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PAPER WITH PASSION

Inclusive system

The top four positions in Civil Services Examination, 2022, have been by women

The final result of Civil Services Examination, 2022, came as a pleasant bit of news, as the top four ranks went to women aspirants. We don't call it a pleasant surprise, because there is not much surprise in the result; women have been doing well in entering the workforce in various fields and at different levels. This is not the first time that women have done well in the civil services competition, which is one of the toughest in the country. This time, Ishita Kishore has topped the list, with Garima Lohia at the second position, Uma Harathi at the third, and Smriti Mishra fourth. In the previous year too, the top three positions were occupied by women. These results underline the fact that, despite a number of negatives plaguing the country, there is considerable vibrancy and vitality in society, which propels the rise of people, both men and women, by sheer intelligence, diligence and determination. Kishore, for instance, failed to clear the preliminary examination twice; in the third attempt, she topped the list. Then there is a head constable of Delhi Police who succeeded in joining the coveted civil services at the 667th rank. The stories of many successful candidates are inspirational and aspirational. They tell us that it is increasingly becoming possible for individuals from all sections of society to break the barriers of caste, class, community, region and gender. Of the successful civil services candidates, more than one-third, 34.2 per cent, are women—the highest ever percentage.



Apart from underlining the reality of women emancipation, the result also shows that the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), a Constitutional body, has been doing its jobs professionally. In a country where most institutions have been undermined by politicians, bureaucrats, and others, the UPSC retains its reputation for objectivity and propriety. In the 1990s, a few cases of paper leak did surface, but on the whole the organization has not been smeared with any serious charges of corruption or misdemeanour. Credit for this should also go to the system, comprising policy and decision makers, which somehow never itched to mould the UPSC as per expedience. Not that the thought didn't cross anyone's mind; during the heyday of Indira Gandhi there was a lot of talk about 'committed bureaucracy' (as also of 'committed judiciary'), but thankfully it did not translate into action. This act of omission on the part of the executive has paid rich dividends to the nation. For decades, the youngsters who became bureaucrats were apolitical, though many of them got infected with the ailments that afflict the system. Also, as we mentioned earlier, aspirants from all sections of society became part of the system, making it more inclusive. In terms of gender inclusion, the process has been quite brisk, as evident from the large number of women joining civil services in the last few years.

PICTALK



G20 Delegates dressed in traditional attires pose for a photo at Nisbat Bagh, in Srinagar

PTI

K'taka Govt: Taking challenges head on

While the new Karnataka government is getting all the praise for getting its act together, the BJP is yet to set its house in order

With the swearing-in of Siddaramaiah, D K Shivakumar and others on Saturday, a new chapter has begun in Karnataka's political history. The oath-taking ceremony got national attention because of the participation of the satraps of opposition parties including the secessionists PDP, NC and DMK. This is the first time in Karnataka a swearing-in ceremony was attended by all major national and regional parties from all over the country. The new government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah got into business within minutes of assuming office and gave a green signal to five of the poll promises the Congress had given to the electorate.

It is expected that the new government would soon rescind the decision of the BJP government which had banned the hijab from all educational institutions and set free hundreds of Islamic youth who have been languishing in prisons on charges ranging from extremism and terrorism. But there are some unanswered questions that both the Congress and the losers BJP owe the people.



Islamist leaders had told the media that there was an understanding between them and the Congress that there would be a deputy chief minister and five ministers from the Muslim community in the government to be formed by the GOP. The community members would be given plum portfolios like revenue, home, PWD and higher education. The Congress leaders have not denied this statement made by the Muslim community leaders. Similarly, it was reported that the tenure of Siddaramaiah would be for 30 months after which Sivakumar would be elevated as chief minister. Though party strongman K C Venugopal who masterminded the election campaign as well as the picking of candidates ruled out any such arrangement. Days before the new government took over,

the Central Government appointed Praveen Sood, a Himachal Pradesh-born IPS officer as the director of CBI, India's premier investigation agency. Sood the chief of Karnataka Police was probing the corruption charges against Shivakumar. What will happen to those cases (last heard, there were 12 cases!) is anybody's guess. Shivakumar had assured the electorate that he would send Sood to prison after the assembly election was over.

Venugopal has also made it clear that Shiva would continue leading Karnataka Congress as its State chief till the Lok Sabha election which is likely to take place in March-April 2024. The Muslims voted en masse to the Congress on the assurance given by the latter about the induction of community members as deputy chief ministers and five ministers with important portfolios.

The run-up to the election saw a massive outflow of leaders (including a former chief minister and deputy chief minister) from the BJP to the Congress. Jagadish Shettar, the former CM, said he was insulted and disgraced



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

by RSS leader B L Santhosh, the de facto BJP chief of South India. According to BJP leaders in the State as well as in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, B L Santhosh, addressed as Anna by his sidekicks, had set his eyes on the post of Chief Minister. It was to smoothen his high-speed journey to the national capital that he cut to-size leaders like Yeddyurappa, Shettar and Shobha Karandlaje. Santhosh, described as the head of the Brahmin Mafia, calls the shots in BJP. The contrast between the leadership of Congress and BJP is that while the former has leaders with direct contacts with grass root level workers, self-appointed RSS chieftains like Santhosh have no knowledge about ground realities. For them, voters too are Swayamsevaks, those destined to work selflessly and suffer silently. The Karnataka BJP reminds one of the novel Oliver Twist immortalized by the main protagonist and the villain Fagin. Well, politics and political parties should always get fresh air and ideas.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer)

RaGa's Congress takes a left turn

Rahul Gandhi is all ears to former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan who favours leftist push to the economy

The Congress has taken a certain left turn in its bid to outsmart the Bharatiya Janata Party in the state elections. From being a centrist party with a shade of leftism in policy formulation, Congress is moving more to the left in giving centre stage to the policy formulation that the people in the country need to be cared for by giving money in their hands. This is in contrast to the economists who argue that the people should be enabled to earn their own livelihoods than support them with cash handouts.

More than a decade ago, in 2011, the then ruling UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi had launched Aajivika Mission in Banswara, Rajasthan after the right-thinking economists with heft within the Congress had concluded that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was coming out with full of leakages and least asset development.

Dr Manmohan Singh, the then prime minister, along with Sonia Gandhi had taken part in the launch of the Aajivika Mission, which was hailed by the Congress at that time as a game changer as the scheme would make the people in the rural areas self-employed and earn their own livelihoods. Aajivika was the name given to the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. The UPA government wanted the focus to shift from the MGNREGS to Aajivika.

It's a coincidence that Jairam Ramesh was the Union Minister for Rural Development in the latter years of the UPA-II government. Ramesh is now an integral part of the Team Rahul Gandhi. Ramesh was working to find market linkages for the rural artisans in states such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and others to give a meaningful direction to the Aajivika scheme.

But the UPA after two terms in office was voted out of power. Ramesh became busy writing books. The Congress went into the wilderness. The BJP seemed set to wipe out the Congress. Worse, even a section of the Congress leaders began thinking that the party has no future. The

scale of defeat in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections only grew in the 2018 general elections.

The Congress leaders from the dissidence camp, who sought non-Gandhi leadership at the helm, gained more attention than the Gandhi family. The story of the Gandhi family was suggested in some quarters to be over. Rahul Gandhi was dubbed a non-serious politician. But the team Rahul Gandhi regrouped. Ramesh joined as a key member of the team and also became the head of the communication department of the Congress. The party began experimenting with pre-poll adjustments with the Left parties in West Bengal. The Congress repeated the experiment in Tripura. The Left parties began influencing the economic world-views of Congress.

Rahul Gandhi boarded the Left-at-the-steering bus with enthusiasm. Even before Rahul Gandhi set out on the Bharat Jodo Yatra, he was all ears to the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Raghuram Rajan, who is a votary of putting cash in the hands of the people as a way to pump consumption to push the economy to higher growth.

DHONI SHOWED GUTS AND GUMPTION

Sir — The writing is on the wall and IPL 16 is at the fag end with play-off matches going on. Mahendra Singh Dhoni's CSK side entered the final of the IPL for the 10th time and it is a unique record. Dhoni as a skipper showed the ability to decide what is the best thing to do in a particular situation and to do it with energy and determination. Even though he could score 104 runs in this IPL overall, but led the side from the front. His keeping from behind the side provided a broad platform to give the side the much-needed impetus to perform at the highest level. Even a seasoned player like Jadeja needed his guidance to deliver at the right moment. Winning is a habit and Dhoni achieves facile wins under his leadership. Last season, the team under Jadeja could not achieve the same momentum and bowed out without a semblance of a fight. MSD makes things move in his direction with whistle podu performances.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

NADAL TO MISS FRENCH OPEN

Sir — Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal, the king of the French Open and the winner of this tournament 14 times, is currently suffering from an injury and has withdrawn from the French Open tournament. This has disappointed Nadal's fans and the organizers. Rafael Nadal, who won the French Open tournament for the first time in 2005 and maintained his dominance, is the first time. June 3rd is Rafael Nadal's birthday during the French Open which is held from May 18 to June 16. So the organizers celebrate this day as a memorial but now Rafael Nadal was injured in the Australian Open tournament held in January. Before that, Rafael Nadal won the Australian Open tournament despite suffering from a leg injury. He has won 122 matches in the French tournament and lost only three matches. Nadal Rafael clarified that 2024 may be the last season of his career and hinted that 2024 will be his retirement



A SECTION OF ECONOMISTS CLAIM THAT THE CONGRESS' FIVE GUARANTEES WOULD COST KARNATAKA ALMOST RS 62,000 CRORES ANNUALLY

Rahul Gandhi would most often hold interactions with Rajan, who even briefly walked with him during the Bharat Jodo Yatra during which several Left-leaning economists also appeared with the former president of the party.

Now, the Congress has taken a decisive Left turn. Himachal Pradesh Assembly election could have been taken as an exception because the hilly state largely has government employees as its core vote base and the party may have made a one-time exception to ride the populism of promising to restore the Old Pension Scheme, and several other cash dole-outs to the people.

But the Congress went steps ahead in Karnataka, which is in the league of very few states with high per capita income and where the unemployment rate is among the lowest in the country, roughly stated to be 4.2 per cent, while the state Budget has a size of Rs 3 lakh crore, besides being the source of the second highest monthly GST collections since October last year.

A section of economists claims that the Congress' five guarantees would cost

Karnataka almost Rs 62,000 crores annually. This will amount to almost one-fifth of the total Budget of Karnataka. The Congress has not yet explained how the economy of Karnataka would gain from such excessive cash dole-outs. Only this week, a young girl died in Bengaluru, drowned in a car after a sudden downpour in a city, which claims to host all the top international corporate names, besides hundreds of research and development centres.

The amounts to be given to the unemployed graduates (Rs 3000 monthly) and diploma holders (1500 monthly) could have easily been spent on skilling them for their employability, and even linkages found with countries such as Japan, Australia, Germany, Nordic countries, etc., who are facing acute shortage of the trained manpower. But the Congress' left turn appears to be a template for the revival of the party ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and economics, for the party leaders, can't wait for better days to get the due attention.

(The writer is contributing editor of The Pioneer)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Girls do well in UPSC



Engineering from IIT, Hyderabad) and Smriti Mishra (Miranda House College of Delhi) have been bagged by women. Though the top 25 candidates comprise 14 women and 11 men, overall, among the 933 candidates — 613 (65%) men and 320 (35%) women — have qualified for the civil services examination 2022. What's a pity when everywhere we have seen the success of women beating the opposite sex even though our females have not yet got the 33% reservation of women in the Parliament. It's the tragedy of the country. I heartily congratulate and sincerely appreciate the efforts rendered by the UPSC Topper and particularly those 41 Persons with Benchmark Disability (14 Orthopedically Handicapped, seven Visually Challenged, 12 Hearing Impaired & 8 Multiple Disabilities) 2023 all over the nation.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

year. To make the upcoming tennis season more memorable, the king of tennis has decided to rest for some time. Best wishes to the king of tennis who is on the way to retirement Good luck!

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

HUMBLE GESTURE

Sir — The humble gesture of Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, when he touches the feet of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is applauded globally. How humble he is when he respects the elderly Head of the State by touching his feet.

Also, it is the maiden visit of any Highest order delegate from India to the littoral country of the Pacific, Papua New Guinea and India had beautifully ended their first-ever bilateral ties. From the launching of the Tamil classic, 'Thirukkural' in the Tok Pisin language of Papua New Guinea.

The warm welcome of our PM by the Papua people decodes the strongest ties and synergies between the two nations. Although we had formal relations with the

island country since 1975, still India we had our restrictions concerning bilateral connections with such littoral nations. Now that India is moving ahead with panoramic as well as inclusive diplomatic approach vis-a-vis geopolitics, India is trying her best to have more friends from every walk of the planet. From developed and big countries to littoral nations, today India aims to associate with every country for inclusive development of each other. After all, we are the propeller of Vasudev Kutumbhagam, One Earth-One Family. This year's G7 summit, had a 49th edition indeed, despite India being an invitee among 8 others, the confluence of India towards all G-7 nations will strengthen our bilateral ties with larger consequences. Hopefully, India will leverage all these benefits coming to her due to her strong governance, and economic, political and social outreach in the entire world.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ART OF EVALUATING PROPERTY'S VALUE

Location is one of the most important factors to consider when evaluating a property



SHIWANG SURAJ

The address is often the first-factor people take into account when considering a particular property. If a home has an impressive street address, it might be more appealing to buyers than other properties on that particular street. Prospective buyers may be willing to pay more for an address that is associated with luxury and prestige.

Location Is King: For buyers and investors alike, location is one of the most important factors when considering a property's value. A desirable address can mean a higher market value, higher resale value, and greater likelihood of quick turnaround.

- **Local amenities:** Is the property near any local attractions, schools, hospitals or other amenities? Being near such popular places can enhance its marketability.

- **Neighborhood:** What kind of neighborhood is it in? Generally speaking, upscale neighbourhoods tend to bring higher prices than lower-end ones.

- **Accessibility:** Is the property easily accessible? Is it close to highways or major roads? Easy access can mean higher desirability and increased prices.

Floor Position and Layout: Higher Floors Command Higher Prices: Location is one of the most essential factors when it comes to evaluating a property's value. This is especially true for the floor a project is situated on and the property's layout. Generally, properties located on higher floors tend to command higher prices, as they offer better living conditions like more sunlight, better views and less background noise. For commercial properties, those located at ground level are more desirable than those on higher floors.

**Orientation and Vastu: South-Facing Homes Are Most Sought After**

Orientation plays a crucial role in determining the market value of a property, both from the perspective of resale value and also rental yield or capital appreciation. Some tips for evaluating a property's orientation include:

- Consider how much natural light is coming into the house
- Check for any obstructions that may limit access to sunlight
- How does the view look? Will it increase in price over time?
- Does it follow Vastu guidelines for better health and prosperity?

The orientation of a residential property can have a major impact on its market value.

Accessibility and Connectivity: Proximity to Transit and Roads:

Accessibility and connectivity are critical factors in determining the market value of a property. Prospective buyers are always on the lookout for properties that are close to transport hubs, such as airports, railway stations, and bus stops, as well as major roads. This is especially important for those looking to live in or near a city. Proximity to major developments such as malls, commercial buildings or highways can also be beneficial.

Neighbourhood Amenities: No matter how perfect a home may appear, its appeal can be easily diminished by the presence of undesirable elements nearby. To ensure that your next property is of value, take a closer look at its surrounding environment - what kind of parks and schools are available for leisure and education? How about hospitals and medical care centers? The nearest parks, schools and medical institutions can be invaluable assets to potential buyers. When evaluating a property, consider these neighbourhood amenities for the maximum possible market value:

Location is one of the most important factors in determining a property's value. The address of a property can have a major impact on its market value, as a location can provide benefits ranging from easy access to transportation and amenities to aesthetic advantages. By taking these factors into account, you can be better equipped to make informed decisions about investing in real estate and make the most from your investments.

(The writer is the founder and Director - InfraMantra)

Don't meddle with university autonomy



JS RAJPUT

Bitter feuds have been witnessed in the appointments of VCs. Chief ministers want to control the appointment of VCs as well as the university itself



It is well-established that universities and institutions of higher learning grow in credibility and acceptability when they enjoy real and effective autonomy in performing their well-articulated task of preparing young persons with a fulsome personality for the future and simultaneously creating the future of the nation. Towards these avowed objectives, the academics there need to put their intellectual prowess in full concentration in the deep study of existing knowledge and wisdom, critical analysis of existing practices in pedagogy and possible improvements that could ensure better pedagogy of the transfer of knowledge to young learners, generation of new knowledge and skills, innovations and exploration of ways and means to utilize it all in the welfare of mankind. The key word is autonomy, availability of adequate resources, and non-interference from external sources that invariably intrude simply because of their positions of power and authority in varied contexts.

The system of state governance and civil society have a responsibility to ensure the smooth functioning of these academic and intellectual pursuits in present times, defined by the march of humanity towards a knowledge society and knowledge economy. It is worthwhile to recall that this is no new proposition. It was the basis of the traditional Indian system of learning and gaining knowledge; in the Gurukula system. The Gurukulas were places of great societal reverence, even kings and emperors entered these premises only after seeking due permission of the Chief Acharya; the Kulapati or Kul Guru; and considered themselves fortunate to take dust from their feet. The state and community ensured the availability of necessary support of varied kinds. In the context of the current times, one could think of some major internationally recognised universities, and it would invariably emerge that it was autonomy that paved the path for their progress and growth and for the outstanding contributions of their products in the field of knowledge.

Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, University of California, Berkeley, and a few more are globally acknowledged

for their seminal contributions. There is no role of the State in their functioning or appointments.

India had experienced it in Nalanda, Taxila, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, and others. It has recent examples of the initial years of growth and excellence witnessed in BHU, Kolkata University, Allahabad University, Delhi University; and a couple more. These acquired credibility, acceptance and a unique culture of work specific to each one of these. These were fortunate to have Vice-Chancellors of the stature of Dr Radhakrishnan, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Pundit Ganga Nath Jha, and other luminaries of outstanding stature. It was the stature of the VC that doubly assured non-interference in the university's autonomy. It made all the difference. Now, India could boast more than 1100 universities. The growth in numbers, necessary and inevitable, has certain unwanted imperatives as well. The challenge is the quality of the learning imparted.

Things are very different times in the context of the autonomy of universities as also in the level and credibility of the academic leadership in most of the universities. Dr Radhakrishnan was convinced that: "Education is a universal right and not a class privilege." Simultaneously he also had very clearly stated how significant it was to value talent and merit in universities. The following words of Dr Radhakrishnan present one of the finest articulations that could comprehensively guide the functioning of India's institutions of higher learning: "Intellectual work is not for all, it is only for the intellectually competent. If our universities, which showed so much promise on the eve of Independence, now appear to be in a state of disarray, it is because they have been increasingly invaded by masses of people who have no regard for intellectual competence

or aptitude for academic work.

We have made short work of tests of intellectual competence to make peace with every kind of social and political pressure." It was Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru who spoke on how necessary it was to ensure proper academic functioning of the universities: "A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people." And both of these stalwarts were expressing themselves some seven to eight decades ago! It was a different age of value-internalization

The pursuit of excellence suffers on several counts both at the school level and also at the university stage. The common factor is the dearth of appropriate and committed academic leadership that could command respect because of competence, commitment and performance. There are severe issues of vacant positions and commercialization which just cannot be ignored. Several instances are being reported on the disturbing state of affairs in the universities funded by state governments. The credibility and quality of professional contributions of a university are primarily linked to the vision and foresight of its leader; the Vice-Chancellor!

States normally have the Governor as the Chancellor of state-funded universities, and private universities select their own Chancellor. Usually, the office of the Chancellor of state-funded universities initiates the process of the selection of VCs. The first step is the appointment of a search-cum selection committee for the same. The Chancellor's nominee on the committee is also designated as the convener; there is a nominee of the state

government, a nominee of the UGC, and a nominee of the Executive Council of the concerned universities. There could be minor variations in the composition of the committee depending upon the relevant State Act. The proviso of the Governor ex-officio becoming the Chancellor intends to wean the selection process away from political influences, as also from any other external pressures. It worked well during the first four-five decades after independence, but not so now.

During the last couple of years, some bitter feuds have been witnessed in the appointments of VCs in a couple of states where the elected chief ministers wish to control the appointment of VCs. Obviously; quality is not the concern in such instances. A pliant VC with desirable political moorings could be a great asset in so many ways that are by now well-known to all. In Kerala, the Chief Minister not only reappointed one retiring VC, but he also went ahead to appoint several more. The High Court cancelled all of these. The state of West Bengal has come up with legislation that would startle everyone concerned with education and universities. The state government of West Bengal would like to have search-cum-selection committee with a nominee of the chief minister, a nominee of the state government and also a nominee of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education in a committee of five members that would include a nominee of the Chancellor and also the UGC! This is a candid and clear political statement intended to reduce the authority of the Chancellor in appointing a reputed academician to lead the university.

It is beyond common sense why there should be three nominees of the state Govt. Such trends deserve to be checked seriously.



THE CREDIBILITY AND QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY ARE PRIMARILY LINKED TO THE VISION AND FORESIGHT OF ITS LEADER; THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

(The works in education, social cohesion and religious amity)

Indian science through the lens of ChatGPT

Human observation can be biased but the observations made by AI may be impartial unless there is human interference

Despite tremendous growth made in the field of science and technology, Indian science is beset with a lot of issues at the ground level. Only if there is a pinch of passion will landmark discoveries come from our institutions. Unfortunately, most of our researchers lack that passion. Research is considered a stop-gap arrangement between marriage and employment. One main issue affecting Indian science is the plight of Indian research scholars. Scholars have been deemed equivalent to class four employees in many institutions. They are made to work like a horse in a lab, with no free time, no holidays and a meagre salary if one is not fortunate enough to get through some fellowships.



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

(The writer is a science communicator and columnist)

Even in many labs, passionate scholars are not given respect by their supervisors and sometimes go to the extent of torturing them. In this era of artificial intelligence, where AI dominates every field of human life, I was curious to find out how AI will perceive Indian science. With this objective, I asked the most popular Chat bot, ChatGPT its perception of the issues affecting Indian science, and the bot gave the following:

- **Funding:** One of the major issues affecting Indian science is the lack of funding. While the Indian government has increased funding for science in recent years, it is still much lower than that of other countries. This lack of funding makes it difficult for

researchers to conduct high-quality research and to attract and retain talented scientists.

- **Infrastructure:** The lack of proper infrastructure and facilities is another major issue. Many universities and research institutions in India lack basic equipment, and researchers often rely on outdated technology.
- **Brain Drain:** There is a significant brain drain in India, as many of the best and brightest scientists and researchers leave the country for better opportunities abroad.
- **Education:** The quality of education in India needs improvement, especially in science and technology. This is necessary to produce more competent and

skilled scientists and researchers.

- **Bureaucracy:** The bureaucracy in India can be a significant hurdle for scientists and researchers, causing delays in obtaining funding and approvals for research projects.
- **Political interference:** There have been instances where political interference has affected scientific research in India. This can hinder the development of science and technology in the country.
- **Collaboration:** There is a lack of collaboration between researchers and institutions in India. This makes it difficult to share resources, knowledge, and expertise, which could hinder scientific progress.

If we analyze critically, the answers provided by the bot are highly relevant. Among the various factors affecting the quality of Indian science, the poor quality of science education cited by the bot needs serious attention. One major issue in science education includes outdated syllabi, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of qualified teachers. Teachers in India often lack adequate training in science subjects.

The bot observes a significant gender disparity in science education in India, with fewer girls pursuing science subjects than boys. This gender disparity is due to societal stereotypes and a lack of female role models. Bot's response regarding the attitude of supervisors in India towards their research scholars is quite

interesting. It has rightly pointed out the correct picture of our supervisors in an impartial manner.

According to the bot, the attitude of supervisors towards their research scholars can vary depending on various factors such as the supervisor's personality, work culture, institutional policies, etc. In general, supervisors in India tend to be highly respected and hold considerable authority over their research scholars. They are expected to guide and support their scholars in all aspects of their research work, including conceptualizing and designing experiments, analyzing data, and writing publications. Some supervisors may take a more hands-off approach, expecting their scholars to work indepen-

dently and only providing guidance when requested. However, there have also been reports of supervisors in India exhibiting a lack of professionalism, such as being dismissive of their scholars' ideas or concerns, being inaccessible or unresponsive, and even engaging in unethical behaviour, such as taking credit for their scholars' work. Such behaviour can be detrimental to the scholars' academic progress and well-being.

Human observation can be biased, as it is an innate human quality. However, observations made by AI may be impartial unless there is human interference. Our policymakers must address these issues to build a robust scientific workforce dedicated to the nation's development.

2023 CHINA TOURISM DAY

Yunnan offers an encounter with happiness and beauty

"Tengchong, located in China's southwest border area, was referred to as the first frontier city by Xu Xiake, a great traveler living in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Today, thanks to modern stage technology and holographic projection technology, the traditional shadow puppetry can be performed on a retractable stage, achieving smart transitions from scene to scene and bringing the history of this city to life," said Liu Chaokan, a successor of Tengchong's shadow puppetry which is inscribed on the national intangible cultural heritage list. On May 19, the launching ceremony and the main venue activity of the 13th China Tourism Day were staged in Heshun Town, Tengchong City, Yunnan Province. At the intangible cultural heritage exhibition held on the same day, the 4D shadow puppetry show Tengchong Reverie deeply impressed the audience.



The picture shows the event held in Tengchong, Yunnan on May 19th. (Photo provided by the organizer)

This year's China Tourism Day was themed on "Beautiful China, Happy Journey". Over the past few days, a series of relevant people-benefiting activities were held both online and offline across China. In Yunnan, where the event's main venue was located, scenic spots, hotels, restaurants, and other players of the culture and tourism industry all became "tourism ambassadors" and tried their best to attract domestic and foreign tourists through promotions, short videos, live

broadcasts, and more efforts. "Pu'er is not only a city but also represents a lifestyle. Whether you are a lover of coffee or tea, Pu'er is always worthy of your love," said Guo Dongmei, an official of the Publicity and Education Department of Pu'er Bureau of Culture and Tourism in south Yunnan. Since the start of May, apart from issuing a large number of culture and

tourism consumption vouchers online and offline, Pu'er has organized an array of cultural activities for the public, such as non-profit cultural shows and free admission to public cultural facilities. Pu'er also joined hands with the Lancang Jingmai Airport in launching a number of air travel promotion activities, in a bid to attract tourists to Lancang Lahu Autonomous County, where

tourists can enjoy folk songs in Laodabao Village, admire the tea plantations on the Jingmai Mountain, and visit those millennium-old ethnic settlements. "The Gejiu-Bizezhai-Shiping narrow-gauge railway has exited the historical stage, but it still lives in the hearts of local people. It demonstrated the early Chinese railway builders' patriotic sentiment, witnessed

the industrial development of cities along the line, and enhanced our identity with our hometown," said Cai Lisheng, Director of the Display and Exhibition Department of the Shiping County Railway Museum in southeast Yunnan's Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture. It was the first time that some tourists had got to learn about the narrow-gauge railway and the stories behind it.

Years on, Yunnan has been striving to promote the culture and tourism industry. In 2022, the province received 840 million tourist visits and achieved a total tourism revenue of 944.90 billion yuan (US\$ 134.36 billion), an increase of 27.3 percent and 21.2 percent, respectively. During this year's May Day holiday, which lasted from April 29 to May 3, the province received 35.013 million tourist visits and achieved a tourism revenue of 34.96 billion yuan (US\$ 4.97 billion), both up more than 30 percent over the same period in 2019, demonstrating the province's strong vitality for developing tourism. (Staff correspondents)

China's tourist market in 2023: Four new trends to watch out for!

What's new in 2023 China tourist market? Let's explore some of the travel trends that were reflected in the latest developments.

Whirlwind tours are on the rise

The "special forces" tourist, or whirlwind traveler, must be one of the hottest buzzword words in China this year, meaning that young people try to visit more places in a short period and with less money. Nan Duoduo, a young man born in the 1990s, climbed The Five Great Mountains in China's five provinces during the 5-day May Day holiday. His feat almost shocked everyone on the internet. Net users jokingly referred to him as the "strongest tourist special force."

Nan Duoduo is not alone. According to data from Tongcheng Travel, 62% of tourists in their 20s chose to depart at dusk and arrive at their destination at dawn to spare accommodation fees. Additionally, 30% of them visited more than four scenic spots in a day. The most popular destinations are cities with dense attractions and convenient public transportation, such as Beijing, Chongqing, Changsha, Shanghai, and Nanjing.

Slow-paced camps go through reshuffling

Contrary to the whirlwind travel style, a group of people prefers a slower travel pace, with camping being a most representative choice. At the start of Covid-19, lockdowns and social distancing measures pushed Chinese youngsters to seek idyllic campsites for pleasure from outdoor life. This trend continued into 2021 and 2022, but campground owners have reported a decrease in visitors, indicating that the camping trend may be waning.

According to iiMedia Research, the camping market experienced rapid growth in 2021, with a growth rate of 78%, but this decreased to 18.6% in 2022. Business insiders analyzed that camping was particularly popular in the past two years due to limited options available. Camping provided a sense of peace, relaxation and freedom, allowing us to escape from the reality full of anxiety and uncertainty for a moment.

Lesser destinations grow to be "new favorites"

"Believe it or not, you can stay in a luxurious five-star hotel room in Hegang for only 300 RMB per night!" A Chinese tourist recently shared his travel experience on social media. As a result, Hegang, a relatively unknown city in northeast China's Heilongjiang province, made a hit in the cyberspace. Besides, other lesser-known Chinese destinations have become the "new favorites" in this year's tourism market. On the Dianping website, "niche activities" and

"less-crowded places" have become hot search terms. What made reverse tourism popular? The main reason is that famous scenic areas and attractions are always overcrowded and overpriced during holidays, making it difficult for people to enjoy them. "Today's young people desire a relaxing travel experience that is enjoyable, stress-free and inexpensive, and those less-explored destinations meet their needs perfectly," said an industry insider.

Exchange travel offers zero-cost homestay

Recently, a new type of travel has emerged on social media, that is, exchange travel. Specifically, two strangers travel to each other's cities and stay in each other's homes at "zero cost." Net users listed their requirements on the house and the house owner and posted the information on social media, such as Xiaohongshu. In this way, the two sides may reach an agreement about the travel schedule through online communication. While some individuals found

hotel prices expensive, exchange travel allowed them to save money and experience a distinctive and individualized trip by living like a local. However, others held a conservative view and were skeptical about allowing strangers to stay in their homes due to safety concerns, especially regarding property security and personal privacy. "Third-party regulations should be introduced to ensure the benefits and security of both parties involved in the exchange," some suggested. (Guo Yao)

Live streaming invigorates China Tourism Day

On May 19, the launching ceremony and the main venue activity of the 2023 China Tourism Day were staged in Heshun Town, Tengchong City. At the main venue, ten distinctive live streaming rooms attracted tourists from all over the country. "Apart from the special live streaming, which will be on for three days, we've also launched a themed online marketing area. We'll join hands with seventeen provinces (municipalities) in promoting the China Tourism Day, integrating high quality online culture and tourism resources around the country to provide

our users with one-stop travel service experience," said an executive of the leading online Chinese travel agency Ctrip's live streaming room. According to statistics, the posts with the hashtag "#China Tourism Day" recorded 95,958,000 reads from 19:00 May 18 to 19:00 May and 1.6 billion reads and 1.135 million comments cumulatively on Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. So far, the videos carrying the same hashtag have registered 820 million plays on Douyin, a Chinese social media platform. (Yunnan Daily)

Travel Colorful Yunnan on the Cloud

Since the start of May, many places in Yunnan Province have launched exciting themed live broadcasts. Popular local tour guides conducted live webcasts in various scenic spots, enabling tourists all over the country to travel this province of cultural and ethnic diversity on the cloud. "This delicacy is typical of Lijiang. It's multi-layered, crispy on the outside and tender on the inside. Take a bite and you'll never forget it!" On Lijiang's Yube Square, a tour guide was vividly describing the taste and texture of the Lijiang-style pancake, a time-honored local snack, while eating one with relish. On May 19, the China Tourism Day, northwestern Yunnan's Lijiang City organized a number of highly popular tour guides to showcase local landscapes and customs through live webcasting so that netizens could experience the ethnic and folk songs, dances, and music that Lijiang has to offer. "Now we're in the Pu-zhehei Scenic Area in Qubai County of Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture." The live webcast by a culture and tourism streamer named Li Yongcun on the Douyin social media platform also attracted a large number of viewers. Following Li, the

viewers were able to feast their eyes on the peak forest, painted boats, and lucid water. "This is really a fairyland on earth," a tourist commented. In Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, tour guides also put local scenic spots online through live webcasts, such as the Primitive Forest Park, the Wild Elephant Valley, the Jinuo Stockaded Village, the Tropical Botanical Garden, and the Mengjinglai Scenic Area. At 10 a.m., the Dai Ethnic Garden's tour guide Yuwangdou started his daily livestreaming as usual. The 90-minute live webcast covered natural beauty, delicacies, history, and culture, introducing the unique tropical charm and fun to netizens all over the country and the world. On the China Tourism Day, the Bureaus of Culture and Tourism in Xishuangbanna's Jinghong City, Menghai County, and Mengla County also promoted their respective culture and tourism resources in consideration of local conditions through various activities such as celebrity endorsement. All the publicity efforts, including the live webcasts by popular tour guides and well-known travel streamers, raised the awareness of the China Tourism Day from multiple angles. (Yunnan Daily)



On the 13th China Tourism Day, Baoshan City, where the event was held, staged a feast of intangible cultural heritages. (Photo provided by the organizer)

Baoshan enlivens tourism with intangible cultural heritages

On the China Tourism Day, an exhibition integrating intangible cultural heritages and tourism was opened to the public in an alley in Heshun Town, Baoshan City. Baoshan's five counties (cities, or districts) all launched their distinctive intangible cultural heritage products, many of which were sold through live webcasts, greatly enriching the day. In the alley where the exhibition was held, the intangible cultural heritage products exhibited at the booths of Longyang District attracted a large group of tourists. In the dynamic exhibition area, Yang Zhihong, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage successor, showed the tourists how to make silver-inlaid black copper

objects. Some tourists were even able to try their hands at making their own copper spoons. Yang Shuxing, a successor of another intangible cultural heritage item known as "golden rooster pottery", not only demonstrated her pottery carving skills but also patiently taught some tourists to throw greenware so that they could experience the fun of pottery making. Baoshan is known for its "three treasures", namely small-grain coffee, red agates, and Yongchang go pieces. In Longyang District's static exhibition area, Li Guowei, a national-level intangible cultural heritage successor, impressed the tourists with his skills of making Yongchang go pieces. Just opposite Li's booth, Baoshan's aromatic small-grain coffee also

attracted a constant flow of tourists. "Longyang District selected six representative intangible cultural heritage items to be exhibited in the dynamic exhibition area and the culture and tourism promotion area." According to an official of the district's Bureau of Culture and Tourism, these products have enabled tourists all over the country to understand and experience the profound ethnic culture of Longyang District. On the China Tourism Day, the successors of Tengchong shadow puppetry showed the tourists how to paint the puppets and sang to the Yu-drum beats as well. Tourists said that while walking the streets lined with libraries, stores and other businesses, they were also able to learn

about Tengchong's unique intangible cultural heritage items, such as the shadow puppetry, Yu-drum music, and Jiamia woodblock printing. Strolling in the intangible cultural heritage exhibition area in Heshun, Baoshan, tourists could be introduced to nearly 100 intangible cultural heritage products. They could also communicate with the successors and learn from them, truly experiencing the charm and vitality of Baoshan's profound culture. To date, Baoshan has registered 407 intangible cultural heritage items at and above the county level, including 5 at the national level, 41 at the provincial level, and 161 at the prefectural city level. (Yunnan Daily)

Lion dances epitomizing folk culture

During the 2023 China Tourism Day, the Sanguan Square in Shidian County, Baoshan City, Yunnan Province were swarming with people. Amidst the thunderous drum music, lion dance teams from all over the county gathered in the county town to showcase the charm of lion dancing as an intangible cultural heritage item and a symbol of folk culture. The lion dances began at two o'clock in the afternoon. To the stormy drum beats, the lion dancers put on amazing performances, which integrated martial arts, dances, acrobatics, and other forms of art. The lion dancers worked together and used their bodies

to imitate various movements of the lions, winning waves of applause from the audience. As the lion dancers jumped, rolled, shook, and did all sorts of stunts, the lions' joy, anger, and sorrow were vividly presented before the audience, who could not help admiring these skillful folk artists. Lion dancing dates back to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties in Shidian County. When there are festivals or the crops are sowed or harvested, the lion dancers in different villages would gather together to put on performances as a way of praying for favorable weather or celebrate good harvests. (Yunnan Daily)