too puffed up; that I don't wish to perish. The fifth giver of trouble to me is my weakness to gain attention, fame, etc.

I have realised that whatever I have achieved is due to the 'kripa' (mercy) of my Lord. By myself, I am close to zero as a small soul. What did Lord Krishna tell Arjuna? (11.33) I give credit for my successes to my Lord. The last one is interpersonal relationships. I have tried to reform my near and dear ones and surely failed miserably. They will improve when they desire to. It is working especially with my grandchildren. So, I am trying to improve my behaviour. This fits with my original requirement of solving my problems. (The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)



SHRIRUPA SENGUPTA

produces enough food to meet caloric needs, ensuring nutritional adequacy remains a challenge. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) shows that while caloric intake is generally adequate, undernutrition persists—35.5 per cent of children under five are stunted, and 19.3 per cent suffer from wasting. Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia due to iron deficiency among women and

vitamin deficiencies among children, further contribute to hidden hunger. Economic disparities and social inequities, including gender inequality and limited health-care access, play significant roles in perpetuating undernutrition.

Poorer segments of the population often lack access to a diverse, nutritious diet and rely heavily on staples like rice and wheat, with inadequate consumption of fruits, vegetables, and proteins.

Community-Led Nutrition Hubs: A Promising Solution Community-led nutrition hubs provide a grassroots approach to addressing food insecurity. Unlike top-down methods, these hubs leverage local knowledge and leadership to create sustainable, con-

text-specific solutions. They focus on balanced, nutritious diets rather than just caloric intake, helping to build community resilience against undernutrition.

Promoting Dietary Diversity: Nutrition hubs encourage the consumption of diverse foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, and animal products, essential for a balanced diet. By promoting dietary diversity, these hubs address micronutrient deficiencies and hidden hunger.

Supporting Vulnerable Groups: These hubs effectively reach vulnerable populations like children, pregnant women, and the elderly. They provide tailored nutritional support, fortified foods, supplements, and education on specific nutritional needs.



Leveraging Local Agriculture: Nutrition hubs support local food production and sustainable agricultural practices, increasing access to fresh, nutritious foods. This approach reduces dependence on external food supplies, which can be affected by price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions, particularly amid climate change.

Impact of Community-Led

Nutrition Hubs: Data from various studies highlight the effectiveness of community-led initiatives in improving nutritional outcomes and resilience. For example, a 2022 report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) noted a 20 per cent reduction in stunting rates among children under five in regions of Uttar Pradesh following the introduction of nutrition hubs.

The Global Nutrition Report 2023 showed that such hubs have improved micronutrient intake, with a 30 per cent increase in iron-rich food consumption among women in Maharashtra, significantly reducing anaemia. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) also found that communities practising

sustainable agriculture supported by nutrition hubs had a 20 per cent increase in crop yields during droughts compared to traditional methods. **A Whole-of-Society Approach:** Achieving the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" hinges on ensuring food security and building resilience through community-led initiatives. However, these goals require a whole-of-society approach that involves all community members, not just women. Men as Partners: Encouraging men to participate in nutrition hubs, whether through farming, cooking, or community organising, helps distribute responsibility more equitably and promotes gender equity. **Youth Engagement:** Involving young people in these efforts

ensures the continuation of community-led initiatives and brings fresh ideas and energy to the table.

Local Govt Support: Local governments can support and scale these initiatives by providing funding, policy support, and infrastructure, making nutrition hubs integral parts of community development.

Gender Equity and Shared Responsibility: While women are often on the frontlines of nutrition and food security, the burden should not fall solely on them. Engaging men, youth, and local governance helps create more equitable and sustainable solutions.

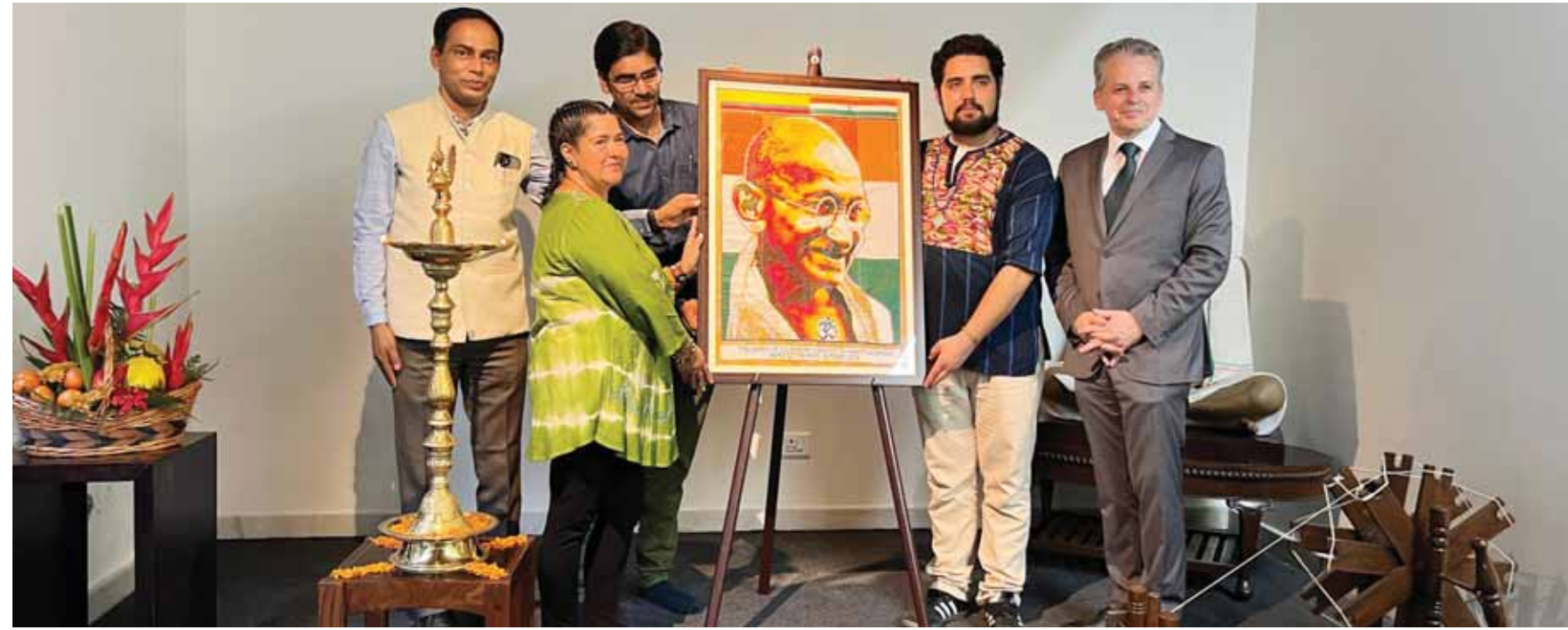
(The writer is Director - Centre for Strategic Communications for Public Health at Swasti; views are personal)

Celebrating unity and reconciliation through art



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In a world fraught with divisions, art transcends barriers, builds bridges. "Weaving Life to Weave Peace," underscores this profound connection



In a world often marked by discord and division, art emerges as a powerful medium that transcends barriers and speaks to our shared humanity. It serves as a universal language that unites people in their collective longing for peace, healing, and reconciliation. Against this backdrop, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, in collaboration with the Embassy of Colombia in India, recently hosted a poignant exhibition titled "Weaving Life to Weave Peace," an initiative of 'Tejidos Chakana'. This significant event, held shortly after the celebrations of October 2nd - Gandhi Jayanti, and the International Day of Nonviolence - underscores the deep connection between art and the pursuit of harmony in our world. The exhibition vividly highlights the transformative power of creativity as it honours the countless lives lost to conflict in Colombia - and the world per se - a nation that has weathered its share of internal strife and lost countless innocent citizens. The Colombian artisans, Mateo Perea Bernal and Nancy Gomez presented an extraordinary array of stunning creations crafted with fine stone beads. Each meticulously designed portrait serves as a heartfelt homage to politicians, journalists, humourists, social thinkers, and others whose lives were tragically cut short by violence. Another defining moment of the exhibition was the unveiling of a remarkable portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, crafted out of an astounding, over 1.4 million stone beads by Ambassador H.E. Mr. Victor Echeverri of Colombia in India, with flags of both the Nations imprinted through the beads.

This unique piece stands as a testament to the ideals of peace and reconciliation that Mahatma Gandhi tirelessly championed throughout his life. In a touching gesture, it was generously donated to the Gandhi Smriti, serving as a fitting tribute to the legacy of a leader who devoted himself to the principles of nonviolence, till the last breath of his life. 'Tejidos Chakana' is a transformative Colombian initiative rooted in ancestral traditions, using the art of weaving to promote peace and reconciliation. Founded by artisans, it honours indigenous techniques and local materials, preserving traditional

craftsmanship while providing a platform for artisans to express their stories of struggle and resilience.

Each handcrafted piece reflects the creativity and strength of a nation recovering from conflict, weaving narratives of hope and unity for a brighter future. At the heart of 'Tejidos Chakana' is the belief that art can bridge divides and foster understanding. The initiative engages diverse communities through workshops and collaborative projects, empowering individuals to reclaim their voices and share their experiences. This cultural exchange promotes dialogue, enabling people to confront their past and imagine peaceful coexistence. Moreover, through vibrant exhibitions, 'Tejidos Chakana' celebrates the artistry and resilience of Colombian artisans, underscoring their vital role in the larger narrative of peace-building. The initiative is a testament to the power of creativity in healing communities and fostering social impact.

By promoting dialogue and cultural exchange, the aim is to foster an environment where healing can occur, allowing people to confront their past while envisioning a peaceful coexistence. The story of 'Tejidos Chakana' resonates deeply with Mahatma Gandhi's beliefs, particularly his emphasis on the use of hands, creativity, and self-reliance as essential elements of individual and societal transformation. Gandhi often spoke of the profound connection between manual labour and the soul, advocating for the dignity and significance of work that involves the hands.

He would say, "If I were a poet, I would write poetry on the possibilities of my five fingers." In his vision of education, known as 'Nai Talim' or 'Basic Education,' Mahatma Gandhi stressed the importance of learning through

productive activity, where creativity and craftsmanship were not merely tools for economic independence but essential means for cultivating inner peace, self-reliance, and a deeper connection with one's community. Much like 'Tejidos Chakana,' Mahatma Gandhi viewed the act of creating with one's hands as a form of empowerment, healing, and self-expression. For him, the spinning wheel, or 'charkha,' became a symbol of India's struggle for independence - more than just a tool for producing cloth, it represented self-sufficiency, unity, and the rejection of exploitative systems. By encouraging Indians to spin their yarn and weave their cloth, Gandhi promoted the idea that true freedom came from within, not only political or economic autonomy but also spiritual and cultural self-reliance. In both the Gandhian framework and the 'Tejidos Chakana' initiative, the act of weaving transcends its material purpose to become a metaphor for life itself. Just as threads are intricately woven to form a piece of fabric, so too are communities brought together by shared experiences, challenges, and hopes. Mahatma Gandhi believed that individual self-reliance was a precursor to true collective harmony - only when people could stand on their own feet would they be able to contribute meaningfully to the welfare of society.

Similarly, the artisans of 'Tejidos Chakana' are not just creating objects of beauty; they are weaving the very fabric of a peaceful and united future for their nation. Echoing Gandhi's ideas of community empowerment and education, as not merely a process of acquiring academic knowledge, but as a holistic development of the individual within a community setting, where the aim is to foster dialogue and cultural exchange, 'Tejidos Chakana' nurtures an environment of collective

learning, where people confront their past traumas and work together towards reconciliation and in the process healing. This reflects Gandhi's belief in the power of community and the idea that true education is incomplete without the cultivation of moral and social values. Moreover, "Weaving Life to Weave Peace" also aligns with Gandhi's vision of nonviolence, or 'ahimsa,' as an active force for peace-building. Mahatma Gandhi believed that nonviolence was not just the absence of physical conflict but the presence of love, compassion, and understanding. In conclusion, it can be said without exaggeration that such powerful initiatives invite the world to witness the power of art as a catalyst for change, encouraging humankind to appreciate the beauty that arises from the collective journeys toward reconciliation and understanding. Moreover, through the lens of art, "Weaving Life to Weave Peace" commemorates the past and inspires hope for a future without conflicts, thereby promoting collective responsibility in weaving a tapestry of peace for generations to come.

As we engage with these artistic expressions, we are reminded that every bead, every creation, and every story contribute to a larger narrative of healing and unity in our world. In celebrating these artistic expressions, we honour the timeless message that true peace begins with the work we do ourselves - both in our hearts and with our hands. This is evident as Ambassador Victor points out that if one bead breaks, the entire frame collapses, signifying the unifying strength of community and peace-building. They are what can be called, "Peace Beads".

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

THE ARTISANS OF 'TEJIDOS CHAKANA' ARE NOT JUST CREATING OBJECTS OF BEAUTY; THEY ARE WEAVING THE VERY FABRIC OF A PEACEFUL AND UNITED FUTURE FOR THEIR NATION

India's nutrition paradox: Tackling hidden hunger amid food sufficiency

The Global Hunger Index 2023 ranks India 111th out of 125 countries, highlighting that malnutrition, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread

While India is not a country of widespread starvation, it does face significant challenges related to undernutrition and hidden hunger, particularly in rural areas. India has achieved self-sufficiency in food production and implemented programs to improve food access, such as the National Food Security Act and the National Nutrition Mission. However, issues like micronutrient deficiencies and income disparities exacerbate food insecurity in certain regions.

India's Nutrition Paradox: The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023 ranks India 111th out of 125 countries, highlighting significant challenges with undernutrition, particularly among children. Though India



SHRIRUPA SENGUPTA

produces enough food to meet caloric needs, ensuring nutritional adequacy remains a challenge. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) shows that while caloric intake is generally adequate, undernutrition persists—35.5 per cent of children under five are stunted, and 19.3 per cent suffer from wasting. Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia due to iron deficiency among women and

vitamin deficiencies among children, further contribute to hidden hunger. Economic disparities and social inequities, including gender inequality and limited health-care access, play significant roles in perpetuating undernutrition.

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sustainable agriculture supported by nutrition hubs had a 20 per cent increase in crop yields during droughts compared to traditional methods. **A Whole-of-Society Approach:** Achieving the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" hinges on ensuring food security and building resilience through community-led initiatives. However, these goals require a whole-of-society approach that involves all community members, not just women. Men as Partners: Encouraging men to participate in nutrition hubs, whether through farming, cooking, or community organising, helps distribute responsibility more equitably and promotes gender equity. **Youth Engagement:** Involving young people in these efforts

ensures the continuation of community-led initiatives and brings fresh ideas and energy to the table.

Local Govt Support: Local governments can support and scale these initiatives by providing funding, policy support, and infrastructure, making nutrition hubs integral parts of community development.

Gender Equity and Shared Responsibility: While women are often on the frontlines of nutrition and food security, the burden should not fall solely on them. Engaging men, youth, and local governance helps create more equitable and sustainable solutions.

(The writer is Director - Centre for Strategic Communications for Public Health at Swasti; views are personal)



EMBRACING SELF-LOVE

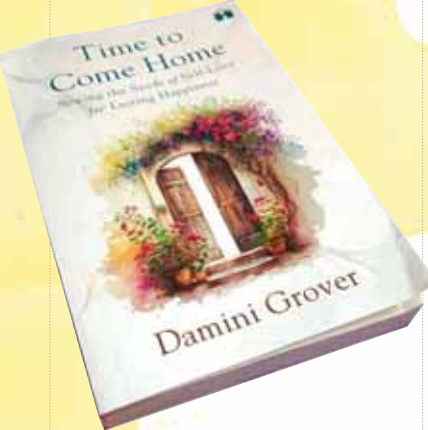
In 'Time to Come Home', Damini Grover invites readers on a transformative journey of self-love, guiding them to rediscover their true selves and embrace their worth says, **SAKSHI PRIYA**

"YOU CANNOT LOVE YOURSELF WITHOUT ACCEPTING YOUR TRUE FORM." THIS SIMPLE YET PROFOUND CONCEPT INVITES READERS TO EMBRACE WHO THEY TRULY ARE, RATHER THAN CONSTANTLY SEEKING VALIDATION FROM OTHERS OR STRIVING FOR PERFECTION.

Time to Come Home by Damini Grover is an insightful and transformative guide that invites readers to embark on a personal journey of self-love and growth. From the very first chapter, Grover begins with the question, "What is self-love?" and encourages readers to dive into an activity that helps define its true meaning. This exercise serves as a powerful reminder that the love we show to others - support, encouragement, forgiveness, should be equally extended to ourselves.

One of the key ideas that Grover highlights is that self-love isn't selfish, it's essential for living a balanced and fulfilling life. As she points out, "You cannot love yourself without accepting your true form." This simple yet profound concept invites readers to embrace who they truly are, rather than constantly seeking validation from others or striving for perfection. The book's first chapter makes an impactful start by showing how we often think of love in terms of what we give to others, our time, attention and care. As I read through this list, I realised how rarely we apply the same level of care to ourselves. Grover encourages us to view self-love as nurturing and forgiving ourselves, just as we would those closest to us. This includes celebrating our successes, whether big or small, and giving ourselves the compassion we so often reserve for others. Grover's experience as a psychologist shines through in her practical advice, which is grounded in both personal anecdotes and examples from her professional life. These real-life stories make the book relatable and offer readers concrete ways to overcome common barriers to self-love, such as societal pressures and internalised doubt. She provides practical exercises that help readers incorporate self-love into their daily routines, making this journey toward personal growth more accessible and achievable.

A particularly powerful moment in the book is when the author explains how we often forget to celebrate our own achievements.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : Time To Come Home - Sowing the Seeds of Self-Love for Lasting Happiness

by **DAMINI GROVER**

Publisher : Hay House

Number of Pages: 280

₹399.00

Availability: Amazon

Whether it's a small personal victory or a significant milestone, Grover reminds us that recognising our own efforts is a vital part of self-love. This isn't about pride, but about valuing ourselves and the work we put into our lives. It struck me how often we fail to give ourselves credit, constantly seeking praise from others, when, in reality, we should be the first to acknowledge our accomplishments.

What sets this book apart is its approachable tone and simplicity. Grover doesn't complicate her message with overwhelming ideas or heavy jargon. Instead, she offers practical guidance, allowing the reader to feel more connected to the process of self-love. Each chapter ends with exercises that encourage reflection and action, guiding readers toward building a stronger, more compassionate relationship with themselves.

One of the standout sections of *Time to Come Home* explores the concept of self-acceptance. Grover touches on how critical it is to stop battling with ourselves and to accept who we are in the present moment. She writes, "It is what it is," which resonates as a gentle yet powerful reminder that acceptance is the foundation for self-love. It's about acknowledging our imperfections without judgment, and choosing to embrace ourselves as we are.

A theme that deeply resonated with me was the emphasis on forgiveness, not just of others, but of ourselves. The author beautifully explains how forgiving ourselves for past mistakes and shortcomings is essential to moving forward. This aspect of self-love, often overlooked, is crucial for personal growth and healing. She also emphasises that loving ourselves includes uplifting ourselves in moments of doubt and difficulty, just as we would for a friend.

Time to Come Home is a guide for anyone seeking to rediscover themselves and strengthen their foundation of self-love. Through relatable stories, practical exercises, and a compassionate tone, Damini Grover highlights the vital role self-love plays in our overall well-being. According to Grover, self-love is not a luxury but a necessity. Without it, we may feel disconnected and unfulfilled, constantly seeking validation from others. By embracing self-love, we improve our relationships, make better decisions and lead more authentic lives. This book is a must-read for anyone ready to embark on the journey of returning to themselves and embracing the power of self-love.

NEW ARRIVALS

OCTOBER NEW RELEASES
BY ALEPH BOOK COMPANY

India: A Linguistic Civilisation
By GN DEVY
(PRICE: ₹599, PAGES: 200)



In *India: A Linguistic Civilisation*, by GN Devy examines the profound linguistic diversity of India and its role in shaping national identity and culture. This insightful book traces the evolution of languages, addressing the challenges of documenting their histories while highlighting the impact of migration, colonialism and cultural practices. Devy emphasises the importance of preserving endangered languages and the rich oral traditions that enrich Indian heritage, making a compelling case for collective responsibility in safeguarding linguistic diversity.

Become an Achiever Right Now
(Price: ₹299, Pages: 144)



In *Become an Achiever Right Now: A Masterclass from the SuperGurus*, a collection of insights from the world's leading self-help gurus, this book uncovers the common traits and strategies shared by great achievers. It explores how taking risks, learning from failures and possessing unique character attributes can propel individuals toward their dreams. With practical advice and inspirational stories, this masterclass equips readers with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges and achieve lasting success.

A Mother's Pain and Family Struggles

Lata Gwalani 'Not Before You' reveals the emotional depth and challenges of a family with a differently-abled child.



BY SANJAY CHANDRA

Not Before You by Lata Gwalani is a layered story that explores different facets of human emotions and accompanying family dynamics. It is the story of a mother's angst as she faces the reality that her first-born son is differently-abled and would not survive long. The story also explores the fragile balance of the family, as the other two members - the father and the second child, a normal daughter, deal with the situation in their own way, which does not include a caregiver role for the child. Jaya works in the media. A chance meeting with Suraj who runs his Yoga Ashram, culminates into romance, and marriage. Their joy soon turns into despair when they realise that the child, Nikhil, is different. The diagnosis after several visits to the doctors shatters them. In time, they have a daughter, Divya, who is normal. Jaya is determined to care for son till the end. Suraj takes refuge by escaping from reality. Divya is traumatised



ABOUT THE BOOK

Book : Not Before You

by **LATA GWALANI**

Publisher : Vishwakarma Publication

Paperback: 216 page

₹325

The first thought that runs through our minds is a silent prayer to the supreme being that our children lead a normal life, and then a sympathy towards the parents. We do not pause and reflect upon the sentiments of the affected parents. Lata shows us the mirror to do just that. It is a sensitive subject beautifully handled by her. There are short references to Yama, the God of death, looking down upon this unique mother and bowing to her wishes to not die before the child. These passages do not interrupt the flow of the story, but could have been avoided. This is a book that teaches us the meaning of empathy. Lata Gwalani has a career spanning three decades in journalism and behavioural training. She is a renowned speaker on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership. Lata uncovers captivating tales in the mundane and has published three works.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Sanjay Chandra is an author, speaker and strategy consultant who writes for The Pioneer and The Hindu. His novels include Behind Closed Doors (2023), The Gymnast (2022) and The Life and Times of a Common Man (2019). He lives in Gurugram and connects with readers through his website and social media. Sanjay loves to interact with readers through his email sanjaychandra59@gmail.com, his website www.authorsanjaychandra.com and various social media handles.



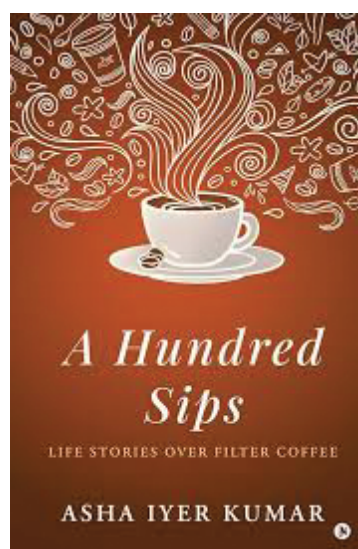
Finding joy: A hundred sips of life's simple moments

In 'A Hundred Sips: Life Stories over Filter Coffee,' Asha Iyer Kumar invites readers to explore the essence of happiness and the beauty found in life's everyday moments, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

What is happiness and how can we discover it in the simple moments of daily life? Is there a pattern to the challenges and hardships we face on this journey? In 'A Hundred Sips: Life Stories over Filter Coffee,' Asha Iyer Kumar presents a collection of uplifting stories that explore these questions and more. Rooted in her personal experiences, Kumar's narratives reveal how hope and joy can be found even amid life's struggles and tough decisions.

A Hundred Sips is a thought-provoking and beautifully crafted collection of stories that take the reader on a reflective journey through life's everyday moments. Each essay is like a sip from the cup of life, offering warmth, insight, and the subtle flavours of human experience. Kumar's writing is both intimate and relatable, drawing from her personal observations and universal truths. Her book explores themes of love, loss, joy and the simple pleasures that often go unnoticed in our fast-paced world. The strength of her prose lies in its simplicity; she conveys profound ideas in a conversational tone, making it feel like the reader is having a heartfelt discussion with an old friend.

Her stories remind us that although life may not always be perfect, there are always glimmers of light, even in the darkest times. With her straightforward yet profound writing, Kumar encourages readers to recognise the happiness and contentment hidden in everyday



moments, celebrating the small pleasures often overlooked. Through this journey, Kumar invites readers to pause and reflect on their own lives, helping them uncover beauty in the ordinary and find the extraordinary within the mundane. Whether you're searching for comfort, inspiration or a fresh perspective, 'A Hundred Sips: Life Stories over Filter Coffee' is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and the joy that can be discovered in the simplest of experiences. Her message is clear: Immerse yourself in these deep stories and let them guide you in savouring life, one sip at a time.

