

Improve capacity to tackle cybercrime: Naveen



BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday said cyber crime has emerged as a big challenge and asked the Commissionerate police to improve its capacity to deal with it effectively so that it can become a model for the country. Addressing the raising day ceremony of Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate police here, the chief minister said he expected the police to be more vigilant and effective in areas of crime control, crime detection, law and order management, disaster management, traffic management, anti-narcotics drive and other areas of security. Stating that he is personally monitoring the implementation of 5T in police department, the chief minister said he is glad to share he has received good feedback from visitors to

police stations. "I will be happy if the experience of visitors to police stations is improved further. I also desire that more technological interventions be introduced to enhance the effectiveness of various policing tasks," he added. The chief minister said he appreciates the vital role of police in organising mega events like Make in Odisha conclave, FIFA Under-17 girls world cup and celebrations of various festivals in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. "I expect the same quality of service in the coming hockey Men's World Cup," he added. Lauding Commissionerate police personnel for their dedicated service during the Covid-19 pandemic, he extended his condolences to family members of personnel who laid down their lives during the period.

SC expresses concern over non-payment of compensation to victims of Bhopal gas tragedy

NEW DELHI(KCN): The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed its displeasure over Centre's failure in providing compensation to the victims of Bhopal gas tragedy till now.



The five judge bench while considering centre's plea seeking additional compensation from Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) (now Dow Chemical Company), expressed concern with regards to the undisbursed dues of Rs 50 crore which were lying with the centre out of the \$470 million paid by the company.

"We were told that ₹50 crore of the settlement amount is lying undisbursed... Have you not exhausted the settlement amount? How is ₹50 crore lying undisbursed? This means that people are not getting the money... Are you responsible for the money not going to the people?" A five judge bench headed by Justice SK Kaul remarked. He also said, "There are many slippery areas if you say, open the settlement." Remarking that the centre without seeking review of its earlier order had opted to directly file a curative plea in 2010 for enhancement of the final settlement paid by UCC, the bench asked centre how it could ask for additional compensation (over Rs 7400 crore) when UCC had already paid Rs 470 million dollar. Further asking centre as **CONTINUED ON: P-7**

Odias in Jharkhand to move Gov and Edu Min over language neglect

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The native Odias of Singhbhum district in Jharkhand have decided to approach the Ministry of Education against the Hemant Soren government's move to yet again remove Odia from its primary teacher training programme. A group of Singhbhum residents under the aegis of Odisha Bhasha Vichar Mancha led by a member of the Kera royal family Deepak Kumar Singhdeo on Monday decided to write to the governors of both Odisha and Jharkhand and the ministry over the issue and administrative neglect being meted out to Odia language. In an advertisement for NCTE examination, published by Jharkhand Academic Council on January 7, while languages like Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu, Ho, Nagpuri, Mundari, Khadia, Santhali and Kudmali have been included in the seventh paper (regional languages) of the primary teacher training exam, Odia does not find a place. This despite the fact that Odia is the second language of the state as it is home to nearly 20 lakh Odia speaking people spread across 10 of its districts. While 35 Odia schools are currently operational in the state, the Odisha government is



funding 160 teachers through Utkal Sammilani to impart education in Odia to stu-

dents there. "We will also start a petition campaign in Singhbhum against the decision of NCTE and Jharkhand government and if the government does not take appropriate action for including Odia in the primary teacher training programme, we will move the High Court of Jharkhand," said Singhdeo. Last year when the Jharkhand government had taken a similar step, Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan had written to Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren. Odisha School and Mass Education minister Samir Ranjan Dash had also sought intervention of Jharkhand School Education minister Jagarnath Mahto. "We are continuing our support to the Jharkhand government to ensure Odia students in the state study in their mother tongue. The department will take up the issue with the Jharkhand government as it had assured us not to exclude Odia from the NCTE exam," Dash said.

BJP accuses govt of misleading people on SHG loans

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The BJP accused the state government of misleading people over financial assistance to women SHGs under Mission Shakti and claiming credit for interest subvention benefits. State BJP president Samir Mohanty said the Central scheme has enabled the states to formulate their own state specific poverty reduction action plans. The Odisha government has been implementing the scheme under Mission Shakti. The scheme is under implementation in 7,611 blocks of the country including all 314 blocks of the state, he said. While financial institutions providing credit to women SHGs are charging interest at 11

per cent, the Centre is taking care of the seven per cent interest including three per cent for

rent financial year is another deceptive attempt to tell people that the state government is ex-

vention is nearly double the amount of what the state is paying, Mohanty said.



timely repayment through subvention. The remaining four per cent interest is paid by the state government. The advertisement issued by the state government announcing disbursement of interest subvention amounting to ₹125 crore for the cur-

tending interest free loans to women groups. The advertisement which reads 'Mission Shakti loan at zero per cent interest up to 5 lakh' gives the impression that the state government is bearing the entire cost of interest when the federal sub-

He said the Central government has been extending financial support to women SHGs under its flagship programme National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) by restructuring Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY).

NATO, EU vow more support for Ukraine to defend itself

BRUSSELS(KCN): NATO and the EU vowed Tuesday to bolster their backing for Ukraine to fight off Russia's invasion and ramp up cooperation between Europe and the US-led alliance. "We must continue to strengthen the partnership between NATO and the European Union. And we must further strengthen our support to Ukraine," NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said after signing a joint declaration with the EU's top officials. Countries in NATO

and the EU -- which share 21 members -- have funnelled billions of dollars of arms to Kyiv that have helped it push back Moscow's forces. The United States, Germany and France have announced they will now also supply Ukraine with armoured fighting vehicles -- but Kyiv has pleaded for modern heavy tanks to be sent as well. "I think that Ukraine should get all the necessary military equipment they need and they can handle to de-

fend the homeland," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

also other types of advanced military equipment, as long as it is necessary to defend

meet next week with Ukraine's defence minister "to discuss exactly what types of

"This is not only about adding more systems, more platforms, more weapons, but also ensuring that the platforms, the weapons we have already provided

the European security order and spurred calls for the EU and NATO to work more closely together to protect the continent. The two organisations

bedrock for Europe's security despite attempts by the EU to boost its role in defence. "Our declaration makes clear that NATO remains the foundation of collective defence and remains essential for Euro-Atlantic security," Stoltenberg said. "It also recognises the value of a more capable European defence that contributes positively to our security and is complementary to and interoperable with NATO."



"This means, of course, advanced air defence systems, but

Ukraine." Stoltenberg said Kyiv's Western backers will

weapons are needed and how can allies provide those weapons."

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are working as they should," he said. Moscow's attack on Ukraine has upended

agreed that NATO, backed by the military might of the United States, remains the

Engineer of Shree Metaliks dies in an accident DMF Collects 20K Cr



Barbil (KCN): A trainee engineer working in Shree Metaliks Steel Plant at Rugudi in the district of Keonjhar, Odisha was killed after some iron materials accidentally fell on him after getting discharged from an crane on Tuesday. He has been identified as Pritikant Upadhyay of Saradang village under Khaira police station of Balashore district. He had joined the steel plant in October 2022 as an engineer trainee under a contractor pay role. The mishap occurred at around 1 pm at the Mill when a over head crane was transporting the iron materials in the plant premises. These materials accidentally got detached

from the crane and fell down on the engineer. Some employees also told the accident happened due to careless attitude of crane operator. It has been observed that the said plant authority is least concern on safety and security in the plant. The deceased had taken to hospital after the accident and doctor declared him dead. This is also seen some plant officials abuse reporters while covering news. According to some reporters, the plant authority wanted to keep the incident under carpeted. However employees demanded adequate security measures to prevent reoccurrence of such incidents

HSRP Rule from Jan 15

Cuttack(KCN): The State Transport Authority (STA) is going to start enforcement against vehicles without High Security Registration Plate (HSRP) from January 15. The deadline for affixation of High Security Registration Plate (HSRP) on the old vehicles registered prior to April 1, 2019 carrying Odisha Registration Mark and Registration Number ending with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 ended on December 31, 2022. The law enforcing agencies will enforce the fitment from January 15 next. The deadline for vehicles carrying Odisha Registration Mark and Registration number ending with 7&8 ends on January 31, 2023 and for the vehicles carrying Odisha Registration Mark and Registration number ending with 9&0, last date for affixation of HSRP is now February 28, 2023. No e-challan will be issued and no fine will be collected or no penal action shall be taken against any vehicle owner for plying vehicles without HSRP till January 14, officials said. After that challans will be issued in accordance with the last date given for various series of vehicles. In case the vehicle is not affixed with HSRP

L.M. Sethi, Additional Commissioner Transport, Enforcement said, "As on January 9, 2023, a total of 35,56,819 vehicle owners have booked slots, out of which HSRP has been affixed in 27,24,994 vehicles." Urging vehicle owners to get the HSRP affixed to their vehicles without delay, Sethi said, "The vehicle owners who do not have access to the internet or do not have knowledge of technology can apply for HSRP through nearby Mo Seva Kendra or HSRP facilitation centres at RTO as per their convenience." The OEMs (vehicle manufacturers) through their authorised vendors have also opened camp fitment centre/temporary fitment centre at 88 locations and at other places of the State i.e. important Government/private establishments where the dealers network of all OEMs are not available and have also started fitment of HSRP at these locations. In addition to this, fitment facilities at some RTO offices are also being provided by some OEMs, he added. Further, fitment of HSRP with old and existing locally manufactured trailers and vehicles registered prior to April 2019 whose manufacturers have closed down their businesses can be done at the RTO from where the vehicle is purchased. The respective owner of locally manufactured trailers and vehicles registered prior to April 2019 whose manufacturers have closed down their businesses can visit the RTO office and produce the RC book for HSRP booking. With regards to replacement of HSRP in case of damage, all the automobile manufacturers and authorized HSRP vendors of OEMs have been intimated with Standard Operating Procedure for issue of duplicate or damaged HSRP which is available online for the benefit of vehicle owners. In accordance with the directives of the Supreme Court, Central Government amended Rule 50 of CMVR and Notifications/Statutory Orders from Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), State Transport Department has made affixation of High-Security Registration Plates (HSRPs) mandatory since June 1, 2022 for all class of old vehicles which were registered prior to April 2019.



within the scheduled date mentioned above, e-challan shall be issued against the offending vehicle and attract a fine of Rs. 5000 or Rs.10,000 under Section 192 of M.V. Act, 1988, as the case may be.

Bhubaneswar(KCN): While Rs.20,420 Crore has been collected under District Mineral Foundation (DMF) from eight major districts, Rs.11,428 Crore has been spent in these districts for setting up various developmental projects. Latest Report on DMF Collection till November, 2022 reveals the fact that from Angul, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Rayagada and Sundergarh Rs.20,420.49 Crore has been collected by 30 November, 2022. The above eight districts account for 98 Percent of the total DMF in the State. According to official sources Rs.20,784 Crore has been allocated to take up 25,084 Projects, which have been approved under DMF funding and 22, 875 Projects were taken up out of which 17,872 Projects have been completed. Highest collection of DMF was from Keonjhar district, from where Rs.8926.23 Crore has been collected during the year till November.

Second one is Sundargarh from where Rs.5368.19 Crore has been collected and Angul contributed Rs.2591.93 Crore to DMF. Jajpur collected Rs.1698.88 Crore, while Jharsuguda collection touched Rs.1136.07 Crore. Koraput district collected Rs.364.86 Crore, Rayagada district collected Rs.224.45 Crore and Mayurbhanj district contributed lowest of Rs.109.88 Crore. While Sundargarh has been allocated highest Rs.7630.82 Crore second highest is Keonjhar, which has been allocated Rs.6680.29 Crore and Anugul got Rs.2256.74 Crore of allocation. Jajpur got Rs.2045.32 Crore of allocation, Jharsuguda received allocation of Rs.1591.81 Crore, Rayagada received Rs.180.67 Crore and Koraput received Rs.296.35 Crore while Mayurbhanj has been allocated Rs.102.03 Crore for taking up various developmental projects. However Mayurbhanj topped the list of spending against allocation. This tribal district has been able to spend 79 Percent of the allocation, while Koraput has come second in spending with 69.60 Percent while Angul comes third in spending of 67 Percent of allocation.

Capacity Building Of Public Servants

New Delhi(KCN): Bharat Lal, Director General, National Centre for Good Governance addressing the of-



access to clean cooking gas connections and speedy internet connections among other things. He highlighted the Prime Minister's emphasis on 'no one is left out'. To bring in innovations and new paradigms in good governance, utilizing technology and bringing in innovations is crucial, said the DG. He urged the participants to utilize the learning from this programme and prepare their own action plan, which they may like to implement in their areas of work in respective countries and states. In this 2-weeks programmes for the civil servants of Bangladesh, Maldives and Arunachal Pradesh, civil servants will interact with experts on diverse topics, viz. changing para-

While Sundargarh has received highest allocation, it has been able to spend only 53.83 Percent of the allocation. Jajpur performance is poor with only 44.11 Percent utilization of the allocation, which was much more than its collection amount. Major spending was done by the Department of Panchayatiraj and Drinking Water (DoPR&DW) as more stress is given for pro-



viding drinking water and sanitation in the tribal zones. DoPR&DW was allocated Rs.4973.90 Crore for taking up 12,546 projects and it has been able to spend 95.87 Percent of its allocation, which has been appreciated by the State Government, said sources. Spending by Department of Health & FW has been highest with 96.92 Percent of the allocation. Health Care sector was allocated Rs.1100.73 Crore for taking up 556 Projects and it has been able to spend Rs.830.70 Crore. Social sector projects were given more stress and Department of School & Mass Education was allocated Rs.2576 Crore and spending was Rs.1035.36 Crore, which is 83.22 Percent of the allocation, officials say. While Department of Works was allocated Rs.4957.17 Crore spending was Rs.1639.46 Crore, Rural Development Department was allocated Rs.1521.73 Crore and spending was Rs.692.86 Crore, which is 86.56 Percent. State Government has advised to speed up erection of the projects, so that utilization of funds can be made in a time bound manner.

digm of governance, vision of India @ 2047 and role of civil servants, decentralised municipal solid waste management, role of government recruitment agency to strengthen governance, health care services in remote areas, ethical perspectives in governance, disaster management, overview of rural development in India, approach to SDGs by 2030, health governance in India, climate change and its impact on biodiversity - policies and global practices, anti-corruption practices, LiFE, circular economy, etc. among other important areas. The National Centre for Good Governance was set up in 2014 by the Government of India as an apex-level institution in the country with a mandate to work on good governance, policy reforms, training and capacity building of civil servants of India as well as of other developing countries. It also works as a think tank of the government. In partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, NCGG has imparted training to civil servants of 15 countries, so far, viz. Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, Bhutan, Myanmar and Cambodia. Known for content and delivery, the capacity building programme is sought after and NCGG is expanding its capacity to accommodate higher number of civil servants from various countries.

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WATCH 'Manikarnika' trailer: This Kangana Ranaut-starrer looks like bits from a Bhansali product



MUMBAI(KCN): Finally it comes. The trailer of the beleaguered historical "Manikarnika - The Queen Of Jhansi" brings to us a furious, ferocious and feral Kangana Ranaut, who tells the 'gora log', "We both want Jhansi. But you want to rule. I want to serve."

Well, precisely. The Rani Of Jhansi was passionately dedicated to her

kingdom. I don't see much of that dedication in the trailer. Much of it is devoted to displaying its leading lady's skills on horses and with swords. The trailer gives us an epic primer on 'Kangana Rides The Horse', 'Kangana Swats The Enemy', 'Kangana Bays For Blood', so on and so forth.

There is so much of the talented ac-

triss' efforts to appear queenly, the trailer barely offers a glimpse of the impressive supporting cast, namely Danny Denzongpa, Atul Kulkarni, Suresh Oberoi and others who flit by in this steamroller view of a woman warrior's day-out binge. Threadbare thunder in a fancy teacup.

Alarmingly and annoyingly, the film

wears a thick and heavy Sanjay Leela Bhansali hangover. In the way the camera zooms in and pans the long stretches of the battle scenes, I was taken back to Bhansali's "Bajirao Mastani". In fact one of Kangana's derring-do in a battle sequence here, she gambols over her army to strike was a move identical to Ranveer Singh's in

"Bajirao Mastani".

ALSO READ: Ready to do a good movie down south, says actress Kangana Ranau So is Kangana's Jhansi Ki Rani, Bajirao or Mastani or both?

It's a highly derivative world created by people who seem to have the resources but not the vision. We could do with a lot more chutzpah when recre-

ating such an important chapter from Indian history.

It's not all a wash-out, though. Kangana seems to convey sufficient fire and elasticity. Her accent is a downer, though.

This is the way the trailer moves: uplifting one moment down to being a disappointment the next. Let's hope the film is not as uneven in tone.

When Julia Roberts realised she was famous

LOS ANGELES (KCN): Actress Julia Roberts, 51, revealed that the first time she realised she was famous was when she was in a bathroom stall at age 21 and a fan asked her for an autograph.

The actress had just starred in the 1988 film "Mystic Pizza" at the time of her bathroom encounter.

The Oscar-winner told the story during an appearance on an episode of a podcast, reports dailymail.co.uk.

ALSO READ: 'Ben Is Back' film review She had her fame awakening after returning home to Georgia to visit her mother and younger sister. The three caught a movie and

Roberts stopped by the bathroom afterward.

"It was after the movie was over and I was in the bathroom and there was a woman in the bathroom who said, 'Hey, girl in stall number one, were you in 'Mystic Pizza?'" she said.

The pushy fan proceeded to slip something under the stall and asked the "Mystic Pizza" star to sign it.

Hansika in Mohanlal's next Tamannaah Bhatia and Shruti Hassan are the new gal pals

It seems Mohanlal-B to @Hansika for her While Rockline



Unnikrishnan team's untitled film is getting bigger and bigger. After Vishal and Srikanth, another popular south star Hansika Motwani will be making her Mollywood debut through the film. The update was announced by the director himself on his official Facebook page.

"I wish great luck

new release Bogan. She will have a very special appearance in my Mohanlal film produced by Mr Rockline Venkatesh," posted Unnikrishnan.

According to the director, who had last teamed up with Mohanlal for Mr Fraud, VFX and special effects will have a lot of importance in the the big budget project.

Venkatesh, who has made films like Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Linga, is the producer, the project also boasts of an excellent crew. Manoj Paramahansa, who has cranked camera for films including Vinnaitaandi Varuvaaya and Nanpan, is the cinematographer. 4 Musics, the band behind the hit songs of Oppam, will be scoring the music.

Tamannaah Bhatia has been bonding with her contemporary Shruti Hassan.

talk everyday due to their busy schedules, but they always make sure to make time on

for Shruti. Tamannaah says, "Shruti is a sweetheart and a dear



for a while now. Tamannaah chose to take some time out last week to meet her new BFF Shruti Hassan to celebrate her birthday.

According to a source close to Tamannaah says. "Tamannaah and Shruti share a special bond, the two actresses may not be able to

each other's birthdays. Shruti Hassan, who celebrated her birthday couple of days ago with close friends, had Tamannaah as one of her special guests. It is said that Tamannaah makes it a point to not miss her friend's special day at any cost. She had also brought a special gift

friend. Since we both have tight schedules, we don't get much time to spend with each other the rest of the year, so I needed to be at her birthday party so that I could be with her. I have been attending her birthday since the last three years and making sure to be with her on her special day."

Brand Modi Vs Brand Rahul - an improbable face off

Brand Modi Vs Brand Rahul? Political pundits have been proclaiming such a possibility since the launch of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. To



them the yatra is all set to bring a fresh challenge to the brand Modi which has been unstoppable since 2014. Their predictions perhaps waved in the direction of Rahul Gandhi am-

plifying his brand value as a politician as the yatra is bringing more prominent faces joining him in this aspirational exercise expecting the range of political fortunes that the possible Rahul rise would bless them with. The latest entrant into the bandwagon of leaders is former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah. Well before the Kashmir veteran joined the Yatra, Kanimozhi from the DMK and superstar Kamal Haasan walked in tune with Rahul Gandhi's revival steps. Expressing her interest in joining the yatra, Mehbooba Mufti, another former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir resonated giving the Congress and its leadership a giggle of relief; which means, the yatra is really emerging as a platform to bring the erstwhile leaders aspiring to rejuvenate their lost political space together. But Akhilesh Yadav's reluctance to join the yatra is justifiably revealing the memory of a political disaster, the defeat that he had in the company of Rahul Gandhi. And Yogi Adityanath's consistent victories since then have not only been a lesson but a nightmare he still struggles to shrug off. Throughout the yatra, narratives are planted with a calculative approach giving an impetus that the Modi regime is all about hatred and communal disharmony and the Yatra's objective is to fasten the dissected cultural cohesion of the country. And this is what the

Congress party planned and this is probably its ultimate

M. R. LALU

political weapon, a strategy that the party thinks would further excavate its half buried political significance. By creating a platform for Rahul Gandhi to emerge above party lines while he holds no responsible position in his party, would help him remain sanctified and invulnerable to all its poll debacles at least until the national elections. More and more opposition leaders are expected to join the yatra in the coming days along with former civil servants, diplomats, economists and religious leaders. Should the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Modi's able leadership be unmindful of the yatra and the potential political consolidation that it began to rake up? There would be consistent efforts to drag the disgruntled political opposition of the BJP on one stage before 2024. And BJP, with its electoral shrewdness and accurate political calculations would this time twiddle with the emotions of the electorate. Union Home Minister Amit Shah's announcement on the timeline for the possible inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya should be seen as an arrow that was shot in advance to garner the majority sentiments. Addressing a huge gathering in the poll bound Tripura; he practically declared the date of inauguration of the Ram Temple. The temple, according to him, will be inaugurated well before the 2024 national elections. The Ram Mandir issue was a strong plank on which the BJP began to chase its political goodwill. Except for raking the issue for electoral mileage, the BJP's efforts remained minimal as the matter was shelved by the judiciary for decades. Systematically blaming the Congress for throwing the Ram Mandir dispute in the jurisdiction of the court, Shah was discordantly evocative of the double standard of

the Congress. Visibly articulating the issue in a poll bound state,

the Home Minister was signalling his party cadre for a proper packaging of the Ram Mandir nationwide for which the foundation was laid by the Prime Minister. In its efforts to dehypnotise its cadre through the Yatra, brand Rahul's enlightened version of appearance resembles the saintly beard of Narendra Modi, which he had grown throughout the enraging pandemic. Does Rahul Gandhi's new makeover give him an awakened position in the political spectrum in the country? It is too early to make inferences on this but the undercurrent is evidently trenchant and the acceptance in his favour is the result of the disgruntlement among parties that oppose the Modi phenomenon. But what seems to remain an accentuating factor would be Rahul Gandhi's lack of political maturity. Until he gains an acceptable maturity to deal with the issues that the country would grapple with in 2023, the new coalition-comity of the opposition parties does not have to take him seriously. Gravely unrealistic on the notion of Indianness and his large strain of image makeover with his ignorance and obscurantist approach on the Indian ethnicity, Rahul is yet to depict convincing capabilities and honest approach on understanding India's spiritual ethos. Modi has undoubtedly delved deeper into the cultural munificence of the country which is dominantly approved by the spiritual rationality of the Indian landscape. He has been an aggressive campaigner for the spiritual awakening that India was capable of offering to the whole world. Brand Modi's spiritual statesmanship puts a relatively average and politically unintelligible brand Rahul into an obtrusive and ineffective corner. And the posterous pretensions of Rahul Gandhi cali-

brated by his dynastic dynamism are yet to chisel out a convincing image of him. Before the country would decide to logically and ceremoniously embrace a better modified version of brand Rahul, the leader of the oldest political party needs to have his kindergarten lessons learned about India. Moreover, as long as a large number of regional satraps are non-dogmatic about the rise of the Gandhi dynasty onto the national stage, the image makeover and the branding of a saviour in the upcoming elections would be a sedative impracticality. Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banarjee and K.Chandrashekar Rao are prominent among the regional leaders assumed to be the capable contenders to halt the saffron spectacle. Arvind Kejriwal has sculptured his branding as a pan India persona winning two states with a comfortable margin. Having groomed his party for a national stage with little eminence at present, the IIT alumnus is yet again ready for testing the political fertility of states that would go for elections this year. In India, politics is not about optimistic, chauvinistic melodrama alone. It is largely about the brand that parties are successful in showcasing. For the BJP, brand Modi's indefatigable market rating has unequivocally gained an upper hand. Brand Rahul's latest clairvoyant makeover needs to grow more convincing and uninterruptedly present in the political conscience of India. His Yatra should not throw him and his party into a self-hypnotic hallucination or a deluding mania that his strides across the country would take him straight away to Lok Kalyan Marg. National elections 2024 is speculated to be a fight against brand Modi but brand Rahul's emergence as a serious contender is a meagre chance.

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Letter to Editor

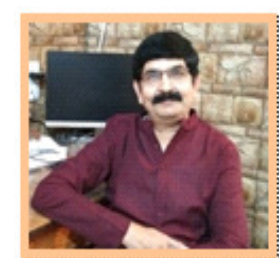
A Law is in need to handle heavy metals in Water

Heavy metal refers to any metallic chemical element that has a relatively high density (usually more than 5 gram per cubic centimetre) and is poisonous at low concentrations. The most popular heavy metals are lead, zinc, mercury, nickel, cadmium, copper, chromium, and arsenic. Although these heavy metals can be detected in traces; they are still hazardous. Other metals such as silver, iron, manganese, molybdenum, boron, calcium, antimony, cobalt, etc. are commonly available in wastewater and need to be removed. The presence of heavy metals in wastewater has been increasing with the growth of industry and human activities, e.g., plating and electroplating industry, batteries, pesticides, mining industry, rayon industry, metal rinse processes, tanning industry, fluidized bed bioreactors, textile industry, metal smelting, petrochemicals, paper manufacturing, and electrolysis applications industries are responsible for contaminating water bodies in the country. The heavy metal contaminated wastewater finding its way into the environment, threatening human health and the ecosystem in the country as per reports. The heavy metals are non-biodegradable and could be carcinogenic thus, the presence of these metals in water by improper amounts could result in critical health issues to living organisms. Heavy metals in water will also lead to several neurological problems in humans including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis. Removal of heavy metal ions from wastewater is of prime importance at present for a clean environment and human health. Rivers containing large quantity of heavy metals is a menace. India's major rivers are contaminated by one or more heavy metals, exceeding safe limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards. The Indian National Science Academy reports that the major hazardous metals of concern for India in terms of their environmental load and health effects are lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium, copper, and aluminium, that are released into the water through anthropogenic activities. It is important to develop filters to treat these effluents that are released into water bodies by industries to prevent pollution. There are different methods for efficient removal of heavy metals from water. Adsorption method is highly efficient low-cost, and ease of operation method. Therefore, our central Ministry of Mining should make a mandatory rule as soon as possible for industries across the country to adopt adsorption technology to treat large amounts of water contaminated with heavy metals.

Vijaykumar H K Raichur, Karnataka, Environmentalist

Make everyone aware of the threats of human trafficking

11th January is observed as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day to raise awareness about the condition of human trafficking victims, as well as to promote and safeguard their rights. We all have an important role to



play in preventing human tracking and protecting victims.

Thousands of children are trafficked every year from rural, tribal as well as urban areas in India. Victims are bought and sold like commodities. Catching child-sex tourists is only part of the problem in Nepal. Nepal has become a source as well as transit destination for trafficking of women and children for sex trade tourism from neighbouring countries. When there is an illegal movement of a person from one country to another, a smuggling component is involved, it becomes human smuggling. Human smuggling becomes human trafficking when there is no consent of the person and people are held against their will for sexual exploitation or labor. Human trafficking is considered a modern form of slavery. This illegal act involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain labor or sex. Traffickers use violence, manipulation, or false promises to lure their victims into trafficking situations. Trafficking victims usually experience physical and/or psychological abuse.

Women and girls comprised 84 percent of victims of forced marriage and 99 percent of victims of forced labour in commercial sexual exploitation. About 7,000 sex workers cross over from Nepal into the country every year, and children from Bangladesh enter via West Bengal, lured by marriage or job offers. Trafficking through India should be stopped immediately. Hapless women, especially young ones, are lured on false promises and taken to various countries by unscrupulous and anti-social elements and sold for flesh trade. India, like many nations, is a signatory

Vinod Chandrashekhar Dixit

to these conventions, but implementation is poor, because of factors such as corruption, lack of capacity and expertise and cultural norms, attitudes and stigmas. Indian Govt. should alert the Nepal Govt and prevent the human trafficking. **Human trafficking** is just another name for modern-day slavery, wherein the victims involved are forced, coerced and deceived into labour and sexual exploitation. In India, children from poor and rural communities, especially those with emotional, physical and learning difficulties, are particularly vulnerable to inter-country trafficking. The culprits should be brought to book and exemplary punishment to be imposed. According to UNICEF 12.6 million children are engaged in unsafe occupations. According to NHRC of INDIA 40,000 children are abducted each year out of which 11,000 are untraced. According to The Global Slavery Index, existing figure of slaves is 18.3 million in India. Every 8 minutes, a child is missing in India. It is reported that children from rural areas in poor condition are trafficked to cities for employment in industries such as spinning mills, hotels, restaurants, and construction for little or no pay at all. They are often physically and mentally exploited by the employers and have to work under hazardous conditions. Many girls are forced by families or sold by traffickers for child marriage. In most cases the condition of girls in early marriages is like slaves. They are exploited physically and mentally.

It is a well-organised network and we need to call for stringent laws and implementation of such laws to contain the menace. Both the Indian and Nepali governments are complicit

in the abuses suffered by trafficking victims. These abuses are not only violations of internationally recognized human rights but are specifically prohibited under the domestic laws of both countries. In Nepal, border police are also bribed to allow traffickers to transport girls to India. The high inspiration of the parents and when the children fail to live upto the expectation, they take the wrong path because of which other youths of their age fall victim to their wrongdoings. Children have always been a soft target both because at times they are not much aware of the fact that what is happening to them is wrong. If at all they are aware of it, then they are scared to speak about it. Those that suffer physical and emotional abuse and rape may never be able to live normal lives again whereas those that are threatened live in constant fear and end being psychologically compromised. It is the violation of human rights and children are deprived freedom. It breaches the child's mental and physical ability which is primary to every child's growth. Children lose their childhood because of the ill-practice of child trafficking. The basic rights of children, irrespective of economic status, caste or gender, are robbed from them. The first step to spreading awareness effectively is educating yourself. Knowing the signs and characteristics of trafficking will give you the ability to be more aware in your own community, and to spread that awareness to your network. The consequences of child trafficking are dreadful. Improving and implementing prevention programs is critical. What we need is right from early childhood, kids should be taught about the sensitive issues and the lawmakers too should enact and follow strict laws to curb this menace and keep the kids safe. Weak legal system is yet another lacuna which adds to the menace.

B-15 Jyoti-Kalash Society, Jodhpur Tekra, Satellite, Ahmedabad

A child died once every 4.4 seconds in 2021: UN report

NEW DELHI: An estimated 5 million children died before their fifth birthday and another 2.1 million children and youth aged between 5-24 years lost their lives in 2021, according to the latest estimates released by the United Nations.

It also found that 1.9 million babies were

schools over mental health 'crisis' in US

If swift action is not taken to improve health services, warn the UN agencies, almost 59 million children and youth will die before 2030, and nearly 16 million babies will be lost to stillbirth, it said.

"It is grossly unjust that a child's chances of survival can be shaped just by their place of birth, and that there are such vast inequities in their access to lifesaving health services," said Dr Anshu Banerjee, Director for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing at the World Health Organization (WHO). "Children

everywhere need strong primary health care systems that meet their needs and those of their families, so that - no matter where they are born - they have the best start and hope for the future."

Children continue to face wildly different chances of survival based on where they are born, with sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia shouldering the heaviest burden, the reports show.

Most child deaths occur in the first five years, of which half are within the very first month of life. For these youngest babies, premature birth and complications during labour are the leading causes of death.

Similarly, more than 40 percent of stillbirths occur during labour - most of which are preventable when women have access to quality care throughout pregnancy and birth.

For children that survive past their first 28 days, infectious diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria pose the biggest threat. "The new estimates highlight the remarkable global progress since 2000 in reducing mortality among children under age 5," said John Wilmoth, Director, UN DESA Population Division.

"Despite this success, more work is needed to address persistent large differences in child survival across countries and regions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Only by improving access to quality health care, especially around the time of childbirth, will we be able to reduce these inequities and end preventable deaths of newborns and children worldwide," he added.



stillborn during the same period.

Tragically, many of these deaths could have been prevented with equitable access and high-quality maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health care, the UN said.

"Every day, far too many parents are facing the trauma of losing their children, sometimes even before their first breath," said Vidhya Ganesh, UNICEF Director of the Division of Data Analytics, Planning and Monitoring.

"Such widespread, preventable tragedy should never be accepted as inevitable. Progress is possible with stronger political will and targeted investment in equitable access to primary health care for every woman and child." While COVID-19 has not directly increased childhood mortality - with children facing a lower likelihood of dying from the disease than adults - the pandemic may have increased future risks to their survival.

The report highlighted concerns around disruptions to vaccination campaigns, nutrition services, and access to primary health care, which could jeopardize their health and well-being for many years to come.

In addition, the pandemic has fuelled the largest continued backslide in vaccinations in three decades, putting the most vulnerable newborns and children at greater risk of dying from preventable diseases.

Gains have reduced significantly since 2010, and 54 countries will fall short of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals target for under-five mortality.

ALSO READ | Big Tech sued by Seattle

'Spare' but not stingy: Takeaways from Prince Harry's memoir

LONDON: From the book's opening citation of William Faulkner to Prince Harry's passionate bond with his wife Meghan, you could almost call the Duke of Sussex's memoir "The Americanization of Prince Harry."

Bereaved boy, troubled teen, wartime soldier, unhappy royal — many facets of Prince Harry are revealed in his explosive memoir, often in eyebrow-raising detail. Running throughout is Harry's desire to be a different kind of prince — the kind who talks about his feelings, eats fast food and otherwise doesn't hide beyond a prim facade. Like an American.

From accounts of cocaine use and losing his virginity to raw family rifts, "Spare" exposes deeply personal details about Harry and the wider royal family. Even Americans may flinch when he confides that a trip to the North Pole left him with frostbitten genitals that proved most irritating during his brother's wedding to Kate.

Brotherhood

The book opens with a famous quote from Faulkner, bard of the American South: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." Harry writes he found this quote on the website BrainyQuote.com.

Harry's story is dominated by his rivalry with his elder brother Prince William and the death of the boys' mother, Princess Diana, in 1997. Harry, who was 12 at the time, has never forgiven the media for Diana's death in a car crash while being pursued by photographers. The loss of his mother haunts the book, which Harry dedicates to Meghan, children Archie and Lili "and, of course, my mother."

Diana, the Princess of Wales holds her son Prince Harry while royal families posed for photographers at the Royal Palace, in Majorca, Spain, on Aug. 9, 1987. (File Photo | AP)

The opening chapter recounts how his father Prince Charles — now King Charles III — broke the news of his mother's accident, but didn't give his son a hug.

Harry reveals that years later he asked his



driver to take him through the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris, the site of the fatal crash, hoping in vain that it would help end a "decade of unrelenting pain." He also says he once consulted a woman who claimed to have "powers" and to be able to pass on messages from Diana. Harry adds that he and William both "pleaded" with their father not to marry his long-term paramour Camilla Parker-Bowles, worried she would become a "wicked stepmother."

Harry also is tormented by his status as royal

Joshimath: The neglected warning from 46 years ago

Why is Joshimath sinking? A formal warning of such a possible catastrophe came 46 years ago. But before we get to that, let us understand the lay of the land.

Joshimath is located in seismic zone five and bound by two regional thrusts: Vaikrita in the north and Munsiri in the south. The 1991 and 1999 earthquakes proved that the area is susceptible to earthquakes. Furthermore, the town is built on a palaeo-landslide-prone slope as Heim, Arnold, and August Gansser first noted in 1939. All these facts underline the fact that Joshimath's foundation has always been very weak.

In 1985, Padma Bhushan Chandni Prasad Bhatt, Dr Navin Juyal, a former scientist at the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad and MS Kunwar, founder of HARC (an NGO), wrote an article entitled Vishnu Prayag Project: A risky venture in Higher Himalaya. This essay, published in a book entitled Environmental Regeneration in Himalaya edited by Professor JS Singh (a renowned environmentalist), mentioned how during the ramping up of the infrastructure, including the building of roads and houses, for the so-called development of Joshimath, enormous quantities of earth and boulders were removed using dynamite. Forests had also been cleared for timber used for construction in the seventies.

They also mentioned that irregular drainage had made the slope vulnerable to erosion. As a result, many parts of the town had sunk.

Bhatt, Juyal, and Kunwar went on to highlight the recommendations of the Mishra Committee (1976), constituted to study why the town was sinking. The committee suggested the following measures to stabilise the slopes of Joshimath.

1. In the slip zone, no new construction should be undertaken. Construction should only be permitted once the site's stability has been assessed, and such regions should be appropriately investigated before being delineated. The excavation of slopes for building homes, their pitching, drainage, and proper muck disposal should all be subject to restrictions.

2. No trees should be chopped down within landslide-prone sites, nor should boulders be removed by excavating or blasting to repair roads or perform any other building activity.

3. The region between Marwari (most affected during the recent incident) and Joshimath, below the Joshimath Reserve Forest, and in the cantonment should all undergo extensive planting. On the slopes, any cracks that have grown need to be filled.

4. Boulders hanging or lying on the foothill should be supported appropriately rather than being left in their current state. It was also highlighted that there should be a complete restriction on gathering building material within a radius of 3 to 5 kilometers of the Joshimath township. At the foot of the hill, anti-scour or river-training measures should be implemented.

Madhav Gadgil Column

How green was my valley: The Himalayan loot that triggered the Joshimath disaster

The Joshimath bypass, which connects Helong and Marwari directly, was termed unfortunate because it had been constructed close to the toe of the Joshimath landslide.

The township of Joshimath, it was noted, is rapidly sinking due to the removal of boulders and the blasting of rocks. Joshimath has a slope of 60 to 70 degrees. The excavation at the slope's bottom, it warned, would undoubtedly result in a major catastrophe. Additionally, the building of this bypass would cause traffic to be diverted, depriving the residents of Joshimath of the advantages of pilgrim traffic.

Many other scientists have also told development planners that the higher Himalayas are not suitable for constructing hydro-projects and suggested that small power projects be created at appropriate places to generate electricity.

Through his research publications, the late Padma Vibhushan Professor KS Valdiya cautioned policymakers that when working on the Himalayan slopes, one must exercise extreme caution because the slopes are delicate. It would be unjust to say that our planners and policymakers are not aware of the sensitivity of the Himalayan ranges, but it seems that the awareness is suppressed by the pressure of utilising the Himalayan resources for national growth and providing easy and fast accessibility by developing

road networks.

In our opinion, the June 2013 Kedarnath tragedy and February 2021 Rishiganga calamity will be an eye-opener to policy planners, particularly the proponents of hydro-power projects. They must re-evaluate their methods because the high mountains are particularly sensitive to extreme rainfalls and flash floods.

Worryingly, after the creation of Uttarakhand, there has been a significant increase in the built-up area along the Alaknanda river. Remarkably, there has been a quantum jump in the built-up areas around Srinagar, De v p r a y a g , R u d r a p r a y a g , K a r n p r a y a g , Nandprayag, and Joshimath.

The safe-habitation slopes in these towns were always few and far between. Most of the villages and small townships are located on the palaeo-landslide-prone area. There is a need for scientific investigation along with proper drainage alignments before any changes are made. Otherwise, there are many more Joshimaths waiting to happen in Uttarakhand.

ALSO READ | Joshimath 'sinking': Experts blame tunneling, poor drainage system, unchecked construction. The unscientific urban development seen till date speaks volumes about the poor governance and lack of urban development policy. The Joshimath tragedy is simply an outcome of denial of scientific advice. The Government will have to come up with a building policy at least now and ensure its honest implementation.

"spare" behind William, who is heir to the British throne. Harry recounts a longstanding sibling rivalry that worsened after Harry began a relationship with Meghan, the American actor whom he married in 2018.

He says that during an argument in 2019, William called Meghan "difficult" and "rude" (the kind of insults an upper-class Englishman might reserve for Americans), then grabbed him by the collar and knocked him

down. Harry suffered cuts and bruises from landing on a dog bowl.

Harry says Charles implored the brothers to make up, saying after the funeral of Prince Philip in 2021: "Please, boys — don't make my final years a misery. Neither Buckingham

Palace, which represents King Charles III nor William's Kensington Palace office has commented on any of the allegations.

ALSO READ | Prince Harry says he wants his father and brother back

Admiration for grandparents Harry writes with admiration and some affection about Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip. He remembers Phillip's "many passions — carriage driving, barbecuing, shooting, food beer," and above all how he "embraced life," as did his mother. "Maybe that

was why he'd been such a fan" of Princess Diana, Harry recalls.

Meanwhile, he acknowledges being intimidated at times by his grandmother, if only because she was the Queen. She is no more helpful than anyone else in containing the media leaks, but she is often seen as sympathetic to his wishes, never more so than when she approved of his marriage to Meghan.

Harry also sees her as an engaging, even humorous person beyond her otherwise proper bearing. Reflecting on her death last year he remembers whispering jokes into her ear or convincing her to participate in a widely seen promotional video of the Invictus Games, in which she one-ups the Obamas in a sparring contest. "She was a natural comedienne," he writes, calling her "wicked sense of humour" a prized confidence between the two. "In every photo of us, whenever we're exchanging a glance, making solid eye contact, it's clear. We had secrets."

Wild teenage years

The memoir suggests the media's party-boy image of Harry during his teen and young adult years was well-deserved. Harry describes how he lost his virginity at 17 — in a field behind a pub to an older woman who loved horses and treated the teenage prince like a "young stallion." It was, he says, an "inglorious episode."

He also says he took cocaine several times starting at the same age, in order to "feel different." He also acknowledges using cannabis and magic mushrooms — which made him hallucinate that a toilet was talking to him.

Alert On Property Statement Rourkela's second automatic weather station inaugurated on NIT-R campus

Bhubaneswar: Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Principal Secretary Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment has issued marching orders for submission of Annual Property Statement in time.



Principal Secretary Dr. Padhee has pointed out that submission of annual Property Statement is a mandatory requirement for all Government Officials of the State as per the Principles outlines under Odisha Government Service Conduct (Amendment) Rules, 2021. Dr. Padhee has elaborated that Department of General Administration and Public Grievances has issued orders on 31.12.2022 and advised all the employees to submit their Annual Property Statement as on 1 January for the year 2022 online through HRMS, latest by 31 January 2023. This is all the more important, as submission of the Property Statement is a pre-requisite for consideration of officials for promotion to the next higher grade.

Accordingly Dr. Padhee has directed that every government servant of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment must submit in given format online in the HRMS portal by end of January, 2023, failing which their salaries for February, 2023 onwards would not be drawn till they file the Statements.

He has also directed the officials concerned dealing with the Office Establishment will submit the list of defaulting officials to the Drawing and Disbursing Officers concerned for appropriate action.

Principal Secretary Dr. Padhee has made it abundantly clear that this directive is applicable to All India Service Officers serving in the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment including himself.

Empowerment has issued marching orders for submission of Annual Property Statement in time.

Dr. Padhee, an honest and upright mandarin has always been transparent in his approach has warned that if any employee fails to do it will face dire consequences like stoppage of salary.

Tourist bus catches fire in Puri, passengers safe



PURI: An empty tourist bus from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh that was stationed at the parking lot near Sakhigopal temple, in Satyabadi near Puri caught fire on Monday. Fortunately, at the time of the incident, the pilgrims, around 50, were out in the open while some were inside the temple. According to sources, the pilgrims

from Gwalior were on way to Puri as a part of Chardham yatra when they stayed at Sakhigopal to have darshan of Gopinath Deb. Suddenly, some of them noticed flames from the back side of the bus and raised an alarm. By the time fire tender unit reached the spot, the entire bus was in flames. It took the fire personnel half an

hour to bring the flames in control. Though there was no human casualty, most of their belongings were reduced to ashes. Initially locals helped the pilgrims with food and clothes. Later, Satyabadi MLA Umakant Samantrai, block and temple administrations assured all help to the stranded pilgrims. "I have sent them to

the Panthashala located alongside the Puri-Bhubaneswar national highway, provided them with mattress, blankets, drinking water besides food. I will bear the cost of sending them back to their homes on Tuesday," Samantrai said. It is suspected that fire erupted due to a short circuit in the battery kept on the rear of the bus.

Naveen unveils 30 new police stations in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday inaugurated 30 police stations across the state including one in Bhubaneswar. The new police stations, created by upgrading beat houses and outposts, are meant to ensure better policing and effective handling of law and order situations. With this, the number of police stations in the state have gone up to 642. The new police station in the capital city has come up at Maitri

Vihar by upgrading the Salia Sahi out-



post. Three of the new police stations have been created in Cuttack while two each are in Angul, Ganjam, Jajpur and Kendrapara districts. In Cuttack district, Maniabandh,

Judum and Bhadreswar outposts

were upgraded to police stations. Beguniapada, Kotinada outposts in Ganjam, Bagedia and Gopalprasad outposts in Angul, Olakunda and Bramhabarada outposts in Jajpur,

Chaudakulat and Kudanagiri outposts in Kendrapara districts were upgraded to police stations. Talapatia beat house in Jharsuguda district was upgraded to airport police station. Jagatsinghpur, Rayagada, Khurda, Subarnapur, Puri, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Deogarh, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Balangir, Balasore, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Berhampur and Boudh have also received one new police station each.

ROURKELA: The steel city's second automatic weather station (AWS) was inaugurated on the campus of National In-

stitute of Technology-Rourkela (NIT-R) on Monday. Foundation stone for a meteorological observatory was also laid while the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) signed an MoU with NIT-R for academic and research collaboration on the day. IMD's director general of meteorology Mrutyunjay Mohapatra laid the foundation stone and signed the agree-

ment on the sidelines of the four-day conference on 'Land-Atmosphere Interactions Controlling Weather and Climate: Applications of Nu-

merical Models and Observations' being organised by the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences of NIT-R.

The observatory will provide current meteorological information and help forecast weather. Similarly, the AWS will transmit and record observations obtained from measuring instruments. In his inaugural address at the conference as chief



R would help in smooth conduct of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023. States like Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and others are prone to lightning strike. Every year, around 2,500 people die of it. Though the IMD makes forecast, a lot remains to be improved when it comes to understanding lightning strikes, he said. Mohapatra exhorted the technical students and

participants to research more on this area to help save lives. In-charge director of NIT-R Prof Pradip

Sarkar, conference convenor Dr Krishna Kishore Osuri, registrar Prof Rohan Dhiman and head of the host department Jagabandhu Panda also spoke. Around 70 participants from IITs, NITs, Central Universities and many reputed research institutes across the country have joined the conference which will conclude on January 12.

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Overseas Indians sent remittances worth USD 100 billion in 2022: Nirmala Sitharaman



INDORE: Underlining the contribution of non-resident Indians, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said remittances sent to the country by overseas Indians were about USD 100 billion for the year 2022, an increase of 12 per cent in one year. Speaking at a session during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, she described NRIs as the "real ambassadors of India" and appealed to them to use made-in-India products and services as far as possible so that the country's individual brand can be promoted across the globe.

Sitharaman also said that after the "China plus one" policy, the world is now talking about the "European Union (EU) plus one" policy. The government is strongly presenting India to multinational companies as a country where they can set up their factories apart from China and the EU, she said.

Sitharaman said the Indian diaspora should also partner with small and big businessmen in the country so that the entrepreneurial skills of NRIs can be harnessed in the next

25 years during the 'Amrit Kaal' of independence.

"I recognise that remittances, which come from abroad by Indians who migrated, are about 100 billion US dollars for the year 2022. This is one of the highest remittances which is coming," the finance minister said. This has gone up by 12 per cent if compared to 2021, she said.

"Within a year which was post-pandemic, people thought Indian workers will not go back abroad again, they have not only gone back but more have gone for very useful employment and the remittance numbers have gone up by 12 pc within one year," she said. Citing the dominance of Indian professionals in information technology, digital technology, automobiles, semiconductor designing, pharmaceutical manufacturing and other fields, she said the country is becoming a global hub of knowledge and progress.

"In the Amrit Kaal of independence, an aspirational India will focus on four 'I's which include infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusion," she said.

Uttar Pradesh ministers' team visit Chennai, interacts with over 100 entrepreneurs at GIS-23

LUCKNOW: A team of UP ministers, led by state Finance minister Suresh Khanna, held an interactive session evoking a respectable response from potential investors in Chennai on late Monday evening. The team has been in Chennai for the last two days to invite the investors to Global Investors Summit due to take place in Lucknow on February 10-12.

Cabinet Ministers Suresh Khanna and Aseem Arun of the Yogi government along with Ministers of State Narendra Kashyap and Nitin Agarwal attended the session which witnessed the participation of over 100 delegates from various industrial groups based in Chennai. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath through a video message

formally invited entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu to invest in Uttar Pradesh.

As the chief guest, Cabinet Minister Suresh Khanna claimed at the



roadshow that UP had a stable government which changed the perception of the state in the outside world by bringing about sweeping changes in the state policies and making it safe for investment. The minister claimed that the state government had made concerted and

successful efforts to improve infrastructure, communication, road connectivity, law and order in the state.

"The UP government

"Subsidies in various sectors are being extended to promote industries," pointed out Khanna. He said that UP had the safest environment for industrialists

follows a policy of zero tolerance against crime and corruption. UP has the largest cluster of MSMEs", he remarked.

The Uttar Pradesh delegation laid emphasis on how unnecessary laws were abolished to rid the system of red-tapism obstructing industry and trade.

today. Inviting the entrepreneurs to invest in UP, he assured them of honouring their suggestions and providing them with all the necessary facilities.

Earlier, welcoming the entrepreneurs of Tamil Nadu to the roadshow, Minister of State Nitin Agarwal talked about the

Budget to focus on fiscal consolidation; cap fiscal gap at 5.9 pc

MUMBAI: The forthcoming budget is likely to meet the targeted 6.4 per cent fiscal deficit and pencil in for a 50 bps reduction in the same for the next fiscal, according to a foreign brokerage report.

The Modi government will present its last full budget on February 1 as the budget 2024 will be a vote on account because the nation will be heading for the hustings from April next year.

The previous budget had pencilled in a fiscal deficit -- the money the government will have to borrow from the market to meet its expenditure -- of 6.4 per cent.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had recently said she would meet the fiscal targets as budgeted given the more than budgeted tax collections.

The commodities shock forced incremental spending on food and fertiliser subsidies and exhausted the fiscal room from higher tax buoyancy.

That apart, the government has also tabled extra demand for spending before

Parliament, comprising 0.8 per cent of GDP or Rs 2.2 lakh crore in December, mainly towards capital expenditure, rural

year -- sort of walking the fiscal consolidation path.

Their optimism comes from the direct and indirect taxes, which are



development and defence.

Wall Street brokerage Goldman Sachs in a report on Tuesday said it expects the

government to meet the budgeted fiscal deficit target of 6.4 per cent of GDP, with an

expenditure compression to the tune of 0.3 per cent of GDP from the budgeted spending to cushion the incremental subsidies due to the commodity shock.

The brokerage also expects the finance minister to budget for a 50 bps reduction in fiscal deficit for FY24 at 5.9 per cent, fully driven by a reduction in food and fertiliser subsidies and project tax revenues to remain buoyant in the

tracking well ahead of budget estimates, even though the government is set to widely miss the disinvestment target.

The brokerage expects the budget to stick to the medium-term fiscal consolidation path, weigh spending priorities on Capex, manufacturing incentives, subsidies and welfare, and limit its market borrowing to the extent that it does not hurt markets.

Given that it's a pre-

SC expresses concern over non-payment of compensation to victims of Bhopal gas tragedy

Continued from page-1

to how could it reopen the settlement, the bench said, "Settlement has arrived at particular stage of time, can we say 10 years hence or 30 years hence open the settlement on the basis of some fresh documents? why did you settle then? One of the parties to the settlement was the Union of India no less, not a weak party... Let's say, on the other hand, a situation arises that the actual scenario is less horrific than made out to be... Can the other side (UCC) come out and say that an excess amount was paid in the settlement and they want the money back? Can we permit that?" Referring to SCs 1991 decision wherein the top court had refused to reopen the settlement, Justice Oka said that the same had clarified that any shortfall in the additional compensation to be paid to the victims by the centre.

Stressing on increase in the number of claimants since 1991, Attorney General (AG) for India R Venkataramani argued that an extraordinary situation was presented by the tragedy. "There's always situations court has added to settlement if justice of cause demands. We are asking for settlement to be annulled. Amount made over to us was under settlement, figure on number of deaths for temporary damage etc, the figures have gone way more than that," the AG added.

Appearing for UCC, Senior Advocate Harish Salve said that UCC wasn't willing to pay a farthing more if SC sets aside the settlement that was arrived in 1989. "My client is not willing to pay a farthing more. They say this is what they settled for, and if you (government) don't want the settlement, let the law take its course. That is our submission," Salve said.

"There is settlement. There is no re-opener clause in a settlement. There's jurisdictional factor where curative jurisdiction was unknown when all this started, a suit was filed by Ggent which was arrived was based on "consent decree" which was sourced from a suit. He also added that the liability of UCC for the tragedy was not established.

Centre in the plea that was filed in 2010 following a public outcry against the perceived laxity of sentences against the accused's tried for the gas release had sought for enhancing the 1989 settlement agreement which was negotiated by the UOI with UCC and Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) and SC's judgement approving the negotiation.

implemented 25 new policies to create an industry-business-friendly environment.

Besides the bureaucrats accompanying the ministerial

delegation held talks with more than 15 industrialists. They

also made a detailed presentation about the investment opportunities and the facilities available in UP.

Prominent among those present in the road show included the Chairman of FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council and CMD of Trivitron Group GSK Velu, Head of Government Affairs and Public Policy at HCL Group Kirti Karamchandani, Director of Aperon Healthcare, Anita Madala, and Director of Paterson Energy, Amarnath.

the path of continuous progress. Today UP is the second most favourable state in the country in terms of ease of doing business," said the Minister of State (Independent charge) for Excise & Liquor Prohibition.

He shared with the gathering that the UP government had

Gareth Bale retires at 33 with five Champions League titles, many Wales memories

LONDON: Gareth Bale retires from football with his place as one of Britain's greatest players secure after a spectacular career at home and abroad.

The Welshman was once the world's most expensive player when he moved to Real Madrid from Tottenham in 2013 and went on to win the Champions League five times with the Spanish giants.



However, he will be most fondly remembered and loved in his homeland for his achievements in dragging Wales from the wilderness of international football to two European Championships and a first World Cup since 1958.

At the peak of his powers, Bale inspired Wales to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 in their first major international tournament for 58 years.

The 33-year-old leaves the stage with a record 111 caps for Wales and 41 goals -- another record.

"My journey on the international stage is one that has changed not only my life but who I am," Bale said in an emotional open letter to the Welsh supporters.

"The fortune of being Welsh and being selected to play for and captain Wales has given me something incomparable to anything else I've experienced."

- Global star -

Bale's career started at Southampton, where he made his debut aged just 16 and caught the eye during just one full season in the second-tier Championship.

In 2007 he joined Tottenham for an initial fee of £5 million (\$6 million), but his path towards stardom at Spurs was not always a smooth one.

Bale did not taste success in any of his first 24 Premier League appearances for the club over a period of more than two years.

However, he soon began to make his mark as a buccaneering left-back with two games against then reigning European champions Inter Milan in 2010 propelling him into the spotlight.

Players with COVID-19 to be allowed to compete at Australian Open

MELBOURNE: Players at this month's Australian Open will not be required to take COVID-19 tests and will be allowed to compete even if they have the virus, according to tournament director Craig Tiley on Monday.

The health policy, which Tiley said reflected what was going on in the larger community, is a significant departure from the strict protocols that have surrounded the tournament for the past two years.

The 2021 tournament was held in a bio-secure bubble, with spectators barred from entering for several days due to a virus outbreak in the

community, while last year, nine-time champion Novak Djokovic was deported due to his anti-vaccine stance.

"We just wanted to follow what's currently in the community," Skysports



quoted Tiley saying at Melbourne Park ahead of the tournament, which runs from January 16-29. "We have gone a step further by making a recommendation around staying away when you're ill, and

Bale scored a hat-trick despite being on the losing side in a 4-3 defeat at the San Siro before running the Italian giants ragged as Spurs gained revenge in a 3-1 win at White Hart Lane.

He ended that season as the Premier League's players' player of the year and won the award for a second time in 2012/13 once he had been moved into a more advanced attacking role.

- Memories and medals in Madrid - His sensational performances attracted the interest of Madrid, who sought Bale to complement a forward line already boasting Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema in a £85 million deal.

Bale's time in Madrid was filled with moments of brilliance and plenty of medals.

A barnstorming run and finish to win the Copa del Rey against Barcelona and the decisive goal to secure Madrid's long-awaited 10th European Cup lit up his debut season.

An even more spectacular overhead kick turned another Champions League final Madrid's way against Liverpool in 2018.

But Bale started three of his five victorious Champions League finals on the bench -- testament to the fact that he failed to produce the consistent brilliance the Madrid fans, media and his managers demanded.

He lost friends in Spain when he responded to jibes over his priorities and love of playing golf by celebrating Wales' qualification for Euro 2020 with a flag that read: "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that order."

Injuries also took their toll on a player whose devastating impact in his early years was based on a blistering pace.

Bale's playing time at the club level diminished during his latter years at Real Madrid, a loan spell back at Tottenham in 2020/21 and the final six months of his career at Los Angeles FC.

That only made his ability to rise to the occasion at the international level all the more impressive.

His goals in playoff win against Austria and Ukraine completed his final quest -- to play at a World Cup.

He even scored a goal on football's biggest stage by firing home a penalty against the USA, but Qatar was the end of the road for Bale and the end of an era for Welsh football.

that our medical staff will continue to monitor that, with the players individually as well," he further added.

"We've made it clear to our players, as well as our staff if anyone is feeling un-

well, stay home. It's a normalised environment for us and, not dissimilar to cricket, there will potentially be players that will compete with Covid," Tiley added. Talking about cricket,

despite testing positive for Covid, cricketer Matt Renshaw continued to play for Australia in a five-day Test match against South Africa in Sydney last week. The batter was separated from his teammates for the first three days of the match, but after several negative tests, he returned to the home dressing room.

At the height of the pandemic, Melbourne experienced some of the world's longest and most stringent lockdowns, but recommendations have long since replaced mandates as the city's cornerstone of public health policy. Melbourne will host the Australian Open which will begin on January 16.

India thrash Sri Lanka by 67 runs in first ODI, take 1-0 series lead




GUWAHATI: India rode on batting maestro Virat Kohli's 73rd international hundred to beat Sri Lanka by 67 runs in the first ODI and take 1-0 lead in the three-match series here on Tuesday.


Skipper Rohit Sharma slammed 83 off 67 balls while Shubman Gill made a 60-ball 70. Umran Malik (3/57) and Mohammed Siraj (2/30) shared

five wickets between them as India restricted Sri Lanka to 306 for 8 in 50 overs. Captain Dasun Shanaka (108 not out) top-scored for Sri Lanka while Pathum Nissanka contributed 72. Brief Scores: India:

373/7 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 113, Rohit Sharma 83, Shubman Gill 60). Sri Lanka: 306 for 8 in 50 overs (Dasun Shanaka 108 not out, Pathum Nissanka 72, Dhananjaya de Silva 47; Umran Malik 3/57, Mohammed Siraj 2/30).



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