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Breaking barriers

India has taken a significant step in liberalising its trade policies by reducing import duties on motorcycles, cutting tariffs on heavyweight bikes (above 1600cc) from 50% to 30% and on smaller bikes from 50% to 40%.

This move, primarily aimed at easing the entry of Harley-Davidson into the Indian market, is being viewed as a strategic attempt to avert the looming threat of tariffs from the United States.

The United States, under President Donald Trump, has consistently scrutinised India's tariff policies. With Trump's return to the White House, trade discussions have intensified, raising concerns over whether these tariff reductions will be sufficient to satisfy his administration or if additional trade-related measures against India are under consideration. The US exported \$3 billion worth of motorcycles to

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Ajay Srivastava, founder of the Global Trade Research Institute, notes that if the US can take trade actions against its closest allies, Canada and Mexico, India is not exempt from potential economic pressure.

Trump's recent phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of balancing trade and increasing India's defence purchases from the US—a move interpreted by many as an effort to leverage India's strategic interests to boost American exports.

India enjoys a trade surplus with the US, its largest trading partner. Bilateral trade was projected to surpass \$190 billion by 2023, with India's goods exports to the US growing by 40% since 2018 to reach \$123 billion, and services trade expanding by 22% to \$66 billion.

Meanwhile, US exports to India stood at \$70 billion, with key categories including crude oil, petroleum products, LNG, coal, medical equipment, and scrap metal.

Apart from motorcycles, India has removed import duties on satellite ground installations, benefiting US exporters who supplied \$92 million worth of equipment to India in 2023. Other tariff reductions include synthetic flavouring essences (from 100% to 20%), fish-based fertilisers (from 15% to 5%), and select scrap metal categories, a sector where the US exported \$2.5 billion to India last year. These measures signal India's willingness to facilitate business despite a complex global trade environment.

Historically, India has been one of the most protectionist economies. American political scientist Joseph Greco once described India as "one of the most restrictive governments in regulating foreign direct investment." India's share of world trade fell from 2.42% in 1948 to a mere 0.51% in 1991, as its inward-looking policies hindered global trade participation. The liberalisation of the 1990s and early 2000s marked a turning point, with average tariffs dropping from 80% in 1990 to 13% in 2008.

However, with the launch of the Make in India campaign, tariffs have risen to approximately 18%, making India a focal point in Trump's "America First" policy. The US has been advocating for reciprocal tariff adjustments to address the trade imbalance, which could lead to further negotiations between the two nations.

Despite progress in multiple sectors, agricultural trade remains a contentious issue. India had removed tariffs on US imports of almonds, apples, chickpeas, pulses, and walnuts in 2023, but agriculture remains a politically sensitive sector in India. Given the substantial impact of the agrarian vote, the Indian government is likely to adopt a cautious approach when negotiating further concessions in this area. While India has shown a willingness to cooperate, it is expected to drive a hard bargain on agricultural products to safeguard domestic interests.

Trade is just one aspect of the complex US-India relationship. India's recent decision to accept the deportation of undocumented Indian migrants from the US has been seen as a goodwill gesture, reinforcing diplomatic ties. Furthermore, Modi's personal rapport with Trump is viewed as an asset in managing bilateral relations.

comment



STEVE CORREA



RONALD D'SOUZA

Do nice guys finish last?

Examining the role of simplicity and shrewdness in workplace success

The phrase "Nice guys finish last" has long been debated professionally and personally. Does kindness and simplicity hinder career progression, or does strategic cunning, often associated with shrewdness, truly determine workplace success? The corporate world is filled with contrasting personalities—some approach their careers with a straightforward and sincere attitude, while others navigate professional landscapes with calculated precision. The key question remains: is it better to be simple or shrewd to succeed in the workplace? The answer is neither absolute nor one-dimensional. Success depends on personal adaptability, industry norms, and balancing integrity with strategy foresight.

The Simple

A simple professional is often characterised by sincerity, hard work, and a strong focus on technical skills rather than engaging in office politics. These individuals take things at face value, prioritising their work without resorting to manipulative tactics to advance their careers. Their greatest strength lies in their unwavering dedication and commitment to their craft. Simpler professionals often excel in roles that require meticulous attention to detail and deep expertise. Over time, they develop into strong subject matter experts, mastering their field with a thorough understanding of its nuances.

Another defining characteristic of a simple professional is authenticity. Their straightforward nature fosters trust among colleagues, making them reliable team members who contribute to a positive work environment. Because they do not engage in deception or calculated interactions, their relationships at work tend to be genuine and built on mutual respect. This sense of integrity allows them to collaborate effectively with others and earn the respect of their peers.

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Moreover, simple professionals experience long-term career satisfaction because they align their work with their values. They often find purpose in what they do, ensuring their professional journey is fulfilling rather than merely a means to an end. Rather than constantly chasing promotions or titles, they find contentment in the work, making their careers more sustainable in the long run.

However, simplicity in a professional setting is not without its challenges. One major limitation of a simple professional is the potential for stagnation in career progression. Without an awareness of workplace dynamics and politics, they may be overlooked for promotions or excluded from decision-making circles. While their technical expertise is valuable, their inability to navigate an

organisation's power structures can hinder their upward mobility.

Furthermore, a lack of shrewdness can make simple professionals vulnerable to manipulation. In competitive work environments where self-interest often dictates decisions, those who are too trusting may become easy targets for exploitation. Their unwillingness or inability to play political games may lead to missed opportunities or, worse, being taken advantage of by more strategically inclined people.

Additionally, simplicity may lead to slow adaptability in fast-changing workplaces. Organisations often require employees to manoeuvre through complex interpersonal and strategic challenges; those struggling with these aspects may lag behind. While they may excel in their technical domain, their lack of strategic foresight can limit their overall impact and career advancement.

The Shrewd

On the other hand, shrewd professionals are highly perceptive and strategic in their approach to career growth. They proactively manage their professional trajectories, engaging in calculated political manoeuvring to position themselves favourably in workplace hierarchies. Unlike simpler professionals, who rely solely on their technical skills and sincerity, shrewd individuals understand that career success often depends on the ability to navigate power structures and make informed, strategic decisions.

One of the primary advantages of a shrewd professional is their ability to drive rapid career growth. They build powerful networks, cultivate influential relationships, and ensure they are visible to key decision-makers. By carefully crafting their professional image and making calculated career moves, they often accelerate their progression within an organisation.

Another strength of the shrewd professional is their ability to wield influence and power effectively. They keenly understand organisational structures and know how to work within them to maximise their impact. Whether through networking, strategic alliances, or calculated positioning, they ensure they remain in control of their professional destiny.

Additionally, shrewd professionals possess a high degree of adaptability and resilience. Their ability to anticipate challenges and navigate workplace obstacles makes them well-equipped to thrive in volatile environments. Rather than being caught off guard by organisational changes or shifting industry trends, they remain ahead of the curve, ensuring their continued relevance and success.

Despite these advantages, however, shrewdness comes with its own trade-offs. One significant drawback is the difficulty in forming genuine relationships. Because colleagues may perceive them as calculating or self-serving, trust can be difficult to build. This perception can lead to isolation, as others may hesitate to confide in or collaborate with them on a deeper level.

Furthermore, the relentless pursuit of career advancement can lead to high stress levels and emotional exhaustion. The constant need to stay ahead, outmanoeuvre

rivals, and maintain a strategic edge can affect one's mental well-being. Unlike simpler professionals, who find fulfillment in their work, shrewd professionals often define their success through external achievements, making them vulnerable to burnout.

Another potential downside of shrewdness is the risk of losing depth in technical expertise. As these individuals focus more on networking and political manoeuvring, they may neglect the continuous learning and skill-building necessary to remain experts in their field. Over time, they may become reliant on their ability to position themselves rather than their actual technical competence, which can be a liability in industries that value deep expertise.

Balance of Simple and Shrewd

While both simple and shrewd professionals possess strengths and weaknesses, the most successful individuals often strike a balance between these two qualities. Rigid adherence to either extreme can be limiting, whereas a dynamic approach—one that blends sincerity with strategic thinking—creates a well-rounded professional capable of thriving in diverse work environments.

One of the most critical factors in achieving this balance is emotional intelligence. Professionals who can read social cues, understand workplace dynamics, and adapt their approach while maintaining authenticity are often the most effective in their roles. Emotional intelligence allows individuals to engage in office politics without compromising their integrity, ensuring that they can navigate professional relationships skillfully.

Additionally, selective shrewdness is a valuable trait. Knowing when to be strategic without being manipulative enables professionals to advance in their careers without alienating colleagues. This approach allows individuals to remain authentic while still making calculated decisions that serve their long-term goals.

Finally, authentic networking is key to sustainable professional growth. Successful professionals foster connections based on mutual benefit rather than building relationships solely for personal gain. They establish genuine professional alliances built on trust and collaboration, ensuring that their networks support them in the long term.

Ultimately, whether nice guys finish last is not a matter of whether simplicity or shrewdness is the superior trait. Rather, it is about integrating both qualities to align with one's career goals and personal values. The most successful professionals recognise when to be sincere and when to be strategic, leveraging each trait as the situation demands. By mastering this balance, individuals can achieve both career success and personal fulfilment, proving that success in the workplace is not about being exclusively simple or shrewd but about knowing when and how to be both.

(Steve Correa is an Executive Coach and Author of The Indian Boss at Work, Thinking Global, Acting Indian. Ronald D'Souza has Corporate and Consulting Experience and mentors new startups.)

Give equal status to Roman script

The Global Konkani Forum along with a few Romi-Konkani supporters held a symbolic protest at Azad Maidan on February 4 (coinciding with the State's Official Language Day) to reaffirm their demand for an amendment to the Official Language Act of 1987 and to grant equal status to the Roman script.

Well, it should be noted that despite the Catholic community of being in the forefront and nowhere of anything being said nor discussed about any script during the entire Konkani movement, the controversial Goa Official Language Act was passed on February 4, 1987, making Konkani in Devanagari script the Official Language of Goa, with Marathi designated for all official purposes thereby openly backstabbing and humiliating the above community in the state.

Well, being a proud Konkani-speaking Goan, I therefore do believe that until and unless the above blunder (which has persisted for almost 38 years and has practically divided our Konkani speaking population along script lines in the State) is not rectified and Roman script is not given its rightful place in the Official Language Act to give justice for the Catholic community (which ultimately still goes to use only Roman and not Devanagari script in their day to day affairs even to this day i.e. in their church services, all correspondence, whilst reading newspapers, using computers, sending WhatsApp/Instagram messages from their mobiles etc), Konkani will continue to suffer and there are chances that this language

(which unfortunately is already in the ICU today) might even go to die a slow death due to the stubbornness/selfishness of the Devanagari-script lobby in particular & that will be curtains down for our unique Goan identity sooner or later. The government should therefore come in its senses, bring an amendment (I doubt that it will ever due to its own political compulsions) to the Official Language Act and grant equal status to Roman Konkani to bring unity amongst the Konkani speaking population in the State to save Konkani & to safeguard our unique Goan identity for the betterment of our future generations in Goa. Save Konkani to safeguard our Goanar-ponn. Viva Goa, viva Goenkar. **Jerry Fernandes, Saligao**

letterstotheeditor

For letters to the editor contact us at editor@herald-goa.com.

All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.

Animal attacks on the rise

Bison have reportedly been found wandering on the streets in different parts of Ponda taluka, causing alarm among the residents in the area. The other day a scooter rider and a pillion rider were injured in Usgao when their scooter rammied into a bison.

Three months ago, a bison attacked a woman at Bethora and the injured woman died the next day while undergoing treatment in the hospital. Leopards are also seen in the villages, especially attacking dogs and other domesticated animals. A leopard was reportedly sighted in the courtyard of a house in Canacona, causing panic among

people's edit

HELP INDIA PROGRESS

SATHAPPAN NARAYAN

Human mind always indulges in worrying of thinking what they do not have rather than count the blessings of what already in their possession.

For instance whenever a childless parent come across an infant he get into self pity of how unlucky he is without a child. If suppose he has a female child then the worry is why he is not having male child and vice versa. Likewise somebody with grey hair is so unhappy whenever come across people of his age or elders with black hair!

Same way with every feature of human beings! Taller individuals are the envy of not so taller or even average heighters. Dark skinned wants to become fair skinned. Data on sales of fairness creams are mind boggling. Have nots of any bodily or materialistic possession are not happy to see have ones. There are two types of thinking in such situation. For example when somebody commuting in a two wheeler stop in a signal by the side of luxury car, chances are he may awestruck to see the beauty of the car and may decide he also should work to earn adequate wealth to buy an identical or better car in future.

On the contrary if he choose to think, 'look at the arrogance on the face, whom he deceived to earn to buy such a car, for sure he will lose all his health and wealth and join me to drive a two wheeler sooner', neither it is good for his personal life nor for the society he is living with.

It is better to have less economic disparity among fellow citizens of a country and it is not only in the interest of individual but for the entire society. It is the moral duty of every governing authorities to ensure availability of quality and affordable education, health care and employment opportunities to every citizen.

It is needless to mention it is the duty of every individual to utilise such provisions with utmost sincerity and ensure quality life for themselves and as well their families.

How an individual should be to progress in life? It is better to turn to Thiruvalluvar to get an answer. There are multiple kuralas on how one can progress in life. Some of the kuralas for self motivation are as below:

The stalks of water flowers are proportionate to the depth of water; so is men's greatness proportionate to their minds (whatever be the rainfall, within hours the stalk of water flowers like lotus grows to the new level of water rather than sinking in water. Thiruvalluvar so beautifully compare this phenomena to self improvement of individuals) (Kural 595)

Wealth will find its own way to the self motivated man of unending energy (No need to give address or other details to receive wealth, on the other hand wealth finds every detail of such individual who is self motivated with nonstop energy/action!) (Kural 594)

Even though the task appears to be impossible even by God, the attempts (trying effort) one put on the task will surely give the benefits to the extent of those efforts made. (Kural 619)

When individuals show sincerity in progressing self it is natural their family progresses and there by the country as a whole.

residents in the area. The area is located close to the road leading to the Palolem beach where domestic and foreign tourists move around at night. Recently, a woman was injured after she was attacked by a wild boar in a field at Poingunim. It must be said just like stray cattle roaming on the roads have become a menace to motorists and people are being attacked by stray dogs on the beaches, wild animals have now become a threat to human life in the villages.

It does not take rocket science to find the reason for the frequent incidents of wild animals straying into human habitat. Human beings, out of greed, have displaced the wildlife from their natural habitat by carrying out large scale deforestation for real estate development. Left with no option, these wild animals enter the villages looking for prey.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco