Every year on July 28, World Nature Conservation Day is observed to increase awareness about protecting our environment, wildlife and to rethink our ways of using natural resources. One of the main goals of World Nature Conservation Day is to save endangered species of plants and animals. New Zealand, from the world’s only alpine parrot, the kea to UNESCO World Heritage National Parks, is thriving with unique living creatures and landscapes. We bring to you 5 rare and special wildlife species and landscapes that New Zealand takes pride in:

1. The flightless parrot - The Kakapo
2. The world’s rarest dolphin - The Hector’s dolphin
3. The national symbol - The Kiwi
4. Auckland’s ancient island sanctuary - Motutapu Island
5. Tongariro Northern Great Walk

TS real estate
booming
TIGHT
REGULATION
CAN
TAME
INFLATED
PRICES

She brought
Amrutha Hastham
to women and child welfare

‘EVERY FILM I DO HAS A PIECE OF MY HEART’

‘EVERY FILM I DO HAS A PIECE OF MY HEART’

P:5

P:3&4
Former Governor of Jharkhand Draupadi Murmu is India’s next President. Ruling NDA’s Draupadi Murmu and Opposition’s Yashwant Sinha were pitted against each other in the contest, with votes clearly stacked in favour of Murmu, who has become the first tribal woman to occupy the top constitutional post in the country. The BJP-led NDA’s Presidential candidate has overcome several personal tragedies in her life. In just six years between 2009-2015, Murmu reportedly lost her husband, two sons, mother and brother.

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The much-awaited song Kesariya from Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt’s upcoming film Brahmastra Part One: Shiva has been finally released and it has created a buzz on social media. The song has been receiving amazing reactions including some funny memes from netizens.

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Vijay Devarakonda’s most-awaited pan-India film Liger’s trailer was released on Thursday at Sudarshan theatre in Hyderabad. People in large numbers gathered at the venue to celebrate the trailer launch. Meanwhile, the trailer is like a blast on social media, trending top on YouTube charts and all social media platforms.

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A dead humpback whale, whose cause of death is still unknown according to local media, is washed up on Sharp Park Beach in Pacifica, California.

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Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao’s comments on cloudburst are doing rounds on the internet. “A new method called cloudburst has come. They say there are conspiracies around it. We don’t know how far it is true. Some foreign countries are deliberately doing cloudbursts in our country. Earlier, they did it in Leh (Ladakh). Later, they did it in Uttarakhand. We have received ‘gloomy, gloomy’ information that they are doing in the Godavari basin also,” he said. Reacting to KCR’s comments on the cloudbursts, Telangana BJP president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar described it as the “joke of the century”.

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A dead humpback whale, whose cause of death is still unknown according to local media, is washed up on Sharp Park Beach in Pacifica, California.

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Experts are of the considered view that the top investment options, after a proper assessment of one’s own risk profile and the risks associated with the investment product, are direct equity, equity mutual funds, debt mutual funds, National Pension System, Public Provident Fund, bank fixed deposit, Senior Citizens’ Saving Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, RBI taxable bonds, the ubiquitous gold, and of course real estate. Despite fluctuating property values, real estate is a very popular investment option for many people in Telangana today, particularly in the state capital. The Pioneer's K. RAMYA SREE, SHIKHA DUGGAL and TANISHA SAXENA throw light on trends suggesting Telangana’s real estate is an ideal investment option for those looking at safety and assured returns. They find that real estate per se is booming, but lack of regulation has resulted in artificially inflated prices.

Rapid construction activities have changed the face of Hyderabad, particularly the Old City. Decades-old colonies near Charminar are being quickly replaced with contemporary structures, both residential and commercial. Why is this happening?

Gumm Ram Reddy, CMD at Ark Group, says, “The increased prices of raw material in the construction sector have definitely affected the price cycle of the real estate in Hyderabad. In addition to this, land rates, registration charges, and labour costs have increased significantly. And now, the skyrocketing fuel prices! The pandemic just furthered this thing. In essence, all these factors have pushed the property rates across the city.”

Is this it? Ownership was the basis of all the investment opportunities we see today. It is a proven fact, because statistics suggest the city’s residential market has seen an increase of 17% as compared to those in other top seven cities. And, when it comes to our thriving city, even the recently released report of JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle), the leading professional services firm that specialises in real estate and investment management, highlights that Hyderabad recorded robust residential sales as it saw the highest quarterly sales since Q2 2008.

The prices of a 2BHK even in a suburb is costing a minimum of Rs 50 lakh. The realestate prices in Hyderabad have been growing rapidly since 2017, making it another Mumbai, Delhi or Bengaluru.

The prices of residential places in Hyderabad are skyrocketing so much so that owing a house for a middle-class person will only remain a dream. Realty analysts claim that the lack of regulations for builders is leading to the increased prices of housing properties in Hyderabad. This is the case not just Hyderabad, but also in Andhra Pradesh, especially in Visakhapatnam.

According to sources, there has been a 30 per cent increase in price/sq ft in all major areas with stretches of the beach in Vizag. Rents, too, have seen a significant spike. One must pay around Rs 50,000 per month to take a house on rent on the beach road, while a 2 BHK is priced anywhere between Rs 25,000 and Rs 30,000 per month. In one case, one wants to buy a 3 BHK on the beach road, they would have to shell out up to Rs 1 crore.

In Miyapur, Hyderabad, one must pay Rs 6,000 per sq ft now as against Rs 2,400 in 2014. Whether it is Vanasthalipuram or Miyapur, the cost is more or the less the same and Hyderabad is losing its charm of being an affordable city to live in.

K Johnson, the founder of Real Estate Guru, shares the reason for the increased prices of reality in Telangana. He says: “Due to the auctions conducted in Kokapet as well as other areas, the prices of properties in Hyderabad have increased. Just because of the poisonous propaganda of middlemen, realtors and builders, flat prices in Hyderabad have increased since 2019. As soon as a new road is laid, or a new flyover is laid, or an announcement of some new IT and ITES company coming up, the prices are rapidly rising, and it has become a habit for builders to increase the prices of flats. For example, when there was publicity about the IT Park coming up in Budvel, flats were available for Rs 3,000 per square feet in Bandlaguda and Kismatpur.

After the announcement, there was a rise of Rs 1,500 per square feet. Before the arrival of Medical Devices Park in Sultanpur, the prices of plots there were under Rs. 5,000 per square yard. As soon as KTR started the park there, the prices of the plots crossed Rs 15,000 per square yard.”

Since 2019, the prices of plots and flats have been artificially increased in Hyderabad. While the government is one reason for this, middlemen, builders, realtors, everyone has a share. Due to the artificially increased prices, there are fewer buyers. Some expats also feel that buying a home in California is better than buying a home in Hyderabad, he says.

According to Johnson, the real estate sector of Hyderabad is currently in a state of concern. “Plots are not for sale. Purchases of flats have decreased. Expatriates are not investing in real estate in Bhagyanagar due to increased rates. There is no chance for land transactions to start until there is clarity on Triple GO (GO 111). On the other hand, the economic downturn is likely to take a toll on Hyderabad realty. The government, realtors and agents have all together destroyed the real estate sector. It may take at least two years for this sector to recover,” says Johnson. Asked who has been benefiting most because of these highly inflated prices, he says: “First beneficiary is landlords...second, real estate agents… third beneficiary, builders...”
During pre-pandemic, Hyderabad had higher demand for 3BHKs, usually priced between Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore with average sizes 1,500-1,600 sq. ft. built-up area. Post pandemic, this demand continued to dominate the market. However, there was also increasing demand for villas priced Rs 2-2.5 crore for which buyers also negotiated hard. North and west zones have been the focused area of real estate development in Hyderabad and account for >90% of the overall new supply in last two years.

— Mudit Gupta, City Lead at Hyderabad (Residential) ANAROCK Group

There is a growing demand for the use of site assessments when valuing a property for both private and commercial real estate. Hence, in a major fallout of increased property prices and lending rate hikes, the top seven cities saw housing sales moderate by 15% from averages. Mumbai and NCR led the residential absorption! Another new aspect is that Hyderabad has made it to the list of top 20 sustainable cities as per the Asia Pacific Sustainability Index, which indicates that the city is slightly advanced and somewhat open to accepting and adapting to environmental, social and governance metrics from all stakeholders to a certain degree.

GHUDE Shekar Reedy, Director with CSR TecnocartaPrivate Limited, asserts, “you if see the road connectivity and infrastructural development of Hyderabad, it is unmatched. The Metro lines have made things better! Hyderabad is everything to offer to the investors. The presence of multinational companies in the city are opening new job opportunities and more and more young couples are willing to settle down in Hyderabad. In spite of the pandemic, Telangana has been reporting steady growth in buying and selling of real estate through existing and commercial complexes in all the eight major cities of the country, including Delhi, Bengaluru and NCR.”

Environmental assessment is made possible by environmental surveyors who examine the environmental factors present within the development of real estate as well as the impacts that development and real estate have on the environment. Environmental opportunities that were created in the IT sector and start-ups are driving the residential market in Hyderabad. Investment in the city’s infrastructure through Strategic Road Development Project has opened new residential clusters in the north and east parts of the city which is contributing to increased residential sales.

“...has significantly altered homebuyers’ preferences across the countryside. Trends emerged across, including demand for bigger spaces, state-of-art amenities in projects and open and green spaces. Interestingly, pre-pandemic there was higher demand for 3BHKs, usually priced between Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore with average sizes 1,500-1,600 sq. ft. built-up area. Post pandemic, this demand continued to dominate the market. However, there was also increasing demand for villas priced Rs 2.5-3 crore for which buyers also negotiated hard. Besides IT/ITeS professionals, there was increased demand from doctors, lawyers and Pharma professionals. Gated communities with all state-of-art amenities have been the highest draw. Moreover, north and west zones have been the frontend to meet this demand. Post-pandemic, demand in Hyderabad and account for >90% of the overall new supply in last two years,” says Mudit Gupta, city lead at Hyderabad (Residential) ANAROCK Group.

There is a presence of luxury real estate also that is sometimes used as a way to store value, especially by wealthy foreigners, without any particular attempt to rent it out. Since the price of any property is directly linked to its size and amenities, online search for properties in the ticket size of more than Rs 2 crore, has also undergone an increase as 1.1x times more queries were registered on the index for premium homes. As per the ANAROCK Research, Hyderabad witnessed 24,330 housing units sold in H1 2022—a whopping YoY 118% growth over corresponding period. Lower home loan rates, discounts by developers, and the growing post-pandemic inclination for homeownership helped boost sales!

Krisnash Malhotra, head of sales and marketing at Vanarambuilders, observes, “The current ruling party is serving a second term and has won the faith and trust of the public, domestic and international investors. Their initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and trade within the state is commendable with the launch of 7-Hub in June. Hyderabad has an advantage of great infrastructure and its geological location and connectivity, making it a great place for businesses to invest which leads to creation of employment and the migration of talent from across the country to this region. Hence, with the mix of local growing youth talent in the city combined with talent pool coming in across the country to work here leads to demand of massive growth in both commercial and residential real estate. Following the simple law of economics increasing demand leads to increasing the price of any commodities. From the supply side we see Hyderabad being the lowest among all metropolitan cities in India in terms of ready-to-move in unsold inventory, which shows the end user absorption rate is highest in the country. Whereas other markets such as Mumbai, Delhi NCR and Bengaluru are close to 7% to 9%+ unsold ready-to-move in inventory. Telugu NRIs investors are yet another aspect here! It is a funny saying among Hyderabadis that they are born to go to USA. Today, North America has the highest density of Telugu NRIs globally, followed by Europe, the Middle East and South Asia.

Doctors and engineers topping this pool of Indian NRIs abroad who are annually investing anywhere between 1.5 to 2 billion dollars back in this region now.”

Whatever the reason could be, according to our survey, many realtors, rent and reality analysts believe that government’s failure to regulate prices in the state is leading to avoidable increase in prices of realty in the state, especially Hyderabad.

Area-wise flat costs per sq ft in Hyderabad:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gated communities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ameerpet: Rs 9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanath Nagar: Rs 8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhapur: Rs 12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miyapur: Rs 7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chandana Nagar: Rs 6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPA Junction Rs 6,000</td>
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<td>Bowenpally Rs 6,000</td>
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<td>Kompally 5500</td>
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<tr>
<td>LB Nagar 6500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moti Nagar: 6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Kukatpally: Rs 7,000 to Rs 8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Whereas in standalone buildings the price is Rs 1.5-2.5 - 2.00 less than what it is in gated communities in areas like Jubilee Hills, Madhapur, Sanjana Hills, Kakapally and Ameerpet.
Simran Choudhary, who made her debut in Tollywood with *Hum Tum* and later went on to do many films like *Bombhaat* and *Check*, exclusively shares some tidbits with *The Pioneer* about her upcoming film *Karna*.

"Every film I do has a piece of my heart. I haven't bogged down all my hopes on this specific movie though, because I know what comes with the losses, if God forbid, the movie doesn't work out well."

For Simran, role playing has evolved into a passion, a passion that has catapulted her to pan-India acclaim as a successful and talented actress. So she finds, "My progress in this profession is going a tad bit slower than the other colleagues. Nevertheless, I am in no rush either. I am patiently waiting for movies that will let me make my fans cry and laugh the next day. I live in the moment, so I take everything with a pinch of salt. I don't visualise my future ever. I still have miles to go before I rest."

Letting us exclusively know about the details of her upcoming film, she spills the beans, and says, "It's a Telugu feature film, an investigative comic thriller. You'll see me playing the role of a journalist. With the help of sitting with my director, I could fulfill my role as a journo. He's extremely meticulous, and the research is so vast and detailed. I wasn't over-thinking about my role at all."

Since the actress has been taking cover here for a very long time, she has had her own goosebump moments and she discloses those, "Balakrishna Garu had come for the poster launch of my last film, and while on stage he said some really lovely words about me that made me feel so special to be there, or to be a part of this industry. Post that, memes followed on social media came as a pleasant surprise."

— Simran Choudhary

The media's interest in celebrity life is becoming an ever-growing one, as evidenced by the media hype on film actors. Is it getting in the way of her positivity? Well, she reacts, "The media to us is extremely important for someone who is a public figure. They showcase our work. Nonetheless, sometimes unnecessary attention does go bonkers. This interferes with privacy. I love working on the sets but the other half of me wants me to spend time with my family. I don't pay attention to my comments section that way."

And, you know what she said next: "Perfection for me is very subjective. Life unfolds in the present. But so often, we let the present slip away, allowing time to rush past unobserved and squandering the precious seconds of our lives as we worry about the future and ruminate about what's past. We are living in a world that contributes in a major way to mental fragmentation. We are always doing something, and we must allow a little time to practise stillness and calm."
Kidney health for all

Our kidneys play a crucial part in the overall health of your body. They aid in the removal of waste and excess fluid from the body. They also eliminate acid to keep the water, salts, and minerals in the body in a healthy equilibrium.

The neurons, muscles, and other body tissues may begin to malfunction, if you don’t maintain a healthy balance. As a result, it’s critical to keep your kidneys in good shape.

Furthermore, kidney disease remains a huge burden on the society and it is estimated that about 10% of the adult population has some form of kidney disease and 200,000 people get afflicted with severe kidney disease (end stage kidney disease) every year and very unfortunately over 90% of them die due to lack of access and affordability of renal replacement therapy in the form of dialysis or transplantation.

The most common causes of kidney disease are diabetes, hypertension, glomerulonephritis, genetic diseases, drug induced kidney disease and kidney disease of uncertain origin.

In conversation with Dr. Sujit Chatterjee, CEO, Dr. L H Hiranandani Hospital, lists some frequent habits that may be hurting your kidneys without your knowledge.

**Consumption of a vitamin-deficient diet**

Certain vitamins are beneficial to your kidneys, and a deficiency can cause damage. Vitamin D deficiency has been discovered in people with kidney disease. Vitamin B6 is also proven to help maintain your kidneys healthy when taken with other drugs. Vitamin D can be obtained by sitting in the sun for 10-15 minutes each day.

**Overuse of painkillers**

That constant headache may tempt you to reach for the pills on a daily basis, but overdosing so might be hazardous to your kidneys. Yes, they relieve your aches and pains, but they can also trigger kidney cancer.

**Inadequate water consumption**

It’s critical to keep your body hydrated. Our kidneys assist in the elimination of waste. Renal stones and other kidney problems can be caused by too many waste products in too little fluid. It is suggested that you drink 12 glasses of water every day.

**Excessive use of processed foods**

Although processed food may satisfy your midnight munchies, those crispy morsels of bliss might be detrimental to your kidneys. Processed meals are high in sodium and phosphorus, which can contribute to kidney damage.

**Not getting enough exercise**

Kidney stones are substantially less likely in people who exercise at least three times each week. Walking is recommended for those with impaired kidney function because it can help with cardiovascular difficulties, which are a major health risk for people with CKD and those on dialysis. Make it a point to exercise for 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

**Consuming an excessive amount of alcohol**

If you can’t live without alcohol or wine, it could be the end of your kidneys. More than four drinks per day have been associated with a two-fold increase in the risk of chronic renal disease, according to studies.

**Excessive salt consumption**

High-salt (sodium) foods and diets can raise your blood pressure, which can injure your kidneys. Rather than oversalting your meal, try seasoning it with herbs and spices. This habit will help you avoid adding salt to your diet over time.

**Prevention is the only cure when it comes to kidney-related ailments. Worry not! You can protect your kidneys by preventing or managing health conditions that cause kidney damage, such as diabetes and high blood pressure.**

We all know that our kidneys play a very important role in the overall health of our bodies. But, unknowingly, we tend to damage our kidneys with our daily activities. We are here to tell you how to protect your kidneys from damage and keep them healthy.

HERE ARE SOME HEALTHY CHOICES TO KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS FROM DAMAGE:

- Make healthy food choices
- Make physical activity part of your routine
- Be active for 30 minutes or more on most days
- Aim for a healthy weight
- Get enough sleep
- Stop smoking
- Limit alcohol intake
- If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink per day if you are a woman and two drinks per day if you are a man.
- One drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of liquor.
- Explore stress-reducing activities
- Manage diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Be aware of the amount of OTC pills you take.

Tips to choose nutritious foods:

- Cook with a blend of spices rather than salt.
- Instead of frying meat, poultry, and fish, try baking or broiling them.
- Serve meals devoid of gravy or other fats.
- Make an effort to select foods with minimal to no added sugar.
- Start with whole milk and gradually reduce to 2 per cent milk until you are only using fat-free (skim) or low-fat milk and milk products for cooking and drinking.
- Consume whole grain products every day, such as whole wheat, brown rice, oats, and whole-grain maize. For toast and sand- wiches, use whole grain bread; for home-cooked meals and when dining out, swap white rice for brown rice.
Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favours, and benefits to members of dominant groups. It is not about who you are as an individual as much as it is about which groups you belong to and how those groups are viewed and treated by society.

— RUPALI KAUL

Privilege may have an advantage. "When people are accustomed to feeling the pressure of earning respect, they may not even realize they are having an advantage," says Rupali Kaul, Operational Head-West at Marching Sheep. Explains, "Privilege is not about being rich, being born with a silver spoon, having an easy life, or getting everything without struggle or hard work. Instead, it means that there are some things in life that you will not experience or ever have to think about just because of who you are. In other words, having privilege means that you possess an unearned and sustained advantage in society through some aspect of your identity, in comparison to others who lack that attribute. Privilege could be on the basis of race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation and many other aspects of our identity like age, religion, language, education, appearance, designation etc. whereby one is not unique to straight people. It is not about who you are as an individual as much as it is about which attributes of one’s identity like gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc. to understand the extent to which the inequalities are manifest in different situations. Other words, having privilege means that there are some things in life that you will not experience or ever have to think about just because of who you are. In other words, having privilege means that you are viewed and treated by society as being the son of Sonia Gandhi," Kaul said.

In India, privilege also comes from education, especially English education. Knowledge of English does bestow a false sense of superiority, just as wealth breeds arrogance. If these two are combined with political clout, the result can be disastrous, as we are witnessing today. She continues, "Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favours, and benefits to members of dominant groups. It is not about who you are as an individual as much as it is about which groups you belong to and how those groups are viewed and treated by society.

Privilege and be more empathetic. That’s what we at The Pioneer are trying to do with this informative piece.

In today’s economy, moreover, the dichotomy of “privilege” is often associated with terms like authority and power. As we acknowledge our privileges, we may tend to feel superior, which can reflect unintentionally in our behaviour and attitude towards our colleagues. This is the dichotomy of having privileges. In situations like these, we have to avoid thinking about privilege as something that makes us superior. Instead, do some serious reflection on the different perspectives it brings in and the power it gives us to channelise our efforts into effective and equitable actions. So, don’t get trapped in the dichotomy of privileges by inadvertently increasing the divide but leverage it in the right direction that drives inclusion. Talking about and using privilege the right way can improve the dynamics of teams and the organisation as a whole by building trust and understanding in the workforce. While it can be uncomfortable to recognise that you have advantages over others through no fault of yours, working through your discomfort can allow you to utilise your privileges in a way that promotes inclusion. Let’s remember, each one of us has some form of privilege, which means all of us have more influence than we may realise to make a real difference. Let’s examine our privileges and the ways we can use them in our daily lives to help those from marginalised spaces.”

Can we forget the vague and extensively used term “nepotism”? That’s also an added advantage! But, can you blame Rahul Gandhi for being the son of Sonia Gandhi because he didn’t choose her in the race of Gandhi’s right? Now, what you can do isn’t downplay your privilege and be more empathetic. That’s what we at The Pioneer are trying to do with this informative piece.

...
introducing Amrutha Hastham and The Pioneer

Sunitha sheds light on her life and Vakiti Sunitha Laxma Reddy, first in the combined Andhra Pradesh, leading initiatives for women and social service. Having served as a child welfare in Telangana in the Pradesh, she held the position of welfare. In a conversation with chairperson of the Telangana interested in politics to now her journey, from not being she was instrumental in past as well.

Fond memories with TBL

As a doctor, YS Rajasekhara Reddy gave always looked upon us as if we were his daughters. Once, he was returning to Nampally in a helicopter, he told me to get in. I remember, I was so occupied with my so many. At that time, Dr. YS Reddy said to me to go and to us he was disabled by the loss of his husband.

Marriage to Laxma Reddy...

I got married to Laxma Reddy during my graduation. My father-in-law is Ram Chandar Reddy, and I was married for 20 years. Later, he was elected an MP for Nizamabad, to the House. There was a very strong bond of kindness between the two families. On many occasions, Laxma Reddy would visit us, and we would go out for walks. He was very fond of my mother, and he would often speak about her with great respect. He always encouraged me to pursue my passion for medicine.

Joining TRS...

It was a difficult decision for me to join the TRS. I was a Parsi girl, and I had never been involved in politics before. However, I was convinced by my husband's dedication to the party, and I believed in its principles. I joined the TRS, and I was instrumental in bringing many reforms while serving as the Chairperson of the TRS Women and Child Welfare Department. I was the first-time MLA, and I had to work hard to get people's trust and confidence.

Fighting discrimination...

Yes, I faced some injustices. Once, when Chandrababu Naidu came to our constituency, he did not take my help. He only listened to the complaints of the local MLA. I had to stand the mix of things, but I would not give up. I fought against the system and stood up for the rights of the people. I was often targeted and misunderstood, but I never gave up. I always believed that truth will prevail.

Supportive husband...

Whatever I think of my husband, one word that comes to my mind is ‘service’. He has given me the courage to fight for what I believe in. He has always stood by me, and I am grateful to him for that. He has been my rock, and I am eternally thankful to him.

Love for movies...

Movies are my only entertainment. However, I love watching Telugu and Hindi movies. I get lost in the stories and the performances. My family enjoys watching movies together, and we have a great time. I love watching romantic movies, and I have a particular fondness for Telugu cinema.

Political growth...

Under YS Rajasekhara Reddy's leadership, I was made the Welfare and Culture Minister. As a member of the State Executive Committee, Women Development, Health and Child Welfare, I have always been involved in supporting women's rights and empowerment.

Rapid fire:

Who is your favourite leader?

Nehru Gandhi

What's your favourite holiday?

As a doctor, I prefer to work on weekends to ensure that patients get the best possible care. However, I do have a few up to me. I like spending time with my family, reading books, and watching movies.
Education has come a long way, and technology has played a critical role in enhancing education. However, even now, students are missing out on critical skills required to make a graduate or undergraduate employable. Our students still struggle, first to get a job, and then to cope with work pressure. This phenomenon is occurring across all sectors.

There are five key skills, which are currently missing in most curriculums that can enable students to become more employable. These skills are enumerated below and can help students become not only employable but also professionals.

**Active communication**
A lot has been said about this topic, but most of these articles and sessions miss out on the core principles of communication that involve ‘active’ listening and relevant response. Most of the students do not have the patience or attitude to listen correctly and are eager to respond without understanding the statement itself. Also, the response is often not according to the person concerned, in terms of their understanding as per the requirement. This is not as complex as it sounds. All we need to do is listen to the statement, and take time to understand and respond in simple but clear language.

**Language**
Despite the various spell check and auto-fill tools, many students have neglected to understand language, especially in the last decade. Even while speaking, grammar, adjectives, and adverbs are used incorrectly, leading to poor written tests and interviews. One of the easiest ways to improve your spoken language is to subscribe to appropriate English news channels which practice responsible journalism. Students should also spend some time every day to write at least 600 words and conduct a self-check. This will improve both their writing skills and grammar.

**Sales orientation**
Sales orientation is your ability to sell your ideas and objectives to other people. It is a common misconception that only direct sales or marketing jobs require selling skills. The first sales pitch for a student is to be able to sell his profile to the recruiter, which needs ‘sales orientation.’ Every student should be able to package, position, and project their profile so that they catch the attention of the recruiter amidst hundreds of other profiles.

**Problem-solving skills**
Every organisation wants solution-driven people — those who spot problems and solve them rather than complain about them. The interview battle is half won if a student can project that, and concentrate on solving problems rather than dwelling on them.

**Personal grooming and presentation**
You buy what you see. Personal grooming is one of the most critical and ignored aspects of cracking an interview and then growing in your career. A well-groomed and polite student always stands out in the crowd. This does not mean that students need to spend a fortune on their wardrobe or hair styling. All it means is that the student needs to carry a clean and smart look with a professional demeanour.

Our world has changed a lot and is continuously evolving. Technology and the global economy are developing at such a fast pace that technical skills requirements change every few years. However, skills such as the ones described in this article are fundamental to any organisation and are transferable across sectors and domains. By paying attention to these, and improving themselves actively, students can become more employable and find the right employment opportunities to succeed in the professional world.

**Recruit the right faculty**
It’s a known adage that in any organisation it is the best people who do the best and the most effective work. But ironically many companies and institutions across the world do an abysmal job of attracting, developing and retaining the most important resource — People. The challenge is even more profound in academic institutions around the world where the quest for high-quality faculty is ongoing and never-ending. From a Global HR perspective, professors are a different breed; their needs, motivations and expectations are different in comparison to corporate professionals. Hence the focus of leading academic institutions is to get the most talented, committed, and distinguished faculty and researchers to help the institution achieve both scholarly excellence in academic research and the highest levels of professional impact in the classroom and beyond. The challenge is further compounded by the wide variety of disciplines, subjects, specializations, and super specialisations that any academic institution has.

Getting the right talent in a global context is paramount since contemporary research proves that superior talent is eight times more productive.

Over 35 years of academic experience have taught this author the valuable tenets of teaching excellence, encapsulated by the 3 Cs of Content, Communication, and Connect. While Content could be a given in many cases, as the faculty members are likely to possess the required knowledge in their domain, sometimes the obsession to super specialise makes their area of expertise too narrow. In today’s academic environment while specialization is required it would be more appropriate that we recruit professors who have a multi-disciplinary mindset. This would require a shift in their focus to be more open-minded and bring in perspectives from multiple disciplines. The onus to get this kind of cultural shift rests also on the leadership of academic institutions. This means breaking up traditional departmental silos, encouraging cross-disciplinary research and publications and recruiting professors who are open to these changes.

While many professors may be great researchers the challenge to translate their research to reach the student community is daunting. The ability to effectively communicate and make the complex clear and simple is a major obstacle for many professors. So, this would require institutions to invest in appropriate training, learning and development initiatives after recruiting them to ensure that the best researchers are also the best communicators and teachers.

The third C of Connect relates to the ability of every professor to connect with their audience emotionally and compassionately. This is not so easy, especially where the student body is diverse, multi-cultural and multi-national. Understanding the nuances of cultural sensitivity and acting appropriately and accurately is a major challenge for faculty members across the world. There have been numerous instances of teachers missing this dimension resulting in disastrous consequences.

The way to address this challenge during and post recruitment would be to have a well-defined cultural diversity and intelligence training to prepare them for such situations.

So, after recruitment how do we develop and retain the top talent among professors? This question can be addressed by asking what motivates a professor? The answer is not simple. Applying the latest research in Motivation Science, we can deduce that faculty members across the world are inspired and influenced by the principles of Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose. While the question of adequate and appropriate faculty pay is addressed initially during recruitment, then academic institutions need to consciously address Autonomy by providing opportunities and space for faculty members to pursue their passions in a multi-national, multi-disciplinary environment. Cross-border research, global faculty exchange, and joint international research among multiple disciplines could all step in the right directions.

Through Mastery, institutions can provide opportunities for faculty to attend seminars, workshops, and conferences across the world both virtually and physically and this can result in them getting better and better at what they do.

The third and probably the most important motivator is Purpose. There is a silent revolution sweeping across all types of organizations including academic institutions in the world today. There is a sure shift from profit-driven institutions to purpose-driven ones and this trend has been further accentuated during the last two years of the pandemic.

So academia needs to impress upon its stakeholders that their primary focus is the impact and influence they have on societal transformation.

Academic institutions across the world will do well to understand these interesting trends in the world of education and do the right thing in recruiting and retaining the right people to make the world a better place!
**WHAT YOU NEED:**
- Walnuts: 500 gm
- Cashews: 100 gm
- Almonds: 100 gm
- Onions: 50 gm
- Leek: 50 gm
- Celery: 50 gm
- Garlic: 40 gm
- Green chilli paste: 30 gm
- Oil: 50 ml
- Cream: 200 ml
- Dry apricot: 100 gm
- Mustard oil: 200 ml
- Panch poran: 30 gm
- Red chilli powder: 50 gm
- Roasted coriander powder: 70 gm
- Turmeric: 15 gm
- Cinnamon: 15 gm
- Cloves: 15 gm
- Black peppercorn: 15 gm
- Salt as required

**HOW TO MAKE:**
- Wash all the nuts two times and put them in lagan along with water and allow it to boil and make it soft.
- Blend it in a fine paste.
- Add oil to a pan and allow it to heat now add whole spices.
- Add chop onion, chop garlic and chop celery, saute a bit and now add the nuts paste along with the vegetable stock.
- Boil for 15 - 20 minutes and finish it.

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**CHICKEN EMPANADA**

**WHAT YOU NEED:**
- Chicken: 300 gm
- Onion: 50 gm
- Garlic: 50 gm
- Zucchini: 40 gm
- Oregano: 10 gm
- Chilli flakes: 10 gm
- Oil: 45 ml
- All-purpose flour: 500 gm
- Water as required
- Oil: 30 ml
- Salt as taste

**HOW TO MAKE:**
- Take a pan, add oil and chopped onion, chopped garlic and saute a bit.
- Add macedoine zucchini to it.
- Then add oregano and chilli flakes.
- Take all-purpose flour and add oil and then rub the oil along with the flour.
- Add water to it and make a tight dough.
- Make small balls of it and roll them into thin small puri.
- Stuff it up and fold it into a semicircle and seal.
- Deep fry it and serve hot as a snack.

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**SPINACH & MEAT ROAST**

**WHAT YOU NEED:**
- Spinach: 300 gm
- Saag puree: 200 gm
- Garlic: 30 gm
- Green chilli: 30 gm
- Ginger puree: 40 gm
- Onion puree: 80 gm
- Tomato puree: 80 gm
- Cinnamon sticks: 20 gm
- Cloves: 20 gm
- Cumin seeds: 20 gm
- Bay leaf: 10 gm
- Mutton: 500 gm
- Turmeric powder: 20 gm
- Salt as per taste
- Oil as required

**HOW TO MAKE:**
- Marinade mutton pieces with salt, turmeric, and ginger-garlic paste and keep aside.
- Take oil in a kadhai, add all dry spices allow it to splutter.
- Then add garlic chop, ginger puree and onion puree. Allow to cook.
- Add Mutton pieces and cook till the meat is half done.
- Add tomato puree and let it cook.
- Take spinach and wash it up.
- Blanch spinach and make it puree along with green chillies.
- Add saag tin after that and let this cook until oil is released.
- Serve hot along with chapatis and naan.
DIZO, BY REALME TECHLIFE, LAUNCHES DIZO WATCH D SHARP

DIZO, the first brand under realme Techlife ecosystem, announced the launch of two new products - DIZO Watch D Sharp with high-res and sharper display with exquisite hybrid frame design and DIZO Wireless Active neckband with a unique laser engraved design. For the smartwatch lovers, DIZO Watch D Sharp flaunts a high-end look and delivers a 1.75-in (4.45 cm) bigger and high-res display with 320x390 resolution, which is 86% sharp-er. It further boasts 550nits brightness, a spec-" Hybrid frame with com-fortable straps suited for skin, with a novel tex-ture. The smartwatch fea-"uatures 110+ sports modes, the entire DIZO health monitoring suite, and 150+ watch faces with DIZO WATCH D SHARP

Feast fresh

Smelling good is essen-tial be it any season. Here are some of the best body sprays for men with long-""
Commercial leasing activities are once again picking up stemming from a robust economic outlook. Most large corporates are now implementing back-to-office programs. Pent-up demand in the market is also fueling growth.

Traditionally commercial leasing is a better investment option than residential markets as it can ensure recurrent rental income. There are a few ground rules, which need to be taken care of in the case of commercial investments to ensure higher rental ROIs and reduce the overall risks. We list out 4 such steps that can turbocharge the rental outputs in commercial investments.

**High-demand locations:**
Always look out for locations with high demand. A location with high demand will give better returns. The demand is rooted in a host of factors such as the availability of business parks & IT clusters, mass transit systems such as metro and suburban railway stations, shopping malls & high street retail in the vicinity, etc. Similarly, airports and large convention centres also fuel commercial activities and can render profitable lease terms to investors. The role of social infrastructure which includes schools, colleges, healthcare facilities, banks & ATMs, etc. can also enable the investor to reap higher returns.

**Invest in high-quality properties:**
Just like location, the quality of the property is also very critical. Even within the same location, different properties can post varied rental returns. A good quality project will always attract better clientele and have lesser chances of cancellation. Hence it is important for investors to scrutinize the property types. Some key parameters that should be examined include elevators & escalators, fittings, lobby & gallery areas, building viewpoints, etc. Likewise, one should also look into certifications such as LEED (leadership in energy and environmental design.) etc.

**Lease terms:**
In commercial real estate popular lease periods are 3+3+3 or 5+5+5 (within a period of 3 or 5 years, leases are renewed). There are also lease terms such as lock-in periods (within the lock-in period the tenant can’t cancel the deal. Likewise, there are client-specific deals, wherein a tenant can cancel before the lease term expire. While drafting the lease agreement, an investor should look for a favourable deal. Generally, extended lock-in periods are advisable, as they will give the landlord a certain edge. Meanwhile, one should also be careful about the needs of the tenant and include them in the agreement terms. A better landlord-tenant relationship is the cornerstone of a prudent commercial leasing business.

**Reputed tenants:**
If a tenant is a large-sized business with good cash flow, then it will ensure a hassle-free business along with a constant rental income without any hiccups. Tenants that include reputable companies and popular start-ups can be a good bet. Meanwhile, with smaller enterprises, there is a risk of poor cash flow that can also impact leasing. Moreover, bringing in a large enterprise such as a blue-chip company in the premise can increase the overall brand perception of the building and help in attracting a few other good deals.

(The writer, Nakul Mathur is the MD of Avanta India.)
LET’S CELEBRATE NATURE AND ITS ABUNDANCE

Hariyali Teej refers to a group of festivals that are observed to celebrate the onset of Monsoon, after the scorching summer. There are three Teej festivals – the Hariyali Teej, the Kajari Teej and the Hartalika Teej. The term ‘Hariyali’ means ‘greenery’, and ‘Teej’ means the ‘third’ day.

The 2022 Hariyali Teej festival falls on Sunday, July 31.

It is the third day of the Shukla Paksha, during Shravan Month.

Hariyali Teej is the festival that marks the onset of growth, prosperity, and greenery all around, after the dry days of summer. It is the celebration of nature and its abundance. The festival is dedicated to the union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Women celebrate Hariyali Teej by singing and dancing and dressing in bright-colored clothes. It commemorates women and their giving birth to children. The celebration of monsoon showers after the scorching summer, leading to Earth getting covered with green foliage symbolizes fertility and the giving birth to offspring.

Hariyali Teej is also known as Sawan Teej, Sharavani Teej or Choti Teej. It is celebrated in the northern states of the country, like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand.

The day is celebrated by organizing cultural fairs and processions for the Goddess Parvati. The festi- val holds great significance to married women as it represents fertility, beauty, and charm of mutual love and affection. This festival is also a great example of the significance of women in the Vedic culture.

Hariyali Teej tradition

Hariyali Teej traditions hold utmost importance for newly married women. On the day prior, Sindhiara is celebrated. Sindhiara is regarded as baggage of gifts that are given by the parents to their daughter and her in-laws. It comprises various things such as bangles, henna, and sweets among others. Girls apply henna on each other’s palms. The intricate patterns and designs symbolize the web of life that connects all of them. It is believed that on this day, every woman who applies Mehendi in her hands gets blessed with good luck, and doing so is also considered extremely auspicious. It is a popular belief that the color of Mehendi on the hands tells about the love shown by husbands.

Applying Alta, a red dye, on the feet is symbolic of the sacred nuptial bonds. On the day of Hariyali Teej, women touch the feet of their mothers-in-law to take their blessings. In case the mother-in-law is not present, the eldest sister-in-law from the hus- band’s side or any other elderly lady in the family takes the place. The womenfolk in the family put on their best clothes and jewelry and engage in the worship of Goddess Parvati. Hariyali Teej is cele- brated by swinging and playing in the green fields. In most places, swings are hung on the branches of the Banyan tree or Vat Vriksha. The Banyan tree is considered sacred and its hanging branches are supposed to reflect knowledge. Folk songs are sung and the women dance to its tunes.

Hariyali Teej puja vidhi

On the day of Hariyali Teej, women worship and celebrate the union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati to gain maximum blessings in married life. On this day, the house is properly cleaned and san- tized then decorated with ornamental Bowers. An earthen altar is made on which the idols of Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha, Goddess Parvati, and a Shiv Lingam are placed. Idols of other gods are also placed as per the discretion of the devotee. After this, Shodash Upchar, or a six-teen-step ritual, is performed for the deities. The Puja activities go on for the whole night.

Women stay awake at this time and engage in devotional music and chanting. Devotees who are keeping fast on Hariyali Teej should not get angry or raise their voices. Women should preferably wear green clothes and bangles. The color green is considered a symbol of happiness, prosperity, growth, longevity, and good health. Women should refrain from lying, humiliating others, or being unfilial.

On the day of Hariyali Teej, women observe a strict fast from lying, humiliating others, or eating unclean. Of the rituals of the Hariyali Teej Puja and Vrat. Women also worship the Moon on the occasion by offering food, card, milk, and sweets. Some people celebrate the love between Lord Krishna and Radha on this day.

Ancient History

Hariyali Teej commemorates the love and sacred union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. The festival celebrates the love between the divine couple, and also the fer-tile bond that exists between the two. It is said Parvati took 107 births to get Lord Shiva as her husband. In her 108th birth, she observed great penance. During this time, she gave up everything and spent her days chewing up dried leaves. However, Lord Shiva’s discipline and his desire for abstinence blinded him from seeing Parvati’s devotion towards him. Goddess Parvati realized that to gain Lord Shiva’s attention, she would have to prove her love to him. She embarked on the treach- erous journey to the Himalayas and chose a cave where she remained completely absorbed in her devotion to Lord Shiva. She became oblivious to the weather and the passage of time.

Goddess Parvati carved a Shiva Lingam with mere sand and directed her devotion to Lord Shiva. Pleaseed with her devotion, Lord Shiva appeared before her and fulfilled her wish. Lord Shiva accepted Goddess Parvati as his wife on the third day of the Shukla Paksha of Shravan month, as a result of the fast she had observed and rituals she had car- ried out during the day. Since then, any woman performing this fast with full devotion is believed to attain desired fruits and bless- ings of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.

Teej vs Karva Chauth

While both Teej and Karva Chauth see women observing fast for getting the desired husband or for the good health of the hus- band, both are celebrated during different times of the year. Karva Chauth is observed on the fourth day of Krishna Paksha in the month of Kartik. In 2022, this falls on October 13, 2022. Here the fast is ended upon sighting the Moon in the evening unlike Teej where the fasting goes on all night long. While Teej celebrations are cen- tered around Goddess Parvati with Lord Shiva, Karva Chauth recalls value of mortal women from different time periods who saved their husbands from the clutches of Lord Yama.

Go ahead with your plans. Benefits are sure to reach you. Your exuberances will bring unwanted attention. If you do good, good will come to you.

A sense of joy will fill you. Rise above mundane existence through introspection. Do not be shy to show emotions. Tenacity will bring success to you.

You want to bare your heart to someone special. Beauty and harmony will attract you. Others will be attracted to you as well. Confidence will grow.

Make self-improvement your motto. Friends and relatives will help you. Do not overreact to the virtues of others. Hard work will bring results.

You may develop strong feelings for a person close to you. The person will respond positively also. Do not ignore work, or your career may be affected.

Lucky colour: Red
Lucky colour: Red
Lucky colour: Blue
Lucky colour: Green
Lucky colour: Red
Lucky colour: White
Lucky colour: Blue
Lucky colour: White
Lucky colour: Pink
Lucky colour: White
Lucky colour: White
Lucky colour: Yellow
**GLOBE TROT**

**Roadside snacks trade becomes research subject in Bengal varsity**

Kana Sarkar, a final year post-graduate student at the Raiganj University in North Bengal, had submitted a proposal christened ‘Rural chop industry and its impact on family wellbeing’ to the university authorities, which has now accepted.

She said that her guide for the research, Tapas Pal, an assistant professor in the university, has helped select this topic as her research paper. The geographical location to be covered in the study includes three village pan-chayats in Malda district—Gazole-I, Gazole-II and Karkach.

“These small and unorganised units make an immense contribution to the economic development of the country. A sample survey in certain pockets of West Bengal has shown that 74 per cent of these roadside snacks business are run by women. However, the same survey also showed that an average annual income of a man from this trade is much higher than that of a woman. So I thought that this could be an important subject of research. Many people might ridicule my student for choosing such a subject, but they cannot ignore the contribution of this sector to women’s empowerment,” Pal said.

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**Narrow escape for 21 school kids as bus catches fire**

Twenty-one children and the driver had a narrow escape when their school bus caught fire in Delhi’s Rohini area on Thursday afternoon, officials said. A Fire Department official said they received a call about the fire incident in a bus near the Sai Baba Mandir T point in Sector-7 of Rohini around 2.15 p.m. and three fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

When the firemen reached the spot they found that the fire was in a school bus (tempo traveller) of the Bal Bharti Public School having 21 children and driver, and three other cars.

“All the children and the driver had safely escaped before the fire engulfed the bus,” Delhi Fire Service chief Atul Garg told IANS.

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**Public sector banks on the block next?**

Having initiated, against odds, the privatisation of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, the Narendra Modi government appears set to privatise public sector banks (PSBs) now. Following amalgamation, the number of PSBs has come down from 27 in 2017 to 12 in 2022, with the Government of India being the major stakeholder.

A report titled ‘Privatisation of Public Sector Banks in India: Why, How and How Far?’, authored by the National Council of Applied Economic Research Director-General Poonam Gupta—a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister—and Arvind Panagariya—a professor, Columbia University and former vice chairman of NITI Aayog—has just prepared the ground for this dicey, gargantuan task. “We propose that the case for privatisation applies to all PSBs, including SBI,” reads the report, with a caveat that the government should privatisate all PSBs but State Bank of India (SBI — the largest PSB).

The authors of the report suggest that within the Indian economic framework and political ethos, the government would want to retain at least one PSB in its portfolio. They believe SBI (which took the biggest hit in the DHFL scam) fits the bill! They want the government to begin the privatisation exercises with two strong banks. “It is important that the first two banks chosen for privatisation set an example for the success of future privatisations. The banks chosen may be the ones with the highest returns on assets and equity, and the lowest NPAs in the last five years,” reads the report. All told, two weak banks are likely to be privatised.

Media reports suggest that the Centre wants to do away with the 10 per cent cap for individuals holding shares in PSBs. “This translates to clearing the way for their eventual privatisation, with private equity (PE) firms buying progressively higher stakes. The Centre may propose changes through the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill that aims to change the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act as well as the Banking Regulation Act. Most PSBs, including behemoth SBI, are in such condition that none, except their employees, unions and management boards, would have any interest in privatisation. The nation’s taxpayers had to pay Rs 3.10,997 crore for their recapitalisation in just four years—from 2016-17 to 2020-21. According to experts, Indian PSBs collectively owed nearly 6.7 trillion Indian rupees in non-performing assets (NPAs) in fiscal year 2021. This value was much higher, at around 7.5 trillion rupees, in the fiscal year 2020, indicating a slow but slight relief for India’s economy in terms of NPAs at PSBs. Thanks to studied efforts made by the Union government and the Reserve Bank of India to tackle the problem of NPAs, for better or worse, PSBs, however, a combined net profit of Rs 31,820 crore in 2020-21 after suffering collective losses for five straight years. They are in the black, no doubt. But the black deeds of the cozy past will haunt them forever, with privatisation, or the sword of Damocles, hanging over them. Last year an Internal Working Group of RBI favoured the grant of banking licences to big corporate houses. RBI has not accepted the recommendation for obvious reasons. Multiple scams have eroded the credibility of Indian banks. As a showpiece of ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’, India’s biggest banking scam emerged with the Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) being in the dock for hoodwinking a consortium of banks led by the Union Bank of India to the tune of Rs 35,000 crore. An assessment by a core panel comprising representatives of the consortium of banks and evaluation by KPMG revealed startling details. The CBI, in its FIR, has shown that the SBI was the most badly hit with an NPA base of Rs 9,698 cr. The other major banks swindled by DHFL include Bank of India and Canara Bank (Rs 4,000 cr each); Union Bank of India and Punjab National Bank (Rs 3,000 cr each).

The other major scams involving banks include Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi—Punjab National Bank (Rs 1,410 cr); Vijay Mallya—13 banks (Rs 9,000 cr); Andhra Bank fraud (Rs 8,100 cr); PMC scam (Rs 3,355 cr); Rotomac Pen scam (Rs 4,695 cr); Videocon (Rs 3,250 cr); Allahabad Bank (Rs 1,775 cr); Syndicate Bank (Rs 1,000 cr), Bank of Maharashtra (Rs 836 cr), Karishik Gold Bank (Rs 824 cr); EDI Bank (Rs 600 cr) and BP Info Systems Bank (Rs 515 cr). RBI data suggests that 34% of the scams in the banking industry are on account of inside work and due to poor lending practices by, and the involvement of, the junior and mid-level management.

The central bank’s December 2021 Financial Stability Report suggests that NPAs of banks could rise (under a baseline scenario) from 9.6% in September 2021 to 8.1% of the total assets by September 2022 and (under a severe stress scenario) to 9.5%.

Research by Deloitte has shown that limited asset monitoring after disbursement (38%) was the foremost reason behind stressed assets and insufficient due diligence before disbursement (21%) was among the major factors for these NPAs.

According to RBI data, corporate loans account for nearly 70% of these bad loans, while retail loans (including car loans, home loans and personal loans) account for only 4%. So, the case is indeed quite strong for privatising PSBs. Structural changes are essential to make PSBs profitable and customer-focused. The larger question is the Centre would have to address: Who should be allowed to buy them? Can the Centre still steer clear of charges of crony capitalism? For, if privatisation of PSBs begins, can Adani and Ambani be far behind? That apart, will the Centre ride roughshod over the inevitable opposition from strong bank unions and well-entrenched vested interests?

Privatisation of PSBs to make them profitable is one thing and handing them over to deep-pocketed industrialists known to rub shoulders with powers that be is quite another.