writetous.orca@gmail.com

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SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **People who completed their sentence in prison became "inspirational bloggers":** Can a person released after serving prison be an "inspirational internet celebrity"? The question on Chinese social media has sparked up discussion and divided netizens on the ethical value of society or whether people deserve a second chance. According to reports, there has been a spike in content by bloggers who report their release from prison. In response, several platforms like Douyin, Kuaishou have taken up measures to crack down relevant accounts and punish the illegal content in accordance with relevant laws.

- **A novice driver drove into a pond and a family of three drowned:** The incident of a car crashing down the pond in Shangrao, Jiangxi province has attracted the attention of netizens. CCTV footage, showing many rescuers gathered around the pond to drag the car up, was circulated on social media. According to reports, a family of three, including a child who was just over a year old drowned in the incident.

NEWS IN CHINA

- China's population in 2022 marks the first decline in 60 years, marking a turning point for the country's demographic. The reason for the drop has been attributed to China's stringent 'one-child policy' that was imposed in the 1980s due to fear of overpopulation. The policy was abolished in 2016 due to dramatic decrease in the birth rates, and from 2021, couples have been allowed to have three children. The plummeting

- birth rate and death rate that rose to 7.37 per 1000 people last year also contributed to the demographic decline of China. In October 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared boosting the birth rate as a priority, in response to the quickly aging population.

- China's second aircraft carrier, the CNS Shandong, recently carried out a combat training exercise in the South China Sea, according to the People's Liberation Army Navy. A number of J-15 fighter jets took part in an air-defense drill and interception training. CNS Shadong is the largest and most sophisticated naval ship in the PLA navy, commissioned in December 2019 to the South Sea Fleet. During the exercises, the Chinese carrier group also practiced cross-service multidimensional attack and defense on the surface, in the air and underwater. With new J-15 pilots becoming certified for nighttime operations, the drills marked another big step towards forming a systematic combat capability, the PLA Navy reportedly said.

- China has become the first country to pass the threshold of 3 million patents and registered 4.212 million valid patents as of December 2022 in an attempt to become a global innovation power. According to data released by the National Intellectual Property Administration (NIPA) on Monday, the number of high value patents per 10,000 people has reached 9.4 in 2022 as compared to 6.3 at the end of 13th five year plan period (2016-2020). China's patent intensive sector accounts for 12.4 per cent of the nation's GDP employing 6.5 per cent of the workforce which is expected to reach more than 13 per cent by 2025.

- A red notice fugitive, Wang Hanmin has been arrested in Chengdu, Sichuan after 26 years, with the help of the fugitive repatriation and asset recovery office under the central anti-corruption coordination group and its sub branch in Yunnan on Tuesday. The fugitive was a former sales manager of Kunming Cigarette Factory, was suspected of corruption and absconded in fear of crime in 1996. In June 1999, the agency handling the case issued a red notice for him through Interpol. According to a statement on the website of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China and the National Commission of Supervision, Wang Hanmin was brought to justice by police and anti-graft authorities in Kunming, Yunnan.

- Master Yu Hai, a renowned practitioner of Seven Star Praying Mantis and an actor best remembered for his role as the Shaolin Temple's resident martial arts instructor to Jet Li's character in the film "Shaolin Temple," passed away on Monday, at the age of 81. Before his death, Yu Hai starred in more than 20 movies and TV series such as "Shaolin Temple", "North and South Shaolin", "Elder Tongtian", "Taiji Zhang Sanfeng", "New Shaolin Temple", "Grandmaster Taiji", "Taiji Xia'' and so on. His performance as a martial arts instructor of grandmasters in films with his image of humble and kind martial artist was loved by the audiences.

INDIA WATCH

- According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, China's population fell by roughly 850,000 last year, its first drop

since 1961. The drop has brought its population to around 1.41 billion at the end of 2022 as the growth rate hit negative 0.6 per thousand people. The negative growth trend could, in the long run, hit China's labor force, as the share of China's working-age population is projected to fall below 50 per cent by 2045. This drop also makes it more likely that India will become the world's most populous nation this year. As already projected by the United Nations, India's population will reach 1.428 billion and surpass China's 1.425 billion in 2023. While the ageing workforce has become a crisis for China, India has the opportunity to reap the benefits of its "demographic dividend". It falls in the hands of policymakers to take contingent action for the creation of meaningful employment opportunities for the young population. The challenges before India's policymakers are to promote growth that generates jobs outside the agriculture sector and use the surplus labor in manufacturing and modern services where average incomes are comparatively higher. Investment bank Espirito Santo warned back in 2013 that without proper implementation of structural changes related to education and employment, the young population could very well give rise to social unrest.