

KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES 2024

The Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is the fourth edition of the annual event in the Khelo India calendar. The Union Territory of Ladakh is making its debut as hosts this year alongside the UT of Jammu & Kashmir, which has organised the Games from 2020. Leh will be the venue for the first part of the Games from February 2-6. The Games are scheduled to move to Gulmarg between February 21-25. While Ladakh will be conducting games -- ice hockey and speed skating -- Jammu and Kashmir will conduct ski mountaineering, Alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic ski and Gandola. The Khelo India Winter Games are part of the Khelo India Mission, a brainchild of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is the PM's endeavour to give importance to all types of Olympic sports and produce a feeder channel of talented sportspersons who can shine for India at the highest levels of sporting excellence.

Importance of taking regular physical exercises

■ TARA CHAND BHAGAT

Through the columns of your esteemed paper I would like to highlighting the importance of taking regular physical exercises. Taking regular physical exercises are as beneficial rather necessary as taking fresh seasonal fruits and fresh balanced foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre that provide fuel for optimal brain function for keeping good health for all. For instance one can get rid of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke. Stepping up the stairs as well as stepping down are a good exercise to keeping healthy heart as heart is an organ that pumps the blood circulating throughout the body thus reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. One need not have taking medicines. Physical exercises also play a very crucial role in the management of blood sugar levels for diabetic patients. Physical exercises also improve the quality of sound sleep. When one gets sound sleep at night, one gets ready for doing any kind of mental work. Moreover physical exercises help promoting thirst of water and appetite i.e. craving for foods we take. These also reduce stress and alleviate fatigue, depression, anxiety and negative thoughts. They don't letting us to be fat and obese. Doing different types of physical exercises one can lead a healthier life than one who doesn't do them. Many a people who get fat, heavy weight and obese taking junk foods direct themselves visiting gymnasium to reducing their obesity. The obesity does get reduced but one becomes de-shaped because of doing over-exercises. Instead of taking oily foods that too full of sugar and other excessive proteins the younger generations are called upon not to be accustomed to fond of such foods as are hazardous putting them to greater health risks than to be healthy ones.

Taking physical exercises is not just whiling away precious time but to take most of the time to develop positive thoughts and meeting other challenges of life recharging their minds mindfully. Besides, yoga is one of the best practical shape of physical exercises. With the deep breathing while doing yoga one can also embrace meditative thoughts towards spirituality that is the sole diet of soul. This also enhances the level of concentration towards spiritual power of God. This is what the time to be happy; the way to be happy and the place to be happy to feel God's existence. God has made us fragrant flowers. Are we spreading sweetness to all? We human beings can only do as such.

Physical exercises cost nothing and need not to have any kind of infrastructure to be applied for in its doing. Only we need to be regular; punctual, and adherence to the right time in the mornings as well as in the evenings. One can refrain from getting vulnerability the infectious as well as contagious diseases. With the regularity of taking physical exercises. Physical exercises enhance physical endurance and sharpen the cerebral focus. As we know physical health is one of the fundamental elements in maintaining our overall fitness and well-being for mental stability. Acrobatism like walking, brisk walking, jogging, running, doubling up and rope jumping are some of the good examples of physical exercises. Physical exercises help making us active, readyman disappearing lethargic habits. Last but not least, these always not only boost ones immunity strongly but also keeping ones away from diseases and also get ones healthy.

INTERIM BUDGET

■ K.V. SEETHARAMAIAH

Being an election year, an interim budget has been presented by the Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman for straight six years. With budget presentation of 6 consecutive years, she has equalled herself with Morarji Desai. Her budget speech was completed in 56 minutes, shortest-ever. Focus is on youth and women empowerment. Fiscal deficit has been target pegged to 5.1 of the GDP, down from the revised estimate (5.8 per cent) in Financial Year 2024. The Income Tax slabs have been kept intact. The salaried class of people are not attractive vote-bank. Therefore, no government evinces much interest in giving relief to the salaried class commensurate with the needs of the day witnessing high inflation. This is an election year. Yet, the Finance Minister is not bothered about the votes of employees. Employees and retired persons are inured to the disappointment at not getting the tax relief. Sumitradhavar on X: "In every Budget poor gets subsidy, rich gets rebate, middle class watch TV and debate". Housing scheme for the deserving middle class, focus on residential tenants, slums, chawls or unauthorized colonies are the features of the interim budget. Capital expenditure has been hiked to 11 per cent to Rs. 11.11 lakh crore. Capital expenditure is for acquisition, upgradation and maintenance of physical assets like property, plants, buildings, technology and equipment. It also includes investments on new projects. Hike in capital expenditure is good investment. The government will borrow Rs. 14.13 crore as against Rs. 15.43 crore in 2024 FY 24 to plug up the fiscal deficit of 5.1 per cent of GDP. The borrowing has been slashed by Rs. 1.30 crore. While borrowings are vital for development, too much and too fast growth of public borrowings places heavy financial burden paying for increased per capita debt. What ails the government from giving some relief by way of tax benefits to the people when crores of rupees have been confiscated from the raids conducted on the people who have hoarded wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income? The on-going raids on the people in possession of wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income must continue irrespective of their political affiliations. From the cash recovered from the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, it can be surmised what has been recovered is only a tip of iceberg. Continued raids can yield much more. The rise in income from unaccounted wealth can be best put for infrastructure development besides giving tax benefits to the middle class. High-powered panel to address population growth challenges and demographic challenges is a well-conceived idea. The burgeoning population in India is not only on account of more and more babies born but also due to illegal migration from the countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh. The growing Muslim population is a challenge and is on the way to change the demographic character of the nation. The government is likely to present a white paper on the mismanagement of the economy prior to 2014. It is necessary to see the difference. What steps have been taken to resurrect the economy must be explained by the government and people are entitled to know how far the steps taken have yielded the better results. The white paper is expected to be presented next week. In the full-fledged budget to be presented after the election, the new government must take steps to give tax relief to the salaried class, contain the price rise and reduce the unemployment problem. Unemployment is the serious issue. It leads many people to swerve from right path.

Renewable Energy: Prospects and Expectations

■ DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

Renewable energy is the energy sources that are naturally replenished on a human timescale and are considered sustainable because they do not deplete the Earth's resources. The main types of renewable energy include: a. Solar Energy: This is energy harnessed from the sun. It can be used directly for heating and lighting homes, for generating electricity, heating water, and even for cooking. Solar energy is captured using solar panels and photovoltaic cells. b. Wind Energy: Wind energy is generated using wind turbines that convert the kinetic energy of the wind into mechanical or electrical energy. Wind farms can be found both onshore and offshore. c. Hydropower (or Hydroelectric Power): This form of energy uses the energy of moving water to produce electricity. It's typically generated by using a dam on a river to store water in a reservoir. Water released from the reservoir flows through a turbine, spinning it, and activating a generator to produce electricity. d. Biomass Energy: Biomass energy is derived from organic materials such as plants and animal waste. These materials can be burned directly for heat or converted into biofuels like ethanol and biodiesel. e. Geothermal Energy: This type of energy is derived from the Earth's internal heat. It can be sourced from shallow ground, hot water, hot rocks, and molten magma. Geothermal power plants harness these heat sources to generate electricity. f. Ocean Energy: This includes both tidal energy, which uses the energy from ocean tides, and wave energy, which harnesses the energy from surface

ocean waves. Benefits of Renewable Energy: a. Environmental Impact: Renewable energy sources produce little to no greenhouse gas emissions during operation, helping to reduce air pollution and combat climate change. b. Sustainability: They are considered inexhaustible on a human time scale. Economic Benefits: Renewable energy can create jobs in manufacturing, installation, and maintenance. It can also contribute to energy independence for a country. Challenges: a. Intermittency: Some renewable energy sources like solar and wind are not always available and the initial investment for renewable energy technologies can be higher than traditional fossil fuels, though costs have been decreasing gradually. b. Land and Resource Use: Certain forms of renewable energy, such as bioenergy and large hydroelectric dams, can have significant land and resource use implications. Future of Renewable Energy: a. Technological Advances: Ongoing improvements in technology are making renewable energy more efficient, reliable, and cheaper. b. Energy Storage: Advances in energy storage, such as batteries, are essential for balancing the intermittent nature of some renewable sources. c. Government Policies and Incentives: Policies and incentives play a crucial role in promoting renewable energy adoption. It is a crucial part of the global strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.

Future of renewable energy The future of renewable energy looks promising and is expected to play a crucial role in global energy systems. The

key trends and projections include: a. Increased Adoption and Growth: Renewable energy sources are projected to continue their growth trajectory. Solar and wind energy, in particular, are expected to dominate the renewable energy landscape due to their decreasing costs and increasing efficiency. b. Technological Advancements: Continued technological innovations are expected in areas like solar panel efficiency, wind turbine design, and energy storage solutions. These advancements will make renewable energy more efficient, affordable, and accessible. c. Energy Storage: The development of efficient and cost-effective energy storage solutions is crucial for addressing the intermittency issues of solar and wind energy. Advancements in battery technology, such as lithium-ion, solid-state, and flow batteries, are anticipated to improve energy storage.

d. Grid Integration and Smart Grids: As renewable energy sources become more prevalent, significant investments in grid infrastructure will be necessary. Smart grids, which use digital technology to manage and respond to fluctuations in energy demand and supply, will be key to integrating renewable energy efficiently. e. Decentralization and Microgrids: The trend towards decentralized energy systems, including microgrids and off-grid solutions, is expected to continue. These systems can be particularly beneficial in remote or under-served areas where traditional grid infrastructure is lacking. f. Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Renewable Synergy: The rise of electric vehicles will increase the demand for clean electricity, further

encouraging the growth of renewable energy. Additionally, EVs could play a role in energy storage and grid stabilization. g. Policy and Regulatory Support: Government policies, international agreements, and incentives will remain critical in promoting renewable energy adoption. This includes carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, and subsidies for renewable energy projects. h. Corporate Investment and Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs): There's a growing trend of corporate investment in renewable energy. Companies are investing in renewable energy projects and purchasing RECs as part of their sustainability strategies. i. Societal Shifts: Increasing public awareness and concern about climate change and environmental issues are driving demand for renewable energy.

Consumer preferences are shifting towards cleaner and sustainable energy sources.

j. Global Collaboration and Development: International collaborations and technological transfers will be important for expanding renewable energy in developing countries.

This not only addresses climate change but also supports economic development and energy access in these regions.

In summary, the future of renewable energy is intertwined with global efforts to combat climate change, technological advancements, economic shifts, and societal trends towards sustainability. It is likely to see significant growth and innovation in the coming decades, making it an increasingly important part of the global energy strategy.

(The author is a youth motivator).

Western media's vituperation against Ram Temple

■ M.R.LALU

Amid shouts of "Jai Shriram" and hysterical sloganeering in spiritual composure, the city of Ayodhya witnessed a truly religious event on January 22. The consecration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya triggered an intense churn of political discourse in India and abroad. There have been numerous write-ups appearing in international dailies questioning the overwrought mobilization by an elected government that stood in unison with the cultural sensitivity of a 'militant majority' in a country that was known, in real sense, for its secular values. Further accusing a particular community and the government at the centre, the vituperative media went on calling the event at Ayodhya a blot on India's existence as a civilization and therefore, should have been sidelined and neglected as the chronology of Ayodhya's journey to this stage of consecration was deeply dampened in blood and hatred. Extreme critical views on the 'Hindu triumphalism', as that is what they call it have appeared in the Washington Post, the Guardian and the Time. The new majoritarian momentum, according to them, has been in emergence in India ever since the Modi regime began to hold the reins of the country and the latest event, the temple consecration was its orchestration. They have only one remark to be made with vociferous malignity that a violent Hindu majoritarianism had almost swallowed the secular essence of India. The country of 1.4 billion is almost at the brink of a doom with its poor minority, especially the Muslims being tortured, bullied and deliberately alienated by an aggressive militant Hindu majority with the support of the present authoritarian government.

The saffron surge, as per the western media, is threateningly growing everywhere and the Muslims are vacating

areas where such forces intensify their presence. The government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has no Muslim representation and the most populous state Uttar Pradesh is governed by a Hindu extremist monk Yogi Adityanath. Cries of Jai Shri Ram became a war-mongering call in almost all cities and the situation is grim with a shadow of animosity hovering over the habitually amiable and secular Muslim population. A Muslim woman journalist who went to report the Ayodhya event was forced to wear a Hindu bindi and she had to leave the event before it culminated, reports the Time magazine. So Ayodhya temple, as the narrative goes, will remain a huge monument of Hindu supremacy symbolizing its violent militancy. In another article the Time refuses to accept the Hindu claim on the historicity of the temple and its remnants buried under the mosque that existed before 1992. It calls the demolition of the controversial structure in 1992 an explosion of Islamophobic violence by a Hindu mob numbering at least 75000 people. Purely blaming the Hindus for the riots that followed after the demolition of the structure which killed about 2000 people, the western media pronounced its judgment on the Hindu majority. A violent Hindu nationalism had catapulted the Modi era to its rise in India in 2014 and Modi surreptitiously watered and furthered this majoritarian aggression. He could manage to enhance his fortunes immensely in his second term in 2019 and the national election 2024 and the temple consecration will be a shot in the arm, a plank that Modi will launch his political gimmickry, the narrative accuses. This being the intellectual acrimony with which the western media handles the Indian sensitivity of Ram, what remains to be seen by them is the reality. The real aura, the ideal that Lord Ram upheld as he ruled his kingdom,

has undoubtedly been a part of India's social discourse for generations through the great epic Ramayana. There hasn't been a speck of doubt with which you would study the glory of Ram. Centuries of agitation for a temple that people believed to have existed in the place of the controversial mosque with archeological evidence accentuating the claim scientifically, the woke media reflect, as usual, their negation calling it a framework of the oppressive Hindu majority. The country's apex court had unequivocally quashed the claims raised by the opposite side and pronounced its verdict favoring a temple at the disputed site. But outrageous on everything that India represents through its cultural legacy, more inflammatory remarks on the consecration and the Prime Minister's statements were tossed by the western media. For instance, let us examine the viciousness in what the Guardian reports. It says, "While the Congress and other opposition parties boycotted the ceremony, they have failed to mount an effective challenge to Mr Modi's dangerous majoritarianism and have at times succumbed to its dominance." The paper, with its colonial calculative approach further estimates that the Modi regime, if repeated for the third time, would rewrite the country's constitution, giving way to a dangerous and violent Hindu India emerging from the laments of a disconsolate minority.

We need to know the level of animosity towards the Hindu population that plays its ugly game in India and abroad. For almost 80 percent of India's Hindu population, the consecration moment was one of the holiest. An event that they believe would be remembered for centuries. Ayodhya would receive the best spiritual makeover throughout this revamping process and millions around the city, irrespective of their religious affinity would be benefitted both social-

ly and economically. The wait for a magnificent temple in the birthplace of their highly venerated Lord was a moment of joy, which was both spiritual and socially elevating. Disregarding the legitimacy of India's legal process, media across various countries began to spit hate against the temple and the Hindus. Alarmingly, there is a visible repugnance to the Indian state, especially to its Hindu heritage. To stretch it further, what causes them to be seriously abhorrent about is the political triumphalism of the Hindu majority which the proponents of wokeism in the west and elsewhere think would successfully pull India giving it a powerful position. Modi is regarded as a persona non grata, who they think is the product of this majoritarian triumphalism that has been in power since 2014. The Hindus after the temple inauguration are expected to shoot their support for Narendra Modi and the western media's unwillingness to accept his rise once again is the principal reason behind their slanderous narratives. Undoubtedly, Ayodhya is going to remain relevant throughout the battle readiness of Modi and his party. That is the threatening aspect that his opposition including the Congress was fearful about. A huge thrust in Modi's popularity was evident as the country joyfully danced in tune with his call for celebrating Ayodhya. Nullifying his severe spiritual austerities for the temple consecration as political gimmickry, the opposition parties lost their chance to join the cultural euphoria that would set the momentum for 2024. Denying India's inclusive majoritarianism outrightly, not only the western media but the naysayers in India also will lose the chance to keep pace with the rise of 'political Hinduism' consolidating its power. This has been a reality that began to vividly lit up India's political horizon with a saffron radiance.

Negative Impact of social media on mental health

■ KULJEET SINGH

This era is dominated by digital connectivity ,Social media platform become an integral part of our lives . In this article i discuss how social media platforms impact of mental Health . In 2023, an estimated 4.9 billion people use social media across the world. The active social media users in India is 33.4% According to figures at the beginning of 2023, more than 69% of adults and 81% of teens use social media daily, with more than 90% of teens using it for more than 4 hours a day. The constant use of social media through smartphones means our brains are exposed to high volumes of stimulation and our neurons are discharge all day , which are responsible for changing the neurological architecture of our brain. reaction to a post, it can trigger the release of dopamine in the brain, the same "reward" chemical that follows winning a game, consumption of alcohol lighting up a cigarette for example ,The more you're rewarded, the more time you want to spend on social media, even if it becomes harmful to other aspects of your life.

How social media effect our brain

Regular usage of social media changing our brain structure, function and cognitive development in the key areas.

1.Attention capacity

While using Social media apps like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and

Snapchat, users are endless scroll of photos, captions, comments, likes and tags. While users are processing this constant influx of information, additional app prompts and notifications are competing for attention and can cause individuals to displace their concentration across multiple incoming media streams. This puts our brains in a constant state of multitasking, thus hindering our ability to focus and shortening our attention span. Heavy social media Users are not able to ignore distraction they are getting distract easily which results decreasing in thinking, reasoning, remembering capacity and shrink part of the brain associated with maintaining concentration .

2.Decreases Memory and Information Processing

Social media affects the content of memories and the capacity of memory. Millions of people use social media to record and share their experiences, but new social apps actually diminish your memory and the moments of the past that you want to preserve.

Researchers believe social media is affecting our transactive memory- the way our brain divides information and decides where to store it. With the advent of social media and smartphone- our brain are not able to remembering of store things effectively and we don't keep as many details about the experience stored internally in our memory.

3.Social and Emotional Responses

Social media is made to be addictive. Each like or positive comment trigger the release of dopamine to our brain, thus creating reward pathways in the brain causing you to desire to getting more and more likes, comments views and retweets, etc. However, the less number of likes and comments can leave us feeling empty, sad, anxious or depressed because our brain isn't getting that hit of dopamine. For the desire of likes and comments we spend lot of time on social media which result in headache hypertension and sleep problem .

4.Increase risk of anxiety and depression disorder

Human beings need face-to-face contact to be mentally healthy. Nothing reduces stress and boosts your mood faster or more effectively than eye-to-eye contact with someone who cares about you. The more you prioritize social media interaction over in-person relationships, the more you're at risk for developing disorders such as anxiety and depression.

How to overcome use of social media

1.Set Clear Goals: Define specific objectives of your life for reducing social media use, such as spending less time scrolling or increasing productivity.

2.Create Time Limits: Establish daily or weekly time limits for social media usage and use built-in app features or third-party apps to enforce them.

3.Designate Tech-Free Zones: Identify certain places like temple mosque and gurudwara etc. where social media use is off-limits, promoting a healthier balance between online and offline activities.

4.Schedule Breaks: Instead of mindlessly scrolling, schedule short breaks specifically for social media to avoid impulsive use throughout the day

5.Prioritize Real Connections: Invest more time in face-to-face interactions or phone calls with friends and family, fostering meaningful connections outside of social media.

6.Unfollow and Unsubscribe: Trim your social media feeds by unfollowing accounts that contribute to negative feelings or excessive content consumption.

7.Turn off notification: Disable non-essential notifications to minimize interruptions and reduce the temptation to check social media constantly.

8.Find alternatives: Identify hobbies or activities that provide fulfillment and replace idle social media time with these healthier alternatives.

9.Track Progress: Keep a log of your social media usage to track improvements and stay accountable to your goals.

10.Seek Support: Share your intentions with friends or family, creating a support system that encourages you to stick to your social media reduction plan.

