



**PUBG MOBILE COULD SOON
BE UNBANNED IN INDIA**
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**WHAT THE HISTORY OF DIVERSITY
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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DAC East to remain closed on 09 Sept

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

One COVID positive person had visited the District Administrative Centre at Sichey, Gangtok on 07 and 08 September, therefore, the DAC will remain closed on 09 Sept for sanitization purpose. An order regarding this was issued by the DC East today.

Sikkim records 7th COVID casualty

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

A 43-year-old Army personnel was brought dead to STNM Hospital last night. Doctors said that he had died due to a heart attack.

However, Truenat test of the dead body was conducted which returned positive for COVID-19 therefore his death will be recorded as a COVID death.

Over 5 crore COVID-19 tests conducted till date

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI): India's cumulative tests for detection of COVID-19 have surpassed five crore, while tests per million have witnessed a rise from 6,396 on July 1 to 36,703 as of date, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

Aggressive and wide-spread testing have essayed an important role in India's fight against the COVID pandemic, the ministry said.

India has come a long way from conducting just one test at the lab in the National Institute of Virology, Pune in January to 5,06,50,128 as on date with 10,98,621 samples being tested in 24 hours testifying the enlarged testing capacity in the country.

"The average daily tests conducted (week-wise) are demonstrating a consistent increase. This has registered a 3.2 times expansion from third week of July (3,26,971) to first week of September (10,46,470)," the ministry said. The average Tests Per Million Per Day have increased from 237 in the second week of July to 758 in the first week of September, it highlighted.

In its Guidance Note on Public Health Criteria to Adjust Public Health and Social Measures in the Context of COVID-19, the WHO has advised countries to conduct 140 tests per day per million population for comprehensive surveillance for suspect cases.

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CM announces Cancer Institute to come up at Karfector



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

Chief Minister, PS Tamang took to Facebook to announce that the state government is planning to set up a Cancer Institute at Karfector in South Sikkim.

"Today I attended a video conference with the Chairman of the GC Group of Companies regarding the set-up of a state of the art Cancer institute at Karfector, South Sikkim," the CM wrote.

He informed that the State Government will provide land, supply of electricity and water including basic amenities at the proposed site.

The company will invest Rs 1500 crores for the construction of the 500-bed cancer hospital which will be equipped with a world-class 10 wing super-specialty department with office space, accommodation and other facilities.

The CM informed that the

company has already visited the land and primary feasibility study has been completed.

The hospital will cater to all the North-Eastern states, West Bengal and neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bhutan which will further boost international medical tourism in the State.

The promoters have been invited to visit the State as early as possible to carry forward the proposal, he wrote.

19 new cases takes COVID tally to 1958

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

Nineteen fresh cases of novel coronavirus have been reported in the State taking the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported so far to 1958. There are now 538 active cases of COVID-19 in the State. The figure of the cured & discharged patients of COVID-19 of Sikkim is now 1413 with the discharge of 17 more patients from isolation facilities.

In his daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that 13 of 96 samples tested by RT-PCR here at VRD Lab in STNM hospital on Monday returned positive for COVID-19. Likewise, he added that two samples were found positive in the testing of 46 samples by TrueNat, while four persons were reported positive for COVID-19 in

the rapid antigen testing of 25 samples.

While providing information on new cases reported in RT-PCR testing, he informed that one from near Marigold School in Sichey, two near Rehab centre in 32 No, one returnee from a paid quarantine facility, one from near Pushpa Garage in Development area and two from Rangpo tested positive in RT-PCR testing.

Mr Bhutia added that one person from Lum in North Sikkim, who had come for check-up at Singtam District Hospital on 01 September and was later referred to STNM hospital tested positive. He added that one SNT driver, who was earlier in Siliguri Transit camp and was presently in quarantine in a hotel, was tested after showing some symptoms and reported positive for COVID-19.

He stated that one

person from below traffic point in Upper Tathangchen, one from Paljor Stadium COVID care centre, one from government quarter near High Court Museum and one from Ranipool also tested positive in RT-PCR.

While giving break-up of RAT testing, State IEC Officer informed that one person from Munshi Colony in Development Area tested positive at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong while one from Kingstone Rhenock and two from Zuluk were found positive in the rapid antigen testing at Rongli. Likewise, he added that one from SICB colony in Vajra also tested positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat testing.

It is informed that 12 patients from STNM hospital, 3 from Paljor Stadium and 2 from Himalayan Pharmacy Institute have been discharged from isolation facilities.

42 fresh cases take Meghalaya's COVID-19 tally to 3,076

SHILLONG, SEPT 8 (PTI): Forty-two more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya on Tuesday, taking the state's tally to 3,076, Health Minister A L Hek said.

There are now 1,343 active cases in the state, while 17 patients have succumbed to the disease so far, he said. As many as 156 patients were cured of the disease during the day, taking the total number of recoveries in the state to 1,716, Health Services director Aman War said.

East Khasi Hills reported 25 fresh infections, followed by West Garo Hills at 13, South West Garo Hills at 3 and Ri-Bhoi at 1.

The state health department has conducted 1.02 lakh tests for COVID-19 so far, the official added.

India's hiring outlook bleakest in 15 yrs: Survey

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI):

India is witnessing the weakest hiring sentiment in 15 years with just 3 per cent companies planning to add staff in the next three months, a survey of over 800 employers said on Tuesday.

According to the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, that covered 813 firms across India, Indian employers report cautious hiring plans for the final quarter of 2020.

As per the survey, 7 per cent of employers anticipate an increase in payrolls, 3 per cent forecast a decrease and 54 per cent expect no change. Once the data is adjusted to allow for seasonal variation, the outlook stands at 3 per cent, it said.

"Hiring sentiment is the weakest since the survey began 15 years ago, remaining relatively stable when compared with the previous quarter, but declining by 16 percentage points in comparison with this time one year ago," the survey said.

The strongest hiring pace is recorded in the small-sized organisations followed by the medium-sized and large-sized firms. From a region perspective, north and east regions indicate a more positive outlook compared to the west and south, the survey said.



"Post the 'right sizing' exercise aligning themselves to the current market demands, organisations are now looking at improving productivity, new forms of employee engagement, getting furloughed employees back and implementation of technology," said Sandeep Gulati, Group Managing Director of ManpowerGroup India. These factors are influencing the employment trends this quarter, he added.

Gulati further said that "the government is also trying to ease the burden on corporate India by providing various sops from production-linked incentives to changes in the labour law and leniency on tax returns. We hope to see the impact of these reforms in the subsequent quarters".

The survey further said that nearly 44 per cent of employers reported that they may return to pre-COVID-19

hiring within the next nine months whereas 42 per cent are unsure about returning back to normalcy from the hiring perspective.

When asked about existing members of the workforce that have been placed on a job retention or furlough scheme, 42 per cent of companies suggest they plan to bring them back with reduced hours, however, 3 per cent indicate these staff will be let go.

Globally, employers in 22 of the 43 countries and territories surveyed by ManpowerGroup expect to add to payrolls in the period up to the end of December 2020. In 16 countries and territories, employers expect to reduce payrolls, while flat hiring activity is forecast in five.

The strongest labour markets are expected in Taiwan, the United States, Turkey, Japan and Greece, while the weakest hiring intentions are

turn to pg 02

75,809 new COVID-19 cases take tally to 42.8 lakh; record 1,133 fatalities push death toll to 72,775

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI):

India's COVID-19 case-load rose to 42,80,422 on Tuesday with 75,809 instances of the viral infection recorded in the last 24 hours, while a record 1,133 fatalities took the death toll to 72,775, the Union health ministry data showed.

During the same period, the number of recoveries surged to 33,23,950 pushing the recovery rate to 77.65 per cent, according to the data updated at

8 am on Tuesday.

India's single-day rise in cases dipped on Tuesday, after recording over 80,000 cases daily for five days in a row. India recorded a spike of over 90,000 cases on Sunday and Monday.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection stands at 1.7 per cent.

According to the data, there are 8,83,697 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country

which comprises 20.65 per cent of the total case-load. India's tally of coronavirus infection crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, reached 30 lakh on August 23 and went past 40 lakh on September 5.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, the number of tests conducted for detection of COVID-19 in India has reached 5,06,50,128 with 10,98,621 samples being tested on Monday.

Why Covid school closures are making girls marry early

HARRIET GRANT

NEW YORK, 08 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: Samita (not her real name) is 17 and lives in the Lamjung district of Nepal. It was never easy, even before coronavirus, for her to attend school full-time. Living in a rural community in a family with little income she was expected to do housework as well.

Samita persisted though. At the beginning of the year, the Sisters for Sisters project run by international development charity VSO was supporting her with an "older sister" mentor, who was encouraging her to keep up her education.

Then, in May, with schools still closed and as many as a quarter of Nepali workers losing their jobs because of Covid-19, Samita's mother decided her daughter should get married. To the dismay of Sisters for Sisters, Samita became one of three girls in the district to get married in the first months of lockdown.

There are many reasons that the VSO group wants to stop Samita and girls like her from getting married before the age of 18. Marriage at

a young age can have devastating and lifelong consequences. Beyond the immediate loss of their education, it puts girls at increased risk of a life of abuse, ill health and poverty.

In a rapid reaction study by VSO in four rural districts where Sisters for Sisters are active, girls were asked about changes in their life since the coronavirus lockdown. A huge majority – 89% – reported increased pressure to do housework or agricultural labour at the cost of school work, and 11 marriages had taken place out of 152 girls. Local groups felt this was a clear increase on a normal three-month period.

Ananda Paudel, project lead for Sisters for Sisters Nepal, says: "The challenges that girls and young women have traditionally faced in Nepal appear to be returning because of the pandemic. Despite progress on gender equality in recent years, we fear that those hard-fought wins will go into reverse.

"The districts we work in in Nepal are highly reliant on migrant labour, with itinerant workers sending remittances back from India.

Households in rural parts of the country are severely affected by the economic fallout from Covid. This is adding pressure on families to stay afloat ... and the pressure on young girls to marry only increases."

When schools around the world began closing their doors to pupils in March, child protection experts predicted that large numbers of children in the poorest parts of the world might never return to the classroom. Unesco estimated at the end of March that more than 89% of students enrolled in education globally, including nearly 743 million girls, were out of school because of Covid-19 closures.

There were warnings that this would lead to an increase in gender-based violence, with vulnerable students forced into work or abusive marriages.

Dr Faith Mwangi-Powell, chief executive at Girls Not Brides, a global partnership of more than 1,300 civil society organisations from more than 100 countries committed to ending child marriage, says there was growing

evidence that school closures had led to a rise in gender-based violence. "School was a safety net for many and this situation disadvantages girls more than boys because they are more likely to be married off, seen as a burden by families facing economic hardship," she says.

"In Kenya, schools have been closed until next year. We are hearing these problems from members all over the world. These are huge challenges and the longer we delay in solving them, the bigger the impact will be for girls. We need to get girls back to school."

The UN's population agency, UNFPA, said in April that as many as 13 million more child marriages could take place over the next 10 years because of a six-month Covid-19 shutdown of schools and family planning services combined with increasing economic hardship.

In a survey by literacy charity Room to Read of 24,000 girls across eight countries, half were found to be at high risk of their education ending permanently because of the closure of schools.

turn to pg 02

Bengal reports 57 more COVID deaths

KOLKATA, SEP 8 (PTI): The COVID-19 death toll in West Bengal rose to 3,677 on Monday with 57 more patients succumbing to the disease, a bulletin released by the state health department said.

The tally went up to 1,86,956 after 3,091 fresh cases of infection were registered from different parts of the state.

The discharge rate of West Bengal improved to 85.60 per cent after 2,996 people recovered from the disease, the bulletin said.

The discharge rate was 85.40 per cent on Monday.

The state now has 23,254 active cases.

India, Angola decide to boost ties in diverse sectors

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI): India and Angola have resolved to expand their bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including energy, telecommunication, information technology and agriculture.

The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations at a meeting of the India-Angola Joint Commission which was co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Angolan counterpart Tete Antonio.

A joint press communique on Monday's virtual meeting said both governments shared the view that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is a global scourge and resolved to combat it through coordinated regional and global efforts, including at the UN.

"The two ministers reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations in the areas of political, economic, trade and investment, defence and security and development cooperation," it said.

The communique released on Tuesday by the Ministry of External Affairs said Jaishankar and Antonio also exchanged views on regional and global developments of mutual interest.

It said both sides agreed to encourage Indian investments in information technologies and telecommunications and cooperate in the field of space so as to benefit the Angolan health and education sectors.

The communique said India offered to share its expertise to support Angola's economic diversification plans through capacity building and infrastructure development in key areas of health, education, mining and agriculture while leveraging Angola's strengths in the petroleum and diamond sector.

"The joint commission noted that Angola-India development partnership could be further strengthened through lines of credit and buyer's credit arrangements to enhance the capacity of Angolan entities in areas like agriculture, defence, energy, industry, and sustainable water projects," it said.

The two sides also finalised three agreements including one on cooperation in the health sector.

6th edition of Aadyam to go online

NEW DELHI, SEPT 8 (PTI): Come October, the sixth edition of Aadyam, a theatre initiative by Aditya Birla Group, will bring plays from stage to screen as it goes online in the times of coronavirus, the organisers announced on Tuesday.

Aadyam, for its debut digital edition, will bring back three plays from its repertoire, which will be streamed via Insider.in.

The three plays will be "Bandish 20-20,000

Hz" (Hindi) by Purva Naresh, "I Don't Like It, As You Like It" (English) by Rajat Kapoor, and "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (English) by Akash Khurana.

The tickets for the shows will be available from late September and the streaming dates will be announced in the coming weeks.

Talking about the digital shift of theatre, Shernaz Patel, artistic director, Aadyam said that

even during these tough times theatre will find a way to survive as it has for hundreds of years.

"This is a tough time for theatre very tough. We excel in the live, we thrive on the immediate and tactile communion between us and the audience. This love, passion, need call it what you will brings us back to the stage year after year, even as sceptics debate if theatre is dying.

"Theatre has sur-

vived centuries. With every catastrophe, we have found ways to reinvent ourselves. Death has never been an option for us. So, in 2020 if we have to perform in 920 x 1080 pixels, we will. We accept the challenge. Because this is what we do," Patel said.

The online show would also be made interactive with live polling and mini quizzes.

Aadyam also launched a communi-

ty platform on Tuesday for theatre lovers, called 'Theatre Ink'. It features original content written and presented by theatre practitioners and reputed writers from across the country.

To be presented in a blog format, Theatre Ink, edited by Patel, will feature interviews, insights, articles, advice, tips, news, behind the scenes snippets and much more, catering to both the industry and audience.

Poshan Maah in North Sikkim



MANGAN, 08 SEPT (IPR): Focussing upon the celebration of Poshan Maah from 1st to 30th September, today on 8th September, Panchayats of Singhik-Sentam GPU was given sensitization about Poshan Abhiyan and the critical role of panchayats to ensure success of the campaign and to monitor and review nutritional status of children at Gram level. The programme also hosted an open discussion on various ways to make malnutrition free GPU.

They were also highlighted about various women centric schemes and how Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme plays a key role in availing the facilities to the women.

A Mahila Sabha was also held during the day with discussion on various topics. The programme was organised by CDPO, Chungthang in coordination with Panchayat president, Singhik Sentam GPU, Women welfare officer (MSK) North was also present as guest speaker.

ASSCWA to hold elections for new body

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 SEPT: A meeting of All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association [ASSCWA] was held under the chairmanship of its senior advisor, Ranjan Pariyar here on Monday. The meeting discussed various agendas related to the upcoming election of the organization.

A press release of the association mentions that the tenure of the existing working committee has finished so the meeting discussed fresh elections of the organization. A meeting held on 07 March this year had decided to hold the meeting in the month of April but it

could not happen due to the lockdown following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The release adds that the organization has now started corresponding with the concerned departments regarding permissions for the conduct of elections.

The release mentions that interested persons need to have membership of the organization to participate in the election process and the new membership and renewal drive will be started from 14 September. Those interested may contact Hemant Ramudamu, Bhupen Lamichaney and Ravi Cintury for membership.

MYMPS donates Rs 11,000 to cancer patient



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 SEPT: Marwari Yuva Manch Prerna Shakha [MYMPS] Gangtok donated Rs 11,000 to a cancer

patient who was in need of financial help. The amount was handed over to the patient's mother. The patient is 20 years old with a 2-month-old baby boy.

Over 5 crore...

The average week-on-week data for India shows a rising improvement on this front.

Expanding network of diagnostic labs has given a boost to Tests per Million.

"The TPM have seen a sharp rise from 6396 on July 1 to 36,703 as of today," the ministry said.

The testing lab network consists of 1668 labs in the country; 1035 labs in the government sector and 633 private labs.

India's COVID-19 caseload mounted to 42,80,422 with a single-day spike of 75,809 infections, while the death toll climbed to 72,775 with record 1,133 new fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

India's hiring...

reported in Panama, Costa Rica, South Africa, Colombia and the UK.

"Interviewing was carried out during the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak. The survey findings for the fourth quarter of 2020 are likely to reflect the impact of the global health emergency, and may be notably different to previous quarters," it noted.

BJP office at Kazitar inaugurated

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh president, DB Chauhan has inaugurated the constituency-level party office at Kazitar in Namchi, South Sikkim on Tuesday. The programme was also attended by South District president, CL Gurung, general secretary, Kumar Rai along with other party workers and members of the district committee along with local gentries.

A press release of BJP spokesperson, Dr Raju Giri informs that a social worker and former Zilla Panchayat, Devi Maya Baraily from Namthang has joined BJP and she was welcomed by the party president.

The party president stated that BJP has emerged as the second



strong party in the State so party leaders and workers need to work harder to strengthen the party at all levels. He further added that BJP has been working together with SKM government in the State in the interest of Sikkimese people and for the development of Sikkim.

Mr Chauhan stated that like in previous years this year again BJP will observe nation-wide 'Sewa Saptah' from 14 to 20 September on the oc-

casion of the birthday of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He added that on the direction of the central committee of the party, activities like blood donation camps, awareness on central schemes, cleanliness drives and others will be conducted in the State. He further appealed to the office bearers and workers of the party to extend their full support for the success of the programme.

Basant Tamang takes charge as Chairman Transport Dept

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:

Basant Tamang took charge as Chairman of Transport Department, Government of Sikkim at Sikkim National Transport Department, Gangtok, today.

During his first day at office, Principal Chief Engineer cum General Manager, Karma Namgyal, Chief Engineer Dukpa Sherpa, Joint Director, LP Gautam and Chief Engineer, Manisha Pradhan including others office staffs, heartily welcomed Chairman.

Meanwhile, PHE Min-



ister, Bhim Hang Limboo had also come to congratulate the Chairman.

While addressing the press fraternity today at his office, Mr Tamang thanked Chief Minister, PS Tamang for offering him this opportunity to

contribute to the state.

He said that he will work together with officers of Transport Department and office staff to take the Transport Department to the next level. He further thanked all his well-wishers as well.

SISCO's 15th ATM inaugurated at Gyalshing



GANGTOK, 08 SEPT (IPR): SISCO Bank inaugurated its 15th ATM at the District Administrative Centre, Gyalshing today. The facility was inaugurated by Chairman of the Bank, Dup Pinto Kaleon in presence of DC (West), senior officials of District Administration and general public.

While dedicating the ATM facility to the Government officers, employees and general public visiting the DAC, the Chairman shared that SISCO Bank is a major player in the banking scenario in the State. Being the only licensed

banking institution of the State, SISCO Bank has been an effective player in outreach and extension of banking services to far corners of the State.

The Bank also has adopted rapid technology up gradation and is providing digital services to the people of Sikkim. He urged the Government Departments, officials and the general public to connect with the Bank. The deposit and credit products of the Bank meet the requirements of the individuals, farmers, traders, entrepreneurs, SHGs and all segments of the society.

The ATM is also the 1st ATM located outside the premises of the Bank. The Bank plans to expand its footprints rapidly in coming days.

The programme was also addressed by DC (West) where he applauded the Bank for its major role in Agriculture and Allied sector of the State and urged the Government Departments to support the Bank.

SISCO Bank, Gyalshing under whom the ATM is managed is led by AGM (South/West), Anuja Pradhan and Branch Head, Nirmal Pradhan.

Why Covid...

The girls in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Tanzania were asked key questions about poverty and home learning and pressures on the family. More than 40% said the pandemic had pushed their families further into poverty, while 7% said they already thought they would not be returning to school.

Government reports have indicated teen pregnancies have risen in Kenya, where schools are staying closed until January 2021, while in Malawi, where 42% of girls are married before 18, Care International reported that local groups have had to mobilise against an increase in both child rape and marriage.

Billy Molosoni is a gender and diversity adviser at Care Malawi. He says the impact has been even worse than was feared at the start of lockdown.

"What we are seeing and hearing is that more girls than usual are getting pregnant and some of them may not go back to school," he says. "We did a rapid analysis of how Covid might impact child marriage and pregnancy before schools closed and there were worries then ... but people didn't imagine the extent to which it is actually impacting them."

Molosoni says there was growing evidence of an immediate impact. "The government here have just done an assessment of the magnitude of the problem. We have been told informally that almost all districts in Malawi have seen at least a few percentages increase in pregnancy and child marriage."

Malawi has a national child and gender-based violence helpline that covers half the country's districts. The Tithandizane helpline, run by a youth organisation called Yonoco, has reported an increase in reports of instances of child marriage and rape. A spokesman says: "Child and forced marriage increased by 83% from March-May this year compared to last, while rape, which is linked to child marriage, increased by 151%."

Care is supporting initiatives to support local chiefs and community leaders to break up child marriages. One project, led by Theresa Kachindamoto, an activist and paramount chief of the Dedza district in the central region of Malawi, has used a WhatsApp group with police and local village groups working together to tackle the issue.

Early marriage is just one part of what experts are warning is a wider pattern of damage being done to the rights of women and girls around the world by Covid.

The UNFPA has set three goals for women globally by 2030: ending unmet needs for family planning; ending gender-based violence, including child marriage; and ending all preventable maternal deaths.

The agency warns: "The Covid-19 pandemic could critically undermine progress made towards achieving these goals."

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Amrita Rai, daughter of Bijay Rai, 31 year of age resident of Samik, East Sikkim P.O & P.S Ranipool East Sikkim solemnly declare that my father name was recorded as "Vijoy Rai" in my Birth Certificate, Voter Card, Aadhar Card and recorded as "Bijay Rai" in my School Certificates. Hence I swear by the affidavit before the Oath Commissioner, East Sikkim that both "Vijoy Rai" & "Bijay Rai" as nmes of one and same persons i.e. my father. Signed on 19th August 2019 at Gangtok, East Sikkim.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak
Price negotiable
Contact : 6296366498,
9641878315, 9593262407

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact: 78640-04501, 62970-03235, 98320-48410

FOR RENT

Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Baazar (Opposite UCO Bank). The building area is 35'x60' appx. in each floor and is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks etc. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General roadside land for sale measuring 30 by 45 square feet near smile land below apica garden. Contact no. 7797885351/9733538899.

Building for sale

A two storey building constructed on plot area 50x40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS, South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 60 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.

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SICA signs Anureet and Md Shahbaz for Sikkim Ranji Team

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

After signing the former Rajasthan captain Robin Bist, Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) has announced that it has signed pacer Anureet Singh and Md Shahbaz Anwar for the upcoming season, a press release informs.

Anureet Singh is a medium-pacer who has played 11 years for Railways and moved to Baroda last season. He has also represented the country in India-A, India Red, Rest of India, Central Zone, Railways, and also played in IPL for Kings XI Punjab, Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals. Singh has taken 249 wickets so far in first-class cricket in 72 matches at an economy rate of just 2.73 including 16 five wickets haul.



He has also scored 1,209 runs in first-class cricket and equally effective with both bat and ball in all formats of the game.

The pacer is excited to play and expresses that it is a big opportunity for him to prove himself in the role entrusted upon him and will give his best

to bring the team up and win. He added that he is also looking forward to sharing his experience with the new team and learn from his new teammates as well.

The third guest player, Md Shahbaz Anwar of Bengal, who has been part of Sikkim since last

year in Under-23 Men's team has been upgraded to the Ranji team after his exceptional performance in 2019-20 season. He scored a total of 1,130 runs in 9 matches of Col CK Nayudu Trophy including five centuries and six half-centuries and became the leading

run-scorer of the tournament in his categories. In One-Day tournament, he scored 406 runs in 9 matches including a century and two half-centuries.

"SICA has signed some of the consistent performers in domestic cricket and we believe they will keep the momentum going," said president of SICA, Mr Tenzing.

As per the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) norms, three guest players are allowed in a team for the India Domestic Season to ensure that the teams have enough quality to remain competitive in various tournaments. As a common practice for all the full cricketers members, Sikkim has chosen its professional players for the upcoming season 2020-21.

Governor takes part in video conference on NEP



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

Governor, Ganga Prasad gave his valuable suggestions for effective implementation of new National Education Policy in transforming higher education across the Country. The Governor stated that Sikkim is ready to implement the New Education Policy-2020 and this policy will certainly play a pivotal role in Sikkim's future growth and nation as well.

A press release informs that the Governor was speaking at Governor's

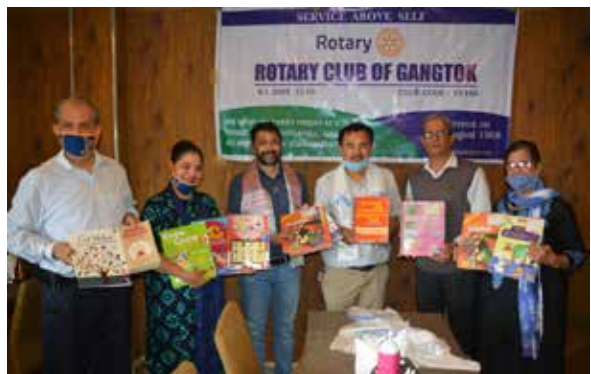
nors' video conference on role of NEP-2020 in transforming higher education which was graced by President of India, Ram Nath Kovind; Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and attended by Union Minister for Education, Romesh Pokhriyal; Governors/ Lieutenant Governors; Education Ministers of States; Chairman, Committee for Drafting New Education Policy; Vice Chancellors and the officers of the States held on Monday (07 September).

The Governor con-

gratulated the Prime Minister for bringing the new National Education Policy, which replaced the 34-year-old National Education Policy. He also sought centre government assistance for infrastructure development in the education sector.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Education department, GP Upadhyaya, Vice-Chancellors of Sikkim Central University and Sikkim Manipal University, Additional Secretary, Raj Bhavan, BK Lama and other officials were also present during the conference.

Rotary Gangtok celebrates World Literacy Day



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:**

The members of Rotary Club of Gangtok handed over books for the library of Government Secondary School, Penlong (East Sikkim) today to celebrate World Literacy Day, a press re-

lease informs. The Club has handed over books to the School for their library in the past as well.

This was part of the Total Literacy and Quality Education program of Rotary International's Rotary India Literacy Mission, the release mentions.

Team of officials takes stock of damages in Yuksam-Tashiding



**PRITAM LAMA
YUKSAM, 08 SEPT:**

Incessant rain in the last few days, especially on Sunday night, triggered massive landslides in many parts of Yuksam-Tashiding Subdivision in West Sikkim.

Yuksam SDM, Tshering T Bhutia along with Disaster Management officials of Yuksam SDM office, visited the affected areas today along with concerned Gram Panchayats to take stock of damages.

"The torrential rainfall on the night of 06 September has caused substantial damage to

residential houses, livestock and agricultural land of people residing in various places due to landslides in different places under Yuksam-Tashiding Sub division," said SDM, Tshering T Bhutia.

A team headed by Yuksam SDM distributed relief material such as tarpaulins for covering the landslides prone portions of land and poly pipes for immediate restoration of drinking water to the affected families as first response.

Further, the SDM informed that the technical report is being prepared

with the necessary documents for submission to the district administration for provision of relief and rehabilitation to the affected people

CONTACT

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NIA arrests 3 from Pune in Bhima Koregaon case

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): The NIA has arrested three persons including a woman, all members of the outlawed CPI(Maoist)'s frontal organisation, in connection with the Bhima Koregaon Elgar Parishad case, an official said.

Sagar Tatyaram Gorkhe, 32, and Ramesh Murlidhar Gaichor, 36, were arrested on Monday while Jyoti Raghoba Jagtap, 33, was arrested on Tuesday, an NIA spokesperson said.

They all are residents of Pune.

The accused are members of Kabir Kala Manch, a frontal organisation of the banned terrorist organisation CPI(Maoist), the official said. The case relates to an Elgar Parishad event of December 31, 2017, organised by the Kabir Kala Manch at Shaniwarwada in Pune, where alleged provocative speeches were made, promoting enmity between various caste groups and leading to violence resulting in the loss of life and property and a state-wide agitation in Maharashtra, the official said.

During investigation, it was revealed that senior leaders of the CPI(Maoist), a banned organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, were in contact with the organisers of Elgar Parishad as well as the accused arrested in the case to spread the ideology of Maoism/Naxalism and encourage unlawful activities, the official of the central investigation agency said.

The Pune police filed a charge sheet and a supplementary charge sheet in the case on November 15, 2018 and February 21, 2019 respectively.

Gorkhe, Gaichor and Jagtap were named in the FIR. The NIA took up the investigation of the case on January 24 this year and arrested Anand Teltumbde and Gautam Navlakha on April 14, the official said.

Further, accused Hanybabu Musaliyavirtil Tarayil, 54, a resident of Gautam Buddha Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and an associate professor in the Department of English, Delhi University, was arrested on July 28.

The NIA official said Gorkhe, Gaichor and Jagtap were propagating Naxal activities and Maoist ideology and were co-conspirators with other arrested accused. They were in contact with absconding accused Milind Teltumbde about the urban network of the CPI(Maoist), he claimed.

During the visits of the Kabir Kala Manch members to the jungle, they underwent weapon and explosive training, and awareness programmes on various topics related to the Maoist movement, the official said.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

A walk in interview for one post of Senior Research Fellow for the Intensive Siri Cattle Breeding Area, Pokhari, West Sikkim purely on contract basis for a period of one year under the National Project on Bovine Breeding will be held on 21st September 2020, at 11.30 am at the office of Sikkim Livestock Development Board, Animal Husbandry Complex, Deorali. Candidates are required to bring testimonials in original, one set of attested copies of testimonials and one passport size colour photograph with complete application, at the time of interview.

Candidates should be present for verification of testimonials at 10.30 am on the 21st September 2020.

The details of educational qualification received, experience and remuneration are shown below:-

Name of the Post:- Senior Research Fellow(SRF)
Education Qualification:- B.V.SC & AH graduate from recognized University.

Candidates with MVSC (Animal Breeding & Genetic) will be given preference.

REMUNERATION: Rs.35,000/-per month.

AGE: Candidates should not have attained the age of 40 years as on 21.09.2020.

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer,
Sikkim Livestock Development Board.

R.O. 63/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21 dt. 04.09.2020

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

The Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is new strain of Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. Notorious for mutating quickly and acquiring new qualities, it is a rising epidemic that was previously not identified in humans.

Symptoms of nCoV

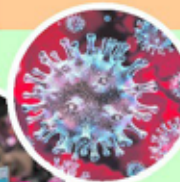
- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition
- No vaccinations available as of now
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- Wash your hands often with soap.
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Observe good personal hygiene.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.
- Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.
- Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.



If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

Defeat Insularity, Every Time

Agent provocateurs can be persistent, but cannot be allowed to win

Some or the other attempt is always in play to whip up some scare with some high-pitched paranoia, and as elections approach nearer, so will the bluster and pretend shock. ‘Pretend’ because there is nothing really surprising in any of this drama which plays out in a cycle around this time of a term every time. To Sikkim’s credit, the tenacity of the communal scaremongers is matched by the pragmatism of its people. Organisations and individuals have consistently represented the interests of their office-bearers [and/ or silent promoters] and almost never the concerns of the people they claim to [or are supposed to] represent; which is perhaps why they hyperventilate over issues which rarely receive mass, grassroots based endorsement. It is this disconnect which also ensures that Sikkim witnesses no communal flare-ups on the streets even though, if the press releases, press statements or Facebook posts were to be believed, the thread of civility between community has been frayed very thin.

This condition is of course not unique to Sikkim. The overlapping of religion and identity and politics has handicapped India since its birth in 1947. Intercommunity fault lines were exploited even in Sikkim during the movement for democracy in the 1970’s. One hears of how rumours tried to pit one community against the other through those tumultuous years and although some clashes did occur, these were more class-confrontations and not inter-community. The people did not turn communal even then. Communal issues flared up in 1979 as well with the Nepali seat issue but its promoters did not receive the endorsement of the people and communal politics was played in the open again in 1994, but did not translate too well in the ballot that time either.

The Sikkimese people, it would hence be safe to vouch, have consistently rejected communal postures. Admittedly, there is an inherent communal streak in all people at an individual level, but the Sikkimese have done exceptionally well in ensuring that this does not become a pathological condition of the entire community. Unfortunately, not all community elders and leaders seem to have accepted this fact and continue to try and peddling prejudiced notions. One hopes that Sikkimese empathy is made of stronger stuff than the chisels with which too many are hammering away at the edifice of respectful coexistence that Sikkim has held firm thus far. In the wake of the festival reaffirming brotherhood and propitiating its Guardian Deity, Sikkim and its people should reaffirm their consistent commitment to stand fast in protecting Sikkim’s interests to fend off the shallow belligerence which should continue to fail so that empathy and mutual respect continue to hold sway.

The Facebook prime minister: how Jacinda Ardern became New Zealand’s most successful political influencer

SOMMER KAPITAN
theconversation.com

“Kia ora, everyone. I’m standing against a blank wall in my house – because it’s the only view in my house that is not messy.”

So begins a 2020 campaign message posted by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. She speaks directly into her phone at day’s end, in a comfortable sweatshirt and with tousled hair, inviting Instagram viewers into her home as she lays out plans for the week ahead.

Voters and fans view her message from their own phones and smart devices: just over 22% of her 1.4 million Instagram followers watched the two-minute video. She is candid, approachable, tired and funny.

Facing a resurgence of COVID-19 just days later, the tone changes to one of concern. But the approach is the same in a 13-minute Facebook livestream, during which 34% of her 1.3 million followers tune in.

In the run-up to the October 17 election, Ardern’s Facebook following alone is four times greater than those of the other seven main party leaders combined. Politician or not, this makes her a serious influencer by anyone’s metrics.

A NATURAL COMMUNICATOR

While the opposition leader’s husband has recently been feeling the heat for his anti-Ardern Facebook posts, Ardern’s own activity is almost relentlessly positive. It’s been that way since she began turning up regularly on live after-dinner Facebook feeds not long after becoming Labour leader seven weeks out from the 2017 election.

Her organic appeal and clear comfort with the format helped her own the space. By the time she was in office, she spoke to Kiwis like an old friend, using the one-way (“parasocial”) relationship with her audience to speak seemingly off the cuff about the day’s events and what she’s thinking.

She is ostensibly unfiltered – tired, often laughing, but above all in command and with creative control over what she posts, shares and shows. This alone helps boost perceptions of her authenticity and expertise.

Ardern joins a continuum of media-age communicators who came to define their political brands via their preferred platforms.

US President Franklin Roosevelt used his radio “fireside chats” in the 1930s and ‘40s to explain policy to Americans. By the 1960s John F. Kennedy had emerged as the original TV president after the first ever televised debate (with Richard Nixon). In New Zealand, Robert Muldoon was the first politician to master the art of political TV.

THE DIGITAL FIRESIDE CHAT

Now, in the digital age, the pace of communication and reach of social media platforms have created the first Twitter president: Donald Trump’s tweets are considered official statements, with more than 11,000 posted from his inauguration in 2017 to the end of 2019.

In 2020 social media are not simply useful political channels (more than 600,000 New Zealanders follow a party account), they are a major electoral battleground.

Ardern knows this. She is a prolific poster, with quick and informal videos (typically one to five



minutes long) making up 81% of her 20 unique posts in a single week in August.

Facebook sits at the heart of her outreach and messaging. Voters, citizens, foreign observers and fans mingle in the comments section, with the general tone being positive and supportive of her leadership.

ENGAGEMENT IS EVERYTHING

The key metric is engagement – the currency of the social media influencer world. Engagement is calculated by dividing the total number of interactions (likes, shares and comments) a post receives by the total number of followers.

Good rates for mega-influencers (those with more than a million followers) on Facebook typically range from .01% to .42%. Rates on Instagram can be as high as 12% for celebrity names such as Taika Waititi.

Analysis of a seven-day period in August, which spanned the Labour Party campaign launch, parliament rising, the resurgence of COVID-19 and subsequent new lockdowns, shows the range and

depth of Ardern’s political influence strategy.

Her Facebook livestream videos – broadcast live but available to watch and comment on later – had an average 1.83% engagement rate on campaign and policy topics and 3.5% on COVID topics.

Ardern is disarming, comfortable and relatable – all key traits that our research suggests increase perceptions of authenticity and expertise. Her engagement puts her on par with, or ahead of, other prolific celebrities such as Rachel Hunter (who also nets a 1.8% engagement for her average of 15 posts a week).

ON-BRAND AND ON-MESSAGE

One five-minute Facebook livestream, posted just before dinnertime on the Saturday of the Labour Party’s campaign launch, gives a taste:

“Hi everyone, I’m sneaking a quick moment while I can hear Neve distracted in the sandpit,” Ardern begins (referring to her two-year-old daughter). As she outlines policy, those watching post heart and thumbs-up emojis, ask questions and talk to one another. The post has a 2.3% engagement rate.

It may be a long way from Trump’s high-pitched, angry use of Twitter, but it is just as brand-aware and on-message.

The New Zealand prime minister is rare in the sense that she is a highly visible social media celebrity as well as a political leader. But at 40 she is also not getting any younger.

If Donald J. Trump is the first Twitter president and Jacinda Ardern the first Facebook prime minister, it’s probably time to ask who will be the first TikTok politician.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Auckland University of Technology]

What the history of diversity training reveals about its future

KIRA LUSSIER
theconversation.com

Picture a standard corporate meeting room, participants crowded around a video of multi-racial actors acting out hypothetical office scenarios.

They fill out workbooks about racial stereotypes, sit through psychological lessons on prejudice and discuss the recent protests against police brutality on the news. The year is 1992, and although the VHS player and the shoulder pads may be dated, other elements of this scene might be familiar to readers in 2020.

Readers may have sat through diversity training at their workplaces or watched as businesses responded to protests against racism. And as we have in the past when companies were called out for racist incidents or homogeneity in the C-suite, we’re once again seeing a call for a familiar intervention to reduce racism: unconscious bias training.

SKEPTICISM ABOUT IMPACT

As a business historian, it doesn’t come as a surprise to see better training as a proposed solution. Yet activists and scholars in the diversity inclusion world have also expressed growing skepticism about the impacts of unconscious bias training.

What’s missing from the conversation is a historical perspective on how we got here as with diversity training has become the default response. That perspective requires an examination of several strands of 20th-century North American history, including psychology, human resource management and equal employment legislation.

Very few corporate announcements of diversity initiatives explain that these programs were needed because of companies’ histories of discriminating on the basis of race. With the mid-1960s introduction of equal employment law and affirmative action in the United States, management positions became a key battleground in attempts to desegregate white-collar work.

Advocates of equal employment in

business identified the attitudes of largely white middle managers as particularly important targets for change, given their role in hiring and promotion decisions.

Diversity training was intended, back then, as an HR intervention to help

ing “business case for diversity,” which had diversity experts and executives alike arguing that a diverse workforce provided a competitive advantage to corporations in a globalized economy.

The career of Price Cobbs, a Black



people adjust to working in newly integrated offices, not to hold companies accountable for previous racially biased policies or incidents.

THE HISTORY OF DIVERSITY TRAINING

Some of the earliest forms of corporate training were mandated in response to employment discrimination lawsuits, as in a 1970s class-action lawsuit at Xerox.

Over the course of the 1960s to 1980s, corporate training broadened in scope to target employee personality traits. This time period also witnessed the ascendance of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a personality testing system that became widely used in management training as a way to understand how personality differences affected working relationships.

This diversity training aimed to teach managers a whole host of social and emotional skills necessary to manage others, including the ability to manage and mitigate conflict stemming from racial differences. Training was a part of the burgeon-

psychiatrist-turned-diversity consultant, illustrates how psychology and business collided in diversity training. In the wake of the Second World War, social psychologists turned to the study of prejudice to explain the horrors of the Holocaust, as well as U.S. segregation.

They identified setting up small groups of 10 to 15 people as an important way to study and change people’s prejudice, developing techniques of unstructured group discussion that continue to be used in diversity training today.

Inspired by social psychology, Cobbs developed the method of the “interracial encounter group” in 1960s California, and ran weekend seminars to break down stereotypes through sensory awareness exercises and fraught interracial discussions. He co-authored a landmark book detailing the effects of racism on Black psychology entitled Black Rage.

In the next few decades, Cobbs would be hired by the computer firm Digital Equipment Corporation to consult for a

program they called Valuing Differences, which paired psychological training approaches with the Myers-Briggs to teach managers how to oversee diverse workplaces.

In the late 1980s, Cobbs also launched a video series called Valuing Diversity and became a popular consultant. By this point, the marketplace for diversity consulting had exploded: new consulting firms sold workbooks, video series and training seminars to corporate clients across North America. According to his autobiography, he taught white executives at Procter & Gamble the term “institutional racism.”

Despite his efforts, Cobbs, like other Black diversity trainers, found himself constrained by white institutions and employees. Diversity trainers generally lacked any bureaucratic power within the ranks of the middle managers they were training.

Trainers were also cautioned to avoid upsetting white participants by calling out white racism.

WHITE BACKLASH

The white backlash became a theme in the business trade media by the early 1990s, as exemplified in Business Week’s “White, Male, and Worried” article that interviewed white men worried about diversity training.

Diversity training exercises risked reinforcing and revealing racial stereotypes, rather than breaking them down. One common technique at the onset of diversity training asked participants to list off common racial stereotypes — a technique spoofed in The Office’s “Diversity Day” episode, resulting in a torrent of racist and sexist stereotypes.

More seriously, in one 1988 lawsuit, Black employees of a California grocery store used the stereotypes displayed in training seminars, like “Black females are more aggressive,” as evidence that white managers had blocked promotion opportunities.

It’s this history that explains how psy-

chological approaches and the language of “valuing diversity” became a key part of diversity training that continue to shape training today.

Decades of applying psychology in business to address racism came to a head in the late 1990s, when psychologists developed the Implicit Association Test, a computer-based test that seeks to measure buried racial biases.

It’s become a core part of unconscious bias training, drawing on the legacy of decades of psychological approaches to racism.

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

But the introduction of diversity training has been a double-edged sword.

It’s offered opportunities for people of colour to advocate for more inclusive workplaces. But instead of identifying the specific hierarchies of power and legacies of structural racism, diversity initiatives often emphasized a supposedly colour-blind celebration of diversity, detached from power and history.

These programs conflated personality differences with racial differences in ways that ignored the systemic discrimination business practices had perpetuated.

History teaches us that we’ve been trying the same old solutions, ignoring the fact that training seminars were never intended to solve racism. They were intended as human resource interventions at organizations concerned about interpersonal conflicts stemming from diverse workforces.

That’s not to say individual change doesn’t matter, or that training can’t help white people address their own unconscious racial biases. But training isn’t going to fix pay inequities or police brutality. Racist structures weren’t built in a day, and they won’t disappear with a few unconscious bias training seminars.

To be more than window dressing, training must be integrated into other organizational policies that strike at the heart of structural inequality, such as targeted recruitment and mentoring programs.

[the writer is Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Toronto, University of Toronto]

Ham radio operators help trace missing man

DIAMOND HARBOUR (WB), SEP 8 (PTI): A 40-year-old mentally challenged man from Maharashtra, who had gone missing from Gangasagar Mela in 2019, was traced near Sunderbans in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district with the help of Ham Radio operators, a senior police officer said here.

Gobinda Raosaheb Munde of Parbahani, Maharashtra, was found earlier by an NGO Bajrang Parishad, at the annual fair, and was claimed to have helped him board a train for his native place in Maharashtra, Vaibhav Tiwari, SP of Sunderban police district in South 24 Parganas, said on Monday.

Rao, however, did not reach home and was finally traced at Kakdwip, the SP said.

"He has been brought at Kakdwip police station for safe custody and



his relatives have been informed who are also on the way to take him back," Tiwari said.

Ambarish Nag Biswas, secretary of West Bengal Radio Club

(WBRC) which is also known as Ham Radio, said that on getting information that the man had gone missing again, the WBRC had deployed several teams of its members

from Monday morning and one of these traced Munde near the old SDO office at Kakdwip.

"One of our members, Dibas Mondal first traced him in Kakdwip and with

the help of another member Samarendra Bikash Roy, the missing man was rescued on Monday morning and the Kakdwip police took him to the police station," he said.

Nagaland notifies new SOPs for people entering State

KOHIMA, SEPT 07 [NAGALANDPAGE]: The High Powered Committee (HPC) on COVID-19 Nagaland headed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Monday decided to bring out new Standard Operating procedure (SOP) relaxing quarantining of returnees and movement of people for urgent official works and agricultural activities in the State.

Informing this media persons here, Minister for Planning and Coordination, Land Revenue and Parliamentary Affairs, Neiba Kronu said the decision to this effect was taken during the HPC meeting held Monday after thoroughly considering the need to enhance the economic and the construction works, specially the four-lane National Highway-29 and other road connectivity.

"The working period of the State is very less in Nagaland and with rainy season coming to an end, we have to open up so that the construction works can be initiated without any hindrance," said Kronu, who is also the Government spokesperson on COVID-19.

However, the Minister asserted that the HPC has also decided that though things are being opened stricter safety measures, including social distancing protocols and hand hygiene measures have to be followed by everyone so as to avoid contraction of the virus.

Quarantining of people coming to the state on official visit and leaving within 48 hours will not be required anymore, he said.

The Minister asserted that the unlock measures have been initiated with a view to encourage other economic activities, especially with regard to agri and allied sectors.

In this, he said, that the state government has constituted a Strategic Economic Committee which has planned out on measures to be taken up for improvement of production of the agri and allied sectors within the State.

The project has been already sent one post COVID-19 project on agri and allied sector to the North Eastern Council (NEC) for funding while approval is awaited.

Meanwhile, Principal Secretary Home Abhijit Sinha informed that the detailed SOP is being worked following Monday's HPC meeting outcome.

Senior SP leader dies due to COVID-19

LUCKNOW, SEP 8 (PTI): Senior Samajwadi Party leader and Member of Legislative Council SRS Yadav died due to COVID-19 here, the party said.

The 87-year-old tested positive for COVID-19 on September 1 and breathed his last at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) here on Monday night, SP national spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary said.

A native of Unnao district, he is survived by wife and three sons.

SRS Yadav, who worked as an administrative officer till 1992, joined the Samajwadi Party after his retirement. He was considered close to SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav.

He held various posts in the party. Presently he was a member of the party's national executive. SP President Akhilesh Yadav, while condoling the demise of the senior party colleague, said he dedicated his entire life to the Samajwadi Party after his retirement.

He said SRS Yadav was a true socialist and always worked for the well being of the downtrodden and deprived sections of the society.

J&K glaciers melting at 'significant' rate, study finds



SHAKOOR RATHER

SRINAGAR, SEP 8 (PTI): Glaciers in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh are melting at a "significant" rate, according to a first-of-its-kind study which used satellite data to find that over 1,200 glaciers in the Himalayan region saw an annual reduction in mass of 35 centimetres (cm) on average between 2000 and 2012.

The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, was carried over the Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh region, including areas across the Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC), and in all 12,243 glaciers were studied for thickness and mass changes.

"In general, it was observed that the glaciers in the Pir Panjal range are melting at the higher rate -- more than one metre per year -- while as the glaciers in the Karakoram range are melting relatively at slower rate, around 10 cms per year," noted Professor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, corresponding author of the study.

"Some glaciers are even advancing or stable in the Karakoram range. In other mountain ranges like the Greater Himalayan range, Zaskar range, Shamabari range, Leh ranges, the glaciers are undoubtedly melting but the rate of melting is variable," Romshoo, Dean of Research at the University of Kashmir in Srinagar, told PTI.

The research team, including Tariq Abdullah and Irfan Rashid, both from Geoinformatics Department, University of Kashmir, used two satellite observations made in 2000 by NASA and in 2012 by German space agency DLR.

They employed this data to determine the glacier thickness changes over the entire Upper Indus Basin, comprising over 12,000 glaciers.

"There is no such data (satellite observations) available in the world after 2012. This is a first of its kind study in the region and provides a very good idea about what is happening to the glaciers in the region," Romshoo explained.

Till date, he said, only six to seven glaciers have been studied in the region for thickness and glacial mass changes using field observations.

The researchers noted that while glacier melting is a continuous process and the shrinkage in area of the glaciers is being estimated routinely, thickness and mass changes are not possible always because of the lack of satellite data.

There are also limitations and challenges associated with field based studies in the mountainous Himalaya, they said.

The team noted that during one decade of observation in this study, the region has lost about 70.32 gigatonne of glacier mass, which is "quite significant."

Romshoo noted that the continued melting of glaciers will have significant adverse impacts on every sector of economy in the region and beyond, particularly in the downstream areas which are already water scarce.

"It is pertinent to mention here that the waters emanating from this region are shared between the neighbouring countries in the south Asia," the professor at the Department of Earth Sciences, University of

Kashmir, added.

The knowledge generated about the glacier thickness changes across different mountain ranges in the data-scarce Himalayan region is vital for determining the sustainability of water resources in the south Asian region, according to the researchers.

Melting of the glaciers in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh is going to impact the water, food and energy security with the consequent adverse effect on the dependent livelihoods, they noted.

The researchers explained that the main drivers of the glacial melt in the Himalayan region are increasing temperatures and decreasing snow precipitation, resulting from greenhouse gas emissions from industrialisation and increasing use of fossil fuels the world over.

Romshoo noted that though there is "almost no industrialisation" in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Himalaya, the mountainous region is facing the brunt of climate change happening globally.

A study, published in the journal Climatic Change on July 29, found that Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh may witness a temperature increase of up to 6.9 degrees Celsius by the end of the century due to climate change, warning that the glaciers in this Himalayan region could shrink by 85 per cent if the projections come true.

The latest study was conducted as part of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) research project "Centre of Excellence for glacial research in the western Himalaya."

Bengaluru gets air ambulance service

BENGALURU, SEP 8 (PTI): Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Tuesday inaugurated the International Critical Air Transfer Team Integrated Air ambulance services in Bengaluru.

The services were launched in collaboration with Kyathi, a leading aviation technology firm.

The ICATT Kyathi's fixed wing aircraft for long distance emergency medical transport, combined with helicopter and land ambulance services providing last mile connectivity, will address the growing need for

timely and quality emergency medical services in India, the company said.

The fixed wing air ambulance to be stationed at the HAL airport in Bengaluru will also be the first air ambulance based out of South India, said the company.

It also said the location will enable speedier services for medical emergencies in the region and overcome the challenges of high road traffic in the metro cities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister exuded confidence that the air ambulance

service will improve the connectivity of these peripheral healthcare centres to the big tertiary centres in the cities.

"During times of emergency, providing timely and speedy medical care and treatment is of paramount importance. The introduction of ICATT Kyathi's Integrated Air Ambulance service will ensure not only quick medical assistance but also high quality care delivered by senior doctors and paramedics trained in critical care, while in flight," Yediyurappa said.

Pune: Notice to agency operating jumbo COVID-19 facility

PUNE, SEP 8 (PTI): The Pune district administration has served notice to an agency operating a newly-created COVID-19 jumbo hospital here for alleged lapses and mismanagement at the facility, an official said.

Another agency has now been roped in to improve facilities at the hospital, set up in the premises of the College of Engineering here in Maharashtra, Pune divisional commissioner Saurabh Rao said on Monday.

Last week, a news channel journalist died at jumbo medical facility. His family members alleged that he did not get a cardiac ambulance in time.

Following his death, there were allegations about mismanagement at the jumbo hospital.

"We have not yet completely replaced the agency operating the facility, but have served notice to it after some lapses were observed. In the meantime, another agency has started

working to improve things at the facility," Rao said.

Talking about issues at the hospital, he said it was set up as the number of COVID-19 cases were rising in Pune.

"The Sassoon General Hospital had some technical issue at the same time which prompted it to reduce its beds equipped with ventilator and oxygen support. Due to this, the number of patients at this newly-created facility suddenly increased and that overburdened the system," Rao said.

Meanwhile, a senior official from the agency which has been served notice claimed that many doctors and nurses quit the facility after a sudden rise in the number of patients there.

However, Rao said there is no shortage of medical staff and medicines at the facility.

Til Monday, Pune district reported 1,97,286 COVID-19 cases and 4,651 deaths due to the disease.

Women factory workers to get free sanitary napkins in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, SEP 8 (PTI): Women factory workers in Meghalaya are set to get free sanitary napkins at their workplace as the state cabinet has approved an amendment to the four-decades-old Factories Rules, a government spokesperson said on Tuesday.

The amendment to the 40-year-old service rules also makes it mandatory for factories to provide personal protective equipment (PPEs) to all workers, he said.

"After discussion, the proposal to amend rules 25 and 78 (C) of the Meghalaya Factories Rules, 1980 was approved at the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Monday," James PK Sangma told PTI.

The amendment was made after the Union Ministry of Labour and

Employment had written to the state government to incorporate the Model Factories Rules regarding the provisions of sanitary napkins for the women workers under the Factories Act, 1948 and also to incorporate rules regarding the PPEs for all workers, he said.

According to the government spokesperson, the proposed amendment also incorporated clauses to ensure that the sanitary napkins of adequate quantity and conforming to Indian standards shall be provided and maintained in the women's toilets for their use and the same be replenished on a daily basis.

He said disposal bins with lit shall also be provided within the women's toilets for the collection of the used napkins and they shall

be disposed of as per procedures approved by the inspector.

The same clauses are also applicable to the PPEs provided in terms of quality and disposal, he said.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet has also approved the appointment of former chief secretary PS Thangkiew as chairman of the Meghalaya State Food Commission (MSFC) and Lamonlang M Syiem as chairperson of the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MSCPCR).

Thangkiew succeeded BK Deb Verma, whose tenure ended in February and Syiem replaced Meena Kharkongor as her term ended in March this year and both were recommended by the respective search committees, he said.

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Bopanna-Shapovalov pair ousted from US Open

NEW YORK, SEP 8 (PTI): The Indian challenge came to an end at the US Open with the quarter-final loss of Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov in the men's doubles event here.

Bopanna and Shapovalov lost 5-7 5-7 to Dutch Jean-Julien Rojer and Romania's Horea Tecau in the last-eight match which lasted one hour and 26 minutes on Monday. Bopanna and Shapovalov lost their serve once in each set and could not convert the only break chance that came their way in the second set.

It was Bopanna's best performance at a Slam since he made the quarterfinals at both the US Open and the French Open in 2018.

Divij Sharan and Sumit Nagal have already exited from the tournament following defeats in their respective events.

Scotland spare blushes with scrappy win over makeshift Czech Republic

EWAN MURRAY

OLOMOUC, 08 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: For more than a quarter of this fixture, a placing in Scotland's congested international hall of shame beckoned. The Czech Republic, having cobbled an entire team together at 48 hours' notice after Covid-related issues, held a well-deserved advantage in Olomouc and the visitors were toiling badly. There was cause for the Czechs to wonder why on earth, in an apparent weekend panic, they tried to have the tie postponed.

A Lyndon Dykes goal, his first for Scotland, on his second appearance, preceded Ryan Christie earning his team respectability from the penalty spot. Yet there should not be, and will not be, any whooping and hollering after unconvincing success against a squad where only two players had sampled international football before.

After two matches and the Nations League's resumption, there remain legitimate doubts about the Scots' readiness for a Euro 2021 play-off against Israel in early October. Steve Clarke made five changes to his starting side following the draw against Israel on Friday but Scotland still lacked fluency and looked incredibly generous in defence. Alarm bells must ring. Clarke does not care much for focus on systems but successive tries at a three-man backline cannot be considered as positive. A glorified Czech league select had Clarke fretting right until full-time, courtesy of a series of set pieces that had his side in occasional panic. The Czech players are due immense credit for their attitude, as they made a mockery of their heavy underdog status.

"It would have been a fairytale night for them," Clarke told Sky Sports after the match. "We were always on a hiding to nothing ... everyone said we had to come here and get the win and we got it. "I knew when it all unfolded over the weekend that it was going to be a difficult game for us," Clarke added. "The Czech Republic were going to play the game of their lives. For us, it was always going to be a difficult night but we got the win. When everybody puts you under so much pressure to get the win then that's all you have to do."

Craig Levein will be glad there is another, curious reference point for a Scotland trip to the Czech Republic. A decade has passed since he deployed a 4-6-0 formation for a game in Prague but Scottish fans and commentators have neither forgiven or forgotten. Every mention of that set-up triggers all manner of furious responses.

There was Tartan Army anger, again, within 11 minutes of this match. A woeful Scotland opening was punished by Jakub Pesek, a 27-year-old journeyman who marked his international debut in memorable fashion. Pesek smartly bent his run behind Scott McTominay, collected a pass from Stanislav Tecl and flicked past the advancing David Marshall.

Scotland now donned red faces alongside light blue shirts. As Marshall scrambled to claw away a long-range effort from Pesek, Clarke had cause to be grateful for the absence of a travelling support.

It took 24 minutes for the visitors to produce something vaguely resembling a coherent attack, Liam Palmer and Christie firing in consecutive crosses that had the defence flapping.

Palmer's next ball, low and inviting from the right flank, was the cue Dykes needed to pounce for his maiden international goal. One of many baffling aspects of the opening period related to Scotland's passiveness after Dykes hauled them back into proceedings.

Officialdom was soon to lend them a helping hand, as if they were worthy of another one. Tomas Malinsky clearly had a hold of the marauding Andy Robertson's shirt, with the Liverpool full-back smart enough to wait until he was inside the penalty area before taking a tumble. The offence appeared to take place in free-kick territory. Christie, for the second time in two games, strode home to score, low to Ales Mandous's left. Scotland's tempered celebrations told their own story.

Marek Havlik's shaving of the post with a free-kick emphasised the makeshift hosts were not of mind to accept their fate. Marshall saved brilliantly from Pesek, with Tecl stumbling over the ball when afforded glaring opportunity on the rebound.

Novak Djokovic left to count personal and professional cost of moment of madness

KEVIN MITCHELL

NEW YORK, 08 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: For most of his career, Novak Djokovic has been chasing a shadow. And how close he was to catching the ageless king, Roger Federer. How desperate he was to wear his crown. How shattered he now is after an evening of madness at Flushing Meadows.

When the world No 1 took a spare ball from his pocket after being broken against the run of play near the end of the first set in his fourth-round match with the Spaniard Pablo Carreño Busta, and sent it spinning innocently towards the back of the court, his whole career unravelled in slow motion.

A look of horror spread across his face as the ball landed on the full in the throat of an unsuspecting line judge. It did not appear to be travelling at speed but she did not pick up its trajectory and, when struck, slid to the ground, coughing loudly and distressed. The replay of Djokovic moving towards her like a man drowning in quicksand sent two wholly different messages: he was concerned, obviously, that he had hurt her; but he knew too he had damaged his career, perhaps beyond repair. His pursuit of the shadow had stalled disastrously.

This, surely, would never have happened to Federer. Like many players, the "Swiss gentleman" – as Novak's former coach Boris Becker calls him – has indeed occasionally flicked a ball away in frustration. But none had landed on a fan. The ball would not be so impertinent. It was Djokovic's rotten luck that an innocent official had got in the way.

What then unfolded compounded his dilemma. He pleaded for clemency with officials for fully 10 minutes. With palms upturned, he managed a weak smile, jovially trying to take the steam out of the crisis, much as a schoolboy might when caught smoking behind the bike shed. He meant no



harm. But Djokovic was wrestling with the obvious: he was about to be thrown out of the 2020 US Open.

This was a grand slam championship he was almost universally favoured to win for the fourth time in the absence of Federer and the defending champion, Rafael Nadal. This was the title that would edge him up to 18 majors, one behind the 34-year-old Spaniard, two behind the 39-year-old Swiss. There were only kids in his way and he was playing superbly.

It got worse. Advised of his fate, Djokovic zipped his bag and walked in quiet fury from Arthur Ashe Court, so often the scene of his triumphs. But, instead of heading for the mandatory press conference, where he surely would have faced a barrage of difficult questions, he collected his clothes, went to the car park and was driven back to his rented house. Authority at this moment meant nothing to him. He was indulging in exceptionalism.

He probably knew at that time he would lose \$250,000 in prize money and all his ranking points, as well as great chunk of dignity. At his house – or perhaps on the way – he composed an apology and put

it on Instagram, in English for his critics and Serbian for his bewildered compatriots. It was full but strangely unconvincing. The incident had left him "sad and empty", he said. He was "extremely sorry" to have caused the woman such stress. "So unintended. So wrong," he wrote.

And then the self-justification and plea for understanding: "As for the disqualification, I need to go back within and work on my disappointment and turn this all into a lesson for my growth and evolution as a player and human being."

No. What he needed to do was return to the scene of the crime and own it. Tim Henman, who was disqualified for a similar incident at Wimbledon in 1995 when he accidentally struck a ballgirl, got it right when he said: "He should have faced up to it and apologised and accept he made a mistake. But, by in essence running away from it, it's just going to go on even longer."

As Djokovic's car cruised out of the car park, he was putting self preservation above his obligations. He has previous. At the back of his mind, he was surely aware of it. In 2016 he was chided for bouncing his racket in frustration, narrowly missing a line judge at Roland

Garros. A few months later at the ATP World Tour Finals in London, he hit a ball into the crowd. Nobody was hurt either time – except Djokovic.

He took grave exception to questions from the British about his complacent behaviour. It was as likely to snow inside the O2 Arena, he joked, as his ball strike and injure a spectator. There is no joking now for @DjokerNole as his 8.7 million Twitter followers know him.

Many of them will descend on his critics, indignant that their hero's integrity should be questioned. He has given tennis in that part of the world pride and joy since leading Serbia to Davis Cup glory in 2009. The slams flowed for him thereafter and here he was, in 2020, at 33, the best player in the world, no question.

Djokovic is not a bad man, but an occasionally intemperate and foolish one. He has raised many millions for Covid-19 sufferers in the Balkans, he is generous with his time and he is often thoughtful and perceptive, as well as funny. But he is also driven, and his ambition has sometimes warped his judgment.

While he was moving smoothly through the draw, he was also bringing together

a players' association he knew would seriously disrupt the sport in the middle of a pandemic, in the middle of a slam and only eight months into the life of a new administration at the ATP. Many players agree with him that they need independent representation. However, more of them have questioned his timing and some wonder about his motives. Was he trying to take over tennis? Not any more, it would seem.

Djokovic gives the appearance of leadership but does not always deliver it. His well-meant but doomed Balkans exhibition Tour – during and after which he and other players, as well as his wife, tested positive for coronavirus – should have been a wake-up moment for his followers.

Ultimately, he is revealed not as a leader but a self-absorbed freewheeler. It will take a good deal of his claimed humility and spiritual awareness to repair the damage of one foolish night.

The mere tennis consequences of this are easier to comprehend. When Federer failed to cash in on two match points in the Wimbledon final last year to allow Djokovic to move to 16 majors, four behind his own record of 20, he was crushed. This was the real face of their rivalry, undercutting the public smiles. Djokovic added another major in Melbourne and went on a winning spree that reminded everyone of the sequence of 41 he put together in 2011.

Covid struck and the Tour was suspended. Federer took the opportunity to have a second knee operation and withdrew from the season. Nadal stayed away, wary of the virus and more focused on the French Open. Djokovic knew that if he stayed fit he could make up valuable ground on both of them. As Alexander Zverev pointed out, Djokovic was the only grand slam title winner left in a weakened field. What a fool he was on Sunday night.

French Open allowing spectators amid virus resurgence

PARIS, SEP 8 (AP): Spectators will be allowed at the French Open this month despite the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country, organizers said.

Organizers unveiled the health protocols for the clay-court grand slam, which will take place at Roland Garros in western Paris from Sept. 27 after being postponed from its May start due to the pandemic.

"Since the international circuit restarted, Roland Garros will be the first tournament with the privilege of hosting an audience," French Tennis Federation president Bernard Giudicelli said Monday.

But Greek tennis player Maria Sakkari, asked about the move after her U.S. Open loss to Serena Williams on Monday, said she was shocked by the federation decision.

"It doesn't make sense, to be honest," Sakkari said.

"To have fans and have us in a bubble? For me, it doesn't really make sense. For me, it was a shocking announcement to have fans."

In accordance with the latest government guidelines capping at-



tendance to 5,000 people in regions such as Paris, the federation has scaled down its plans.

The federation wanted to welcome 50% to 60% of capacity, the equivalent of about 20,000 fans per day. Instead, Roland Garros will be divided into three zones based on the three main courts, with 5,000 people each for the Philippe Chatrier and Suzanne Lenglen courts.

The zone surrounding the third biggest court will host a maximum of 1,500 spectators a day.

Wearing a mask on site will be mandatory, while all accredited peo-

ple at the tournament will have to pass virus tests to be admitted in the Roland Garros bubble. Tournament director Guy Forget said all players will be tested upon their arrival in the French capital city. They will be authorized to play if they return a negative test and will undergo a second test 72 hours later.

Players will then be tested every five days as long as they remain in the draw, and will have to stay in the two hotels booked by organizers.

Organizers also decided to give more money to the early losers, in a gesture of solidarity

toward the players who have been the hardest hit financially by the crisis.

"The prize money for first-round losers will thus increase by 30% compared to last year, to 60,000 euros (71,000)," they said in a statement.

"A major effort has also been made on the qualifications, with an allocation up 27% compared to 2019. The first-round losers in qualifications will receive a 10,000 euros (11,800) check."

French officials have confirmed more than 30,000 deaths from COVID-19 while the number of new daily cases surpassed 8,000 last Friday.

Kylian Mbappé tests positive for Covid-19 and will miss France v Croatia game

JAMIE JACKSON

LONDON, 08 SEPT [PA MEDIA]: The France and Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappé has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss the Nations League match against Croatia, the French football federation has announced.

"Kylian Mbatpe will not play in France v Croatia [on] Tuesday evening at the Stade de France," an FFF statement said. "His Covid-19 test carried out by Uefa on Monday morning revealed a positive result. He was isolated from the squad after receiving the results at the end of training, and returned home in the evening."

The statement added that Mbappé had provided negative tests before joining the squad, and before Saturday's Nations League game against Sweden, where he scored the winning goal.

Mbappé is thought to be the seventh PSG player to test positive for Covid-19, with the other cases picked up by the club's pre-season testing. The Ligue 1 champions begin their title defence on Thursday at Lens – a match in which Mbappé will now not be available to play.

The Manchester City players Aymeric Laporte and Riyad Mahrez have also tested positive for coronavirus. Both men are self-isolating as City prepare for their opening game of the new Premier League season against Wolves.

Laporte, who is Pep Guardiola's defensive linchpin, and the forward Mahrez could be available as the trip to Molineux is on 21 September, in a fortnight's time – the maximum period for quarantine, according to government rules. It is unclear when each player began quarantine, and thus when they can resume training with Guardiola's squad.

A club statement on Monday said: "Manchester City FC can confirm that Riyad Mahrez and Aymeric Laporte have tested positive for Covid-19. Both players are currently observing a period of self-isolation in accordance with Premier League and UK government protocol on quarantine. Neither is displaying symptoms of the virus. Everyone at the club wishes Riyad and Aymeric a speedy recovery ahead of their return to training and the new season."

China asks Indian students to stay in touch with their Chinese colleges for info to return

BEIJING, SEP 8 (PTI): China has asked hundreds of Indian students stranded back home due to the coronavirus pandemic to remain in touch with their respective colleges and follow instructions to protect their academic progress through online courses as foreign students are still not allowed to enter the country.

Over 23,000 Indian students studied different courses in Chinese universities and colleges of which over 21,000 were enrolled to study MBBS, according to last year's data.

Most of these students left for India during the Chinese New Year holidays in January, just around the time when the coronavirus pandemic began spreading in China following which international travel has been badly disrupted.

At present, foreign students in China cannot enter the country for the time being, but the Chinese government attaches great importance to the protection of the le-



gitimate rights and interests of foreign students in China," the Chinese Ministry of Education informed the Indian Embassy here.

Earlier, the Indian Embassy took up with the Chinese officials the concerns of a large number of Indian students following an official announcement that foreign

students and teachers will not return to their colleges until further notice.

In its response, the Chinese Education Ministry said: It requires relevant universities in China to maintain close

contacts with the students, immediately notify relevant information and try their best to

protect students' academic progress through online courses, properly respond to students' reasonable demands and help solve their practical difficulties.

In view of the fact that the epidemic situation in the world is still unclear and relevant policies on entry and exit in China are being gradual-

ly adjusted, it is suggested that Indian students should maintain close contact with relevant Chinese Colleges and Universities and arrange to study in China in strict accordance with the suggestions and guidance of the Colleges/Universities, it said, according to a press release issued by the Indian Embassy on Monday.

Indian students are accordingly advised to remain in touch with their respective Universities/Colleges, the Indian Embassy said, adding that they are advised to monitor the website of the Indian Embassy/Consulates in China and their social media channels to remain updated about the evolving situation in respect of the return of foreign students to China.

The coronavirus pandemic that first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan has killed 892,443 people globally and infected about 27,339,132 others, according to the John Hopkins coronavirus resource centre.

Campaign to succeed PM Abe as party leader begins in Japan



TOKYO, SEP 8 (AP): The official campaigning to lead Japan's ruling party began on Tuesday with the longtime right-hand man of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe now seen as a top candidate and his likely successor to lead the government.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, 71, had formally submitted his candidacy for the Liberal Democratic Party leadership last week. The chief government spokesman faces two younger contenders, former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba and former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, both 63.

The winner of the in-party vote on Septem-

ber 14 will eventually become Japan's next prime minister because of the ruling bloc's majority in the parliament. Abe is stepping down for health reasons.

Suga is a latecomer favoured among party heavyweights as the best candidate to continue Abe's policies and have reported lined up to support him in hopes of getting favourable party and Cabinet posts in his administration. Newspaper opinion surveys have also shown Suga surpassing the former favourite Ishiba among the public.

Suga pledged to carry out the challenges left behind by Abe, includ-

ing measures on the coronavirus, the economic fallout and pursuing Japan-US security alliance.

Ishiba, who has long been seen as Abe's rival, is vying for the party leadership for the fourth time, calling for a change to the Abenomics economic measures to focus more support for small businesses and low-income earners as well as rural areas.

Kishida, who is currently serving the party policy chief, says he seeks to be a leader who listens to the people's voices more carefully than Abe and prioritise economic policies to address disparities.

EU names Dombrovskis as its new trade chief

BRUSSELS, SEP 8 (AP): The European Union's executive commission is proposing its experienced Latvian vice president, Valdis Dombrovskis, to take over the post as trade chief of the bloc following the resignation of Ireland's Phil Hogan.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen made the announcement as she named European Parliament heavyweight Mairead McGuinness as the new financial services commissioner to fill Ireland's seat at the table.

Dombrovskis had already been holding the post temporarily since Hogan's resignation on August 26.

Dombrovskis now fills a vital post in dealing with the United States, China and post-Brexit Britain, with all three demanding near daily attention.

I am looking forward to work on all those issues," Dombrovskis.

It also means von der Leyen limited her reshuffle in the Commission and with McGuinness she further narrowed the gender gap in the Commission, which now stands at 14 men and 13 women.

Scorched earth: Record 2 million acres burned in California

SHAVER LAKE (US), SEPT 8 (AP): Wildfires have burned a record 2 million acres in California this year, and the danger for more destruction is so high the US Forest Service announced on Monday that it was closing all eight national forests in the southern half of the state.

After a typically dry summer, California is parched heading into fall and what normally is the most dangerous time for wildfires. Two of the three largest fires in state history are burning in the San Francisco Bay Area.

More than 14,000 firefighters are battling those fires and dozens of others more around California.

A three-day heat wave brought triple-digit temperatures to much of the state during Labour Day weekend. But right behind it was a weather system with dry winds that could fan fires. The state's largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric, was preparing to cut power to 158,000 customers in 21 counties in the northern half of the state to reduce the possibility its lines and other equipment could spark new fires.

Randy Moore, regional forester for the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Region that covers California, announced the national forest closures and said the decision would be re-evaluated daily. Campgrounds at all national forests in the state also were closed.

The wildfire situation throughout California is dangerous and must be taken seriously," Moore said. Existing fires are displaying extreme fire behavior, new fire starts are likely, weather conditions are worsening, and we simply do not have enough resources to fully fight and contain every fire." Lynne Tolmachoff, spokeswoman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it's unnerving" to have reached a record for acreage burned when September and October usually are the worst for fires because vegetation has dried out and high winds are more common.

The previous high was 1.96 million acres burned in 2018. Cal Fire began tracking the numbers in 1987.

While the two mammoth Bay Area fires were largely contained after burning for three weeks, firefighters struggled to corral several other major blazes ahead of the expected winds. Evacuation orders were expanded to more mountain communities on Monday as



the largest blaze, the Creek Fire, churned through the Sierra National Forest in Central California.

It was one of many recent major fires that has displayed terrifyingly swift movement. The fire moved 15 miles (24 kilometres) in a single day and burned 56 square miles (145.04 square kilometres).

Debra Rios wasn't home when the order came to evacuate her hometown of Auberry, just north-east of Fresno. Sheriff's deputies went to her ranch property to pick up her 92-year-old mother, Shirley MacLean. They reunited at an evacuation centre.

I hope like heck the fire doesn't reach my little ranch, Rios said. It's not looking good right now. It's an awfully big fire. Mountain roads saw a steady stream of cars and trucks leaving the community of about 2,300 on Monday afternoon.

Firefighters working in steep terrain saved the tiny town of Shaver Lake from flames that roared down hillsides toward a marina. About 30 houses were destroyed in the remote hamlet of Big Creek, resident Toby Wait said.

The Creek Fire had charred more than 114 square miles (295 square kilometres) of timber after breaking out Friday. The nearly 1,000 firefighters on the scene had yet to get any containment. The cause had not been determined.

On Saturday, National Guard rescuers in two military helicopters airlifted 214 people to safety after flames trapped them in a wooded camping area near Mammoth Pool Reservoir. Two people were seriously injured and were among 12 hospitalised.

On Monday night, a military helicopter landed near Lake Edison to rescue people trapped by the

Creek Fire, the Fresno Fire Department said on Twitter. Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Rosamond, the pilot of a Chinook helicopter, said visibility was poor and winds increasingly strong during the three flights he made into the fire zone. His crew relied on night-vision goggles to search for a landing spot near a boat launch where flames came within 50 feet of the aircraft.

The injured, along with women and children, took priority on the first airlift, which filled both helicopters to capacity, he said.

Record-breaking temperatures were driving the highest power use of the year, and transmission losses because of wildfires have cut into supplies. Throughout the holiday weekend, the California Independent System Operator that manages the state's power grid warned of outages if residents didn't reduce their electricity usage. But none had occurred by late Monday afternoon.

In Southern California, crews scrambled to douse several fires that roared to life in searing temperatures, including one that closed mountain roads in Angeles National Forest and forced the evacuation of the historic Mount Wilson Observatory.

Cal Fire said a blaze in San Bernardino County called the El Dorado Fire started Saturday morning and was caused by a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender.

In eastern San Diego County, a fire destroyed at least 10 structures after burning 16 square miles (41.44 square kilometres) and prompting evacuations near the remote community of Alpine in the Cleveland National Forest.

One midnight moment in Taiwan's virus battle

TAIPEI, SEP 8 (AP): Get back in the car! the masked people shouted at me.

Get back in! It was near midnight. My taxi just pulled into the parking lot where I was greeted by three masked people. They were dressed in heavy protective gear, goggles, gloves, face mask and medical gowns.

One person raised a sign saying: Do not get out of the car, please show your health questionnaire and passport. I couldn't find mine. I panicked, asking my driver if he had it. He asked if it was in my luggage in the back trunk, and went to open the back trunk. I stepped out too, freaked out that I had just lost my passport. I was tired, lost and really hungry.

That was how I was greeted upon arrival at a centralised quarantine centre in Taiwan.

I had arrived in Taiwan to start my new job, but with the stress of moving, I'd come down with a cold. Unfortunately, I still had a cough by the time I flew to Taiwan. As a result, I was taken upon arrival to the quarantine centre rather than the quarantine hotel I'd booked.

Taiwan has been lauded around the world as a COVID-19 success story. It's 160 kilometres (100 miles) off the mainland China coast, and because

of the economic and cultural relations with the mainland, where the virus outbreak first surfaced, many feared Taiwan would be hit hard.

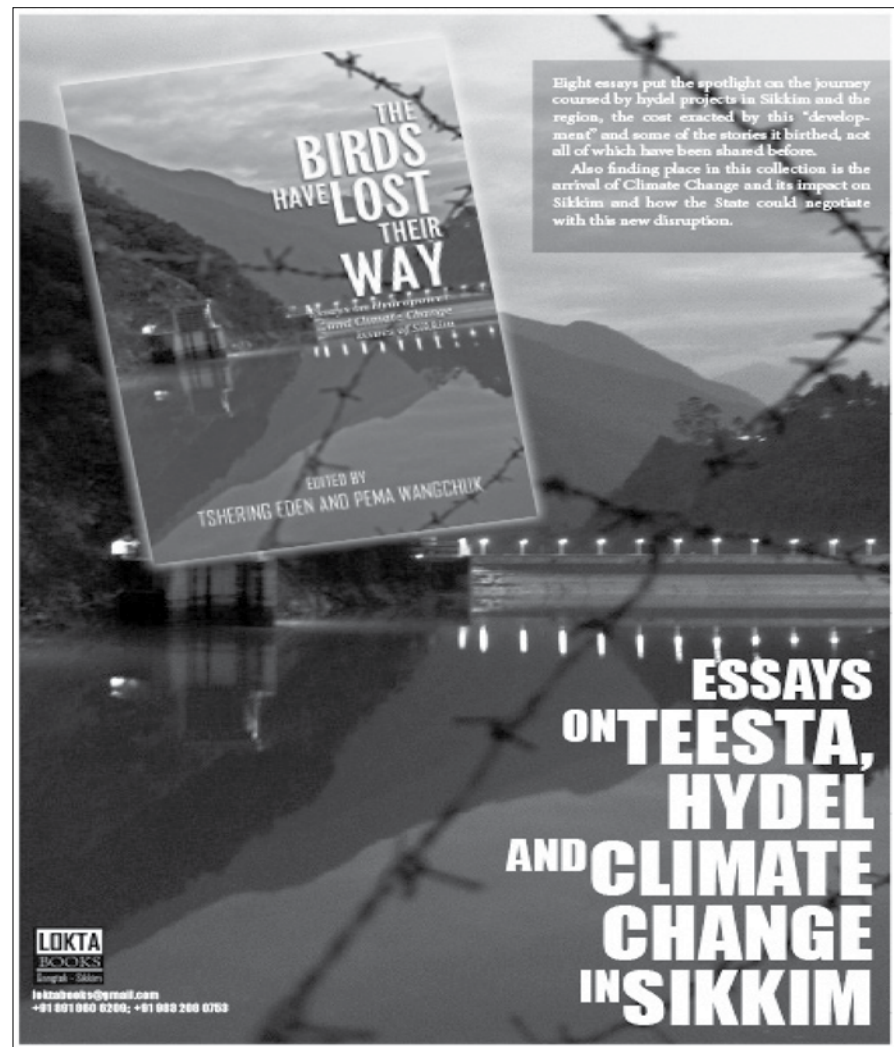
But more than eight months after the outbreak, the island has only had seven deaths from COVID-19 and 488 confirmed cases. How was Taiwan able to keep the numbers so low? I got to see for myself. On my flight to Taipei, each passenger had a separate row. Flight attendants wore medical gowns, goggles, face masks and gloves. No food was served.

Because I'd showed up at the border with a cough, health authorities also took a throat swab test. Before I could get into my CDC-assigned taxi to be taken to the centralised centre, I got sprayed from shoulder downwards with disinfectant. The taxi driver, decked out in protective gear, maintained a distance.

I don't have COVID! I wanted to say to him. But it seemed a moot point.

I felt only anxiety. Just 10 hours ago I was eating Nepali food with friends in a restaurant in Shanghai. Now I was being treated as a contaminant.

I'd rushed back to Beijing in early February, before China shut its borders and instituted a strict centralised quarantine for all arrivals.



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SAFE SISTERS! Actress Kaley Cuoco and Sister Briana goofed around and stayed safe wearing face masks in New York City during the coronavirus pandemic.

PUBG Mobile could soon be unbanned in India

PUBG Corporation is cutting its ties with Tencent Games in India to reverse the ban on PUBG Mobile.

PUBG Corporation today announced that it has decided to no longer authorize the PUBG Mobile franchise to Tencent Games in India. The move comes just a week after PUBG Mobile and PUBG Mobile Lite were banned in India by the country's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, along with 116 other apps of Chinese origin.

In a statement released on its website, PUBG Corporation said: "In light of recent developments, PUBG Corporation has made the decision to no longer authorize the PUBG MOBILE franchise to Tencent Games in India. Moving forward, PUBG Corporation will take on all publishing responsibilities within the country. As the company explores ways to provide its own PUBG experience for India in the near future, it is committed to doing so by sustaining a localized and healthy gameplay environment for its fans."



By taking on all publishing responsibilities in India, PUBG Corporation is hoping to provide its own PUBG experience in India soon. It is also planning to engage the PUBG community in India with various region-based activities such as eSports and community events in

the near future.

Even though the South Korean company says that it will work "hand-in-hand with the Indian government to find a solution," it isn't clear just how long it would take for PUBG Mobile and PUBG Mobile Lite to get reinstated on the Google Play Store and Apple's App Store in the country.

Jeff Goldblum was 'starstruck' by Cate Blanchett

LOS ANGELES, SEP 8 (PTI): Actor Jeff Goldblum says he was in awe of his "Thor: Ragnarok" co-star Cate Blanchett while working on the 2017 Marvel superhero film. The 67-year-old actor played The Grandmaster in the film, fronted by Chris Hemsworth, which featured

Blanchett as the antagonist Hela.

In an interview with People TV's Couch Surfing, Goldblum said, "Cate Blanchett plays Hela, that powerfully cosmically powerful witchy woman. She's so good. I'm deeply starstruck with her. She's spectacular." The "Jurassic Park" veteran also

praised "Ragnarok" director Taika Waititi, calling him a "brilliant man" and an "enjoyable comedic force".

"Working on this (film) was fantastic. We improvised a lot, he fools around, I fool around, we did a lot of fun things on it," Goldblum added.

No, Urvashi Rautela Is Not Being Cast In *Adipurush*

The makers of Adipurush, which will star Prabhas and Saif Ali Khan in the lead roles, dismissed reports about approaching actress Urvashi Rautela for the film. The 3D action will be directed by Om Raut and co-produced by Bhushan Kumar and Om Raut. In a statement, the makers called the reports "baseless and untrue" and said that other than Saif and Prabhas, they haven't finalised the remaining cast of the film. The rumours about Urvashi being considered for the lead role in Adipurush surfaced on the Internet after a DNA report stated that the actress is likely to play the role of Sita in the film. Refuting the report, the makers said: "Stories and reports claiming that Urvashi Rautela has been approached to play the lead role in Adipurush are absolutely baseless and untrue."

"The makers have never offered any role from the epic drama to Urvashi or her team. After Prabhas and Saif, we are currently finalising the remaining cast to play the other characters, including the role of Sita, and Urvashi is not in the running for the same. We will make an official announcement when we lock someone. Till then, we urge people not to be swayed by such rumours and speculations," they said in a statement. Urvashi Rautela has

featured in films such as Singh Saab The Great, Great Grand Masti, Hate Story 4 and Race 3. She was last seen in comedy-dra-

the director. The film's shooting is expected to start next year. It will be shot in Hindi and Telugu.



ma Virgin Bhanupriya, which released a couple of months ago.

Coming back to Adipurush, the film will star Prabhas as the protagonist named Adipurush and Saif Ali Khan as the villain - Lankesh. The makers announced the news of Saif joining the cast of the film earlier this month. Prabhas was finalised for Adipurush in August.

Adipurush marks Saif Ali Khan's second project with Om Raut after 'Tanhaji' and Prabhas' first film with

Rhea Chakraborty arrested: NCB



MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): Sushant Singh Rajput's girlfriend, Rhea Chakraborty was on Tuesday arrested in Mumbai by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in connection with drugs-related allegations in the actor's death

case, an NCB official said.

Rhea was arrested after three days of questioning in the case, the official said.

Rhea, 28, had earlier denied consuming drugs. Her brother Showik Chakraborty was arrested last week in the case.

Akshay Kumar on son Aarav: He wants to be away from the limelight

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): Bollywood star Akshay Kumar says his son Aarav wants to have a life away from the media glare and create his own identity.

Aarav was born to Kumar and actor-author Twinkle Khanna in 2002. The couple are also parents to seven-year-old daughter, Nitara.

"My son is very different. He just doesn't want to tell anyone that he's my son. He wants to be away from the limelight. He wants to have his own identity. That's what the whole thing and I understand it. So, I let him be the way he wants to (sic)," Kumar told host Bear Grylls in the upcoming episode of Discovery's "Into the Wild with Bear Grylls".

The actor, who will next be seen in horror comedy "Laxmmi Bomb", said he has tried to inculcate his father's values in his son.

"He's (my father was) the only influence I have in my life and I've followed all his rules and all his things that he has taught me. And I hope my son gets that," Kumar added.

The much-anticipated episode of the adventure show will premiere on September 11 on Discovery Plus app at 8 pm and on September 14 at 8 pm across 12 Discovery channels.

Previously, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and superstar Rajinikanth have accompanied Grylls on his adventures in the wilderness.

John Legend working on sitcom based on his school days

LOS ANGELES, SEP 8 (PTI): Singer John Legend has revealed he is developing a situational comedy based on his "first public high school experience".

The "All of Me" hitmaker, who went to church school in his initial days, said the transition to high school was full of "comedy".

"I grew up in the church. I was skipped a couple of grades, so by the time I got to high school, my first public high school experience was as a 12 year old when most of my peers were 14," Legend told Extra magazine.

"There's a lot of comedy in my childhood, in my teenage years - so we're gonna try and mine that for a sitcom. We're developing it right now, and we're excited for it," he added.

On the personal front, the 41-year-old singer and his wife, model Chrissy Teigen (34) are expecting their third child. They are also parents to daughter Luna, four, and son Miles, two.

The Venture Bros' cancelled by Adult Swim

LOS ANGELES, SEP 8 (PTI): Animation series The Venture Bros has been cancelled by cable network Adult Swim after seven seasons. The adult animated cartoon, that spoofed many superheroes, pop culture tropes and featured main characters that were a riff on the Johnny Quest crew, started airing on Adult Swim in 2003 and the final season premiered in 2018.

Creator of the series, Christopher McCulloch aka Jackson Publick, said on Twitter that they were in the middle of writing season eight of the show when they received the news of the cancellation.

Unfortunately, it's true: Venture Bros' has been canceled. We got the highly disappointing news a few months ago, while we were writing what would have been season 8. We thank you, our amazing fans, for 17 years of your kind (and patient) attention. And, as always, we love you, wrote McCulloch.

In a statement posted on the microblogging site, Adult Swim said it was figuring out a way to continue the story with McCulloch and co-writer Doc Hammer. We also want more Venture Bros' and have been working with Jackson (Publick) and Doc (Hammer) to find another way to continue the Venture Bros' story, the tweet read.

The series revolved around the Venture family: teen brothers Dean and Hank, their scientist father Rusty, their family bodyguard Brock Sampson and many villains.

ARIES:

Success is not an overnight journey. Sweat, blood, and tears are sometimes an integral part of the process. Instead of resisting what your circumstances are showing you right now, be grateful for it, and know that you're making your way to the top at your own pace. What could pose as a problem, though, is your relationship with your siblings. You may feel like they don't believe in your dreams or aren't supporting you in the way you'd like them to. Wait for the storm to pass before you initiate a difficult conversation with them.

Tip: You are making your way to the top at your own pace.

TAURUS:

Reviewing your life is an important theme for you right now. Not everything has worked out the way you wanted it to, and that's okay. Maybe these experiences were helping you evolve. Maybe they were bringing your attention towards what isn't in alignment with your truth. Call upon your higher self to cut the cords where you need to. Reaffirming your boundaries is also going to be an important theme. Don't be afraid to call out on that one person who has been crossing a line with you.

Tip: Reviewing your life is an important theme for you.

GEMINI:

Don't give up just yet. This is the last leg of the war. Once you cross this hurdle, you'll have a clearer picture of where you need to go from here. Some of you may feel like you're shouldering a lot of responsibilities at this point. Trust the cards when they say it will all be worth it in the end. On the upside, you'll find that this is a blessed time in your world. The things you whispered to the Universe a while ago are beginning to take form now.

Tip: It will all be worth it in the end.

CANCER:

Some of you may feel like you're shouldering a lot of responsibilities at this point. Knowing your limitations is an integral part of the simplification process. Let go of the fear of failure and take a step back. Your spirit team is holding space for you at this moment. Endings could be a prominent theme for a lot of you. Focus not on what is being taken away from you, but on the space it is opening up in your life. What awaits you on the other side is one of your biggest breakthroughs, Cancer.

Tip: Simplify. Take a step back.

LEO:

We all face creative blocks on our journey, and that's okay. If you feel like inspiration has been playing the role of the elusive lover, it's time to change the game a little. Instead of running around in circles, engage in something that's unrelated to the given project. Working with your hands is a wonderful way to get out your head. So bring out your tool kit, painting supplies, or simply do the dishes. The Muse has a way of showing up when you least expect it.

Tip: A creative breakthrough is on the cards.

VIRGO:

It's not for you to judge somebody else's journey, Virgo. They're on their path and you're on yours. Wish them well and redirect your focus back towards yourself. Some of you could be at a crossroads right now as far as your romantic relationship is concerned. Take a step towards your 'together forever' and trust that everything will work out as it is meant to.

Tip: You're at a crossroads, Virgo.

LIBRA:

Oh, the miracles we invite into our experience when we decide

to stay open! The cards are pointing towards something new and beautiful on the romantic front, or the deepening of an existing connection. Trust your gut and move forward. You're in the right place! Single Librans could receive a proposal from the family. You can only be receptive to the hidden gifts by keeping your judgements aside.

Tip: It's all working out for you.

SCORPIO:

Your mental health could be a cause of concern at this point. You don't have to do this alone, Scorpio. Turn to an expert in the field to hold space for you while you go through this catharsis. Being around those who love you unconditionally will also prove to be therapeutic. On a side note, changes on the home front could be on the cards for some. If you've found a property that works for you *and* your fam, put your name on the dotted line.

Tip: Your mental health is important.

SAGITTARIUS:

From where you are standing, the road ahead seems unclear. But the truth is, you're unwilling to see this situation for what it is. Ask yourself what you really want from your life and take action in the right direction. It's your strength and resilience that will make the challenges seem insignificant in comparison. Some of you could be shying away from having an important conversation, and that's okay. Take the time you need to assimilate the given information before you approach the other person.

Tip: Your strength and resilience will make the challenges seem insignificant in comparison.

CAPRICORN:

Be receptive to the business ideas you are receiving at the

moment as they are guided by your higher self and have the potential to take you places. Look around you, Capricorn. You are surrounded by many inspirational friends and family members. When in doubt, listen to stories of their challenges and breakthroughs. This will give you the courage you need to keep moving forward on your path. Remember, good things happen to those who show up. Waiting for opportunities to come knocking at your door has never been your style anyway.

Tip: Be receptive to the business ideas that are coming through your style anyway.

AQUARIUS:

Sometimes, you just have to block the distractions out so you can listen to your inner voice. Contemplation is the need of the hour. Trust that you will find the answers you are seeking by looking within. Be receptive to the creative ideas that are coming through from your superconsciousness as well. They hold the key to your success. The wheel is turning, Aquarius, and a lot is going to change in your life over the next few days. Word for the wise: stay grounded.

Tip: Contemplation is the need of the hour.

PISCES:

With local travel opening up, some of you may be inspired to plan a getaway. Booking an Airbnb or a retreat you trust could be a good way to proceed. Alternatively, you could just check in to your best friend's house and take a trip down memory lane. As such, connecting with your siblings and your best friends is going to be a big theme for you right now. If there's somebody you've been meaning to catch up with, set up a phone date now.

Tip: You're in the mood for a getaway.