

106 dead in Wayanad landslides, hundreds feared trapped, entire area swept away

New Delhi, (KCN): Massive landslides struck various hilly areas near Meppadi in Kerala's Wayanad district, leaving hundreds trapped. The Army has been deployed to assist in rescue operations.

At least 106 people have been killed, 128 injured, and hundreds of others are feared trapped after massive landslides struck the hilly areas near Meppadi in Kerala's Wayanad district on Tuesday morning amid heavy rain. Multiple agencies, including the NDRF, and the Army have been deployed for rescue operations as three landslides struck Wayanad within a span of four hours.

Mundakka, Chooralmala, Attamala, and Noolpuza villages were among the worst

affected areas. Many people have been feared to have been washed away in the Chaliyar river.

Addressing a press conference, the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called it a heart-wrenching disaster, saying an entire locality was wiped out. The government also declared state mourning for two days.

"The landslide in Wayanad is a heart-wrenching disaster. There was extremely heavy rainfall. An entire area has been wiped out. Many who went to sleep last night have been swept away," Vijayan said.

In a statement, the Indian Army said they have deployed 225 personnel, including medical teams. Two Air Force helicopters, a Mi-

17 and an ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter), have also been put into service.

The landslides have left a trail of destruction in Meppadi, Chooralmala, Vythiri and Mundakka (Reuters)

Kerala minister Veena George said a team from the Indian Navy would also assist in rescue efforts. A bridge in the district that connected the affected areas to the nearest town of Chooralmala has also been washed away, George said. "Around 70 people are also injured. We have ensured proper treatment of the injured," she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and assured him of all the help from the Centre to



deal with the crisis.

The Prime Minister's Office has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for the families of those killed in the landslides. Those injured will receive Rs 50,000.

The landslides have left a trail of destruction, with visuals showing trees uprooted, and

several houses destroyed in the district known for its picturesque locales and tea estates.

Vehicles washed away in floodwaters could be seen stuck in tree trunks. Rescue operations were hindered due to incessant rain and some areas were unreachable due to

huge boulders blocking the path of rescue workers.

Earlier in the day, Pinarayi Vijayan said a delegation of five ministers had been assigned to Wayanad to oversee ongoing relief efforts.

"All government systems have joined together in the rescue

operations," the Chief Minister said.

operations are underway. I have requested them to ensure coordination with all agencies, set up a control room, and inform us of any assistance needed for the relief efforts," Rahul Gandhi said.

According to district authorities, several families have been moved to the various camps or homes of their relatives.

In a post on X, former Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi said he was deeply anguished by the landslides and the loss of lives caused by the same.

Congress MP KC Venugopal said both Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka might visit Wayanad.

"I have spoken to the Kerala Chief Minister and the Wayanad District Collector, who assured me that rescue

operations are underway. I have requested them to ensure coordination with all agencies, set up a control room, and inform us of any assistance needed for the relief efforts," Rahul Gandhi said.

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It also advised locals and tourists to exercise extreme precaution.

Opposition seeks clarity on Odisha's special category status demand by CM at NITI Aayog Meet

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): Opposition BJD and Congress Tuesday asked Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to inform the Assembly whether he demanded special category status for the state at the recent NITI Aayog meeting in Delhi.

The opposition parties raised the issue in the House a day after Majhi returned to the state from the national capital. During the Zero Hour in the Assembly, senior BJD MLA and former minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said the Chief Minister should inform the House whether he demanded the "special category status or the special focus state tag or any special allocation of funds for Odisha" at the Governing Council



meeting of the NITI Aayog.

Majhi along with Odisha Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja had attended the Niti Aayog meeting in New Delhi July 27. Noting that the BJP, in its election manifesto in 2014, had promised the special category status for Odisha, Sahoo said, "The Chief Minister should inform the House whether he made the

same demand during the NITI Aayog meeting." The BJD leader said though the Centre had earlier rejected the state's demand for the special category status based on a committee report, it recently provided special allocations of funds to Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

"Odisha BJP has sent 20

MPs to Lok Sabha and

the state should be reciprocated with special attention. The 20 MPs helped the BJP form government at the Centre. The people have also changed the government in Odisha by voting in favour of the saffron party. Therefore, the state should get the attention of the Centre," he said. Congress Legislative Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam also said the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre should provide special category status to the state since it formed the "double engine sarkar" in Odisha. The term "double engine" is used by BJP leaders to refer to the party being in power at the Centre as well as in a state.

While justifying Odisha's demand, Kadam said there are two factors – tribals, Dalits, and OBCs are a majority in the state and the coastal state faces natural disasters frequently. "Therefore, the state should get the special category status. Odisha should not be deprived of its rights," he said. Congress member CS Raazan Ekka said the Chief Minister should inform the House on the demand for the special category status for Odisha. The coastal state should get a special allocation of funds as it witnesses frequent floods and cyclones, the legislator said.

The Congress MLA also

raised the Mahanadi water dispute with the neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

Odisha: Fire Services DIG Pandit Rajesh Uttamrao suspended for 'grave misconduct'



Bhubaneswar, (KCN): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday placed senior IPS officer Pandit Rajesh Uttamrao under suspension on the grounds of "grave misconduct".

Uttamrao, a 1970-batch Odisha cadre officer, was posted as the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Fire Services and Home Guards. Following the directions of CM Majhi, the state Home Department has issued the suspension order based on a confidential report submitted by the Director General of Police in connection with an incident that occurred in the Capital police limits here July 27 night which lowered the dignity of his position. "Whereas a disciplinary proceeding against Shri Pandit

leave the said headquarters without obtaining the permission of the DGP. "It is further ordered that during the period of suspension, the Headquarters of said Shri Pandit Rajesh Uttamrao, IPS is fixed at the State Police Headquarters, Odisha, Cuttack and the said Shri Pandit Rajesh Uttamrao, IPS shall not leave the said headquarters without obtaining the permission of the DG of Police, Odisha, Cuttack," the order adds. As per sources, the senior IPS officer was reportedly engaged in a fight with a female police personnel and her husband at the latter's official residence late July 27 night. The issue came to the fore after it was reported in various media houses.

Odisha issues challan against 153 juvenile drivers, seizes 60 vehicles in a day

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): The Odisha State Transport Authority (STA) Tuesday said it has issued 153 challans against juvenile drivers and seized 60 vehicles on the first day of a special drive to ensure road safety across the state.

The Transport Department has launched a special enforcement drive across the state.

On the first day of the special drive Monday, the focus was on juvenile drivers. As a result, a total of 153 challans were issued and 60 vehicles were seized, the department said in a statement.

Rigorous inspections are being conducted under the 38 regional transport offices, including Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Ganjam, Rourkela, Sambalpur and Balasore. Recently, Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena directed the STA to take strict measures to reduce road accidents.

"The Transport Department teams conducted inspections at key points and near schools and colleges. Many students, who were not of legal driving age and did not possess driving licenses, were found riding bikes and scooters to educational institutions," the STA said.

The inspection teams caught the juvenile drivers under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, which allows for a fine of Rs 25,000 against the parents or vehicle owners of juvenile drivers and in some cases, even up to three years of imprisonment.

President of India to preside over TWO-DAY CONFERENCE OF GOVERNORS on August 2 and 3 at Rashtrapati Bhavan

New Delhi, (KCN): The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu will preside over Conference of Governors on August 2 and 3, 2024 at Rashtrapati Bhavan. This Conference will be the first Conference of Governors to be presided over by President Droupadi Murmu.

Governors of all States will attend the Conference. The Vice President; the Prime Minister; Union Ministers of Home Affairs; Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Education; Tribal

Affairs; Information and Broadcasting; Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and Youth Affairs and Sports; Vice Chairman and CEO of NITI Aayog and other senior officials from PMO, Cabinet Secretariat, MHA and other Ministries will also participate.

The agenda of the Conference includes implementation of three criminal laws; reforms in higher education and accreditation of universities; development of focus areas like tribal areas, aspirational districts and blocks and border areas;

Two from Odisha die as Mumbai Howrah train derails in Jharkhand



Jharkhand / Rourkela, (KCN): Two persons from Odisha were killed after 18 coaches of a train bound for Mumbai derailed in Jharkhand Tuesday, a source said.

The deceased have been identified as Ajit Kumar Samal and OT Bikash Rao. Both of them hailed from Rourkela, the source added.

The Howrah-CSMT Express (train number 12810) derailed between Rajkharawaran and Badabambo stations at

around 4 am, 80 km from Jamshedpur in the Chakradharpur railway division of Jharkhand.

Railway teams were engaged in rescue and relief operations, and many injured passengers have been admitted to nearby hospitals.

Senior officials from the Chakradharpur railway division, along with a relief train, have reached the accident site.

The Senior DCM (Divisional Commercial Manager) of Chakradharpur Division, Aditya Kumar

Choudhary, confirmed the accident.

According to the Seraikela district administration, two passengers have died, and the injured have been taken to hospitals by buses.

The train operations on the Tatanagar-Chakradharpur section of the South Eastern Railway have been completely halted due to the accident.

Several trains have been cancelled, and some are being run on alternative routes.

Nearly 4 K patients undergo Head and Neck Cancer surgery every year at AIIMS Bhubaneswar More than 1200 patients receive radiotherapy and chemotherapy every year

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): AIIMS Bhubaneswar reported a significant influx of cancer patients, with more than 10,000 individuals visiting the ENT and Radiotherapy OPD annually. Among these, 3,500 to 4,000 patients undergo head and neck cancer surgery every year. Additionally, nearly 1,200 patients receive radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Dr. Ashutosh Biswas highlighted the alarming rise in head and neck cancer cases due to increased alcohol and tobacco consumption. He emphasized the

preventability of cancer through lifestyle changes such as quitting tobacco use, smoking, and alcohol. "Once diagnosed, cancer can be treated and cured with surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy. Early treatment significantly extends patient survival," Dr. Biswas remarked. He also noted that all treatment facilities are provided free of cost at AIIMS Bhubaneswar. Head and neck cancers, particularly affecting the oral cavity, are the most prevalent cancers among the Indian population, with males being more frequently affected. Dr. Pradipta Kumar Parida, Head of the Department



of ENT & Head and Neck Surgery, urged individuals with symptoms such as decreased mouth opening, oral ulcers, loose teeth, and neck swelling to seek medical advice promptly.

To mark World Head and Neck Cancer Day, AIIMS Bhubaneswar's Department of ENT and Head & Neck Surgery, in collaboration with the Department of Radiation Oncology, organized an awareness programme. The event, attended by DEAN Dr. Prasanta R Mohapatra, Medical Superintendent Dr. Dilip Kumar Parida, Dr. Ashok Kumar Jena, faculty, students, and the public, was also highlighted during the event.

Department of Sanskrit at Central University of Odisha Hosts Special Lecture on Sanskrit Grammar

Koraput, (KCN): the Department of Sanskrit at the Central University of Odisha hosted a special lecture on Sanskrit Grammar at its Sunabeda campus. The event featured distinguished speakers, including Prof. Anupama Prusty, Head of the Department of Navya Vyakarana at Central Sanskrit University, Puri Campus, and Prof. Yudhistira Sahoo, Head of the Department of Sanskrit at Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chakradhar Tripathi, extended his best wishes for a successful programme. The event was inaugurated by Prof.



N.C. Panda, Registrar (I/C) and Dean of the School of Languages, who also addressed the gathering. Prof. Prusty delivered an insightful lecture on 'S a b d o b o d h a', emphasizing the significance of sound and its interpretation within

the Sanskrit language. Prof. Sahoo engaged with the audience on the application and importance of Sanskrit grammar, illustrating his points with various examples. The lecture was well-attended by faculty members Dr. Nabin Kumar Pradhan, Dr. Debadis Karmakar, Dr. Sanjib Sarkar, Dr. Birendra Kumar Sadangi, Mr. Satyawrat Mishra, Public Relations Officer Dr. Phagunath Bhoi and students from the Department of Sanskrit, who all contributed to the vibrant discussion.

Safety Fencing Work in Bhadrak - Palasa and Khurda Road - Puri over Khurda Road Division:

Bhubaneswar, (KCN): In a significant move to enhance railway safety and increase train speeds, the Ministry of Railways has sanctioned ₹275.01 crore for the provision of safety fencing along tracks in the Bhadrak-Palasa and Khurda Road-Puri Railway Sections of the Khurda Road Division under East Coast Railway. This project aims to facilitate the safe operation of trains at speeds up to 130 kmph and beyond.

To ensure effective fencing and avoid any

disruptions, the Ministry has decided to construct boundary walls nearer to the tracks. The current plan involves erecting fencing at the boundary of Railway Land, with the actual distance to be determined by the zonal railway authorities based on site conditions, maintenance requirements, multi-tracking works, the level of trespassing and the overall effectiveness of the proposed fencing. The initiative also aims to seal the entry to track at level crossings, ROBs

(flyovers), RUBs (underpasses), bridges and other critical locations requiring access control. Apart from this, cattle grazing near Rail will get restricted to Railway Line. This will also provide for smooth traffic movement and this will prevent loss of livestock and wildlife. Recently, Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnav informed in Lok Sabha, stating that safety fencing would be strategically implemented at vulnerable locations to support the running of

Vande Bharat trains at speeds between 110 kmph and 130 kmph. For speeds exceeding 130 kmph, continuous safety fencing will be installed along the entire track length. The Ministry of Railways remains committed to advancing railway safety and infrastructure to meet the growing demands of semi-high-speed train travel in India. This safety fencing project marks a significant step towards achieving these goals, ensuring a safer and more efficient railway network for the nation.

Tata Steel Kalinganagar Celebrates 120th Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna JRD Tata

Kalinganagar, (Sapan Kar) :- Tata Steel Kalinganagar (TSK) celebrated the 120th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna JRD Tata with a lot of fervour on Monday at its Kalinganagar plant located in Dhubri of Jajpur district. The celebrations started with floral tributes to the great visionary during a homage ceremony at TSK Centre that was attended by Karamveer Singh, General Manager Operations, TSK and Rabindra Kumar Jamuda, President, Tata Steel



Workers' Union as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour, respectively. Among others present on the occasion were senior officials, Union representatives and employees of Tata

Steel Kalinganagar. As part of the celebrations, a blood donation drive was also organised by Joint Development Committee (JDC), Corporate Services, TSK in association with Odisha



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Barkha Singh Reflects On Her Iconic Role As Ayesha In
'Masaba Masaba' As Season 2 Completes Two Years

As the show completes two years since its second season was released, Singh expressed her fond memories of working on the project and the overwhelming response she received for her portrayal.

Singh, known for her versatility as an actress, talked, "Being part of Masaba Masaba will always be special for me for many reasons - getting to work with Sonam Nair whose work I had loved before I even auditioned for this, sharing the screen with a great cast and of course, working with Netflix and even Panchami again! It was a widely loved show and the kind of responses I got for my character, Ayesha was stellar! Beyond what I had expected - both from within and outside the

industry." She revealed that playing Ayesha was a departure from her usual typecast roles and a welcome challenge. "My character Ayesha is very icy, which is very different from the kind of person I am and more importantly very different from the kind of roles I have done in the past, so I was almost relieved that it was so well received," she said. The actress also praised

the show's creator, Sonam Nair, and the talented cast, including Neena Gupta, with whom she shared the screen. "The cherry on top was that I got to meet Neena Ji who is such a composed, yet such a vivacious person!" Singh's performance in Masaba Masaba not only showcased her range as an actress but also added depth to the narrative, contributing significantly

to the series' success. As she looks back on her experience, Singh hopes to reprise her role as Ayesha in future seasons, saying "If I had it my way Ayesha would come back for the next season!" With her remarkable performance in Masaba Masaba, Barkha Singh has solidified her position as one of India's most talented and versatile digital stars.

Global Star Priyanka Chopra Starts
Shooting For Her Next 'The Bluff'

Actor Priyanka Chopra is in Australia for the shoot of her new project 'The Bluff'. On Friday, Priyanka took to Instagram, shared a picture of her script and expressed excitement about the shoot. "It begins....," she captioned the post. One can also see "Om" written on the script.

'The Bluff' is being directed by Frank E Flowers. Recently, Priyanka dropped a video with her daughter Malti Marie. The video began with Priyanka's flight landing in Australia. It then gave a glimpse of her daughter looking outside the airport.

Set in the 19th century Caribbean, The Bluff follows a former female pirate (Priyanka) who must protect her family when the mysterious sins of her past catch up to her, as per Deadline. The movie is produced by Russo Brothers' banner AGBO Studios and Amazon MGM Studios. Priyanka also serves as a producer on the film. This will be Priyanka's second project with The Russo Brothers after she starred in their Amazon Original series Citadel.



Ali Abbas Zafar says why he retained 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' title for his next



Ali Abbas Zafar recently talked about why he chose to retain the iconic title 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan' for his upcoming film, much to the curiosity of fans and critics alike. The director, who is known for delivering blockbuster hits, has recently stirred up excitement among Bollywood enthusiasts for his upcoming action thriller, starring Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff and Prithviraj Sukumaran.

In a recent interview, Zafar shed light on the reason behind his decision to retain this classic title for his action-packed spectacle. The title 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan,' was originally associated with the 1998 comedy film starring Amitabh Bachchan and Govinda. Speaking about the same, Ali told

IndiaToday.in, "Well there is a connection which will be revealed in the film. So when you come and watch the film you will know why it is called 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan.' I would say that this film had a certain vision and the way the producers of this film, Jackky Bhagnani, Vashu Bhagnani, and

Himanshu, all supported this film, it wouldn't have been possible if you didn't have producers like that backing in this version."

Further speaking about the film he said,

"Jackky called me one day I was shooting in Abu Dhabi, and he said that I have

something to offer you.

same time, it's so bizarre that I was working on a two-hero film with a crazy mad villain. I always call him an anti-hero more than a villain. Then, somewhere or another, that conversation stayed with me."

He adds, "Then he called me again a week later and by that time I really thought it through that how we can do this thing with Akshay and Tiger. And then he said that it's my father's dream to call this film 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan'. So I said, you've got such a great offer served on a platter to me. I would respect that. Later we made changes to the script. So when you watch the film you will understand why it is called BMCM, but it is very special how it comes in the film."

Raashii Khanna reacts to 'Yodha's' underwhelming performance at box office



Raashii Khanna reacted to the underwhelming performance of 'Yodha' at the box office. The film, which also features Sidharth Malhotra, was a highly anticipated film and generated considerable buzz prior to its release. However, not every film achieves the desired commercial success, despite the talent and efforts invested in its making.

'Yodha' failed to make a significant impact at the box office and struggled to attract audiences to theatres, resulting in disappointing ticket sales and overall lacklustre performance in terms of box office revenue. Now in an exclusive interview with India Today.in, Raashii Khanna opened

up about her thoughts on the underwhelming performance of 'Yodha' at the box office. The actor acknowledged the disappointment surrounding the film's reception but remained optimistic about the creative journey and the experience gained through the project.

She said, "Maybe there's

somebody who loves it, then somebody who hates it. There'll always be all kinds of people, but obviously, we want, when the film is released, a lot of people should like it. I think the challenge has been to bring them to theatres still, because now everyone knows that the film will be released on OTT. So that is a challenge that even

people face. I also sometimes do it, but that's also because I am always occupied. But I know people, in general, are very occupied today, so bringing them to theatres is a problem. I don't think 'Yodha' is a bad film at all, so that's fine. I think every film has its destiny, and you just learn from it and then move on to your next. That's all we can do."

Even though the film couldn't work commercially, Raashii was praised for her performance. Speaking about it, she said, "You

love the fact that it has received love because that's what you work so hard for. But apart from that, my job is always to deliver my best and to see that the audience is enjoying my part as well. Because if a film works, but you don't work, then that's sad in a way. So I'm really happy with the reactions I'm getting. I'm really happy that people are really loving me, coming back into Hindi films, and seeing me on the big screen. I was also very, very happy to see myself on the big screen in Hindi. This is amazing. It was a very nice moment and a very nice feeling that I had."

Yodha released in theatres on March 15.

Growing Fears of Technological Disaster

Vijay Garg



'Blue Death of Screen' (BDOS) on at least 85 lakh computers. The entire screen of computers is suddenly working due to this. The letters turned sky blue and an error message started appearing on them. Although such messages of errors remain local due to various activities on computers, but this time the problem was worldwide. That's why. This happened because CrowdStrike, another company to protect Microsoft computers from cyber attacks, had released an automatic 'software update' for all Microsoft computers, which kept on coming and leaving some flaws. As this software update begins, Microsoft Windows computers running on it stopped operating. Since this computers are equipped with automatic shutdown mechanisms when an internal (such as a hardware or motherboard problem) or external problem (such as a virus attack or cyber attack) occurs, so they may stop working as soon as a faulty software update is introduced. In particular, the blue screens of millions of computers connected to



the 'Clyde Network' made it clear that their system had crashed. This software update, called CrowdStrike Falcon, is actually a cyber security tool, which is designed to protect computers from various cyber attacks. But there was a technical flaw in it. Therefore, the operation of computers equipped with Microsoft Windows stopped suddenly. There is a need to consider that in the present world, when there is talk of handing over all the work to internet based technologies and devices, what will happen to the world if there is an immediate 'shutdown'. The artificial intelligence which is being touted as the cure

for all diseases is not a blessing from the sky but it is also based on the Internet and there is a system based on the network of computers, which is called Tuki Vhee Ki Ran' Bhi' Dha Dhawana Vadhna Method. There is also a possibility that some faulty system operating within it might do such a thing and the world would remain cheated. Today, the way hospitals are being run all over the world through the network of computers connected to the Internet, traffic control is being done, stock markets, reservation systems and even the security systems of countries are based on them - in

such a situation, if there is any technical flaw, all the arrangements are being made. Can destroy in a single moment. It is noteworthy that there is no dearth of factors causing such technical flaws. This can happen due to cutting of the 'cable' laying under the sea providing internet services. This situation can occur in case of server failure due to power failure. This is a recent example of a software glitch, but this can also happen due to a computer virus attack or a cyber attack by an enemy country. It is possible that the situation may worsen due to the satellites through which the internet or cloud internet services are being provided, getting hit by

a solar storm. To say there are anti-viruses available to protect computers from viruses, there are many measures to prevent cyber attacks, but what about other technological disasters when a simple activity like a software update can create such a big crisis. Go. The latest digital tsunami occurred when a company implemented a legitimate and possibly tried and tested technique like a software update. But imagine what happens when a hostile country, hacker or terrorist group deliberately unleashes a technological disaster on the world. What will be the result if I join

forces? This is all a strange irony that the Texas (America) based cyber security company CrowdStrike is responsible for protecting millions of computers running the 'Aapre Operating System' called Microsoft Windows from cyber attacks and keeping them running smoothly. A software update recently caused such a huge digital disaster. This company is considered an expert in cyber security. It is claimed that corporate networks and cloud networks of large companies, airlines, emergency services and this company plays an important role in protecting connecting devices etc. from computer viruses, malware and hacking. Especially companies using cloud network services take the services of CrowdStrike to keep their servers safe from cyber attacks and hacking. This company is said to play an important role in investigating cyber attacks around the world. But the latest incident has raised questions on the credibility of CrowdStrike company as well as Microsoft.

Similarly, in 2010, antivirus manufacturing company McAfee was unaware of a mistake. Windows XP PCs were discontinued worldwide in 2015. There was a similar stir at that time also. It is not that this is the only incident of internet dependent cyber network being disrupted. Small technical accidents happen frequently. Sometimes the server of 'Meta', the company that operates WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook etc. gets stalled, and sometimes Google's performance slows down. Cyber attacks and hacking have shocked the world. It is true that many tasks have become convenient with the Internet and computers, but as our dependence on selected technology companies is increasing, we will have to be prepared for such technological disasters. How can a technological storm destroy a world which has turned into an island with the help of technological arrangements? The time has now come to remember this lesson and make arrangements to avoid it.

Retired Principal
Educational
Columnist Malout
Punjab

Union Budget: Focus on Economic Boost through Religious Tourism

Coney Dongre



Spiritual (religious) tourism is increasingly shaping India's domestic tourism sector. According to data from the Ministry of Tourism, the number of people participating in religious tourism in India surged to 1,439 million in 2022, up from 677 million in 2021. The Indian government seems to be determined to enhance religious tourism through initiatives like the P R A S A D (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme. This

scheme was launched in 2015 with an aim to identify and develop pilgrimage sites nationwide. To achieve the set goal significant investments have been made to reconstruct, renovate and modernize several sacred locations. This has led to increased visitor numbers at prominent sites such as the Ram Temple (Ayodhya, UP), Kashi Vishwanath Dham (Varanasi, UP), Kedarnath Temple (Rudraprayag, UK), and Mahakal Temple (Ujjain, MP).

In the interim budget of February 1, 2024, the central government introduced interest-free loans to states to boost tourism including religious tourism is a

welcome step forward. India's numerous places of worship, often situated in small towns and previously constrained by infrastructural challenges, are poised for significant transformation due to substantial investment by the Centre and states. The influx of indigenous and foreign tourists will not only revitalize the local economies but also create new job and business opportunities. Enhanced transportation infrastructure, including new airports, highways, and railways, will improve connectivity. As land prices

pilgrimage towns, real estate developers are taking notice, paving the way for new residential complexes, malls, and shopping districts. Recognizing the potential of these destinations, major hotel chains such as Taj, Radisson, and ITC are planning new properties at popular religious sites. New lodging options are being designed to offer unique cultural experiences and a variety of attractions, including adventure sports, hot air balloon rides, and yoga lessons. Improvements in basic amenities like sanitation and last-mile connectivity will further enhance the appeal of these spiritual destinations. The focus on spiritual tourism is thus fostering comprehensive

destination development, with far-reaching benefits for both local communities and the broader industry. However, it is crucial for the government to ensure effective management and oversight of these projects. Proper monitoring of fund utilization is necessary to maximize the benefits of these schemes and avoid issues that could harm religious sentiments, such as the recent damage to statues by thunderstorm in the Mahakal Lok campus in Ujjain. If executed well, the government's focus on religious tourism can uplift communities, preserve cultural heritage, and drive economic growth

across the country.

Author: Coney has more than a decade of experience doing qualitative and quantitative research in the travel industry. She is adept in travel market sizing,

trends analysis and has published several research reports on the state of the industry across the globe. She is also a frequent speaker at several travel/tourism industry events.

Letter to Editor

Sir,
CBI inquiry needed
In Karnataka, politicians are under scrutiny over alleged fraudulent site allotments by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), with claims of a Rs 5000 crore scam. The controversy centers on irregularities in the 50:50 incentive scheme, where land losers were supposed to receive either half the sites or alternative sites. Reports suggest some received more sites or better locations than entitled, causing significant financial losses for MUDA. Despite two government orders halting site allocations, they continued, with allegations that influential individuals and real estate developers got benefited largely. Therefore a CBI inquiry which should be carried out in an unbiased way is much needed to uncover the truth behind these alleged scams.

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Teachers must shape future generations to fulfil vision of a Developed Nation - Haryana CM

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), July 30: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini urged teachers to contribute significantly to the country's development, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047. "Just as you have brought glory to your parents with your hard work, in the same way, you must work to hone the future generations to enhance the honour and respect of the country."

Chief Minister Saini made these remarks while addressing teachers from across the state at the state-level orientation program for newly appointed Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs) held in Panchkula Monday. During the event, the Chief Minister also distributed appointment letters to the newly recruited TGT teachers.

The Chief Minister said that within the next two days, the waiting list of TGTs, along with the detailed results, will be released with full transparency. He congratulated the newly appointed TGTs and highlighted that, in this

result, the daughters have achieved remarkable positions through their outstanding performance.

Congratulating the newly appointed TGTs, the Chief Minister said that in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, these teachers will play a crucial role in shaping future generations to build a developed India. He commended their success, which is a result of their hard work, and said that many

teachers do the noble work of teaching children in slum areas even after their official duties. A teacher must embody the spirit of promoting education. By spreading knowledge, you not only contribute to the growth of others but also elevate your own name and progress, he added.

He also outlined the current government's commitment to simplifying the lives of its people and accelerating development, building on the foundation laid by former Chief Minister Manohar Lal. The government's efforts have led to significant advancements, including

the establishment of universities, medical colleges, and other educational institutions across the state. Notably, the vision to ensure that girls do not have to travel more than 20 kilometres for higher education has been realized, greatly improving access to college facilities for female students.

CM Saini claimed that 1,41,000 youths have received government jobs based on merit during the last ten years.

Taking a dig at previous administrations, Chief Minister Saini pointed out that before 2014, recruitment lists were often published in newspapers before the results were announced. In contrast, today's news highlights stories of individuals like the son of a rickshaw driver achieving the rank of HCS in Haryana. This shift, he emphasized, has been brought about by the current government over the past decade. He also highlighted that the present government has ensured transparency in government jobs, emphasizing merit without any corruption or undue influence. Over the last 10 years, the

government has provided 141,000 jobs based on merit, without any cost or favouritism. He challenged the opposition to account for their actions during their tenure.

The Chief Minister said that the results for 745 posts were announced in January 2024. Since then, thousands of recruitments have been completed for government positions from February to June. In July alone, 7,765 TGTs have been appointed.

The Chief Minister said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership over



the past decade, India has made significant progress in every field. Today this program is being organized in Panchkula, adjacent to Chandigarh and everyone has arrived here in just about three and half hours from any corner of Haryana, such changes have been achieved in the last 10 years.

He criticized the previous government used to weaken the country and the state by resorting to lies, creating confusion and deceiving people through misinformation.

He pointed out that some opposition members have threatened to dismantle the portals if they come to

power. The Chief Minister urged vigilance against such individuals. Such people have set up Bharti Roko Gang also. They go to court to stop the recruitment announced by the government. He called on people to be wary of these anti-social forces and to alert others to their disruptive actions.

Congratulating the newly appointed teachers, Haryana Education Minister Smt. Seema Trikha said that the current government is focused on serving the people, not just holding power. She highlighted that the Chief Minister is dedicated to serving the

state's 2.75 crore residents and advancing the policies set by former Chief Minister Manohar Lal. She expressed satisfaction that government jobs are now being awarded based solely on merit and transparency.

Mrs. Trikha described the present government as fair and transparent, adding that it has set records with the appointment of TGTs. She stressed that these teachers, selected for their capabilities, have a vital role in realizing the Prime Minister's vision for Amit Kaal.

She underscored the crucial role teachers play, second only to parents, in nurturing safe and cultured children. She called for teachers to instill Indian values in students and to remind them of the sacrifices made by soldiers protecting the borders.

Additionally, she suggested that children should be encouraged to say "Jai Hind" instead of "Good Morning," as this reflects a sense of patriotism and contributes to the vision of Amit Kaal and a proud Indian heritage.

Haryana Vidhan Sabha

Speaker Gian Chand Gupta stated that the government has provided jobs to the youth without any cost or corruption. He highlighted that no one has had to spend a single penny in this process, underscoring the government's commitment to transparency. This approach has instilled confidence in the youth, assuring them that jobs are now awarded based purely on merit.

He also mentioned the rise of coaching centres as a result of this transparency. In his congratulatory remarks to the newly appointed TGTs, he urged them to pledge to deliver excellent education and contribute to advancing the state.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister extended his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the renowned shooter Manu Bhaker, who won the bronze medal in the 10-meter air pistol mixed event, following her earlier success in the 10-meter air pistol event at the Paris Olympics 2024. He expressed that the entire nation is proud of Haryana's athletes.

"Keep Insulting, I'll Keep Fighting": Rahul Gandhi Hits Out At Anurag Thakur



Hindi, "Rahul ji, you spoke about 'halwa' (sweetmeat). Who had the 'halwa' from the Bofors scam, from the Antriksh-Dewas scam, from the Commonwealth Games, National Herald, submarines, AgustaWestland, 2G, coal, urea and fodder scams? Rahul ji, was the 'halwa' sweet or tasteless? Some people talk about OBCs, but for them (the Congress) OBC stands for 'only for brother-in-law' commission'. This party will talk about other backward castes?"

Continuing in his strident

tone, he said, "The 'shahzada' (prince) from this party will give us 'gyan'? First he has to understand what LoP stands for - it is Leader of the Opposition and not leader of propaganda. All I want to say is that he should stop spreading lies. There is a lot of talk about OBC and caste census. He whose caste is unknown is talking about a census?"

As the statement caused an uproar in the opposition benches, the Leader of the Opposition interjected to say that he should be given an opportunity to speak because Mr Thakur had

insulted him. "You can insult me as much as you want, do it every day. But don't forget that we (the opposition) will get the bill passed here (in Parliament)," Mr Gandhi asserted.

As an MP from the treasury benches shouted that this would mean the Congress leader would also have to write down his caste, a defiant Mr Thakur said it seemed Mr Gandhi needed a note every time he wanted to intervene.

"Politics can't be done with a borrowed brain. You speak every time you get a note. You

functioning of the Portal is extremely slow. It is very difficult to download form 26AS, AIS and TIS, and to verify it. Since section 87A is amended, the same has to be given effect to, to file revised returns. Payment of self-assessment tax through bank takes much time to download challan. The utility has once again been changed on 27.7.2024 for ITR 1 to ITR 4. This will require changes in the software which will take a little time.

Kolkata (KCN): All-India Federation of Tax Practitioners has sent a memorandum to Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes, New Delhi and urged for extension of Time Limit for filing of Income Tax Returns by one month i.e. upto 31.8.2023 for the assessment year 2024-25 for those Taxpayers whose due date is 31st July, 2024.

Narayan Jain, National President of AIFTTP and SM Surana, Chairman, Direct Tax Representation Committee have pointed out problems arising from

functioning of the Portal is extremely slow. It is very difficult to download form 26AS, AIS and TIS, and to verify it. Since section 87A is amended, the same has to be given effect to, to file revised returns. Payment of self-assessment tax through bank takes much time to download challan. The utility has once again been changed on 27.7.2024 for ITR 1 to ITR 4. This will require changes in the software which will take a little time.

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In these circumstances AIFTTP, has urged for immediate extension of date for filing ITRS by one month till 31st August, 2024.

No State Has Been Denied Money In FY25 Budget: Nirmala Sitharaman

New Delhi (KCN): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today termed misleading claims by opposition leaders that if any state is not named in the Budget speech, then it does not get any budgetary allocation. Replying to a Budget discussion in the Lok Sabha, Ms Sitharaman asserted that no state was being denied money. I

She recalled that in the past Budgets by the UPA government also did not mention names of all states in their Budget speech. "I have been picking up on Budget speeches since 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and so on. The Budget of 2004-2005 did not take the name of 17 states. I



would like to ask the members of the UPA government at that time - did money not go to those 17 states? Did they stop it?" Ms Sitharaman said. She was responding to comments by several opposition members that the Budget has provided funds only to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh and nothing to other states. Ms Sitharaman said India

is the fastest-growing economy globally and has overcome the after-effects of the pandemic due to heavy capex push. She also said the government is complying with the fiscal deficit trajectory. It will bring down the deficit to below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26 from the targeted 4.9 per cent for the current fiscal. The deficit was 5.6 per

cent in 2023-24. The Budget has provided substantial financial support of ₹ 17,000 crore to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir this year. It includes ₹ 12,000 crore towards financing the cost of J&K police. "That's the burden we want to take on our shoulders," Ms Sitharaman said.

More Projects In Paradip Port

Bhubaneswar(KCN): T K Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), made his maiden visit to Paradip Port Authority (PPA). During his visit he inaugurated and laid foundation stone of several significant projects worth more than Rs. 13 crores. PPA Chairman P L Haranadh graced the occasion. He inaugurated the Trauma and Burn Care (TBC) Centre in the newly constructed Annex building of Paradip Port Hospital. Constructed at a cost of Rs. 2.90 Crores, the centre will provide



Township. Shri Ramachandran reviewed the functioning of the PPA and interacted with Heads of Departments and

Deputy Heads of Departments. He also inspected and reviewed port operations, planning, and expansion at the

Mechanized Coal Handling Plant, Twin Wagon Tipplers at JSWPTPL, and KICT silos. He suggested system improvement

measures to increase productivity.

The Secretary suggested several measures aimed at improving the overall performance of the port operations. These recommendations are expected to enhance the capacity and streamline the work flow, contributing to Paradip Port's long-term growth and success.

It is to be noted that, the Paradip Port in Odisha is the highest cargo handling major port of the country. In the financial year 2023-24 PPA became highest cargo handling port by handling 145.38 million metric tonnes (MMT) cargo

throughput. The goal under Vision 2047 is to increase the port handling capacity to 10,000 MTPA. Contours of the plan will soon be spelled out. There will be avenues for private participation that are being worked upon. All ports are preparing a master plan in order to become mega ports by 2047. Improving port infrastructure and facilities, reducing turnaround time, and increasing handling capacity will be the bedrock of the 2047 target. The latest goal is well above the targets set under the ongoing Sagarmala programme that aims at boosting port capacity by 800 MMTPA to an overall 3,500 MMTPA by 2035. As a part of Sagarmala programme, more than 800 projects at an estimated cost of Rs 5.5 lakh crore have been identified for implementation during 2015-2035. In a nearer goal, the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 has a goal to develop global standard ports in India. The MIV 2030 estimates investments to the tune of Rs 1-1.25 lakh crore for capacity augmentation and infrastructure development at Indian ports.

MGM Sponsors Deaf Cricketeers

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Leading Industrialist, Pankaj Lochan Mohanty, Chairman & Managing Director of MGM Group has all along supported the cause of Sports in a big way.

When Odisha Deaf Cricket Association (ODFA) approached Shri Mohanty, the ace philanthropist extended all out support for the Team and sponsored the program.

Shri Mohanty, a passionate lover of sports in general and cricket in particular is the Vice President of Odisha Cricket Association.

He has been supporting art, culture, sports in the State of Odisha since long and being appreciated by the sports men and women, artists,



and cross section of people.

Cricket Championship. ODFA has acknowledged the support of MGM Minerals Limited saying MGM has extended its

support to sixteen deaf cricketers from the East Zone team by providing them with sports kits and jersey kits.

This initiative is part of MGM's journey of empowerment.*Thanks to MGM MINERALS LTD for the Sponsor to our East Zone Team* #MGMMineralsltd #odishadeafcricketassociation #Support #OCA #mymindmymind

The players expressed their happiness for extending a helping hand to the Odisha Deaf Cricket Association by the MGM Group.

It is worth mentioning that Northern Zone, Southern Zone, Western Zone, Central Zone and Eastern Zone participated in the championship.

Centre Reduces Coal Import



New Delhi(KCN): The Ministry of Coal spearheading a transformative initiative to reduce coal imports and promote coal exports, is marking a significant shift in the country's energy landscape. This strategic move aims to enhance domestic coal production, strengthen energy security, and support the growth of the coal sector.

India's coal production witnessed a remarkable increase of 11.65% in the year 2023-24, demonstrating the government's commitment to self-

reliance. The target for the year 2024-25 has been set at an ambitious 1,080 Million Tonnes, further solidifying India's position as a major coal producer.

To streamline the process of reducing coal imports, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was formed and the committee will facilitate discussions and coordinate efforts among various ministries to identify opportunities for import substitution. While acknowledging the need for some high-grade coal imports, the focus remains on minimizing non-essential imports and

promoting the use of domestically produced coal.

In addition to reducing imports, the government is actively promoting coal exports to capitalize on the growing global demand for the fossil fuel. This initiative aims to position India as a key player in the international coal market, generating revenue and creating employment opportunities in the sector.

The reduction in coal imports and the promotion of exports are crucial steps in ensuring India's energy security. By

relying more on domestically produced coal, the country can reduce its dependence on foreign sources and insulate itself from global price fluctuations.

The transformation of the coal sector is

expected to have a positive impact on the Indian economy. The increased production and export of coal will contribute to economic growth, create jobs, and generate revenue for the government.

Additionally, the reduced reliance on imports will help conserve foreign exchange reserves.

2024-2025

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West Bengal to be transformed into major Export hub : Dr. Shashi Panja

Kolkata (PAPRTHA ROY): Dr. Shashi Panja, Minister in Charge, Department of Industry, Commerce and Enterprises and Women & Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal conferred EEPC India's 38th & 39th Eastern Region Export Awards for the fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively on 29th July 2024 in Kolkata. Dr Panja congratulated the winners and said that exporters from West Bengal achieved an export figure of US\$3134.8 million during the financial year 2023-24 which contributes 2.9 % to India's Engineering Export kitty. "The exemplary performance of the exporting community of the engineering sector in 2023-24 enabled the country to achieve an

export figure of US\$109.32 billion contributing 25% of total merchandise exports of US\$437.06 billion. I take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of EEPC India in helping the exporters achieve this" the Minister said. Dr Shashi Panja mentioned on the inspiration of Chief Minister of West Bengal Smt. Mamata Banerjee West Bengal Government is taking major initiatives to transform West Bengal into a major Export hub of India including Engineering Export. Minister mentioned West Bengal Government is making efforts to promote export from each district in the state. In his congratulatory message, Mr Vimal Anand, Joint Secretary, Department of

Commerce, Government of India said that India's engineering exports have shown remarkable resilience despite numerous global challenges during the year 2023-24 resulting in a positive cumulative export growth of 2.1%. "The Eastern region achieved an impressive US\$12.24 billion in exports of engineering products during the same period. States like Odisha and West Bengal have significantly contributed to this success, reflecting the infrastructure and innovation capabilities that have been developed in the region" he said. In his welcome address, EEPC India Chairman Mr. Arun Kumar Garodia said that after two depressing fiscal years during the pandemic phase, engineering



exports from India witnessed a remarkable comeback with an all-time high shipment of US\$112.1 billion and the support from the government was exemplary. "After a marginal decline in 2022-23, engineering shipment from India again increased in 2023-24 to US\$ 109.3 billion and this growth story

continued during the first quarter of the current fiscal. EEPC is once again taking a lead role in raising the brand value of Indian engineering before the world," Mr Garodia said. He stated that the Eastern region, led by Orissa and West Bengal, is an important contributor in Indian

US\$75.3 billion in 2019-20 to reach US\$ 109.32 billion during last financial year 2023-24, registering a growth rate of 45% percent in last five years."

Mr Adhip Mitra, Executive Director & Secretary, EEPC India congratulated all 67 award winners from the Eastern Region under various categories for fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Mitra noted, "It was not an easy milestone to achieve as the two aforesaid fiscal years saw unprecedented headwinds in global economic activities due to the emergence of COVID-19. However, our members were brave enough to combat all the adversities and delivered the best possible results."

Speaking on the sidelines of the EEPC award ceremony, noted

industrialist and part of several key initiatives of West Bengal Government, Shri Sanjay Buddha mentioned West Bengal has all key resources to transform West Bengal into a major Export Hub for all types of products. Shri Buddha mentioned West Bengal Government has already announced New Export Policy, as well as New Logistics Policy. Shri Buddha added work is going on to set up District Export Facilitation Centre in every district of West Bengal.

Australian Consul General in Kolkata Mr. Hugh Boylan who was Guest of Honour at EEPC Award Ceremony mentioned India & Australia are working on to boost bilateral trade through prudent export - import tax management.

SpiceJet and Axis Bank launch co-branded credit card

GURUGRAM: SpiceJet, the country's favourite airline and Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank, have partnered to launch the most rewarding co-branded credit card, powered by Visa that will offer a host of privileges and benefits to customers. The card comes in two variants – SpiceJet Axis Bank Voyage and Voyage Black, and is aimed at facilitating a superlative travel experience for flyers through SpiceClub, the first frequent flyer program by a low cost carrier in India.

Through this collaboration, the two

brands hope to capitalize on the resurgent demand for travel following two years of stagnation caused by the pandemic. Further, with the shared goal of expanding their reach to Tier 2 & 3 cities and other synergies, the brands are committed to serving a much larger populace.

SpiceJet Axis Bank Voyage & Voyage Black credit cards were officially launched at Indira Gandhi International airport in the presence of Ajay Singh, Chairman and MD, SpiceJet and Amitabh Chaudhary, MD & CEO, Axis Bank, where they unveiled a special

SpiceJet-Axis Bank credit card livery on a SpiceJet Boeing 737 MAX aircraft.

The products are designed to enable customers to use the rewards earned on their daily spends for booking flights and add-ons, thus encouraging both travel and digital payments embedded with benefits of SpiceJet's frequent flyer program, SpiceClub.

Customers can earn benefits up to 7% on the Voyage Black credit card which is a Top-tier offering in the travel credit card segment. In addition, the redemption of earned points does not

have any limitations on blackout dates, festival demand, and are on first-come basis. Cardholders would get exclusive SpiceClub membership with direct entry in either Silver or Gold tiers, and special benefits like complimentary or discounted travel add-ons, priority check-in, SpiceMax upgrade, preferred seat selection, complimentary meal etc.

Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "I am delighted to announce the launch of the SpiceJet-Axis Bank co-branded Credit Card. This card will make every customer journey

an even more rewarding one. We are the pioneers of the frequent flyer program for budget airlines in the country and this partnership with Axis Bank significantly strengthens the value offering of SpiceClub. Our association with Axis Bank – founded on the shared vision to offer unparalleled customer experience – is yet another innovative step towards creating a world class travel experience. I hope to see our customers enjoying the benefits of this rewarding collaboration as much as they love to fly with us."

Memoirs of Intricacies and Innovation of Rules in life of wife of Indian Diplomat



Kolkata (PAPRTHA ROY): Indian Council for Cultural Relations Zonal Office (East), Kolkata (Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India) organised a panel discussion on a book titled "HOP, SKIP AND JUMP: Peregrinations of a Diplomat's Wife" authored by Dr. Reba Som who was first Director of ICCR Kolkata. The book is published by Om Publication. Participants in panel discussion were the author, Ms. Rita Bhimani and Ms. Ratnottama Sengupta. Ms. Minakshi Misra ICCR Zonal Head &

Director welcomed the guest. As indicated by the author, the book chronicles her travels and experiences during her stay in several nations as diplomats' wife. It also deals with challenges faced by Indian diplomat's wife while posted abroad in the past. The book also brings in to focus role and rich contribution of wives of Indian diplomats in promotion of Indian culture in their host country through culinary presentation, arts, music, dance, in fact, multifarious ways. The author mentioned

when a woman became Foreign Secretary of India, she brought in changes in rules, facilitating wives of diplomats to participate and contribute in building goodwill for people of India in myriad ways. Lady Foreign Secretary empowered wives of Indian diplomats with freedom to pursue their personal development as well as contribute in development of the society & humanity. Dr. Reba Som's husband is Shri Himachal Som, a former career diplomat who was also Head of ICCR, the organisation involved in cultural

diplomacy for Government of India. Dr. Reba Som mentioned common people in various nations appreciate Indian culture including Yoga. In

fact, sharing her experience, the author stressed on the "unity in diversity as one live on shared planet Earth".

theatre. Sometimes nudity represents ultimate disorder or torture. This nudity has been used aesthetically in theatre as a protest against the oppressor's tyranny. Besides, the author has also analyzed how sexuality came to the commercial theatre of Kolkata in the seventies and eighties. What is surprising is that despite dramas

about minority sexuality all over the world or in India, there has been a reluctance to record their history for a long time. There is hardly any book on this subject in India. It seems that the author has prepared this book to remove this deficiency. The subject of sexuality is still treated with great sensitivity. Sex is still a secret practice. It can be said that the author has written this book with great courage.

Rabindra Bhattacharya) : Rabindra Bhattacharya University's drama department guest professor Dr. Dani Karmakar's English

research drama book 'Theatre and Sexuality'. Publisher Rabindra Bhattacharya University's drama department guest professor Dr. Dani Karmakar's English

research drama book 'Theatre and Sexuality'. Publisher Rabindra Bhattacharya

homosexuals while living in this society. It will help better understand LGBTQ families and relationships. The book also deals with nudity in

theatre. Sometimes nudity represents ultimate disorder or torture. This nudity has been used aesthetically in theatre as a protest against the oppressor's

tyranny. Besides, the author has also analyzed how sexuality came to the commercial theatre of Kolkata in the seventies and eighties. What is surprising is that despite dramas

Kolkata-based social activist Sundeep Bhutoria writes to PM Modi to include Literature in CSR initiatives

Kolkata (AMBAR MUKHERJEE): In a letter to the Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi, Kolkata-based social and cultural activist, Sundeep Bhutoria, has appealed to include 'Literature' as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity for corporates.

Sharing the letter on his X handle, Mr Bhutoria wrote "... appealed to the Hon'ble PM of India for corporate financial support for art & artists. CSR initiatives often overlook art, culture & lit due to challenges in identifying beneficiaries. Many cultural torch-bearers struggle and need platforms and opportunities to thrive." Bhutoria wrote, without financial support from the corporate sector such events by foundations will be impossible to conduct regularly. "For this, it is my humble request that

our corporations be encouraged to earmark some of their CSR funds for artistic and cultural endeavours for our country. We request the concerned ministry to also include literature in CSR initiatives for promoting the diverse languages of our country," he wrote.

"Access to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding will be the lifeblood for India's artistic and cultural renaissance, under your inspirational leadership," wrote Mr Bhutoria, who is also the Trustee of Kolkata-based NGO, Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

Three-time Grammy Award winner, Ricky Kej, Padmabhushan and Grammy Award winner, Pt. Vishwamohan Bhattacharya, and actress Nandita Das lauded Mr Bhutoria's appeal to include literature in CSR initiatives. "Literature as CSR activity. "This is a fantastic initiative and appeal by my dear friend Sundeep Bhutoria. CSR initiatives need to include art, culture and literature. As we all know, this is our soft power and our might! I hope this gets enough support," wrote Ricky Kej in his X handle. "It is very important to think for preservation and preparation of Classical and folk arts. Let us all support this movement and request our Honourable Prime Minister of India to consider," wrote Pt. Vishwamohan Bhattacharya via his X handle. "Thank you for taking the initiative to speak for the art and craft communities that really struggle for sustenance. Hope it becomes part of the CSR funds," said Nandita Das via her X handle. Mr Bhutoria has supported the efforts of national and regional writers, musicians, dancers, artistes and artisans in promoting their craft.

"We work across the country for the sustenance and spread of Indian culture and heritage through performance and discussion. We also provide books to educational institutions in rural and semi-urban areas. Most of our events are held in Tier B and C cities, where availability of books is restricted and many readers can't afford to buy new books," he informed. Currently, the list of permitted CSR activities under Section 135 read with Schedule VII of Companies Act, 2013, says - Protection of national heritage, art and culture including restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional art and handicrafts. Notably, there is no specific mention of literature.

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