VUCA CHRONICLES

LABOUR DAY

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Volatile **U**ncertain **C**omplex **A**mbiguous

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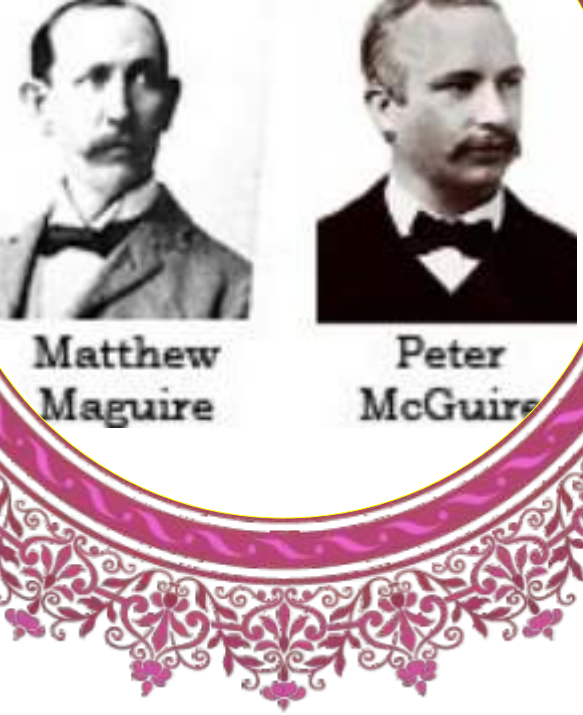
Labour Day

By Gia Ganesh, Grade 8, SNS Gurugram

Labour Day. What does the word 'labour' mean? If we glance at the dictionary, it would define it as strenuous or productive work; mostly the physical work being done. Some easy examples of these people, labourers, who work hard and efficiently to provide the best for us are cobblers, weavers, and even the Didis and Bhaiyas who work in our school.

So, what is Labour Day, and what is its purpose?



Labour day is the day to honour workers for the effort and sacrifice they make for us to receive the best. Its purpose is exactly that. It's a day of appreciation and to recognize their contributions.

Peter J. McGuire and Mathew Maguire created Labour Day. On September 5th 1882, there was a massive parade of approximately 10,000 workers. In 1885 celebrations were being held in multiple states such as India, Cuba, China etc. to show gratitude to the workers. U.S president Grover Cleveland made Labour Day a national holiday.

However, in India, people only started to recognize it on 1st May 1923. A solution came forth stating 'the government should allow everybody a national holiday on Labour Day since it is observed annually.'

Over time, the meaning and importance of the national holiday changed in the United States. For many, it became a celebration for the end of summer; a break during which workers could spend time with their loved ones. Over the years, it has continued to be acknowledged with speeches, parades, and political rallies.

When it comes to the rights for labourers, first and foremost, they have the right to rest. Young or old, every human being requires rest and sleep, to have energy and stay healthy. Second, their social security.

The law states "Social Security is a program of protection provided by society against the contingencies of modern life like sickness, unemployment, old age, and industrial accident against which an individual cannot be expected to protect himself and his family by his ability and foresightedness"-meaning that they should be

provided with medical care, protection from unemployment and so on.

These rights, however, have not been fully accessible to women. Even if a woman has a higher educational level, she will earn less than men. "The pay gap even follows women into retirement: As a result of lower lifetime earnings, they receive less in Social Security and pensions. In terms of overall retirement income, women have only 70% of what men do."

In conclusion, Labour Day is the day when we realise that every individual is equal and recognize the work done by helpers. Although, there is a long list of problems such as pay gap, gender and caste-based discrimination etc. but their contribution is essential.

So please, remember to thank them for the hard work they have put in and for being there when we needed them.

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A Movement for Peace

By Anisha Pandey, Grade 6, SNS Gurugram

In the words of Martin Luther King-

"No work is insignificant. All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Labour Day has just gone by, and it is time to commemorate and praise the efforts made by the countless labourers around us and respect the services

and facilities they provide. Without them, no wonder what would happen to this century! As we stroll in the corridors of our very own school, we see Didis cleaning the washrooms and guards keeping an eye on the children misbehaving. Their jobs aren't as easy as they make it look like. They continue to keep at it, and never give up, even if they are given tons of work!

So, today I shall be telling you about Pushpa Didi and how she migrated from a rural area to an urban one. She works in the Grade 6 corridor, always keeping the bathrooms spick and span. Truly, she is an extraordinary person, one who is very hardworking and committed to her work.

Living on the streets of Aya Nagar near the Arjangarh Metro Station, Pushpa Didi was always occupied. She lived in a small family with her parents and siblings. "They are supportive and generous. When I was young, they used to talk to me once in a while. Now all my siblings are married, and touchwood are keeping well." she said. Few of them have shifted to foreign countries and are making a living over there.

Pushpa Didi was peacefully living in Delhi, so why did she move here and why did she begin working at Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon (SNS)?

With the hope of earning money, the intent of more job opportunities along with better living conditions, and escaping the vicious circle of poverty, Pushpa Didi set foot in SNS Gurgaon. Initially, it was difficult as she missed her family. Even though they didn't talk to her that much, it surely was comforting to know that they were there.

And although, school is a whole new environment, this atmosphere was different from living on rusty

streets and hearing the sound of the metro whizzing by. It was different from sitting on dirty roads, falling ill most of the time, roaming around near vehicles, and trying to work with all the commotion nearby.

For a few days she worked reluctantly, but as time passed, she got the hang of it. It became her habit or her routine! Pushpa Didi enjoys working here and loves seeing our faces whenever we come.

"This change was good for me, and I finally experienced the fruit of hard work," she claimed. Pushpa Didi has never regretted the decision of leaving Aya Nagar and moving to Gurgaon. She was able to earn a livelihood, save money, live in a house and properly feed herself and her family.

What else would a woman want than such a peaceful life!

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True Journalistic Freedom

By Pranet Khetan, Grade 8, SNS Gurugram

The 20th World Press Freedom Index was published by RSF on May 3, 2022. It indexes all the 180 countries in the world and ranks them based on press freedom, journalist security and more.

Guess India's rank.

Some optimistic people would say, “50? 40, maybe.” Others would say, “should be around 100, I guess”. Some would simply search it up online and give me the correct answer.

150. Yes, India ranked 150 out of 180 on the Press Freedom Index. Oh, and if I forgot to mention, in the last place is the most communist and oppressive regime you've ever heard of: North Korea.

Let's jump to the golden question: Why does India have such a terrible ranking on this list. It becomes even more embarrassing when you get to know that India ranked 136 in 2017, 138 in 2018 and 140 in 2019. Let us look into these reasons one-by-one:

·"The unleashing of hatred towards journalists is one of the worst threats to democracies," said RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire. In many places in India, journalists challenging PM Narendra Modi are being tagged as 'anti-Indian scum' who must be 'purged' and 'removed from the system'.

According to the RSF, "In India, hate speech targeting journalists is shared and amplified on social networks, often by troll armies in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pay."

India is also one of the least safe countries for journalists: the RSF says that an average of 3 to 4 journalists are killed regarding their work every year! Sadly, they are also exposed to all sorts of physical violence, too.

There are many incidents of journalists being imprisoned and 'murdered' for their work, that are generally not talked about. According to the RSF, there are about 15 journalists who are currently imprisoned for their work, 2 who were imprisoned and then released and one who was killed in 2022.

Due to the extremely rapid rise of social media, there has been lots of polarisation. Polarisation is the division of people into two sharply contrasting

groups with different characteristics, opinions or beliefs. Each side blocks off the other, and believes that it is right while the real truth must be something totally different. This polarisation feeds off misinformation.

So much fake news is spread across the likes of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and more, that they have to be officially debunked by professionals so that people don't accidentally harm themselves.

Censorship and control: Although there are many, many media outlets in India, very few ever think about the concentration of ownership, with only a handful of media companies (like the Times Group, or people like Mukesh Ambani) having control over these outlets.

Sedition Law: This is yet another reason for India's horrible rank, and is the one I personally find the most interesting. Section 124A of the Constitution defines 'sedition' as: "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added…"

Sedition law has existed ever since colonial times: it was one of the first laws introduced by the British, in fact.

Luckily for everyone here in India, though, it appears as if the Supreme Court is taking some tangible actions against this and is trying to shed off India's colonial baggage with it recently put the Sedition Law on hold and asked the government to review it.

These are the main reasons surrounding this rank. I would now like to bring your attention to the country that ranked first on this very index: Norway.

How? Let us see why Norway has such a favourable rank, and how we can use its example to shake up things in India (So that its rank doesn't continuously worsen over the years):

·There is a robust legal system pertaining to press freedom. The constitution of Norway guarantees public access to information and no legal constraints for free speech.

Norwegian politicians are also generally silent. They refrain from 'labelling' news as 'fake', or from discrediting its authors. They also don't interfere much with these media outlets and public bodies.

Norwegian society and the state generally support free speech and the exchange of new ideas.

Let us now talk about the radical foundation that has created these rankings: the RSF, which stands for Reporters Without Borders (in French), a non-profit organisation founded by four journalists in France. Its mission statement is to 'Act for the freedom, pluralism and independence of journalism and defend those who embody these ideals'.

Although it is an amazing organisation with a noble goal, the RSF also has its own shortcomings:

·It has a narrow view that doesn't account for the misinformation spread by journalists and the wrongdoing done by journalists themselves.

·It many-a-times skips/doesn't include news and

outrages from Western countries, and it is very rare when it labels a Western country as 'a predator of press freedom'.

Its indexing/ranking method is such that it causes a predominant bias against Asian countries.

A point in India's favour: It sure seems to be faring better than its neighbours Pakistan (157th), Afghanistan (157th), China (175th), and Myanmar (176th).

I hope this article gave you an overall picture of the state of press freedom in India. There are certainly some faults in this system that need to be corrected to provide a safe environment for journalists working for public interest, while we also have to acknowledge the faults and slight biases of the RSF, the organisation that creates these rankings.

This article is also a tribute to journalists themselves, who are risking their lives out in the field so that we can get access to important information about our country and its people. I hope we can support these journalists in their work and try our best to make their lives easier.

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Hunger and Malnutrition in India

By Amber Rohatgi, Grade 8, SNS Gurugram

Supported by Sharanya Dixit, Grade 6, SNS Gurugram

This article is about one of the biggest challenges and outcomes of poverty in our country- hunger and malnutrition in India. We will look at the issue and its implications, what is being done to prevent it, and what can be done for existing victims.

What is hunger and malnutrition?

Malnutrition is a severe malady in which an individual has a lack of proper nutrition that is caused by either not having enough to eat, not eating enough of the right things, or not being able to access food as a resource. It can also be caused by digestive conditions. If

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malnutrition is left untreated, it could result in physical or mental disability. Unfortunately, it is a common disease and there are more than a million cases in India due to the grip of poverty on a large portion of our country.

Recently, an interview was conducted with Ashunta Khakha, one of the food staff who manages our daily meals. Regarding our meal prep, she said, "They make food in bulk, and sometimes, either people may not eat as much as they were expected to or the number of people is lesser than the number of people the food was made for."

So, what happens to this unused food?

"Most of the times, it is mixed with the food that is wasted and thrown away. This is a completely unnecessary waste that can be prevented."

Ashunta Didi has been working with Shiv Nadar School for the past three years. In November 2021, when the schools reopened after the lockdown, she was invited to return to her job with Sodexo, a catering company.

According to her, about five kgs of food goes waste per day in our school alone. Usually, the staff either throws it away or gives it to the few cows roaming in the vicinity of the school.

Ashunta didi believes that in order to manage food wastage, the school must make food as per the number of people and manage their quantities better so that lesser food is wasted.

She thinks that at least a dozen people can be fed with the food that is left over instead of wasting it. Ashunta didi also mentioned that she has seen poor, starving children on roadsides and crossings

who do not have any money to access basic resources. She feels that going without food could cause illness or harm to these children and she feels very distressed as she throws away an excessive amount of food that could be given to someone in need.

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool that is designed to measure and track hunger at global, national and regional levels in an efficient and encyclopaedic manner.

The insights provided by Ashunta Didi highlight the fact that malnutrition and hunger are a very real situation, especially in India, due to the mass poverty all over the country.

India ranked 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index with over 200 million cases of people who do not have proper access to food as a resource. India's rank can be considered especially poor since 2016. In 2019, India had the highest rates of children who suffer from acute malnutrition.

GHI scores are annually calculated to examine progress and setbacks in combating hunger and spread worldwide awareness of the struggle against hunger, provide a way to compare the levels of hunger between countries and regions, and provide recognition to areas of the world where hunger levels are highest and where additional efforts to abolish hunger are most necessary.

For each and every country, scores are determined with the help of four indicators:

Undernourishment (part of the population that does not have sufficient intake of nutrients), Child Wasting (children who reflect serious undernourishment by displaying low weight for their height), Child Stunting (children whose growth and development are affected due to malnutrition), and Child Mortality (the life span of children under the age of 5).

A large amount of food made in our homes is also wasted on a day-to-day basis. As per the Food Waste Index of 2021, around fifty kilograms of food was thrown away per person per annum in Indian homes.

The United Nations have created the "zero hunger" goal in order to put a stop to hunger and malnutrition all over the world. In simple terms, the "zero hunger" initiative is a sustainable development enterprise.

It is to end hunger, and consequently malnutrition,

by providing nutritious foods to all people despite their race or rank by 2030. The end result of this extensive project would be to not have a single individual remaining who is hungry.

What can we do about it?
We, as children and citizens of our country can do our part by taking lesser food in multiple servings instead of piling our plates to make sure we can finish the food we have taken.

The staff can recycle the food by not throwing away unused cooked food. At home we can recycle pieces of meat and vegetables to make soup, broth or salad. We can also support organisations like Feeding India and the Robin Hood Army by donating money which will be used to make meals and distribute food to the poor.

What can be done for existing victims of hunger and malnutrition?

Well, aside from diet changes and access to proper nutritious food, victims of malnutrition should be provided with proper healthcare and supplements. This can be done with the help of fundraisers, taxes, and donations through organisations.

From this article we can conclude that hunger and malnutrition are caused by the grip of poverty on several countries, especially India, a country that can be seen as relatively poor, with about one-fifth of the 1.3 billion citizens living below the National Poverty Line.

However, the zero-hunger initiative and the growing awareness of this issue can be a huge saviour for people suffering from this condition. As a school, we will move with a positive mindset and do all we can to reduce our food wastage.

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A Silver Lining

By Aiyana Bhagowati, Grade 6, SNS Gurugram

It was summertime that kept us in,
If we hadn't, Corona told us it would win.
We did what was said,
And stayed in instead.

Some of us happily found a silver lining,
Telling ourselves to stop whining!
And though this meant more time with family,
Some of us stayed isolated unhappily.

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Summertime last year found no ice-cream,
It seemed our world was becoming too extreme.
We needed to be positive, though not in the Covid way,
When we couldn't care less about what negative people say.

Negative people would stay at home and do naught,
While people who had Coronavirus still fought,
To enjoy their summers even when they were sick,
And when they were cheerful, some got better quick.

Last summer, we had mixed feelings,
But when we're happy, we found healing.
Summer this year could be awesome,
For life to blossom.

Now it's time again for sweet and heavenly ice creams and swimming,
This, my friends, is just the very beginning.
This summer could be simply splendid,
And it could be magic like the world was intended.

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The Phantom

By Ateeksh Mishra, Grade 6, SNS Gurugram

You hear a sound
You look around
Then you see footprints on the ground
But there's no one around

Is it a ghost,
A shade?
A phantom.
You are haunted

By a phantom, you're taunted
But you're undaunted
Because by you, the ghost is wanted

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Is it a spectre,
A spook?
A Wraith

The wraith is dead
Killed while drinking mead
His body was found by the Feds
His clothes stained in something red

Is it a haunt,
A ghast?
A Djinn.

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