

When you go into court you are putting your fate into the hands of twelve people who aren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.
Norm Crosby

Govt healthcare vs private healthcare

One of the priorities given by the West Bengal Government under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from the very beginning is to healthcare for the common, especially poor, people. Treatment in government hospitals has now become practically free. Complicated surgical operations which cost lakhs of rupees in private hospitals and nursing homes are performed free in government hospitals and done by top surgeons in their respective fields. The private hospitals have become money-minting machines where the patients or their relatives are regularly overcharged, their bills are highly inflated, they are forced to buy medicines only from the pharmacies approved by the hospital concerned at exorbitant prices. Ordinary injection syringes are recharged several hundred percent higher than their actual cost. In addition, they routinely get rude behaviour from the doctors and supporting staff. They have to suffer the overcharging and the gratuitous humiliation silently.

Now the State Government is acquiring highly sophisticated diagnostic equipment costing hundreds of crores of rupees to bring the government healthcare system at par with the best private hospitals and nursing homes. The cost will not be passed on to the patients but borne by the Government. In diseases like aplastic anaemia, bone marrow transplantation is the only curative treatment. It costs a fortune. Now the Calcutta Medical College is transplanting bone marrow completely free of cost. The expenditure comes to ten to twelve lakh rupees per patient.

Incidence of cancer of all types is rising rapidly. The selling price of anti-cancer drugs has no relation to the actual cost of production and reasonable profit. They are exorbitantly charged because the drug manufacturers know that the relations of patients will spend everything they have to save the life of the patient. Giving these highly costly drugs free to the patient is not enough. The State Government should move the Centre for enacting legislation to prevent profiteering and bringing down the prices of these drugs to a reasonable level. Second and no less important is for the government to encourage research in its laboratories and institutes for making alternative cancer-cure drugs and take their patents immediately so that unscrupulous private manufacturers are not able to have access to the formulae to inflate their profits. Research for developing anti-cancer drugs and their field trials in government hospitals will be a giant stride forward in bringing cancer treatment within the means of the common man. The West Bengal Government should try to make medicare available to all, instead of pampering crony capitalism.

MP chief minister's yatra policies

REFLEX ACTION

L S Herdenia

In honour of Adi Shankaracharya to honour his contributions for the revival of Hindu faith. In this activity also the state machinery is totally involved. People are questioning our religious activities are being organised with the government expenditure. Before that huge funds were also spent on holding Simhashta. Whatever many be the cost, the chief minister will continue to organise such activities.

In a message to the people Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the year 2017 has departed. Many sweet memories stay on with us. We have made 2017 a memorable year, which witnessed a host of radical initiatives and historical achievements. Let us be ready to welcome 2018 with these lovely memories, he said. According to the Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh is advancing faster in every sector. The people deserve all the credit. They are amazingly enterprising and have all the capability to take enduring pains in the interest of the State. The achievements of 2017 clearly underline the fact that MP's spirited people are full of confidence and have unshakable determination.

With the creative energies and positive thinking of the people, Madhya Pradesh has scored new records in development sector. This will continue in 2018. Chauhan said People are expected to enthusiastically participate in governance for desired results. It is a matter of great satisfaction that they have discharged their duties and responsibilities tirelessly. I find that the people of Madhya Pradesh deserve the credit for unprecedented development in the state. Their role is greater than that of the government. I hold that every task remains incomplete without people's cooperation and support. I regard them as

experts on many subjects and have always respected their wisdom, he said.

"Last year, we had many challenging moments but they were chased away. Thanks to the cooperation and support of the community. Many challenges have been addressed permanently. Innovative Price Deficit Payment Scheme for poor farmers is a shining example of this. Now, farmers will no longer suffer losses even if prices of crops fall. "Similarly, the concern of our talented students about educational expenses has been taken care of. Their worries are permanently over. They have to simply concentrate on study and score good marks. The government will take care of their education. The examinations are not far off. I would like to urge my dear students to give a New Year gift to your parents by securing good marks", the CM mentioned. After Narmada Seva Yatra, people's faith has been vigorously manifested in the ongoing "Ekam Yatra", which began in Ujjain and will culminate on January 22 at Omkareshwar. People are acquainting themselves with the legacy of Adi Shankaracharya, who brought about India's cultural integration. A huge 108-ft-tall statue of Adi Shankaracharya will be installed at Omkareshwar as a mark of tribute from the people of Madhya Pradesh. Ekam Yatra is a journey that aims at spiritual awakening of the masses.

Chauhan believes that spiritual progress along with development is equally important. This changes attitude towards governance. It drives away attention from corrupt practices. Spiritual orientation deepens faith in honest means and results in and develops a healthy mindset. This is why he has taken some initiatives like Tirtha Darshan Yojna, Narmada Seva Yatra, Ekam Yatra, which are going to enrich spiritual understanding. The integration of government, society and spirituality is a necessary dimension of good governance, he feels. CM's supporters say that the chief minister is sure to get political capital out of these yatra and he will be able to influence voters in the next assembly elections later this year (IPA)



Children playing during a foggy morning at Kanha village near Guwahati on Friday

Approach to a job policy formulation

FOCUS

Nantoo Banerjee

It is good to know that the government is working on a first ever national employment policy that will address the crucial issue of jobs creation in the country. The policy is intended to outline a comprehensive road map with focus on creation of quality jobs across sectors through economic, social and labour policy interventions. It may be announced in the upcoming budget session though it may take several months before the final document is ready. The task is, by no means, easy. The existing economic environment and job market situation are quite complex. Manufacturing, a universal source of stable employment, is playing a second fiddle to the services sector. The government's 'Make-in-India' programme is yet to make an appreciable breakthrough. Imports of low-technology products and components are flooding the market. Job seekers are increasingly facing the curse of underemployment, part-time and contract assignments and low remuneration. As it is, their future looks uncertain. High employment rates generally benefit employers to freely fix employment terms based on the demand-supply situation. Hopefully, those in the government are fully aware of the rising trend of underemployment where workers' jobs don't use all their skills, education, or

availability to work. There is as much a problem of visible underemployment as disguised unemployment. Going by the routine definition, under visible underemployment, employees work fewer hours than is typical in their field. They are willing and able to work more hours, but cannot get full-time employment. They often work two or three part-time jobs, just to make ends meet. In the case of invisible underemployment, workers are in full-time jobs that don't use all their skills and qualifications. Unfortunately, the latter is becoming increasingly common for want of jobs suitable to one's education and skills. This type of underemployment is difficult to measure. It requires extensive surveying that compares workers' skills, education versus job requirements. Workers have little choice to find jobs that will realise their skills. Underemployment has a more adverse effect on those with college or post-graduate degrees in technical or general education. Frequent media reports show how over-qualified people have been looking for jobs even in Class IV category under state and central governments. After the new Pay Commission awards, more secured government jobs, which now carry somewhat decent remuneration across categories, are being increasingly preferred by job seekers. Recently, huge job losses of engineers and skilled

workers in IT, telecom, steel, engineering and mining, mainly in the private sector, are posing a new challenge to India's growing unemployment market. Overseas job visa restrictions, mergers and amalgamations in the telecom, steel, banking and other sectors, bankruptcy proceedings and depression in certain industries are having a major impact on industries in multiple sectors. The telecom industry alone lost a quarter of their employees in just last two or three months. It had to undergo layoffs due to various reasons such as company mergers, shut-downs and fierce competition. This instability in the market has affected startups. According to Amit Jain, director, Mangalbhavan, in, "It is not that the people are lacking in talent or are not capable of doing anything, but due to being surrounded by negative energy, their success is being hindered. In October, most of the calls we received for job consultation and counselling are from the people of Telecom sector. Out of all job counselling related calls, the ratio of calls from Telecom job sector increased 45 percent from an earlier 20 percent

in the past couple of months." This insecurity and hesitation are certain to increase over the coming months as the industry norms are changing rapidly and competition is getting fiercer by day. In order to save on the expenses, companies naturally get rid of employees, who account for nearly five per cent of the operational costs in the telecom sector. Under the circumstances, the government's hands seem to be tied. The proposed national employment policy will require a thorough research not only on how to create new jobs for entrants, but also on retraining job losers to find fresh employment elsewhere. It must find ways to offer financial sustainability to both job losers and new job seekers. It must be able to financially support those after retirement. The present minimum pension for retired industrial workers, above 60 years of age, is ridiculously low, only Rs.1,000 per month. While government pensions are meagre allowance linked, industrial workers get only a fixed pension. The cost of social security and survival concerns of

industrial workers will have to be borne by the entire society and not by their employers alone. The fast growth of the retail sector and e-commerce has made the employment scene highly complex and uncertain for employees. According to the latest joint report by FICCI-NASSCOM and EY, nearly 25 per cent of the workforce in the retail sector would be deployed in jobs that have radically changed skill set requirements. Most industry experts believe that creation of highly optimised supply chains would drive growth in retail in the next five years. "New business models such as e-commerce and mobile based e-retailing are increasingly becoming popular in India across tier I, II and III cities. The impact of this growth is already visible on the job market," says Anurag Malik of EY. Understandably, a multi-pronged employment policy will include incentives for employers to create more jobs, reforms to attract enterprises and help for medium and small scale industries, which are major job providers. The policy is expected to take up the twin issues of providing quality jobs to over 10 million youth being added to the country's workforce every year and ensuring that more of these are created in the formal sector. As of now, barely 10 per cent of the country's 400 million workforce is in the organised sector. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword

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			23			
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- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Wading bird | 1 Adult insect |
| 6 Mechanical man | 2 Cliff |
| 8 Very small | 3 Silly |
| 9 First man | 4 Arithmetical calculation |
| 10 Top card | 5 Goes back |
| 12 Clergyman | 6 Annoying child |
| 13 Lead bare | 7 Layer |
| 15 Tentacle | 11 Innermost part |
| 18 Tantalises | 12 Arbitration |
| 20 Tree | 14 Excuse |
| 21 Extinct bird | 16 Unbound |
| 23 Effaces | 17 Heronhouse |
| 24 Cavalry weapon | 18 Labour |
| 25 Curved | 19 Like nature |
| | 21 Expert |
| | 22 Lair |

SUDOKU: 2076

4	6	2	9	5	3			
			8		2	7		
				4	8		9	
9				5	1		2	
			9		8			
3	7	1					8	
5	9	4						
7	4		5					
2	3		7	1	4	9		

Yesterday's Solution 2075

5	4	9	1	2	7	6	8	3
8	3	6	4	5	9	2	7	1
7	1	2	6	8	3	9	4	5
2	6	4	5	7	1	8	3	9
1	9	8	2	3	6	7	5	4
3	7	5	9	4	8	1	2	6
9	2	3	8	1	4	5	6	7
4	5	1	7	6	2	3	9	8
6	8	7	3	9	5	4	1	2

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 084

N	O	T	E	S	A
O	W	E	X	A	C
I	N	E	P	T	S
S	M	A	T	E	S
E	A	L	L	S	R
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V	F	R	A	U	S
C	E	D	E	P	E
R	A	N	G	E	S
M	S	I	T	E	S

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