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# Summit TIMES

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State-Level Independence Day celebration in Gangtok

## Sikkim Rajya Khel Purashkar to mark I-Day from 2022, announces CM

### CM ANNOUNCES

1. The Government will start Chief Minister's Fellowship Programme, in the form of scholarship, to 100 best students selected by the Education Department every year from 2022 onwards. Such students will be attached to any Government or corporate sector of their choice and trained for one year. The CM directed the Education Department to work out the modalities.
2. A cash award of Rs. 5 (five) lakhs to Arjuna Awardee and Padmashree-Tarundeep Rai from the Chief Minister's Fund for his participation and performance in the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics. The award will be presented to Ace Archer Tarundeep Rai on the occasion of National Sports Day which falls on 29th August. **turn to pg02**



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 15 AUG:**

The State level 75th Independence Day celebration was held at Manan Kendra in Gangtok, today. In view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic scenario, the celebration was held on a smaller scale this year while adhering to Covid-19 safety protocols and social distancing

measures with lesser invitees.

A press release from the Information and Public Relations Department informs that the event was streamed live through various digital platforms of the State Government which was facilitated by the State IT Department, IPR Department and NIC to reach out to the people across Sikkim and the nation.

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang, present as the chief guest, unfurled the National Flag, amidst the National Anthem tune by the Sikkim Police Band. Thereafter, the Chief Minister received the National salute presented by the Sikkim Police contingent.

The event had the presence of Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Legisla-

tive Assembly, Advisors, Chairpersons, Chief Secretary, DGP, Heads of Departments and officials from the Army along with health, police and GMC frontline

### FELICITATIONS

During the Independence Day celebration, Chief Minister, PS Tamang handed over awards and Certificate of Appreciation to individuals for making a distinct mark in their respective fields.

Following is the list of the recipients:

1. State Meritorious Service Award:
  - i) Special Secretary, BhimThatal, Education Department
  - ii) Additional Director, Normit Lepcha, Social Justice and Welfare Department
  - iii) Sub Divisional Magistrate, Robin Sewa, Gangtok, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.
  - iv) Deputy Director, DrIndraBir Singh Yadav, Skill Development Department.
  - v) Office Superintendent, Ongmu Bhutia, Law Department.
  - vi) Sub-Inspector, Chandra Bahadur Gurung, Sikkim Police

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workers who were special invitees on the occasion.

The programme also had the presence of the Secretary, Ministry of DoNER, **turn to pg02**

### Anju Tamang to attend AFC Women's Asia Cup camp



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Sikkimese footballer, Anju Tamang will be attending the national football camp to be held at Jamshedpur for the forthcoming AFC Women's Asia Cup 2022.

Sikkim Football Association has congratulated Anju Tamang on being selected for the Senior Women's National Football Team for a preparation camp to be held at Jamshedpur in view of the forthcoming AFC

Women's Asia Cup 2022.

An SFA press release issued by its president, Menla Ethenpa, mentions that Anju is a talented woman footballer from Sikkim and is a product of Mangalbaria Girls Academy, West Sikkim. She is an employee working with Indian Railways and is presently posted in Bihar.

Thomas Dennerby has been named Chief Coach for the team. The championship is likely to be held from 20 January to 06 February 2022.

## TMC celebrates Khela Hobe Diwas in North Bengal



### SMRITA KHAWAS

**DARJEELING, 16 AUG:**

Khela Hobe Diwas, initiated by Government of West Bengal was observed at Darjeeling today with a friendly football match after the Chief Minister announced to observe Khela Hobe Day on 16 August all over the state across 117 Munici-

palties, 6 Corporations, 144 Wards & GTA area to promote fitness and healthy lifestyle.

"We the Municipality of Darjeeling organised this football tournament in Darjeeling on the auspicious day of Khela Hobe Diwas today after the Chief Minister announced to observe

Khela Hobae Day on 16 August," said UDC Darjeeling Municipality, Ravi Mangar.

A similar event was organized by the Mirik sub-divisional office, GTA Youth Welfare Department and the Mirik Municipal office today.

Mirik Municipal chairman, LB Rai said

that the Khela Hobe Day was also observed in Mirik in memory of those who lost their lives in a football match between Mohan Bagan and East Bengal at Eden Gardens on 16 Aug, 1980. A two-minute silence was observed in memory of those who lost their lives.

### By-election for Arithang-II ward on 17 Sept

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

State Election Commissioner announced today. Model Code of Conduct has come into force with announcement of the dates and the last date for filing nominations is 23 Aug. Scrutiny is scheduled for 24 Aug, while the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is 26 Aug.

Counting is scheduled for 19 Sept. There are 3,632 electors in Arithang-II, 1,898 male and 1,734 female.

17 Sept, the State Election Commissioner announced today.

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There are 3,632 electors in Arithang-II, 1,898 male and 1,734 female.

## Viral Hepatitis Control Prog awaits proper implementation even as inconvenience, and even avoidable deaths, continue: SDUF

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Sikkim Drug Users' Forum [SDUF] rued today that the Sikkim State Viral Hepatitis Control Program continues to be delayed despite two years into its launch in the State.

On the same, SDUF has urged Chief Minister PS Tamang and also the Health Minister, Dr MK Sharma, to look into the matter and pass directions for immediate and proper implementation of the

program. Their leadership was required for the viral hepatitis program in the state to be able to achieve the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis from Sikkim by 2030.

Sikkim Drug Users' Forum is a community-led action for the health and associated rights of the people who use drugs.

An SDUF press release contends that the Sikkim State Viral Hepatitis Control Program's implementation was

crucial but has been allowed to languish in a deplorable condition as services for patients seeking viral hepatitis testing and treatment are delayed, neglected, and compromised.

It adds that such delays have resulted in avoidable deaths.

The release alleges that poor planning and failure to scale-up testing & treatment has resulted in expiry of more than 4,600 bottles of Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C drugs

received under the national program even as patients have died without access to these life-saving drugs which are expensive in the open market.

And the problems continue. "Currently, patients under the Hepatitis B and C treatment will face drug shortage if the procurement doesn't happen before 20 August 2021 and such major lapse occurred due to the poor coordination and planning and if these patients do not receive the required

Hepatitis B & C drugs on time, it will serve as a huge setback on their wellbeing and health," the release states.

The release mentions that the programme was launched in Sikkim in August 2019 by the Health Minister, who, along with the Health Department, had assured robust implementation, including the establishment of a viral-load testing lab in the State and provision of necessary human resource.

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## Sikkim records lowest daily cases of the second wave! And no new Covid deaths!!

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Sikkim recorded only 20 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, the lowest number it has recorded in the second wave of the virus thus far. The low count is thanks primarily to the lower number of tests conducted yesterday owing to the double-holiday that it was - Independence Day and a Sunday, but despite that, it is still a number which should bring at least some psychological relief to the State which has had a rough time with Covid's second wave.

The record for the lowest number of daily cases in the second wave was held thus far by 26 April, 2021, when 23 new cases were reported. 26 April was also a Monday and the statistics released on the day were for tests conducted the previous day when fewer samples are screened. 26 April was also very early into the second wave, which this newspaper takes as having begun on 22 April, and infections had only just begun at the time and even realization had not set in that the second wave had struck.

Be that as it may, as per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, the 20 new

cases were picked up from the screening of 302 samples on Sunday giving the State a daily test positivity rate of 6.6%.

Sikkim's count of confirmed cases of COVID-19 now stands at 28,726.

While six cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 129 samples, 14 more persons tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 171 samples.

Of the new cases, nine were registered in East District, nine in West District, one in South District and one in North District.

What is also welcome is that Sikkim recorded no new COVID deaths in the last 24 hours. Sikkim's Covid death toll continues to hold at 361, a graph that has not moved for two consecutive days now.

In the meantime, the State also registered 147 new recoveries improving the count of recovered cases to 26,018.

There are currently 2,068 active cases of Covid in State, of whom only 103 are currently in hospital and the rest with symptoms mild enough for them to recover under home or facility isolation. Of those in hospital, five were admitted in the last 24 hours while six are currently admitted in the ICU at STNM Hospital and four in the ICU at Central Referral Hospital.

## Govt should make LT seat reservation formula public: LTVC demands

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Limboo Tamang Voluntary Committee [LTVC] has also demanded that the State government make its formula of Assembly seat reservation for Limboo and Tamang public. The organisation further demands that the state government clarify whether the reservation formula is based on 32 seats, 40 seats or 60 seats which has been submitted to the Centre.

An LTVC press release alleges that Chief Minister, PS Tamang is playing with the sentiments of Limboo and Tamang communities. After failing to pass any resolution on the LT seat reservation in the State Assembly from

2019 to 2021, the CM is now suddenly claiming to have submitted the seat formula, the release states.

Stating that when it was in the opposition, the SKM party had placed a resolution in the State Assembly to provide seats for Limboo and Tamang from the existing 32 seats, the organisation has stressed that the SKM government should place its demand on the basis of the same resolution.

The release further states that until the state government passes a proposal to provide seats for LT from the existing 32 seats and annuls the Burman Commission report of the previous government, LT would remain deprived of their constitutional rights.



## I-Day at New Raj Bhavan



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 15 AUG:

Governor Ganga Prasad unfurled the National flag while ITBP personnel attached to Raj Bhavan presented the Guard of Honor to the flag in a brief ceremony held at New Raj Bhavan premises on 15 Aug, 2021, a press

release informs.

A cultural program was held at Ashirvad Hall of Old Raj Bhavan in the evening. During the function, Arjuna awardee, Padma Shri Tarundeep Rai and Paratrooper Sonam T Tamang, who was awarded with Shourya Chakra, were felicitated by Raj Bhavan.

## I-Day celebrated at Yuksam

### PRITAM LAMA YUKSAM, 15 AUG:

Despite intermittent rain, Yuksam Sub-divisional Magistrate office in West District of Sikkim joined the rest of the Nation in celebrating the country's 75th Independence Day on Sunday.

The I-Day function was held at Yuksam SDM office premises following COVID-19 protocols. The function was attended by Sikkim Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker-cum Yuksam-Tashiding MLA, Sangay Lepcha as the chief guest while Buddhist spiritual leader Tulku Khyentse Serta Rinpoche was the guest of honour.

The chief guest hoisted the National flag and received the guard of honour from Sikkim Police.

MLA, Sangay Lepcha,

in his address, extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim and fellow countrymen on the 75th Independence Day. He spoke in brief about the significance of celebrating Independence Day and the importance of upholding peace and tranquility in the state.

Prizes were presented to the winners of an online quiz competition organized by Yuksam Senior Senior Secondary school among students in different categories.

The Independence Day message of the Governor and the Chief Minister were read out by the Yuksam SDM, Tshering T. Bhutia and BDO, Samber Man Limboo, respectively.

Yuksam school students also presented cultural performances on the day.

## Kabi BAC celebrates Independence Day



### WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 15 AUG:

The 75th Independence Day was celebrated at Kabi BAC under Kabi Sub-Division, North Sikkim on 15 Aug with Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia, as the chief guest.

On the occasion, the

Minister presented citation along with cash reward to school toppers from KGSSS. The toppers are TsetenTashi Bhutia [Class X] and Sonam Lepcha [Class XII].

The entire event was held following strict COVID guidelines.

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### Sikkim Rajya Khel...

Government of India, DrInderjit Singh, who along with his spouse, were special guests on the occasion.

The CM, in his address, extended his warmest greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Independence Day 2021. Expressing great honour and reverence, he paid tribute to the freedom fighters who fought valiantly for the war of independence thereby freeing India from the colonial British rule while giving special mention to Sikkimese freedom fighter, Late Helen Lepcha.

The Chief Minister took the opportunity to highlight the state government's various works on providing basic needs to the society with the main focus being the sectors of health and education, the release mentions.

He also informed that the extension of the campus of Sikkim University for Master's Degree Courses in different colleges of Sikkim has been initiated. The budget has already been allocated

for the construction of Sikkim State University at TemiTarku in South Sikkim. The State government has also acquired 100 acres of land for the National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Khamdong, he stated.

The CM extended gratitude to the people of Sikkim for extending support during these inevitable hours of crisis and applauded the dedicated services provided by frontline warriors in all sectors for their patience, forbearance, cooperation and support during both waves of the pandemic.

The CM also presented Certificates of Participation to Home Stay Owners in the State who participated in the four-day Home Stay Congress (Seminar) organized in Okharey, West Sikkim from 04to 08 April, 2021.

During the programme, the digital launch of Sikkim Urban GaribAwasYojana(SUGAY), the first fully State-sponsored urban housing scheme was also held, the release informs.

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 16 AUG:

The Independence Day Celebration Forum (Virtual) 2021, Namthang-Rateypani, South Sikkim celebrated the Independence Day at the Auditorium, Bal Krishna Kasaju Sr Sec School on 15 Aug, strictly following the Covid-19 guidelines, a press release informs.

Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha, Sikkim), Indra Hang Subba was the chief guest.

The celebration was virtually participated by students, parents and teachers of different schools under Namthang block on zoom cloud meeting. The recorded dance videos, songs, Independence Day messages performance of students and artists were displayed online as no entries were allowed for person without covid vaccine, children's below 18 years age, no food were served inside the hall to avoid any physical contacts with the people attending days function.

The IDCf (V) had organised this year's Independence Day by organising different online events based on patriotism, covid-19 pan-



dem on competitive mode for students of the Namthang-Rateypani area that included patriotic dance, essay, songs, art, soliloquy, innovations, etc. in which more than 1000 students from nursery to PG participated through online modes of communication.

The competition began on 01 Aug, 2021 and results were declared on 15 Aug, 2021 by Mr Subba for four different categories (sub-junior, junior, senior and special category). Diwash Chandra Rai of NIT Sikkim won the 1st prize in senior category for his digital art, Ananiya Ghimiray took 1st position in junior category for her yoga performance, Daisy

Sanker won 1st prize in sub junior category (patriotic song) and Managhang Limboo (child with special needs) won in special category. The prizes included 2nd and 3rd in all categories while Special Prizes for 51 students and e-certificate to all 841 participants.

The IDCf (V) felicitated six different individuals for their contributions in varied fields of interest and provided Certificate of Appreciation to different Institutions for their helps and support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

MP, Indra Hang Subba in his addressed stressed on the importance of online mode of education and urged the students, stake-

holders to adopt this method of teaching-learning as this phenomenon will now become part of daily life even after the normalcy returns as this means is more time and cost effective.

The IDCf (V) working team consisted of educated youth from Namthang-Rateypani area whose prime focus was to create such online platforms for the students, understand the difficulties faced by the them and work on programs that will help to bring new innovations, develop scientific temperament, inculcate the feelings of patriotism and contribute immensely towards the development of the human civilisations through collective efforts of all stakeholders.

## I-Day at Gyalshing

**GYALSHING, 15 AUG (IPR):** The 75th Independence Day celebration organized by the District Administrative centre (DAC), Rabdentse had the presence of Minister for Energy & Power and Labour Department, MN Sherpa as the chief guest.

The programme commenced with the chief guest unfurling the national flag amidst the tune of National Anthem played by Nehru Yuwa Kendra, Gyalshing. The guard of honour was exhibited by the Police department of West District.

Thereafter, the message of Governor of Sikkim was read out by the District Collector(W), Karma R Bonpo and the message of the Chief Minister of Sikkim was read out by Anant Jain, SDM(HQ) West.

On the occasion, Chairman Contractor Association, NB Dahal and Chairman, SIDICO, Janak Gurung was present as the Guest of honour along with TW Bhutia, SP, West.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister, MN Sherpa paid heartfelt tribute to the freedom fighters and acknowledged the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian warriors.

SDM, Anant Jain, HQ presented a power point presentation in detail on the infrastructural upgradation done by the District Administration in various fields under the leadership DC West. The video campaign of Nasha Mukta Bharat was also telecast.

On the occasion, DC West was



presented a letter of appreciation by Darap Senior Secondary School for his selfless support in enhancing the education system in West District.

Certificates of Meritorious Service were conferred to the following Police personnel of West District: PI, Tara Sharma (SHO/Nayabazar); ASI, Devendra Khatiwada (I/C, Darap, OP); and Constable, Amit Dahal.

The felicitation and appreciation letter were also presented to the following officers and employees of West District to honour and motivate them for rendering their sincere service towards the welfare of the department.

1. Rukma Lall Sharma, LR&DMD (Certificate of Meritorious service)
2. Gopal Prasad Sharma, Education Department (Letter of felicitation)
3. Rebecca Lama, Health Department (Letter of Felicitation)

4. B. B Basnett, Health Department (Letter of Felicitation)
5. Ahangma Limboo, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
6. Rabzang Chaktha, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
7. Sabin Tewari, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
8. Kinzang Bhutia, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
9. Khushang Subba, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
10. Bal Krishna Dhakal, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
11. Premika Chettri, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
12. Deepak Gurung, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
13. Arjun Rai, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation)
14. Rupen Sharma, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation) and
15. Indisha Bhattarai, Power Department (Letter of Appreciation).

cal and social infrastructure. A total of 260 flats will be constructed in the municipal areas of Gangtok (150 units), Nayabazaar-Jorethang (40 units) and Gyalshing (70 units).

A three-storied building under the Shelter for Houseless Households (SHH) comprising of the male and female dormitory with a total capacity for 40 inmates, kitchen, dining, office and a caretaker's quarters will also be constructed and integrated into the social house complex at Gangtok. This will provide dignified shelter to the destitute. The total cost of the project is Rs. 15686.93 lakhs.

The CM handed over the proposed orders for Individual House Construction to three beneficiaries namely Pema Eden Bhutia (Arithang), Pushpa-Tamang (Jorethang), BinitaChettri and Chandra Bdr Chettri (Tadong).

The programme also featured patriotic songs presented by artists of the Culture Department, Government of Sikkim.

### Viral Hepatitis Control...

"As of today, even after a lapse of two years, the assurance given has not translated into reality, as the supposedly free viral hepatitis program remains a rather compromised health chapter in terms of actual implementation," the release stresses.

SDUF highlights that it is unfortunate that the State Government was still dependent on North Bengal Medical College for viral load tests for Hepatitis-C and DNA count for Hepatitis-B and patients were compelled to travel to Siliguri for such diagnostics. In this scenario, some patients had no option but to opt for private sector diagnostics at huge financial burden.

SDUF adds that, at the launch, the Health Minister had assured establishment of a viral load testing lab in Sikkim in recognition of the existing inconvenience and expense to patients. The assurance continues to await proper delivery.

The release adds that after continuous demands, the viral load test for Hep-C and DNA count for Hep-B was established but tests are conducted only once a week. It is added that such limited service results in low number of testing and that translates into fewer patients being initiated on treatment.

The planning and action of the government exposes the lack of urgency, and suggests that concerns of the people are not considered priority by the Health Department, SDUF contends.

The release claims that the viral Hepatitis Program in the state has been further compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic and argues that one health crisis should not affect other health crises and both pandemics should have been addressed with equal priority.

"Sikkim Drug Users' Forum and its members as a beneficiary of the services and support group for the vulnerable and marginalised community have express the concern, challenges and also provided all the support and expertise on effective implementation of the hepatitis program but it is unfortunately that the Health Minister and the officials of the health department failed in its commitment, lack leadership that was promised during the launching and forgot the very goal to prevent morbidity and mortality resulting out viral hepatitis," the release alleged

### CM ANNOUNCES...

3. A cash award of Rs. 3 (three) lakhs to SandhyaGurung, personal coach/trainer of Indian Boxer LovlinaBorgohain from Assam who won the bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics.

4. From 2022 onwards, on the occasion of Independence Day every year, the Government will present an award called 'Sikkim RajyaKhelPurashkar' to the three best sportspersons from Sikkim in any sporting field. The first award will be a cash award of Rs. 5 (five) lakhs, the second prize will be a cash award of Rs. 3 (three) lakhs and the third prize would be a cash award of Rs. 2 (two) lakhs. The entire education expenditure of these sportspersons after their selection would be borne by the State Government. The Sports Department was directed to prepare a detailed plan, including the selection procedures.

5. Before the Dussheera (Dasain) festival in October, the pending 11% Dearness Allowance (DA) will be released to the State Government employees.

### FELICITATIONS...

- vii) Assistant Sub-Inspector, Mani Kumar Sunar,Sikkim Police.
- viii) Assistant Sub Inspector, Jahar Singh Chettri,Excise Department.
- ix) Driver, RatanChettri, Commerce and Industries Department
2. Fire Service Medals for Meritorious Service awarded by MMA:
  - i) Assistant Sub Fire Officer, Karma Tenzing Bhutia – awarded on the occasion of Republic Day, 2018.
  - ii) Assistant Sub Fire Officer, Deo Kumar Sadhu - awarded on the occasion of Independence Day, 2018.
3. Certificate of Appreciation:
  - Presented to Medical Specialist and Head of Department, Dr BN Sharma,Medicine, STNM Hospital, for his dedicated and selfless service and continuous management of the COVID dedicated Hospital since 2020.

As per communication received from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Additional DGP, Sikkim Police, N Sridhar Rao has been awarded the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, on the occasion of Independence Day, 2021.

Likewise, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Sikkim, Zamyang-Tashi Bhutia, has been conferred with the Fire Service Medal for Meritorious Service, on the occasion of Independence Day, 2021.

### BEFORE THE OATH COMMISSIONER OF SIKKIM AT GANGTOK

#### AFFIDAVIT/SELF DECLARATION

(FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF WIDOWS OF DECEASED SOLDIERS AND CHANGE OF NAME OF WIVES OF VETERANS AND SERVING SOLDIERS).

I, Mrs Munu gurung is legally wedded spouse of No\_5456854P Rank HAV Name Sunil gurung, permanent resident of Dong Busty Rameng-Nizrameng Perbing South Sikkim and presently residing at HQ 17 Mountain Division Camp, Gangtok, East Sikkimdo hereby solemnly affirm and state on Oath as follows:-

- a) That I have changed my name from Mrs Munu gurung to Mrs Munu Rai due to updation of documents. That my date of birth is 13/07/1984(thirteen July Nineteen Eighty four ).
- b) That I am producing this affidavit for the purpose of evidence for my name.
- c) That both names Mrs Munu gurung and Mrs Munu Rai pertain to one and same person.
- d) that, I shall at all times hereafter in all records, deeds and sriting and in all proceeding dealing with transactions, private as well as under all occasions what so ever be known only Mrs. Munu Rai.
- e) That what is stated above is true and correct to best of my knowledge information and belief. Nothing material has been concealed there from.

Sd/-  
Munu Rai  
DEPONENT.



# First meeting of SVEEP Core Committee held

**GANGTOK, 16 AUG (IPR):** The first meeting of the District SVEEP Core Committee for East District was held today in the conference hall of District Administrative Centre, Sichey, Gangtok.

The meeting was chaired by District Collector, East, Ragul K, the Chairperson of the Committee. The meeting had the presence and participation of ADC (East) Tushar G. Nihare, ADC (HQ) Hemant Rai, ADC (Development) of Gangtok and Pakyong, SDM (East) and SDM (HQ), BDOs, Under Secretary, Election Department, and Members of the Core Committee.

The District SVEEP Core Committee comprises ADC East, Director PIB, Head of Programme Door-darshan Gangtok, Head of Office AIR Gangtok, State Coordinator NYK, DIO East IPR, NSS Officer,



Media House Correspondents, and Under Secretary Election Department.

The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation program, better known as SVEEP, is the flagship program of the Election Commission of India for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India. Started in 2009, the programme has been directed towards prepar-

ing India's electors and equipping them with basic knowledge related to the electoral process.

The main motto of SVEEP is 'Greater Participation for a Stronger Democracy'. SVEEP's primary goal is to build a truly participative democracy in India by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections. The programme is based on multiple gen-

eral as well as targeted interventions which are designed according to the socio-economic, cultural and demographic profile of the state as well as the history of electoral participation in previous rounds of elections and learning thereof.

The District Collector briefed the Committee about the objective of SVEEP and the role of the Committee. He stressed on the need to use appro-

priate media campaigns to educate the masses about the summary revision of the electoral rolls and the importance of voting. He also stressed on the need to provide education and necessary assistance to people who need special support.

The ADC East apprised about initiatives being taken such as Electoral Literacy Clubs in Schools, Youth Ambassadors in Colleges, and Chuno Pathshala in the polling stations.

Members of the Core Committee presented their ideas and suggestions during the meeting.

After the SVEEP Core Committee Meeting, the District Collector convened a meeting of the EROs and AEROs and briefed them about the activities lined up for the preparation for the forthcoming summary revision of electoral rolls.

## 7th Installation Ceremony of Rotaract Club of Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 15 AUG:**

Rotaract Club of Gangtok Hills, Youth Wing of Rotary Club of Gangtok South completed their 7th Installation Ceremony on 15 Aug, 2021. Pintu Sharma was collared as the President and Nim Tshering Bhujel was collared as the Secretary, a press release informs.

The event was attended by Gopal Chettri, President of Rotary Club of Gangtok South and Prakash Sundas, Rotaract Club Chairperson and the Installation Officer.

Prakash Sundas felicitated 4 club members and 2 co-club members for their services for Rotaract 3240 Cares.

On the day, the Club celebrated Independence Day by cutting a cake at the installation venue followed by distributing sweets to residents of Mayalmu shelter home.

Keeping the current situation of Covid19 in mind, the club invited only a few people to the event and followed all the required protocols. Interactors, Rotaractors and Rotarians were also present in the event.

## Lingi-Payong school keeps I-Day low-key but still significant

**SUMMIT REPORT  
LINGI PAYONG, 16 AUG:**

Lingi Payong Secondary School celebrated Independence Day in a simple manner with a hoisting of the Tricolor at the school premises by the school in-charge, Satyendra Singh, in the presence of a few teachers, students and parents.

The celebration this year was kept low-key due to the pandemic and subsequent school closure, nevertheless, virtu-



al activities were organised for students.

Competitions were organised for students divided in five groups:

Group 1 (Class LKG-UKG), Group 2 (Class I-III), Group 3 (Class IV-V), Group 4 (Class VI-VIII) and Group 5 (Class IX-X).

Activities, mostly based on the theme of Independence Day were organised with the help of teachers Yog Kumar Bhandari (GTA), Pemkit Lepcha (GTL), Goma Sharma (GTS) and non-teaching staff Manoj Gautam, Ranjita Adhikari, Arpan Tiwari, Ghanshyam Khatiwara, Namrata Dhakal and Amrita Rai.

## I-Day at Soreng

**SORENG, 15 AUG (IPR):** As the nation celebrated the 75th Independence Day, the sub-division of Soreng too joined in the celebration at the Swarna Jayanti Ranga Manch Auditorium Hall of Government Senior Secondary School, Soreng while maintaining all the norms and guidelines of the Covid-19 issued by the State Government.

The chief guest for the occasion was the Minister of Public Health Engineering and Water Resources Department, Bhim Hang Limboo. On his arrival, the chief guest was accorded the Guard of Honour at the premises of the Government Senior Secondary School where he hoisted the National Flag attuning to the National Anthem. This was followed by a short celebratory program in the school auditorium wherein Ranjan Rai warmly greeted and welcomed the esteemed guests and the invitees. This was followed by the Governor's Independence Day message read by Gayas Pega.

The SDM (Soreng), Ranjan Rai then read out the Independence Day message of the Chief Minister.

The Press Advisor to CM, CP Sharma in his address thanked the army personnel for their selfless contribution towards their nation.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister, Bhim Hang Limboo extended his best wishes on the occasion of the 75th Independence Day of the nation. He briefly spoke about the contributions and sacrifices made by our freedom fighters for which the fellow countrymen are indebted forever.

The Administration had organized competitions for school students under various themes. Following are the list of awardees from the competitions:

1. Senior Secondary Essay Competition.  
Topic: "Our Soreng as a District- My vision"  
Winner: Teegan

Subba, Government Senior Secondary School, Soreng

2. Secondary Essay Competition.

Topic: "Impact of Online Classes- Present and Future prospects"

Winner: Amitya Chettri, Government Senior Secondary School, Kamling

3. Junior level Nepali Poem Writing Competition

Topic: Novel Covid-19

Winner: Resmika Chettri, Government Senior Secondary School, Buriakhop

4. Primary level Painting Competition

Topic: "Independence Day"

Winner: Palsang Dolma Tamang, Government Primary School, Tambudara.

The programme also saw the felicitation of the Head of Office of the Covid-19 frontline workers from all the concerned departments by presenting them the ceremonial khadas and mementoes as a token of appreciation.

## Sant Nirankari Mandal undertakes tree plantation at Sichey

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Sant Nirankari Mandal, Gangtok branch, Sikkim, organised a Tree plantation programme at the premises of their new Satsang Bhawan at Sichey to mark the death anniversary of their previous Lord Master Satguru Baba Avtar Singh Ji Maharaj on 16 Aug, 2021, a press release informs.

Near about 15-20



saints of the mission gathered to attend the programme. Also present were Rev Saint LN Ad-

hikari ji and our Sanyojak Bahen Rev Meena Chettri ji. Total of 21 plants were planted during the day.

# UDID awareness and enrolment drive at Soreng

**SORENG, 16 AUG (IPR):** The department of Social Justice and Welfare in coordination with the Department of Health and Family Welfare (Soreng) conducted an awareness and enrolment seminar on Unique Disability ID (UDID) at the Community Hall, today.

The team led by the Joint Secretary, SJ&WD, Abinash Rai briefed the participants about the nationwide project being implemented with a view to create a National Database for Person with Disabilities (PwDs) and to issue a Unique Disability Identity Card to each person with disabilities.

The issued card will not only bring transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering the Government benefits to the PwDs but also ensures uniformity, he added.

It may be informed that the online enrolment will be done by the

officials of SJ&WD after the submission and verification of the mandatory documents mentioned below:

1. Disability certificate along with the type and percentage of disability issued by the Medical Board, certified by the Doctor.

2. Address and ID proof such as Aadhar or Voter Card, Bank account passbook (having address details).

3. One recent coloured passport size photograph.

If a person does not possess a disability certificate, then he/she may obtain one from their respective district hospitals along with the certification done by the Doctor.

Abinash Rai said that the main objective of the campaign was to enable the enrolment of PwDs in order for them to avail schemes & benefits laid

by the Government.

He informed that as of today 5767 disability certificates have been issued which roughly covers around 32% of the disabled population in the State.

"Our aim is to reach out to 100% of the disabled population in our State; General awareness through various media platforms have already been done but on-field enrolment is necessary", he added.

UDID Co-ordinator, Sameer Pradhan informed that the enrolled individual can avail the paper copy of UDID card which will contain the unique eighteen-digit number through UDID portal website and the PVC card will be available at the respective Social Welfare Offices.

The next awareness campaign will be conducted on the 18th of August in Gyalshing.

## SLSA celebrates I-Day in Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Sikkim State Legal Services Authority [SLSA] celebrated the 75th Independence Day in its office premises at Development Area, Gangtok, on 15Aug, strictly complying with social distancing norms in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, and, as per the Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, a press release informs.

Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, hoisted the National Flag on the occasion, which was followed by the Guard of Honour and rendition of the National Anthem by Officers and Staff of the Sikkim SLSA.

The function was also attend-

ed by former Managing Director, SIDICO, Roger R Rai, Spouse of her Ladyship, Ld Registrar, High Court of Sikkim, Additional Advocate General, Government of Sikkim, Judicial Officers, Legal Remembrancer-cum-Secretary, Law Department, Government of Sikkim, Designated Senior Advocates, High Court of Sikkim, Member Secretary, Sikkim SLSA, Panel Advocates, Sikkim SLSA, Officers and Staff of High Court of Sikkim & Sikkim SLSA and electronic media.

The Sikkim SLSA has uploaded the program on YouTube and Facebook to enable members of the Bar, Officers and Staff and interested members of the public to watch the program. A page has been created on Facebook under the name "Sikkim State Legal Services Authority".

## High Court of Sikkim celebrates I-Day

**GANGTOK, 15 AUG (IPR):** The High Court of Sikkim celebrated the 75th Independence Day in its premises at Gangtok on 15Aug, 2021.

The National Flag at the High Court of Sikkim was unfurled by Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari, Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim, which was followed by rendition of the National Anthem. Chief Justice also received Guard of Honour from Sikkim Armed Police.

On the occasion, the Judges of the High Court

of Sikkim, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai and Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan were present.

Registrar General, Registrar, District Judges, Judicial Officers, Addl Advocate Generals, LR-cum-Law Secretary, Senior Advocates, Executive Members of the Bar Association of Sikkim and Sikkim High Court Bar Association, officers of Sikkim SLSA, Sikkim Judicial Academy and the officers and staff of the High Court were also present.

## JUS carries out cleanliness drive on I-Day



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 15 AUG:**


On the occasion of the 75th Independence Day of the country, Journalists Union of Sikkim carried out a cleanliness drive from its office premises till Hungry Jack junction on 15 Aug, 2021. The drive saw active participation of journalists led by JUS president,

Bhim Rawat.

The drive is a way of giving back to the society and also to spread awareness on cleanliness, according to JUS.

Mr Rawat highlighted how cleanliness is the duty of every citizen and not just the government. He said that JUS will initiate similar activities in the future as well.

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 <b>GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM</b> <b>EDUCATION DEPARTMENT</b> <b>DIRECTORATE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION</b> TASHILING, GANGTOK		Date: 10.08.2021
No. GOS/DTE/2021/567		
<b>NOTICE</b>		
It is for information of all concerned that the following information relating to allotment of State quota seats for 2021 is hereby notified.		
<b>II. Registration.</b> - Interested candidates are required to register themselves and fill up the forms online in the State web portal <a href="http://www.statequota.sikkim.gov.in">www.statequota.sikkim.gov.in</a> as per the schedule indicated below.		
<b>(i) For BA/B.Com/B.Sc./BBA/BCA/Hospitality &amp; Hotel Management /B.Sc. IT/BTMM/BHTM.</b>		
a) Registration opens : 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
b) Registration closes : 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
c) Choice filling opens : 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
d) Choice locking closes : 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
<b>(ii) for B.Sc Nursing/GNM/B.Pharm/B.Pharm (Lateral)/Dip.Pharm/BPT/B.Sc. Med.Biotech/Diploma in Paramedical.</b>		
a) Registration opens : 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
b) Registration closes : 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
c) Choice filling opens : 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
d) Choice locking closes : 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
<b>(iii) Diploma Engineering /Lateral Entry Diploma</b>		
a) Registration opens : 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
b) Registration closes : 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
c) Choice filling opens : 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
d) Choice locking closes : 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
<b>(iv) B.Tech/ Lateral Entry B.Tech.</b>		
a) Registration opens : 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
b) Registration closes : 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
c) Choice filling opens : 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
d) Choice locking closes : 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
<b>(v) BBA LLB(Intg), BA LLB(Intg), LLB</b>		
a) Registration opens : 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
b) Registration closes : 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
c) Choice filling opens : 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2021 from 10:00 a.m.		
d) Choice locking closes : 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021 at 4:30 p.m.		
<b>Please note that no extension of dates for online registration is permissible.</b>		
<b>III. Registration fees</b> - The registration fee of Rs. 150/- per course has to be paid online for the above indicated course except for B.Tech and Lateral Entry B.Tech. The registration fee for B.Tech/Lateral Entry B.Tech if Rs. 450/- only. A provision for payment of registration fees through offline mode has also been facilitated by the State Bank of Sikkim. A candidate who desires to pay offline needs to visit the nearest State Bank of Sikkim branch.		
<b>IV. Documents required</b> : All candidates are advised to upload the following documents online for verification. Incomplete forms will be summarily rejected.		
1. Sikkim Subject Certificate or COI of father or of candidate.		
2. Valid Community Certificate in the name of candidate.		
3. Residential Certificate or Trade License in the name of father or Parents employment certificates in case of Others community candidates.		
4. Recent BPL certificate (issued by DESME), if any.		
5. Date of Birth Certificate.		
6. Class X & XII marksheet.		
7. PWD certificate (issued by Disability Screening Board) , if any.		
<b>Online registration does not confer the applicant a right to quota seat. The allotment of seats will be purely on merit of the marks obtained in the qualifying examinations vis a vis reservation and roster policy of the State Government.</b>		
Candidates are advised to regularly log on to Education Department web portal <a href="http://www.sikkimhrdd.org">www.sikkimhrdd.org</a> where all information relating to counseling dates and other related information will be uploaded from time to time.		
Sd/- Director Higher & Tech Education.		
R.O. No. 146/IPR/Pub/Classi./21-22 Date: 13.8.2021.		



## Separated at Birth

*After I-Day, remember the Partition*

Twins, born 74-years-ago, celebrated their Independence a day apart over the weekend. A combination of intolerance, politics and irreconcilable leadership differences split Pakistan and India making enemies out of fellow citizens and former colleagues and inciting a feud which keeps people apart to this day. The two nations are at daggers drawn and hold suspicions which sponsor the political and professional futures of the agent provocateurs who remain relevant because the hate sustains. A people who share a common history and draw identities from places which now lie in the neighbour's home which is now out of bounds for them for all practical purposes, have so completely bought into the seven decade old mischief, that they forget the common culture that they collectively fostered over several millennia.

That perhaps is the price one has to pay when politics is allowed to define identities and short-sighted politicians allowed to set priorities. When the partition happened in 1947, most of the displaced millions believed that it would be a temporary experiment; a mad scheme which would unravel on itself. At that time, no one could fathom a Punjab divided into two nations or believe that so many could be permanently uprooted. The Partition holocaust, and of course it was one, was taken as a momentary wave of madness, and the exodus, a precautionary measure of temporary nature. In fact, it must have been this belief which convinced so many to leave their homes in the first place, the belief that they could return when the situation "normalised". Many even believed that people's movement between India and Pakistan would be free and frequent and that no permanent cleavage of ties was possible.

A cruel con was played on the entire Partition/Independent generation and because the people a section hurting over the Partition violence and struggling with the challenges of survival as refugees and the rest swept by jubilation of being free – forgot to remind their leaders and future generations of what it meant to be one people, the fiction of ingrained hate and reflexive paranoia took over.

The present generation of Indians and Pakistanis look at the Partition rather dispassionately and express no surprise that India claims Mohenjodaro or that Pakistan celebrates the Mughal empire or that our national anthem celebrates Sindh. Mohenjodaro sits in Pakistan and Pakistan technically holds only the periphery of the Mughal Empire's spread and Sindh now belongs to Pakistan. Partition remains something that most students receive only a superficial introduction to, and what they receive from mass-media only reinforces prejudice. 12.5 million people were displaced and up to a million killed in the Partition riots. The staggering numbers involved demand that all Indians and all Pakistanis study the Partition in more detail, not to hate each other more, but to realise that even the most genuine of people's movements can throw up a monster; that the culmination of 90 years of a struggle for freedom can deliver a madness which can take away all the joy. Our children need to study the Partition more so that they understand the horror of division and do not themselves make the mistakes that people continue to wilfully allow to this day. If they understand what the Partition did, they will perhaps not allow the politics of hate and the mechanisations of paranoia to decide their futures for them.

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# The World Must Not Look Away as the Taliban Sexually Enslaves Women and Girls

VRINDA NARAIN  
*theconversation.com*

Since the withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan in July, the Taliban have swiftly taken control of large parts of the country. The president has fled and the government has fallen.

Emboldened by their success, lack of resistance by Afghan forces and minimal international pressure, the Taliban have intensified their violence. For Afghan women, their increasing power is terrifying.

In early July, after Taliban leaders who took control of the provinces of Badakhshan and Takhar issued an order to local religious leaders to provide them with a list of girls over the age of 15 and widows under the age of 45 for "marriage" with Taliban fighters. It's not yet known whether they've complied.

If these forced marriages take place, women and girls will be taken to Waziristan in Pakistan to be re-educated and converted to "authentic Islam."

This order has caused profound fear among women and their families living in these areas and forced them to flee and join the ranks of internally displaced persons, adding to the humanitarian disaster unfolding in Afghanistan. In the past three months alone, 900,000 people have been displaced.

#### REMINISCENT OF BRUTAL TALIBAN RULE

This Taliban directive serves as a stark warning of what lies ahead and a harsh reminder of their brutal 1996-2001 regime during which women were subjected to persistent human rights violations, denied employment and education, forced to wear the burqa and forbidden from leaving home

without a male "guardian" or mahram.

Despite claiming they've changed their stance on women's rights, the Taliban's actions and latest efforts to commit thousands of women to sexual slavery demonstrate quite the opposite.

Furthermore, the Taliban have signalled their intention to deny girls' education past the age of 12, to ban women from employment and reinstate the law requiring women to be accompanied by a guardian.

The gains made by Afghan women over the past 20 years, particularly in education, employment and political participation, are under grave threat.

Offering "wives" is a strategy aimed at luring militants to join the Taliban. This is sexual enslavement, not marriage, and forcing women into sexual slavery under the guise of marriage is both a war crime and a crime against humanity. Article 27 of the Geneva Convention states: "Women must be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any other form of indecent assault."

In 2008, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1820 declaring that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity." It recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war intent on humiliating, dominating and instilling fear in civilian members of the community.

#### HOW TO FIGHT BACK

The UN must now act decisively to prevent further atrocities against women in Afghanistan.

I propose four policy actions for the international community to bring about sustainable peace. They're guided by Resolution 1820 that

underscores the importance of including women as equal participants in the peace process and condemns all forms of gendered violence against civilians in armed conflict:

1. Calling for an immediate ceasefire to ensure the peace process can proceed in good faith.
2. Ensuring that women's rights — enshrined in Afghanistan's Constitution, national legislation and international law — are respected.
3. Insisting that peace negotiations continue with meaningful participation of Afghan women. Currently, there are only four women peace negotiators on the Afghan government's team and none on the Taliban's.
4. Lifting sanctions against the Taliban must be conditional on their commitment to uphold women's rights. The European Union and the United States, currently the largest donors to Afghanistan, must make aid conditional upon women's rights and their access to education and employment.

Women in Afghanistan and across the region would welcome efforts by the UN and the international community to ensure that survivors of sexual violence have equal protection under the law and equal access to justice.

There must be no impunity for acts of sexual violence as part of a comprehensive approach to seeking sustainable peace, justice and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

*[the writer is Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism; Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University]*

# Type 2 Diabetes: more than one type of diet can help people achieve remission

DUANE MELLOR &  
DR ADRIAN BROWN  
*theconversation.com*

Until recently, type 2 diabetes has mainly been managed by controlling risk factors – such as high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar (glucose) levels – usually by prescribing drugs. But this approach doesn't address the underlying causes of type 2 diabetes – such as problems with the hormone insulin no longer effectively controlling blood sugar. While taking drugs can help to manage blood sugar levels, it won't help unpick the biological causes behind type 2 diabetes.

A growing body of research shows that losing weight, either through surgery or dieting, can help address some of the underlying causes of type 2 diabetes. It does this by helping the body control blood sugar levels. This is significant as controlling blood sugar by improving how insulin is made and works is key to bringing type 2 diabetes into remission.

Most of this body of research so far has looked at using meal-replacement shakes to help people with type 2 diabetes, which is why this approach may be prescribed by a doctor. But, more recently, researchers have begun investigating other diets – such as low-carbohydrate diets – in achieving remission. Although research in this area is still emerging, study results have so far shown a low-carbohydrate diet to be promising.

To better understand which diets are best at helping people achieve type 2 diabetes remission, our recent review looked at over 90 papers describing the effects of various diets

on type 2 diabetes. We found that although the better quality research tended to focus on meal-replacement shakes used in clinical trials, other approaches (such as low-carbohydrate diets) were also shown to work well.

Our review found that meal-replacement diets helped around one in three people successfully achieve remission, while low carbohydrate diets were able to help around one in five people achieve remission. People who lost weight using both of these diets were able to stay in remission for up to two years if they maintained their weight loss.

Low calorie and Mediterranean diets were also able to help people achieve remission – but at much lower rates. Only around 5% of people on low-calorie diets stayed in remission after one year, while only 15% of people on a Mediterranean diet stayed in remission after a year.

#### DEFINING REMISSION

One of the big challenges we faced when writing our review was defining what "remission" is. Knowing how to define it was important so we could understand which diets worked best in helping people achieve remission.

The reason this was difficult is because the definition varies between different expert groups and research studies. Most define remission as a reduction of blood sugar levels below the range to diagnose diabetes – but some definitions state that this needs to be done without the use of drugs, while others do not. Other definitions say weight (especially fat around the midsection) must be lost to achieve remission.

Another challenge we faced when defining remission was that some

reports suggest low-carbohydrate diets can normalise blood sugar levels even without weight loss. This happens because when we eat carbohydrates, they're broken down into sugars which cause our blood sugar levels to rise. A low-carbohydrate diet means less blood sugar appears in the bloodstream, leading to improved blood sugar control.

For that reason, we initially defined remission using the definition each study used. Then, we compared the numbers of people whose blood sugar levels normalised without drugs for at least six months – which most consider to be true remission.

#### MITIGATION v REMISSION

While low-carbohydrate diets help people achieve remission, there's concern that blood sugar levels could potentially rise again as soon as more carbohydrates are eaten. This is why we suggest in our review that rather than call this remission, it should perhaps be called "mitigation of diabetes", as type 2 diabetes is still present – but the negative effects are being well managed. We think that remission can only be achieved if fat is lost from around the organs. This allows insulin to be made and used effectively again.

But because carbohydrates are also a major energy source in our diet, eating less of these often results in consuming fewer calories – which typically results in weight loss. So if someone is able to maintain a low-carbohydrate diet long term, they will not only reduce blood sugar levels and risk of complications for their diabetes, but may also achieve remission.

Regardless, the evidence that we looked at in our review made clear

that there are many ways a person can significantly improve their blood sugar levels through diet – and that this can lead to remission in many cases. The key thing we found with each type of diet is that at least 10-15kg of body weight needed to be lost to achieve remission.

However, although weight loss seems to be the best predictor of success, it assumes fat loss from the pancreas and liver. It will be important for future studies to compare how these diets work for different ethnic groups, as type 2 diabetes can happen at lower body weights in different ethnic groups, who may have less weight to lose.

Not everyone may be able to achieve remission, but people who are younger (less than 50), male, have had type 2 diabetes for less than six years and lose more weight are more likely to be successful. This could be because these people are able to reverse the causes of their diabetes, recovering more of the pancreas's ability to make insulin and the liver's ability to use it. But this doesn't mean others won't be successful if they improve their diet and lifestyle, and lose weight.

Whether or not a person achieves remission, reducing blood sugar levels is important in managing the negative effects of type 2 diabetes and reducing risk of complications. But when it comes to choosing a diet, the most important thing is to pick one that suits you – one that you're likely to stick to long term.

*[Duane Mellor is Lead for Evidence-Based Medicine and Nutrition, Aston Medical School, Aston University; Dr Adrian Brown is Research Fellow & Lecturer, UCL]*



# 75th Independence Day Celebration at Teesta-V Power Station

Teesta-V Power Station celebrated 75th Independence Day with patriotic fervour at its administrative building premises, Balutar, East Sikkim amid strict Covid protocols. On the eve of Independence Day, decorative lighting of the Dam, Powerhouse and Administrative building of the Power Station in hues of the tricolour was undertaken. Shri Sanjay Darbari, GM (I/c), Teesta-V PS & Teesta-IV HE Project hoisted the tricolour flag on the morning of 15th August. IRBN security officers offered a ceremonial guard of honour on the occasion. In his speech, Shri Darbari gratefully remembered and paid homage to those self sacrificing freedom fighters and devoted leaders and patriots who struggled to ensure freedom from oppressive foreign rule throughout their lives. Their sacrifices have enabled us to live in an independent nation. He observed that as part of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” (India@75), Teesta-V Power Station organized various events like Speech Competition, creative Drawing Competitions to commemorate 75 years of freedom and showcase progress made



by the country since Independence as well as highlight the glorious history of our people, culture and achievements. He also appreciated the employees of Power Station for their dedication and untiring efforts towards goals of organization amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted that the Power Station has organized Free Vaccination camps with State Government help for benefit of its officers, staff, their families as well as the local people numbering

more than 1640 doses. He stated that NHPC Teesta-V Power Station has developed a 15 bed COVID Care Centre at Dung Dung Complex for the State Government as well as a Quarantine Centre for its officers and staff. Further expansion is underway. This measure is as part of strategic preparedness and emergency response plan in view of the ongoing COVID19 Pandemic. He was deeply appreciative of the officers, staff, contract labour and other functionaries who together in a synergistic

manner ensured that the Power Station exceeded its annual generation target and achieved a high of 2830 MU generation in the last financial year and exhorted them to dedicate themselves in service of the Nation. He commended the patience and wisdom being demonstrated by them in coping with the Pandemic and was confident that they will continue to maintain caution and act responsibly. He expressed his gratitude to State Administration, local people, IRBN, Home Guard, Ken-

driya Vidyalaya and other stakeholders including contractual labour and staff for their continued and steadfast support to the Power Station and he hoped that such support will continue in future also. The function was followed by a large plantation drive of fruit trees in the area adjoining the helipad by the officers of the Power station. The Head of Power Station later visited the underground Power House and interacted with the Shift officers. Light refreshments were served during the function.

## Vindicated by Centre’s decision to allow State OBC list: Chamling

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 16 AUG:**

Former Chief Minister and President of Sikkim Democratic Front party, Pawan Chamling has welcomed the Centre’s decision to empower state governments to make their separate list of OBCs, an SDF press release informs. “Earlier, in 2019 January, the Centre also approved 10 percent reservation for general category. All those decisions by the centre vindicated the decisions of the SDF party that were taken nearly two decades ago when the SDF government had

enlisted all the left-out communities in the State List of OBC. Such innovative and inclusive social engineering had never been adopted by any other state governments in India except the SDF government in Sikkim,” the release states. In the party’s weekly Q&A session, Mr Chamling said that he looks back at this decision with a deep of sense of pride and vindication. “We made the decision 18 years ago to grant OBC status to the Bahun, Chettri and Newar communities left out under the list of OBCs

recognized by the Centre. On 9 August 2021, last Monday, the Centre passed a bill to empower the states and UTs to make their own separate list of OBCs. This was exactly the decision we had taken earlier. On 22 September 2003, the SDF government implemented the policy taken by our government to grant OBC status to the Bahun, Chettri and Newar communities of Sikkim at the state level. We distributed OBC certificates to the three communities at the TNA playground on the same day,” he adds.

## I-Day at Rongli

**GANGTOK, 15 AUG (IPR):** The 75th Independence Day was celebrated today, at SDM Office premises under Rongli Sub-Division, East Sikkim following all guidelines under the National directives on Covid-19 safety protocol. The programme was attended by MLA and Advisor, Roads and Bridges Department, GT Dhungel as the chief guest. The programme started with the unfurling of the National Flag by the chief guest followed by the National Anthem and receiving of Guard of Honour from the Rongli Police contingent. On the occasion, SDM Rongli, Samdup Bhutia read out the Republic Day message of Governor of Sikkim while the message of Chief Minister of Sikkim was read out by BDO Regu BAC, Bhim Pradhan.

The main attractions of the programme included patriotic songs and poetry recitation presented by the local artists and the winners of sub-division level virtual patriotic song and poetry competitions organised by the Youth Development Society of Sikkim (YODESS) in collaboration with other local NGOs under ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’.

The Shrimad Bhagwad Mahapurana

Committee, which had organized a Mahapurana in January 2021, also felicitated various individuals and organizations for their support and guidance in organising the event by presenting them with an appreciation letter on the occasion. The winners of the virtual competitions were also handed over certificates and prizes by the chief guest. The chief guest began his address by wishing everyone a happy Independence Day and also highlighted the significance of the day. He paid tribute to the freedom fighters for their sacrifices and also applauded the COVID-19 warriors for their hard work and dedicated service in the trying times.

The chief guest also spoke in detail about the State Government programmes being undertaken in the education and health sectors. Earlier, BDO, Regu BAC, RB Gurung delivered the welcome address. The programme was conducted by Coordinator, Krishna Pd Dawari, Education Department, Regu BAC and ended with the vote of thanks proposed by Deputy Director, Kumar Pradhan, Education Department, Rongli Sub-division.

## I-Day at Namchi

**BIKASH CHETTRI**  
**NAMCHI, 15 AUG:**

The Independence Day celebration in South Sikkim headquarters, Namchi, saw the reading of the Governor and Chief Minister’s messages, singing of patriotic songs and guard of honor to the chief guest, Agriculture Minister, LN Sharma.

Namchi along with other districts of Sikkim used to prepare students from every school and police department for parade from the month of July along with some football tournaments and cultural programs. However, due to the pandemic, this year the cele-



bration was toned down. NYK volunteers, affiliated youth clubs and NSS members, took part in the Freedom Run, right before the programme was conducted in South District DAC premises. The participants received a certificate each

along with the felicitation of meritorious employees under Disaster Management and NYK volunteers during Covid-19 warriors. The event in DAC Namchi was organized under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

## Tangzi-Bikmat GPU celebrates I-Day

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**NAMTHANG, 16 AUG:**

Tangzi-Bikmat Gram PanchayatUnit celebrated the 75th Independence Day at Gram Prasashan Kendra today with National Flag hoisting by president, Arjun Kr Rai followed by singing of the National Anthem.

A short formal program was conducted by

the panchayat of Suiram ward, DikbirGurung. In his short speech, MrRai highlighted the history and importance of celebrating Independence Day. Senior VAA,ArjunRai gave the vote of thanks followed by tea and snacks in the said program. Cultural programs like singing, dancing and poem recitation were also conducted.

## Arunachal Pradesh reports 48 new COVID-19 cases

**ITANAGAR, AUG 16 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh reported 48 fresh COVID-19 cases, pushing the virus tally in the north-eastern state to 51,348, a senior health department official said here on Monday.

The COVID-19 death toll in the frontier state remained at 252 as no new fatality was reported in the past 24 hours, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) DrLobsangJampa said.

The Capital Complex Region recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 30, followed by Papumpare (6), two each from Tawang and West Kameng and one each

from West Siang, Upper Siang, Lower Subansiri, Lower Siang, Lohit, Leparada, Changlang and Dibang Valley district respectively, the official said.

Of the 48 fresh cases, 40 were detected through rapid antigen test and 8 through RT-PCR method, the official said, adding that 23 people have developed symptoms of COVID-19.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 1,920 active COVID-19 cases, while 49,176 people have recovered from the disease, including 255 patients on Sunday, Jampa said.

## Sri Lanka’s KusalPerera tests positive for COVID-19

**COLOMBO, SRI LANKA (AP):** Sri Lanka’s wicketkeeper-batsman KusalPerera has tested positive for COVID-19, its cricket board said Monday.

Perera, who turns 31 on Tuesday, missed the recent home series against India because of injury after being sacked as captain following the tour by England at the

start of the year.

He has played in 22 tests, 107 one-day internationals and 50 Twenty20 matches for his country. He has hit two centuries in tests and six in ODI cricket.

Sri Lanka is witnessing a sharp rise in COVID-19, with the government reverting to nightly curfews and a ban on public gatherings.

## Petrol bombs hurled at Meghalaya CM's private residence

**SHILLONG, AUG 16 (PTI):** Unidentified miscreants on Sunday night lobbed a petrol bomb at the residence of Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, police said.

The incident took place around 10.15 pm when vehicle-borne attackers lobbed two Molotov cocktail bottles at the premises of his personal residence at Third Mile in Upper Shillong, they said. No one was injured in the incident, according to a senior district police officer.

The first bottle was lobbed at the front part

of the house while the second one was thrown behind the backyard, he said, prompting the guards there to douse the fire immediately.

The state government has imposed a curfew in Shillong and banned mobile internet services in at least four districts as vandalism and arson rocked the state capital and nearby areas on Independence Day.

Meghalaya Home Minister LakhmenRymbui resigned amid violence in Shillong over the police shooting of a former militant.

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Rymbui also urged the CM to institute a judicial inquiry into the shooting of CheristerfieldThangkhiew, the self-styled general secretary of the banned Hynniewtre National Liberation Council who had surrendered.

Thangkhiew, who had surrendered in 2018, was shot dead on August 13 when he allegedly tried to attack a police team with a knife during a raid at his house in connection with a series of IED blasts in the state.

## CRPF vehicle attacked in Meghalaya capital amid curfew



**SHILLONG, AUG 16 (PTI):** A vehicle carrying CRPF personnel was attacked by protesters in Mawlai area here during curfew hours, prompting security forces to resort to mild force for dispersing the crowd, police said on Monday.

The state government has imposed a curfew in Shillong and banned mobile internet services in at least four districts, as vandalism and arson rocked the state capital and nearby areas on Independence Day during the funeral procession of a former militant.

The attack on the CRPF vehicle took place hours after unidentified miscreants hurled petrol bombs at the residence of Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma late on Sunday, they said.

Acting on reports of a large number of youths burning tyres in the middle of the road in Mawlai area, CRPF personnel rushed to the area. The agitators pelted stones at their vehicle, prompt-

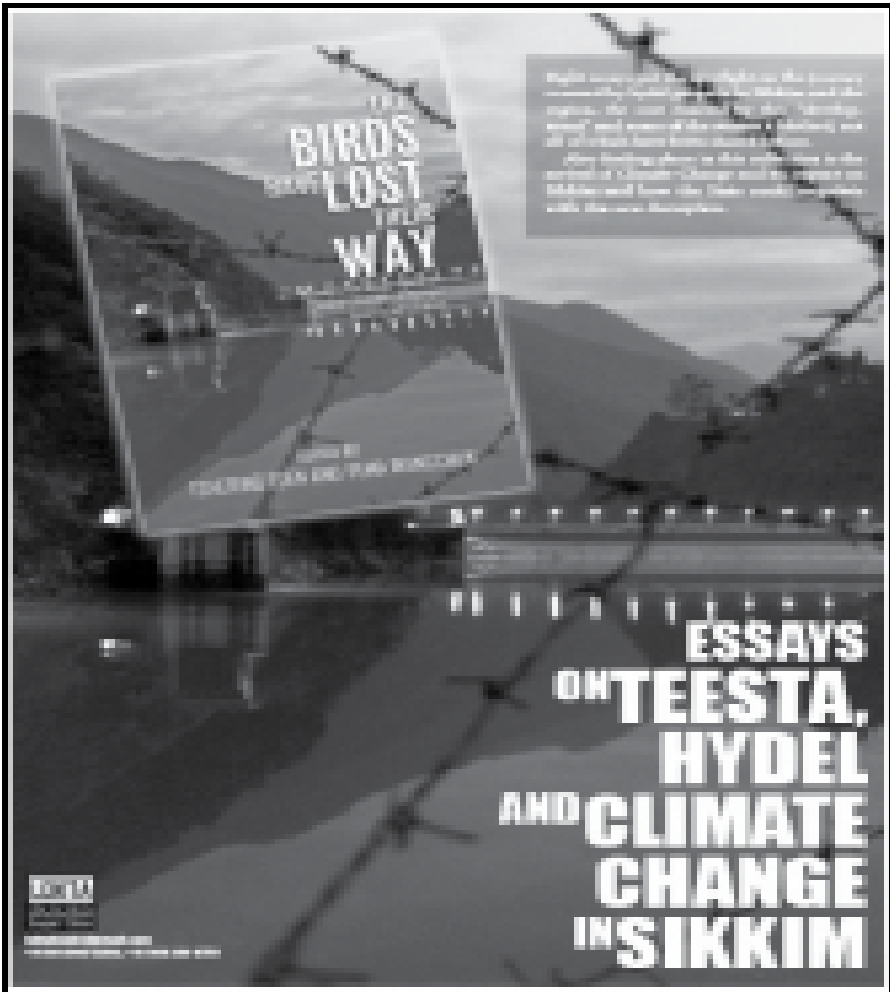
ing the personnel to use mild force to disperse the crowd, a senior district police officer told PTI.

He said a vehicle belonging to a vernacular media house was damaged and its driver suffered injuries during lathicharge by CRPF jawans.

Meghalaya Home Minister LakhmenRymbui had resigned on Sunday amid violence in Shillong over the police shooting of the former militant.

Rymbui also urged the CM to institute a judicial inquiry into the shooting of CheristerfieldThangkhiew, the self-styled general secretary of the banned Hynniewtre National Liberation Council.

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*My finger on lips celebration is for haters:*

*Siraj*

**LONDON, AUG 16 (PTI):** Mohammed Siraj is taking wickets and his new mode of celebration involves an underlying message for all his critics asking them to just keep shut.

Siraj was the pick of the Indian bowlers with four wickets in his first appearance at the Lord's and he was asked about his "finger on lips" gesture after getting each and every England wicket in the second Test.

So what's the back story?

"This story (celebration) is for the haters (critics) because they used to say a lot of things about me, like he cannot do that and cannot do that. So, I will only let my ball do the talking and hence this is my new style of celebration," Siraj said at the virtual press conference after the third day's play.

Put into bat, India rode on KL Rahul's classy 129 to post 364 in the first innings, but England skipper Joe Root struck an unbeaten 180 to post 391 in their first essay and take a 27-run lead.

A bottle cork was hurled at Rahul on the third day from the spectators during the pre-lunch session, but Siraj said that he was unaware about it.

"I did not actually notice what happened but nothing (offensive) was said by the public," he maintained.

He said that the plan of the fast bowlers was to be consistent and bowl in one area.

He also underlined the importance of four fast bowlers in these conditions.

"It was important (to play with fourth fast bowler), because we have taken three wickets at the start and our fast bowlers were effective and bowling consistently in one area.

"The role of fast bowlers is important in England because when you come to England, you want to try things, but our plan here was to be consistent and bowl at one place," he said.

Siraj also said his plan was to bowl consistently.

When I played Ranji Trophy for first time, my plan was to hit consistently in one area, that is my simple plan not to try anything, if I would have tried more things, it could have affected the team, and my bowling figures, he said.

The Indian bowlers conceded a lot of extras but Siraj said it was part of the game.

What can I say about it (conceding extras), this happens, it is part of the game, extras, it is not that anyone has purposely conceded extras, it's okay, he quipped.

According to Siraj, Indian batsmen would look to score runs in the second essay.

The wicket has become good for batting, and we will look to put runs on the board and try to score maximum runs and then see what happens after that, he said.

Siraj removed a set Jonny Bairstow off a bouncer and the right-arm speedster revealed the strategy behind it.

**INDIANAPOLIS (AP):** AJ Allmendinger screamed in elation after winning Sunday at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Just about everyone else left the world-famous speedway frustrated, angry or bewildered by a bizarre Brickyard 200 finish that involved 16 wrecked cars, two red flags, a spin out of the race leader and a penalty all in the final five laps to help Allmendinger reach victory lane.

The 39-year-old Allmendinger beat Ryan Blaney across the yard of bricks by 0.929 seconds to pick up his second career Cup win in his fourth start of the season. It also was the first win for Kaulig Racing in the team's seventh start.

"Oh my God, I just won at Indy. Shank I just wanted to be like you," Allmendinger shouted to the crowd, referencing Michael Shank's win at the Indianapolis 500. "It was just survival of the fittest."

Allmendinger's other victory also came on a road course, Watkins Glen in 2014.

Indianapolis' 14-turn, 2.439-mile road course certainly proved to be a challenge for everyone on this wild crossover weekend. After watching one IndyCar and two NASCAR Xfinity Series drivers go airborne in the sixth turn Saturday, track officials removed the "turtle" there. On Sunday, drivers were having trouble with the chicane in the back-to-back fifth and sixth turns. The damaged obstacle, NASCAR officials said,



had deteriorated by the end of the race. Whether that was because three consecutive days of practice, qualifying and racing was unclear.

Track workers still attempted to fix it during the race and once pulled a 3-foot metal piece from underneath it. When pole-winning driver William Byron ran over the curbing with five laps left, it was chaos. His No. 24 carved off course and eight more drivers quickly followed him, immediately bringing out a yellow and eventually the first red flag.

"It was so weird," said Byron, who first noticed it when Kyle Larson's car went over the obstacle ahead of him. "I nailed something and it tore it

up." This time, the track workers pried it loose and towed it away to the sound of cheering fans. Even Indianapolis Motor Speedway President Doug Boles pitched in by grabbing a shovel and broom to help clean up in his suit and tie.

When the engines restarted, nobody knew what to expect or how to navigate the altered course. And the next time through the turn, seven more cars were involved in the pileup bringing out another red flag.

NASCAR officials did not report any serious injuries.

"There was some debate about whether to continue and whether to take the other one out," NASCAR vice president of competition Scott

Miller said. "When we tested there last year, that section was way too fast so we weren't going to sign up for that, so we keep the other one." The drama was just beginning.

With Denny Hamlin in the lead on the final restart, Chase Briscoe's second-place car went skittering through the grass between the first two turns and back onto the track. The two raced side-by-side briefly before Hamlin pulled slightly ahead heading into the 10th turn. That's when Briscoe spun out Hamlin, apparently unaware he had been assessed a penalty. Hamlin finished 23rd but dropped to second place in the points because after Larson finished third, Briscoe wound up 26th.

"Just a lack of awareness," Hamlin said. "I don't think he did it maliciously. He's not that kind of person. This just turned everything upside down." Actually, things were upside down all day at a race that seemed more apt on a short track.

At one point, Brad Keselowski hit a concrete wall and pitted with the back part of his car dragging. Several cars used duct tape to keep parts together and while some drivers inadvertently wound up in the grass, others were punted off the track. And after the big melee, the damage was evident up and down the stopped car line.

Somehow, in the midst of all of it, Allmendinger made

his way to the front and led only two laps — the last two. "I was so mad yesterday because I wanted to win so bad," he said, dedicating the victory to familiar racing media figures Bob Jenkins and Robin Miller. "I never could have imagined this is how this would play out."

**STAGING POINTS**

Tyler Reddick won the first two stages, gaining crucial points toward a playoff spot. He beat Richard Childress Racing teammate Austin Dillon to the yard of bricks both times with Dillon finishing third in the first stage and moving up one spot in the second.

**WATCH PARTY**

Many drivers from all three series lined up to watch other drivers compete over the weekend. IndyCar driver Rinus VeeKay watched from the infield Sunday. Ryan Hunter-Reay stuck around, too.

But none embraced the crossover opportunity more than Daniel Suarez and IndyCar championship contender Pato O'Ward, who did their formative driving in Mexico.

"I haven't seen him in so long, it was really really nice to see him," O'Ward said after finishing fifth Saturday. "I hope we can get to more racetracks together because we started at the same racetrack. He's a great, great guy, great family. I've always enjoyed having him around."

**UP NEXT**

After back-to-back road races, the Cup circuit returns to an oval next Sunday at Michigan International Speedway.

## Piot rallies to beat Greaser and win US Amateur at Oakmont

**OAKMONT, PA. (AP):** Even for James Piot, the scrappy Michigan kid who isn't afraid to set the bar high, his target Sunday in the U.S. Amateur was bordering on audacious.

He was 3 down and running out of time.

Standing on the 10th tee, Piot set a goal of playing the back nine at 4-under par. This was at Oakmont, as fearsome as any course in America, where the greens reputed to be the fastest in the land had been triple cut. More holes were won with pars than birdies.

Piot was up to the task. Starting with a 9-iron to 3 feet for birdie, he won four straight holes to take the lead over Austin Greaser and closed out his stunning rally with a 20-foot par putt that sent him to a 2-and-1 victory.

"It's the greatest feeling in the world," Piot said. "As an amateur, it's the best thing you can do."

Piot didn't win a hole on the front nine in the afternoon. He didn't lose a hole on the back nine, even if he fell just short of his goal. He was 3 under on the back.

The match ended on the reachable par-4 17th when Piot blasted out of a bunker across the slick green and into another bunker, got that out to 20 feet and made it for par. Greaser's 8-foot birdie putt to extend the match spun out of the left lip.

"I just didn't execute on the back nine," Greaser said. "He did. Hats off to him, he played a great back nine. The cards fell his way this time. It's going to sting a little bit."

Piot, a 22-year-old senior at Michigan State, was mobbed by friends and teammates in their Spartans gear off the green and before long he was holding the gold Havemeyer Trophy.

He appeared to be gazing at a century-old list of champions from Bobby Jones to Jack Nicklaus to Tiger Woods. Turns out that wasn't the case at all.

"I was trying to see if it was real or not," Piot said. "I couldn't believe it. I honestly was like, 'Did I just win the U.S. Am?' I probably couldn't tell you one name right now on that thing. That's how crazy it was and how unbelievable it felt." Groomed on a public course in Michigan called Fox Hills

Golf and Banquet Center, he learned to battle by spending all day at the course with friends making up money games to play, either for lunch for each other's golf balls. When he arrived at Michigan State and his coach encouraged Piot to strive to be All-Big Ten, Piot thought told that was setting the bar too low. He wanted to be All-American.

And now he's a U.S. Amateur champion.

It was a tough loss for Greaser, a junior at North Carolina. Trailing 1 down after the morning 18 holes, he won three of the opening four holes in the afternoon, followed by a pair of tough par putts to stay in front.

With a par to win the ninth, he went 3 up and looked tough to beat.

Piot took it from there. His birdie on No. 10 was his first since he hit 6-iron to 3 feet on the 18th in the morning round to take a 1-up lead into lunch. And then he got some help from Greaser.

Both had 15-foot birdie putts on the 11th. Greaser ran his 6 feet by and three-putted to lose another hole. On the par-5 12th, Grease hit 3-iron too far left into a bunker some 20 yards short of the green. He could only get out to the front of the green, leaving him a 70-foot putt that didn't stop rolling until it was 20 feet away.

He three-putted — his seventh of the championship match — and it was back to all square.

"I just felt like from there, all the momentum was on my side," Piot said.

Piot won his fourth straight hole and took the lead with a tee shot on the par-3 13th to 10 feet for a conceded birdie when Greaser found a bunker and failed to convert a 12-footer par putt. The final blow was the 15th, when Greaser hit into the "church pew" bunkers down the left side, had to lay up and hit wedge that didn't quite clear a subtle ridge, and the speed and slope of Oakmont's notorious greens sent the ball 20 feet away for another bogey.

"It really stinks to come up just a hair short," Greaser said. "But there were a lot of kids that probably wished they were standing where I was today, and I'm going to try and remember that and know that I played my heart out and gave my best."

## Paralympics follow lead of Olympics: No fans during pandemic



**TOKYO (AP):** All fans will be barred from the Paralympics in Japan because of the coronavirus pandemic, just as they were from the recently-completed Tokyo Olympics, organizers said Monday.

There were a few exceptions made during the Olympics with some fans allowed in outlying areas away from Tokyo. This time, all fans will be barred except the possibility of some children attending a few unspecified events.

Organizers have also asked the public not to come out to view road events.

The decision was announced after a meeting with International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons, organizing committee president Seiko Hashimoto, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike and Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa.

The Paralympics open on Aug. 24 with about 4,400 athletes, a far smaller event than the Olympics with 11,000 athletes. But the Paralympics come as new infections have accelerated in Tokyo, which may expose an athlete population that is more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Parsons, speaking at a news conference, said there was no room for complacency in the wake of the Olympics.

"In light of the current case numbers in Tokyo and wider Japan, everyone attending these games must be vigilant," Parsons said.

New infections in Tokyo tripled during the 17 days of the Olympics, although medical experts said the surge was not directly linked to the Tokyo Games. Rather, experts suggested an indirect effect as the public was distracted and lulled into a false sense of se-

curity that staging the Games offered. With the situation growing worse, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Monday said a state of emergency in Tokyo and other areas will be extended until Sept. 12. The state of emergency has been in force since July 12 and was to end later this month.

The Paralympics end on Sept. 5.

"The surge in infections is reaching alarming record highs," Suga said after meeting with other government ministers.

On Friday, Tokyo logged 5,773 cases, a new high. On Sunday, the Japanese capital reported 4,295 cases. The rise in infections has severely strained the medical system. Experts say the situation is getting out of control and some call it "a disaster."

Japan has attributed 15,400 deaths to CO-

VID-19. Dr. Haruo Ozaki, president of the Tokyo Medical Association, said in an interview with regional newspaper Tokyo Shimbun published Saturday that a significant number of people are still unvaccinated, and characterized the virus situation for the Paralympics as worse than it was during the Olympics.

Estimates suggest about 37% of the Japanese population has been fully vaccinated.

Ozaki called having no fans "a minimum necessity" and attributed the surge to the delta variant.

He called holding the Paralympics "a political decision, but the judgment by the media side is that it will be difficult."

"The Olympics," Ozaki added, "is a festival and might have affected the people in ways to loosen up and served as an indirect cause of rising cases."



# Australia's worst day of pandemic sees restrictions tighten

**CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA (AP):** Australia's most populous state on Monday reported its worst day of the pandemic with 478 new infections and seven COVID-19 deaths as pandemic restrictions tightened in other parts of the country.

The previous record daily tally in New South Wales was 466 new cases reported on Saturday. Two of the dead had received a single dose of a two-shot vaccine. The rest were unvaccinated, New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said.

Only 26% of Australians aged 16 and older had been fully vaccinated by Saturday. Australia has one of the slowest vaccine rollouts among wealthy countries, which is making the spread of the delta variant particularly dangerous.

The first shipment of 1 million Pfizer doses that Australia bought from Poland arrived in Sydney overnight.

Residents aged 16-to-39 in Sydney's worst-affected suburbs will be given 530,000 of the new doses, the government said. This age group was responsible for most of the virus spread.

Berejiklian blamed Sydney residents' failure to comply with the city's lockdown restrictions and stay-at-home



orders for the escalating infections.

"The case numbers are disturbingly high and we are ... at a fork in the road," Berejiklian said.

"We will see the numbers come down when people stay home and people don't move about unless they absolutely have to. Until we see that, we're not going to see the case numbers go down," she added.

Melbourne reported 22 new infections on Monday. Even with the substantially

smaller problem, Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said Australia's largest city after Sydney was at a "tipping point" in its battle to stamp out all infections. A lockdown that was due to end on Thursday was extended to Sept. 2 with a 9 p.m.-to-5 a.m. curfew beginning on Tuesday.

Tougher restrictions include a ban on people removing face masks to drink alcohol in public. This followed a "Walk. Talk. Sip" event advertised on social media that en-

couraged people to stroll from pub to pub in the suburb of Richmond with takeout drinks over the weekend. "We've seen people turning the footpath into an impromptu beer garden and doing pub crawls," Andrews said. "We've seen lots of people flouting these rules, not doing as they should, making really poor choices."

The national capital Canberra also extended a lockdown that was to end this week until Sept. 2 after reporting 19 news infections on

Monday. The virus came from Sydney but authorities don't know how.

There have been a total of 28 cases recorded since Canberra locked down when the first case was detected on Thursday last week.

The Northern Territory introduced a snap three-day lockdown because of a single case detected on Monday.

The American man, aged in his 30s, tested positive in the Northern Territory city of Katherine where he had traveled for a job, officials said.

Katherine and the Northern Territory capital Darwin, where he spent three days last week, will be locked down until Thursday. People are only allowed to leave home for essential reasons and must wear masks outside their homes.

The New South Wales government has been criticized for waiting 10 days before locking down Sydney after a limousine driver was infected while transporting a U.S. air crew from Sydney Airport and tested positive on June 16.

Surrounding New South Wales was entirely locked down from Saturday because of recent infections detected in regional towns and virus found in wastewater north and west of Sydney.

## President Widodo says pandemic changed Indonesia's culture

**JAKARTA, INDONESIA (AP):** Indonesia's president pledged to improve COVID-19 testing and treatment in a speech Monday marking the country's independence and said the pandemic has changed Indonesian culture in ways that would be a foundation for advancement.

Wearing masks, not shaking hands and avoiding crowds of people were once taboo, while working from home, distance learning, online meetings and online court have become new habits "that we used to be hesitant to do," President Joko Widodo said in the national address marking the country's 76th anniversary of independence.

"Amid today's disruptive world, the spirit to change, the spirit to make changes and the spirit to innovate have become the foundation to build an advanced Indonesia," Widodo said. "With the COVID-19 pandemic, the acceleration of innovation has become an integrated part of our everyday lives."

Only half of the 711 lawmakers and senators were in Parliament for Widodo's speech on the eve of Independence Day, with the rest attending remotely in a social-distancing measure.

The world's fourth-most populous country hit peaks last month with daily highs of 50,000 new cases, more than five times the usual highs in June. July was also the deadliest month, with more than 30,100 deaths from COVID-19 as sick people overwhelmed

hospitals or died at home or while awaiting care. Its totals of 3.8 million cases and 118,833 fatalities are considered undercounts due to low testing and poor tracing measures in the nation of 270 million people.

Widodo said almost all regional leaders are working hand in hand to address health and economic problems and his administration would improve on-the-ground management in testing, tracing, treatment and vaccination as well as provision of medical oxygen.

"The availability and affordability of medicines should be guaranteed and there is zero tolerance to anyone who obstructs our humanitarian and national missions," Widodo said.

Once the country's COVID-19 epicenter, Jakarta has been seeing declines in both active cases and new cases from mid-July to the past week, from over 100,000 to below 15,000 active cases per day and from over 10,000 to below 2,500 new cases per day.

Also, patients are not being turned away like in the past as the bed occupancy rate in hospitals declined in several regions.

Restrictions on public activities, which the government credits with helping to ease pressure on hospitals, are being eased in the capital. Authorities in Jakarta have reopened malls, places of worship and outdoor sport venues since last week with certain capacity limits, and people must show they've been vaccinated.

# Chaos as thousands flee Afghanistan after Taliban takeover

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN (AP):** Thousands of people packed into the Afghan capital's airport on Monday, rushing the tarmac and pushing onto planes in desperate attempts to flee the country after the Taliban overthrew the Western-backed government. U.S. troops fired warning shots as they struggled to manage the chaotic evacuation.

The Taliban swept into Kabul on Sunday after President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing a stunning end to a two-decade campaign in which the U.S. and its allies had tried to transform Afghanistan. The country's Western-trained security forces collapsed or fled in the face of an insurgent offensive that tore through the country in just over a week, ahead of the planned withdrawal of the last American troops at the end of the month.

In the capital, a tense calm set in, with most people hiding in their homes as the Taliban deployed fighters at major intersections. There were scattered reports of looting and armed men knocking on doors and gates, and there was less traffic than usual on eerily quiet streets. Fighters could be seen searching vehicles at one of the city's main squares.

Many fear chaos, after the Taliban freed thousands of prisoners and the police simply melted away, or a return to the kind of brutal rule the Taliban imposed when it was last in power. They raced to Kabul's international airport, where the "civilian side" was closed until further notice, according to Afghanistan's Civil Aviation Authority. The military was put in control of the airspace.

Videos circulating on social media showed hundreds of people running across the tarmac as U.S. soldiers fired warning shots in the air. One showed a crowd pushing and shoving its way up a staircase, trying to board a plane, with some people hanging off the railings.

In another video, hundreds of people could be seen running alongside a U.S. Air Force transport plane as it moved down a runway. Some climbed onto the side of the jet just before take-off. That raised questions about how much longer aircraft would be able to safely take off and land.

Massouma Tajik, a 22-year-old data analyst, described scenes of panic at the airport, where she was hoping to board an evacuation flight.

After waiting six hours, she heard shots from outside, where a crowd of men and women were trying to climb aboard a plane. She said U.S. troops



sprayed gas and fired into the air to disperse the crowds after people scaled the walls and swarmed onto the tarmac. Gunfire could be heard in the voice messages she sent to The Associated Press.

Shafi Arifi, who had a ticket to travel to Uzbekistan on Sunday, was unable to board her plane because it was packed with people who had raced across the tarmac and climbed aboard, with no police or airport staff in sight.

"There was no room for us to stand," said the 24-year-old. "Children were crying, women were shouting, young and old men were so angry and upset, no one could hear each other. There was no oxygen to breathe."

After another woman fainted and was carried off the plane, Arifi gave up and went back home.

The U.S. Embassy has been evacuated and the American flag lowered, with diplomats relocating to the airport to aid with the evacuation. Other Western countries have also closed their missions and are flying out staff and nationals. Afghans are also trying to leave through land border crossings, all of which are now controlled by the Taliban. Rakhmatula Kuyash, 30, was one of the few people with a visa allowing him to cross into Uzbekistan on Sunday. He said his children and relatives had to stay behind.

"I'm lost and I don't know what to do. I left everything behind," he said.

The speed of the Taliban offensive

through the country appears to have stunned American officials. Just days before the insurgents entered Kabul with little if any resistance, a U.S. military assessment predicted it could take months for the capital to fall.

The rout threatened to erase 20 years of Western efforts to remake Afghanistan that saw more than 3,500 U.S. and allied troops killed as well as tens of thousands of Afghans. The initial invasion drove the Taliban from power and scattered al-Qaida, which had planned the 9/11 attacks while being sheltered in Afghanistan. Many had hoped the Western-backed Afghan government would usher in a new era of peace and respect for human rights.

As the U.S. lost focus on Afghanistan during the Iraq war, the Taliban eventually regrouped. The militants captured much of the Afghan countryside in recent years and then swept into cities as U.S. forces prepared to withdraw ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline.

Under the Taliban, which ruled in accordance with a harsh interpretation of Islamic law, women were largely confined to their homes and suspected criminals faced amputation or public execution. The insurgents have sought to project greater moderation in recent years, but many Afghans remain skeptical.

Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, tweeted that fighters had been instructed not to enter any home without permission and to protect "life, property and honor." The Taliban have also

said they will stay out of the upscale diplomatic quarter housing the U.S. Embassy complex and the posh villas of U.S.-allied former warlords who have fled the country or gone into hiding.

Those assurances are part of an effort by the Taliban to "shape the narrative that their accession to power is legitimate — a message for both inside Afghanistan and beyond its borders," the Texas-based private intelligence firm Stratfor wrote.

"The speed of the Taliban's final advance suggests less military dominance than effective political insurgency coupled with an incohesive Afghan political system and security force struggling with flagging morale."

When the Taliban last seized Kabul in 1996, it had been heavily damaged in the civil war that broke out among rival warlords after the Soviet withdrawal seven years earlier. The city was then home to around a million people, most traveling on dusty roads by bicycle or aging taxi.

Today Kabul is a built-up city home to 5 million people where luxury vehicles and SUVs struggle to push through endemic traffic jams.

Wahidullah Qadiri, a resident of the city, said he hoped for peace after decades of war that have claimed the lives of two of his brothers and a cousin.

"We haven't seen anything but catastrophes and fighting," he said, "so we always live with hope for a long-lasting peace."







**RED-HOT!** The actress, Megan Fox turns heads as she leaves a photoshoot in Los Angeles.

## Everyone is charting their own course in the film industry: Vaani Kapoor

**MUMBAI, AUG 16 (PTI):** Actor Vaani Kapoor says the greed to play "the most important and impactful" characters is never-ending, but she is trying to gradually build a filmography that boasts of good projects.

The 32-year-old actor, who will next be seen in the spy thriller "Bellbottom", said she is building her own path to success.

"Everyone is charting their own course in the industry. You cannot copy somebody else's career structure, follow their path and get success... I picked the best from what came to me and out of that what works and what doesn't is destiny," Kapoor, who entered Bollywood in 2013 with ShuddhDesiRomance, told PTI in an interview.

She further said she has chosen to be part of those films in her career that have given her a sense of contentment.

You are not always lucky with films where everything is going to be 50:50 or your character is going to be the sole driving force of a film. It is never going to be like that. There will be certain films that will not be driven by your character." In the upcoming film based on true events and directed by Ranjit M Tewari, the actor plays the wife to Akshay Kumar's undercover agent code-named 'Bellbottom' who is on a mission to rescue hostages from a hijacked Indian plane.

Kapoor said she is aware that she has a small role in Bellbottom but chose to be part of the film as she was hooked to the basic premise of the film. She didn't want to let go the opportunity of working with Kumar, she added.

"The character does have a surprise element which is not there in the trailer.

She is very different from Tara of ShuddhDesi Romance' or Shyra of Befikre'. Besides, it was interesting to be paired opposite Akshay Kumar, he is a big megastar.

"There are certain stars who are loved by the masses and to share a screen space with them is a huge boost for an actor because you also get to connect with his audience. And my father is a huge fan of his, it is literally like I have fulfilled his wish."

Kapoor, known for her work in Ranveer Singh-starrer Befikre and HrithikRoshan-Tiger Shroff'sWar, said she aims to make her presence felt in every film irrespective of the length of the role.

I would want to leave a presence behind in that amount of time and scenes where you have (only) so much scope to perform. That's the greed every actor has. I want to do the most important and impactful roles and there is no end to that greed, she said.

However, I truly value what I have got. But there are a lot of films that I watch and I wish I can get that film or get to work with this director, she added.

The Delhi-born actor further said she believes in the theory of "work brings work".

Citing the example of her last theatrical release War, Kapoor shared that both actor-producer JackkyBhagnani and filmmaker AbhishekKapoor offered her Bellbottom and Chandigarh KareAashiqui, respectively after watching the 2019 blockbuster film.

In "War", directed by SiddharthAnand, she played Naina, a single mother who helps Roshan'sKabir in his mission to spy on a terrorist. When you are working in certain films you get more

work because somebody is noticing you in that film. Sometimes a filmmaker connects when he watches your past work. This is how you bring in your visibility.

"I don't want to get papped everyday outside my house, that's not the visibility I want. I would rather be part of a good storyline where I have a decent part and make my presence felt, she said, adding, it is a challenge to be remembered in a big star film.

Kapoor said she is yet to establish herself as a credible performer and when that happens she hopes to work with the directors on her wish list.

There a lot of films that I wish I could be part of but maybe the director doesn't have the faith in me, maybe I am not credible as an actor, I am not a star, people don't have that relatability or connection with me.

"It is a business at the end they want the star to pull the crowd. I don't have that credibility as an actor yet. I am also picking and choosing from what I am getting. Nothing is coming to me on a platter, she said.

Up next for her is RanbirKapoor-Sanjay Dutt'sShamshera, a period-action drama film, and a romantic-drama Chandigarh KareAashiqui with AyushmannKhurrana.

"I am looking for these films to come out and hoping people will like me and that directors can view me in their films as a potential actor, she said.

Bellbottom is produced by VasuBhagnani, JackkyBhagnani, DeepshikhaDeshmukh, MonishaAdvani, MadhuBhojwani and NikkhilAdvani.

Also starring Lara Dutta, HumaQureshi and AdilHussain, the film will be released in theatres on Thursday.

## Hansal Mehta completes filming for 'Faraaz'

**MUMBAI, AUG 16 (PTI):** Film-maker Hansal Mehta on Sunday announced he has finished shooting for his upcoming action thriller "Faraaz".

The film will depict the Holey Artisan cafe attack that shook Bangladesh in 2016.

"Faraaz" marks late star ShashiKapoor's grandson, ZahaanKapoor's debut and will also feature AdityaRawal, son of actors ParesRawal and SwaroopSampat, who made his acting debut last year with the ZEE5 film "Bamfaad".

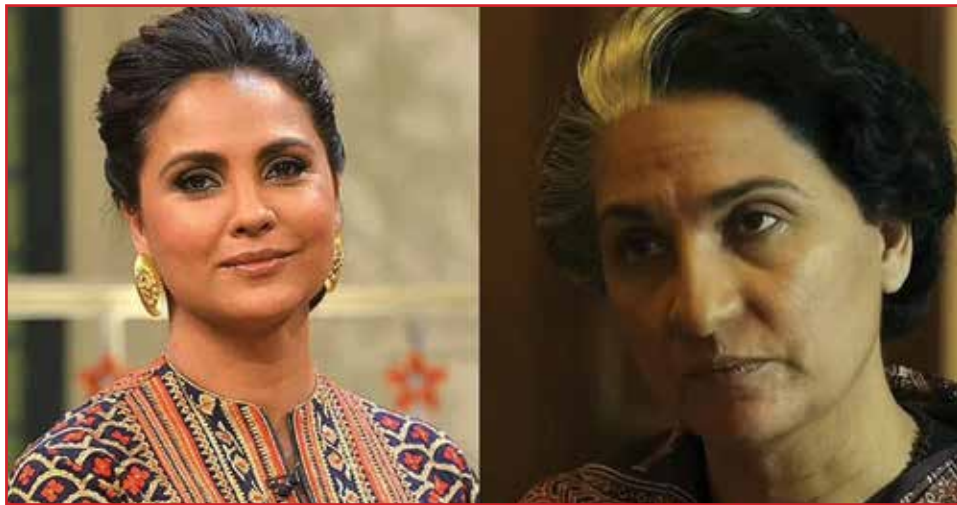
Mehta took to Instagram and posted a video of his crew, writing, "It's a wrap."

The director, who last helmed the acclaimed web series "Scam 1992 - The Harshad Mehta Story" and sports drama feature "Chhalaang", began shooting for the film in June.

According to the official synopsis, "Faraaz" will chronicle the events that took place on the night of July 1, 2016, in Dhaka where five young militants ravaged the upscale cafe and held over 50 people as hostages for nearly 12 dreadful hours.

"Faraaz" is jointly produced by filmmaker AnubhavSinha'sBenara sMediaworks, T-Series along with Mahana Films' SahilSaigal, Sakshi Bhatt and MazahirMandasaurwala.

## Don't feel the need to be constantly seen on screen: Lara Dutta



**MUMBAI, AUG 16 (PTI):** Actor Lara Dutta says for her it is more important to strike a work-life balance rather than try too hard to be seen on screen.

The former Miss Universe entered the Hindi film industry in 2003 with Andaaz, also starring Akshay Kumar and another debutante, Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

Since then the actor has appeared in films Aan: Men at Work, No Entry, BhagamBhag, JhoomBarabarJhoom, Partner, Billu, Housefull, Singh Is Bliing, and Azhar as well as web show "Hundred".

Dutta, 43, who tied the knot with tennis star Mahesh Bhupati in 2011 and welcomed their daughter Saira the next year, said she believes in giving equal time to other aspects of her life apart from her career.

I juggle between multiple roles -- a mother, an entrepreneur, an actor, and a producer -- and I want to give all the things equal amounts of importance and time. So

when the right project comes I will do it.

"I don't feel the burning need to be constantly seen on screen or being written about. I am very content and satisfied, Dutta told PTI.

The 43-year-old actor, whose last big screen release was 2018 movie "Welcome to New York", will next be seen in Kumar-led espionage thriller "BellBottom".

The film, directed by Ranjit M Tewari, is based on a true story that follows an undercover RAW agent (Kumar) who is on a mission to rescue over 200 hostages from a hijacked Indian plane.

In the period movie, also starring VaaniKapoor, HumaQureshi, AdilHussain, Dutta plays the role of former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

BellBottom is produced by VasuBhagnani, JackkyBhagnani, DeepshikhaDeshmukh, MonishaAdvani, MadhuBhojwani and NikkhilAdvani. It is set to arrive in theatres on August 19.

## Debra Winger says she quit a League of their own because of Madonna

Debra Winger, who spent months training to play the Geena Davis role in A League of Their Own, says she quit the film after Madonna joined the cast.

There might not be crying in baseball, but based on Debra Winger's story surrounding her experience with Madonna, there is quitting in baseball.

During an interview with The Telegraph published on Friday, Aug. 13, the 66-year-old Terms of Endearment star recalled that she had spent three months training with the Chicago Cubs to prepare for Geena Davis' role in A League of Their Own, but that she quit the project after Madonna was cast in another lead role.

Debra explained that she believed director Penny Marshall casting the pop star was a sign the movie would become "an Elvis [Presley] film," and so she decided to bow out.

"The studio agreed with me because it was the only time I ever collected a pay-or-play on my contract," the three-time Oscar nominee said. "In other words, I collected my pay even though I did not play, and that's very hard to get in a court."

Debra went on to say she doesn't think the film succeeded in its effort to tell the real-life athletes' stories. "As entertaining as [the final film] was, you don't walk away going, 'Wow, those women did that,'" she shared. "You kind of go, 'Is that true?'"

She also said she didn't think most of the

stars did enough training and that Geena "did OK" in the part Debra was set to play. When asked to comment on Madonna's performance, Debra added, "I think [her] acting



career has spoken for itself." Ouch.

Madonna has yet to comment publicly on the recent remarks.

Debra, who currently stars on the Apple TV+ series Mr. Corman, is known for speaking her mind during interviews. Indeed, she took part in an awkward Watch What Happens Live sit-down in 2018.

Back then, after host Andy Cohen asked her to rank some of her previous on-screen kisses, she fired back with, "OK, so you remember somebody you kissed 30 years ago?"

Aries:

It all comes down to what you put out there, Aries. If you plant the seeds of love, love is what you will attract. If you plant the seeds of peace, peace will encompass your daily existence. If you plant the seeds of goodness, you will find that the support you require from your tribe is always available. So, begin to elevate your life conditions. Rewrite the script of your life with the inner knowing that your Destiny is ultimately in your hands.

Tip: It's time to rewrite the script, beautiful.

Taurus:

When you've made up your mind about something, there is nothing and nobody that can come in your way. But is your need to act impulsively serving you in the grand scheme of things? Something to think about, Taurus. What the cards are urging you to do today is hit the pause button, reassess the big move and then take a calculated risk. Thinking about the long-term repercussions of your actions will help you do what's right for you and the collective.

Tip: It's time to take a calculated risk.

Gemini:

It's all about love and other intoxicants in the Gemini HQ. You're allowing yourself to receive the affection of both your beloved and those around you. You're allowing yourself to lean on those who are unconditionally show-

ing up for you. As such, this is also a time of deepening your bond with your father or father figure in your life, or working through the wounds caused by such a relationship. Pay attention to the seemingly mundane observations (or advice) they're sharing with you as this could help you create a vibrational shift in your existence.

Tip: Nurture your relationship with your father or a father figure in your life.

Cancer:

Playing the blame game is convenient. But it doesn't solve your problems, Cancer. The only thing it does is add to that feeling of hopelessness and frustration. Word for the wise: it's time to let go of the narrative that 'things are happening to you' and take the power back in your hands. The story you tell yourself will make all the difference here. For those who are stuck in a dead-end relationship, this weekend could bring with itself a major wake up call. If this relationship is not in alignment with your higher self, it's time to cut the cords.

Tip: Take the power back in your hands, beautiful.

Leo:

Beware, Leo: there is somebody who is taking credit for your work right now, and they're making stealthy moves without leaving any evidence behind. They could even be pretending to be your confidante right

now. But, the good thing is, your instinct is strong. You always know when there is something fishy going on. So, trust that voice of wisdom within, and put an end to the drama before matters get worse.

Tip: Trust what your instinct is telling you about the given situation.

Virgo:

It's not about attracting love, Virgo. It's about becoming love, being love, and staying in the vibration of love, for it is our vibration that ultimately creates our reality. So, what will "you" choose today? The old story that 'things don't work out for you', or joy, bliss, creativity, and play? Something tells us that with a little bit of practice, you will be able to transmute the fears and expand your heart space.

Tip: Stay in the energy of love. That's all!

Libra:

It's been quite the year, Libra, and you're tired of being "this" domesticated. The week ahead sees you connecting with your inner wild child and chasing that adrenaline rush like never before. While some of you may be travelling spontaneously, others could be planning a vacation they're likely to remember for years to come. PS: Now is a good time to reconnect with your creative side as well as to free yourself from the idea of 'perfection'.

Tip: It's all about the wild and the unknown.

Scorpio:

The thing about love is that we tend to find it in the most unexpected of places. This is true for where you are right now, Scorpio. So, open your heart. Open your heart as you allow yourself to melt and merge. It's not everyday that you get to experience a romance that's this enchanting, beautiful. Plutonians who are already in a relationship are being asked to let their guard down. Come as you are, beautiful, as you hold space for the other to do just the same. This will lead to a massive transformation.

Tip: It's all about love and other intoxicants.

Sagittarius:

This is a good time for archers who have been putting in the work and showing up for what they love. Your career is thriving with you, beautiful, and bringing you the recognition you deserve. Things on the work and money front are also transforming for you. You're learning to make practical decisions and stash your coins away for tomorrow. Trust that the future version of yourself is going to thank you for the sacrifices you are making today.

Tip: Oh hello, rising star!

Capricorn:

What you're chasing is an impossible dream, Capri-

corn. A dream that's never going to bring you the joy you desire and deserve. So, reassess where you're at and why you're obsessing over something that isn't good for you. It's time to let go of what isn't in alignment as you begin to honour your truth.

Tip: Look beyond the illusion, wild one.

Aquarius:

Plot twist, Aquarius: just when you thought you had it all figured out, a brand new door opens up for you. The answer to "Which way do I go from here?" can be found by turning inwards. Don't be intimidated by the unknown, though. Keep in mind that true growth can only take place once you step out of your comfort zone.

Tip: Embrace the idea of the wild and the unknown.

Pisces:

The week ahead finds you tapping into your inner magician and alchemist. It's all about traversing to unseen realms in order to gain access to sacred information. Some of you may be feeling inspired to study esoteric subjects such as tarot, astrology and numerology, and practice ancient forms of divination as well. Remember, a mentor can only take you 'this\* far. Learning to trust your intuition fully will prove to be the biggest game changer in your journey.

Tip: You're in the mood to traverse to the unseen realms.