

## Dissolving reservation quota of specially abled

Specially abled persons are really special in the sense that what we normally achieve under normal circumstances is a struggle for them. Few specially-abled people are mentally strong enough to overcome their shortcomings, get educated, and live life with pride. Their life is a struggle, and from birth through childhood and college, each stage is a big hurdle that they have to overcome. Like ordinary children, they have their dreams and ambitions in life. The policies of the administration are always to encourage and support such persons at all levels, from admissions to scholarships for studies and jobs; at every step, the Government is there to help them out. According to law, the Government has provided 4% of jobs for them with reservations after much deliberation, planning, and consideration, and every state and UT must follow the set rules of reservations. The goal is simple: provide them with an opportunity to sustain their lives with dignity. Every specially-abled person has to appear before a medical board to get the disability certificate, and then only he or she can apply for the job. It may have been difficult for a disabled person to do the job, but with the advancement of science and subsequent gadgets, and in this digital era, it is not so difficult now. Online interpretation tools and assisting equipment are available, and as such, their utility in different fields is not hampered much now. India is proud to have Maharashtra-born IAS Officer Pranjali Patil as the first blind IAS Officer of India. Only last week, Sunil Kumar became the first deaf and mute student from Jammu and Kashmir to graduate with a Master's degree in Computer Applications (MCA). Two other alumni from the same school did BCA, and two girls secured jobs in the J&K Finance Department. All these examples are a testimony that these specially-abled persons have the talent, determination and zeal to stand up in their lives on their own.

But certain departments of Jammu and Kashmir UT are ignoring the set reservation rules. It is alleged that they are flouting the carry-forward norm for the advertised posts. The rule is clear: if the administration is unable to fill up the 4% of vacancies set aside for the specially-abled, then they have to keep them separate and re-advertise later on or club them separately in the next recruitment process. The eligible candidates are crying foul and citing various recent advertisements with specific allegations. The Higher Education Department has prepared the basic roster with the alleged anomalies as explained by JKPS, in consultation with the Social Welfare Department. Due to this, many eligible, physically challenged candidates had not been able to apply in the past, and year after year, the same set of rules and omissions continue. There is no clarity in the advertised post, though it is mandatory to bifurcate the vacancies as per set norms, somehow PSC and Higher Education Department are not following the rules. Even though an addendum had been issued, there is still no clarity. No official is ready to clarify the current position despite representation by the candidates to highlight the discrepancies. Every year, multiple delegations have been assured of justice, but the next year, the same procedure is being followed. The matter is serious in the sense that many opportunities had been lost by these deserving candidates with no fault of theirs. The administration must look into the allegations and come out with a course correction if there are discrepancies. The deserving candidates must be compensated with additional vacancies in the next advertisement. Candidates have reached here after much struggle, and very few opportunities are available in the private sector due to a lack of trust in their abilities. As such, no opportunity should be taken away from these candidates, as a Government job is an assured gateway to living life with dignity.

## Illegal appointments in H&ME

Health and Medical Education is a crucial department that provides essential services to the public and, as such, requires the requisite manpower to deliver the services. On the one hand, there is a 50% shortage of doctors, hampering health services, especially in rural areas. No one was held accountable, which is why this shortage persisted for years. On the other hand, 2274 illegal appointments in the department have been noticed while conducting a manpower audit. It is beyond comprehension how the salaries of this excess staff have been withdrawn for years without the Finance Department's approval. This is a serious matter with long-term consequences and shows the deep nexus of officials working in tandem to execute such a large number of illegal appointments without being penalized for years together. The dark period of terrorism seems to have been a boon for this kind of nexus, which worked in sync to exploit the situation and indulge in illegal appointments. Fear of the law was never in mind, but the present LG administration is unflinching. Proper investigation and stringent action must be initiated to set an example for the future. A classic case of BMO Beerwah has lingered on since 2010, despite two audits in 2011 and 2012. Although 89 posts were sanctioned, 102 people were drawing salaries, which will amount to crores if cumulatively accumulated to date. Who is responsible for this loss to the state for decades now? This is just the case of one BMO with 13 illegal employees, but when we take the case of 2274 employees, this salary figure is enormous and requires immediate intervention from the authorities. All these illegal appointees have snatched employment opportunities and rights of employment from deserving candidates. The earlier decision of the LG administration to proceed with human audits in all departments is paying off now that the administration has swung into action, committees have been formed to take the final call, and we expect an example to be set for the future.

# Birthday tribute to Gen Rawat

Satish Singh Manhas

"It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men live" (George S Patton, Jr).

General Bipen Rawat was a four star General of the Indian army who served as 26th chief of the army and first chief of defence staff of the Indian armed forces from January 2020 until his death in a helicopter crash. He was a first in the "order of merit graduate" from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun and was also a 'Sword of Honour' awardee. General Bipen Rawat was commissioned into the 5th battalion, the 11 Gorkha Rifles (5/11 GR) on 16 December 1978, the same unit as his father had retired from.

There are many firsts associated with his military career like as a young captain, General Bipen Rawat had successfully handled the Sino-Indian skirmishes of 1987, the first after 1962 war at Sumdorong Chu valley along the Mac Mohan line. He had spent ten years conducting counter-insurgency operations in different areas in different ranks. As a brigadier he had served successfully for a UN mission in Congo and is

credited with bringing the CNDP and other armed groups on the negotiating table and played a commendable role for the protection of the vulnerable population there. He is also credited with revenging the martyrdom of 18 Indian soldiers killed in an ambush by militants belonging to the United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLFW) in Manipur in June 2015 by responding with cross-border strikes by striking an NSCN-K base in Myanmar inflicting heavy casualties on the militants.

A daring and upright general habitual of calling "spade a spade" he backed up the action of his young major Leetul Gogoi in Kashmir insurgency and awarded a Chief of the Army Staff Commendation Card for his successful counter-insurgency operations. As a honour, on his visit to the United States in 2019, General Rawat was inducted to the United States Army Command and General Staff College International Hall of Fame. During his tenure, the 73 days Doklam military standoff was handled very effectively causing heavy loss to the Chinese army. He also advised the nation and

its leadership to prepare for a two-front war situation any time in future against China and Pakistan. Academically, he was awarded a honorary doctorate by Choudhary Charan Singh

diploma in Management and Computer Studies from the University of Madras in 2011.

But the entire nation got shocked over the tragic accident in which General Bipen Rawat



university Meerut, for his research on military-media strategic studies, he had also obtained a MPhil degree in Defence Studies as well as

the first chief of armed forces (COAS) along with his wife Smt. Madhulika Rawat, Brigadier Lakhwinder Singh Lidder and 11 other soldiers

including the bodyguard commandos for the General lost their precious lives near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu on December 8th, 2021. The General along with his team was heading to address the faculty and trainee officers of the staff college at the defense services staff college (DSSC), Wellington, Nilgiri Hills. He along with the others flew in the morning from New Delhi in another chopper before boarding the Russian manufactured Mi-17V5.

This double engine chopper besides having an on board weather radar is also equipped with the latest generation night vision device. This double engine Chopper has the capability to fly if one engine stops working or if both engines stop working and even after that it can land as the parachute. But, Alas! What happened as none of these specialized features could help save our dynamic General, his wife and other martyr soldiers. What went wrong with the chopper that within 30 minutes of its take off and flying, such a tragedy struck our nation? If bad weather has been cited as the reason of accident initially and even in the findings of the high level tri services probe headed

by air marshal Manvendra Singh which submitted its preliminary findings to Defense Minister Raj Nath Singh, ruling out any mechanical failure, sabotage or negligence then a question arises why the on board weather radar could not detect in advance the direction and intensity of bad weather/ wind/clouds? Has any weather report for the flight not been issued? Or who decided to go with the flight if the forecast had indicated inclement weather? Could the pilot not make any distress call? Was the on board radar not working? If so then a question arises, was the chopper not ready before flying? If bad weather is the only reason.

Then all other guesses seem illogical. But definitely need a look. Because can the weather become too violent within a few minutes if there was no forecast. Now what is more important at this point of time is that we lost a great General along with a big team of officers which the nation cannot afford to lose under any circumstances in the future. Can such accidents be averted well in time in the future? This is what everybody wants to hear, although at times nature has its own unpredictable call.

## Gaslighting at Workplace

Aufaz Zargar

Work is worship. In a supportive work environment, employees are encouraged to share ideas, work together, and assist one another. In general, a conducive workplace provides an opportunity for employees to make significant contribution to the organization while also valuing, respecting, and supporting them in their personal and professional development. However, if the workplace is toxic, even a workaholic feels jammed. This finally leads to an unmotivated and demoralized workforce. Although many factors make a workplace no less than hell, gaslighting at the workplace is deadly dangerous. And, no boss should ignore it. It must be nipped in the bud. It can lead to problems, disputes, low morale, excessive stress, poor outcomes, illness, high staff turnover, and even abusive conduct among workers. Conflict is inevitable in an environment that is toxic and gaslit.

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation where a person or group of people intentionally deceive someone to cause him to question his sanity or reality. This behaviour can be especially harmful in the workplace, where it can damage productivity, morale, and mental health. It can come in various forms, from downplaying someone's feelings or experiences to holding them accountable for errors they didn't commit. Indirect insults, sarcasm, or disparaging remarks can also be used, which over time can erode someone's confidence and self-esteem. The effects of gaslighting can be very negative. Anxiety, despair, and even post-traumatic stress disorder can result from it. Moreover, it leads to poorer work output and lower job satisfaction.

Let's present a hypothetical case for reference and explanation.

At a marketing company where Jane worked, Joe was a coworker. Joe was known for being extremely competitive and frequently made fun of his coworkers to appear more intelligent. The supervisor praised Jane for her excellent endeavour. At a meeting, Joe walked up to her and said, "Given how terrible that project was, I find it

unbelievable that you earned praise. I had to step in and set things straight." Jane was certain that her project would be a success and that it would meet all requirements, but Joe's comment made her doubt her abilities. Jane was aware that Joe had a history of using comments like these to undermine her confidence and have her doubt her accomplishments.

In this instance, Joe's treatment of Jane is an illustration of gaslighting. He was attempting to make Jane doubt her skills and reality by purposefully making inaccurate and disparaging remarks

It can be difficult to recognize if an employee is a victim of gaslighting, as it is very subtle and insidious. Gaslighting can make a person doubt his thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. If an employee is constantly feeling confused or uncertain about his decisions, or if he feels like he is constantly second-guessing himself, it may be a sign that he is being gaslit. It can also cause a person to feel isolated and alone. If a boss feels like an employee doesn't value anyone he can trust and keeps himself isolated, he may be gaslit. It can make a person feel like he is losing his grip on reality.



about her job. This type of behaviour can seriously undermine someone's confidence and sense of self-worth and can poison the workplace. If Joe and Jane continue to work together and exhibit similar conduct, Jane may need to bring up the matter with her boss. This behaviour is not uncommon in the corporate sector, and unfortunately, it is creeping up at Govt offices also.

Such employees need empathy and reinvigoration. Gaslighting can make a person feel like they are always to blame for any issues or problems that arise. If an employee repeatedly reports this problem, a boss must pay attention. He needs to come forward for support and arrange for a mental health professional to help him understand what is happening and develop a plan to address

the situation.

Dealing with gaslighting can be emotionally draining, so it is important to take care of oneself. Take breaks when needed, engage in activities that bring joy, and seek professional support if necessary. Employees must be encouraged to Speak up, Seek support and Report the problem. It is the employer's duty as a leader in the office to establish a secure and healthy working environment for all employees. This entails dealing with any instances of gaslighting or other toxic behaviour that might be affecting the staff. An employer ought to provide education and training to all employees about what gaslighting is, its impact, and why it is unacceptable in the workplace. This can help create awareness and reduce the likelihood of gaslighting occurring. The employer should establish clear policies and procedures that prohibit gaslighting or any other form of toxic behaviour in the workplace. The policies should outline the consequences of violating these rules. He ought to encourage employees to speak up if they experience or witness gaslighting or any other form of toxic behaviour. He must strive to create a safe and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable bringing up their concerns. He must follow up with the employee who reported the gaslighting behaviour to ensure that they feel supported and that the issue has been resolved.

To sum up, Gaslighting is a problem that needs to be handled in the workplace. It affects one's mental health and well-being as well as capacity to function productively. One can get rid of this toxic conduct in workplace by confronting it, fostering a culture of respect and accountability, and offering help to those affected. Particularly, the employer must foster a positive work atmosphere and deal with any instances of gaslighting or other toxic conduct that may be affecting the staff. An employer, a boss, a head of organization or an administrator must prevent gaslighting and take pro-active measures, and make sure that workers feel safe and supported.

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## India's growth story must include people with disabilities

Harihar Swarup

On August 15, 2047, India will turn 100. A hundred years of giant strides to becoming the world's largest democracy and an economic superpower. Morgan Stanley, one of the most influential companies in the world, said last year that three mega global trends, global offshoring, digitalization and energy transition, are setting the scene for India's unprecedented economic growth. They believe India is set to surpass Japan and Germany to become world's third largest economy by 2027. Whether citizens with disabilities will be part of this glorious narrative and how are points to ponder on.

Today, there are millions of people living with disabilities in India. Census 2011 pegs us at 26.8 million, constituting 2.21 per cent of India's total population; but activists, academicians and world bodies like WHO estimate it to be between 40 and 80 million. It is clear that we constitute a significant part of the India's population and yet remain marginalized and isolated. The question is why?

These are the most favourable times for the people living with disabilities in India. We have a robust rights-based law, a progressive education policy, NEP 2020, and the Accessible India campaign. At the same time, the international development agenda says: "Leave No one Behind".

Signed into law in 2016, the historic Rights for Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act gave India its most comprehensive and robust law to protect our rights. This civil rights law is designed to ensure that we have the same law and opportunities as everyone else by promoting an enabling environment and prohibiting discrimination in education, employment, transportation and other

independent, safe and dignified living, the government launched the Accessibility India campaign in 2015.

Yet, in India, people with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic partition and higher rates of poverty. Women and girls with disabilities are further subjected to multiple layers of discrimination.

**Living in a world not built for us is a huge challenge. Without options to travel freely and independently and use public space, people with disabilities will continue to lack access to education, health care, employment, housing and system of social protection.**

aspects of public life. The RPwD Act also increased the quota for disability reservation in higher educational institutions to five per cent and government jobs to 4 per cent. Accessibility has become a right. To create a barrier-free environment for

Unemployment rates are highest among them. Women with disabilities often face disproportionately high rates of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation.

This is perhaps because we are limiting our-

selves to only drafting the best laws and policies. Such interventions cannot create an enabling environment by themselves. People with disabilities are fighting cases of non-implementation by several state governments in various high courts. Only by proper operationalisation of laws and policies can we bring about positive changes in the lives of the disabled in India. To ensure this, we need to focus on four things-disability-specific data, accessibility, finances and awareness.

There is a dearth of data on disability and disabled people in India. Data is needed to ascertain the services and finances to be provided. Policy makers and practitioners tend to leave out people with disabilities in various programmes due to the unavailability of data. It is crucial to create and manage disability-specific disaggregated data across sectors of health, education, poverty alleviation, law and order, sports and culture.

Living in a world not built for us is a huge challenge. Without options to travel freely and independently and use public space, people with disabilities will continue to lack access to education, health care, employment, housing and system of social protection. They will continue to face stigma, discrimination, and even violence. The principles of "universal design" must be followed to make places, transport, websites, information and processes (meetings, processions etc) accessible. (IPA)

## Exempt 1947 PoJK DPs from property tax

Sir,

It is a well-known fact that the 1947 displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK DPs), who live in Jammu and Kashmir and other states throughout the country, have long fought for and continue to fight for their legitimate grievances, and their genocide is considered to be the biggest genocide in the world. The situation of the Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir persons did not improve during the tenures of successive governments in the erstwhile of State of Jammu and Kashmir governments or at Central Governments.

One of the major aspects that has remained unattended since the post-displacement of the Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir displaced persons is the resettlement and rehabilitation of the elderly and infirm, the young generation, women, widows, orphans, etc. The assistance programmes were not in good shape

during the post-displacement period. Because of the lackadaisical attitude of the previous administration, numerous welfare programmes in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir were ignored and unaddressed. The displaced people from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir have already encountered many obstacles to their survival as well as the survival of future generations, and they have had to adapt to a hard life throughout the country.

The administration of the Union Territory has now implemented a policy requiring all urban local councils, municipalities to collect property taxes from Union Territory residents. The imposition of property tax on the displaced people amounts to pouring fuel to the fire because they have already endured immense suffering and battled for their lives. In contrast to what is implied in the circular, the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir are unable to pay property tax. These displaced persons are yet to get ownership rights over the land and houses that were

allotted to them. The inclusion of property tax would prefer to make their lives more worse than to give them any of the relief they occasionally ask for.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of India, the Central Leadership is making every effort to ease the challenges faced by the displaced persons of 1947 Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir who reside within Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as well as those who reside in other states of the Country. Yet, it is deeply regretful and upsetting that the Lieutenant Governor's administration chose to include displaced persons under the tax payer umbrella. The Lieutenant Governor is urged to exempt 1947 Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir displaced persons from paying the property tax.

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Poonch