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Summit **TIMES**

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27-yr-old commits suicide by drowning in SelepTanki, cleaning of tank underway

AARON RAI

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

A 27-year-old resident of SelepTanki, Upper Burtuk, East Sikkim committed suicide by drowning in a water reservoir located at SelepTanki, Upper Burtuk, Gangtok, East Sikkim, on 17 Sept.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that the deceased was suffering from mental illness and epilepsy since the past 9 years.

On 17 Sept at around 8:30 am in the morning some villagers saw the deceased going towards the water reservoir tank at Bulbuleyang informed her mother. Subsequently, the mother along with some villagers went to the water reservoir tank near the village and found her dead body inside the tank.

The deceased, it is learnt, had developed suicidal tendency and was undergoing treatment at STNM Hospital.

The dead body was taken out of the water reservoir tank and authorities inform that this water reservoir tank supplies water to Bojoghari, Helipad, Sichey and some other areas. The tank has been drained for cleaning and supply will resume once the tank is cleaned, it is informed.

Sikkim records first health worker casualty

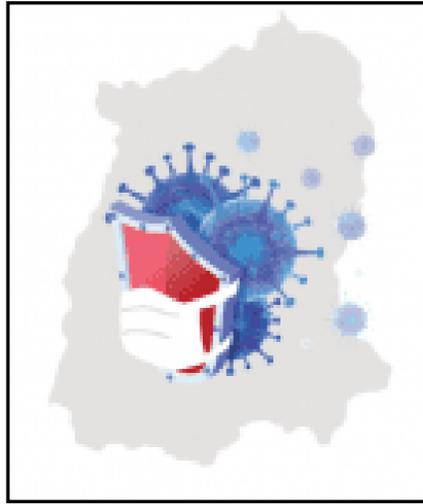
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

Friday was a sad day for Sikkim as we lost our first health worker to COVID-19. 49-year-old Assistant Nursing Superintendent, Basanti Sundas breathed her last on Friday morning at STNM Hospital. She was the 24th covid casualty of the state.

Late Sundas was COVID positive and was recently released from the hospital. However, she was rushed back to STNM Hospital on 17 Sept and passed away in the morning of 18 Sept. It was informed that she was a hypertension patient.

Late Sundas was part of the 8th batch of COVID warriors who were on COVID duty from 11 July till 17 July. After that she was mostly working in the emergency ward of STNM Hospital. She is survived by her two sons and husband.

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president and Chief Minister PS Tamang condoled her demise in a



press release issued by the party

Meanwhile, Sikkim registered a total of seven COVID-related deaths in two days [Thursday and Friday],

including the one mentioned earlier, taking the death toll to 25 in the State.

There were four COVID-19 related deaths yesterday in the State and three more deaths are recorded today.

A 45-year-old male residing near Hungry Jack was brought dead at around 8 PM today and tested positive for COVID-19 post-mortem.

Likewise, Mr Bhutia mentioned that a 72-year-old man from Baiguney in West Sikkim, who had tested positive in RT-PCR on 16 September, was admitted to the ICU ward of STNM Hospital and passed away this afternoon at around 1:10 PM. The patient had the co-morbidities of diabetes and hypertension.

The State had registered four

COVID-related deaths on Thursday.

A 49-year-old lady from Tibet Road, Gangtok was brought dead to STNM hospital Thursday morning and was found COVID-19 positive. It is informed that she had a history of asthma and diabetes and was also a dialysis patient.

A 25-year-old male from Bishal Gaon, Arithang, who was shifted from the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong to STNM hospital after testing positive in rapid antigen testing, also passed away on Thursday morning. He had comorbidities and was also suffering from MDR TB.

The third death was recorded of a 64-year-old woman from Vajra area in Gangtok, who passed away yesterday. She had paralysis and co-morbid conditions.

A 67-year-old male from Development Area, Gangtok, who had a history of diabetes and hypertension, passed away yesterday at STNM hospital.

CM launches Skilled Youth Start-up Scheme

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT (IPR):

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang launched the Skilled Youth Start-up Scheme at SammanBhawan today. The programme was launched in presence of the Minister for Commerce and Industries Department, BS Panth, Political Secretary to CM, Advisors, Chairperson, Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, Secretary to CM, Secretary Commerce and Industries Department, General Manager RBI Gangtok, HK Sharma, Chief Manager Lead Bank, MD SISCO Bank, officials, staff and beneficiaries.

The 'Skilled Youth Start Up Scheme', is envisioned to generate equitable entrepreneurial opportunities in rural as well as urban areas of Sikkim, particularly among the educated unemployed youth to become self employed by setting up of manufacturing/service/business/co-



operative/Agriculture and allied enterprises by availing loan with back ended financial subsidy assistance @ 50% for Below Poverty Line and @ 35% for rest on financially viable/bankable projects from the State Government.

The scheme will be implemented by the Commerce and Industries Department through the District Industries Centres (DICs). The application can be obtained from DIC(E/N), Gangtok for applicants pertaining to North & East Sikkim and from DIC(S/W), Jorethang for applicants pertaining to South & West Sikkim.

The applicants should submit their applications along with the Detailed Project Report and other relevant documents addressed to the General Manager, DIC (E/N)/(S/W) at Gangtok and Jorethang, respectively.

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang in his keynote address informed that the Skilled Youth Start Up Scheme is a flagship programme of the State Government. The scheme was launched to facilitate the un-employed youths of the State to take up entrepreneurship in areas like Dairy, Poultry and Piggyery, Organic Farming by

setting up Green house, manufacturing sectors, Traditional Wood Handicraft & Handloom Industries, adventure tourism like paragliding, mountain cycling, etc. rural Home stays, IT, Cutting and tailoring, Bakery & Restaurants, Beauty parlour, Boutique shops, Herbal Products Industry including Nurseries, Paper bags/ Paper plates, Bamboo based Industry (Cane & Bamboo), Automobile Workshop Garage/Car spa, Diagnostic Centers, Film related activities and other such viable projects.

The State Government has initiated the scheme that would create new livelihoods option for the youths of the State and make them self reliant, he added. The Chief Minister also suggested the nodal department to constitute a committee to guide and inform the beneficiaries.

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Sikkim's COVID-tally reaches 2,303

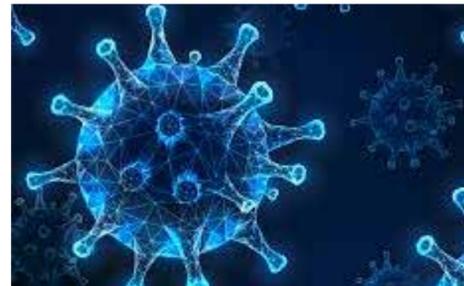
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

Sikkim's tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 has reached 2,303 with reports of 29 new cases of novel coronavirus in the 24 hours up to 8 AM Friday. There are 422 active cases in the State while the number of COVID-19 patients discharged from isolation wards has now reached 1,857 with the discharge of 68 more patients on Thursday.

In the daily health bulletin on Friday, State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that 25 of 189 samples tested by RT-PCR at VRD Lab in STNM hospital on Thursday returned positive for COVID-19.

Likewise, three new cases were detected via TrueNat testing of 29 samples, while one sample returned positive in rapid antigen testing of nine samples.

Meanwhile, 13



patients from STNM Hospital, 20 from the COVID Care Centre at Paljor Stadium, 25 from CCC at SICUN and 10 from CCC at Himalayan Pharmacy Institute were discharged yesterday.

While providing the break-up of new cases found in RT-PCR testing, Mr Bhutia informed that three cases were reported from the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong, of whom one is CRH staff residing below ICAR, one from staff quarter A-block and one from near Greendale School.

He further informed that one person from Sang, one patient from Singtam District Hospital, one from below Lingding School, one from near Allahabad Bank at Swastik, Burtuk, one from near DIET College, Helipad in Burtuk, one from near Deorali Girls SSS and two from below police outpost, Deorali tested positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR.

He mentioned that a 50-year-old male from Sichey, who was found positive in RT-PCR testing, remains unreach despite

repeated phone calls by the Health Department team the entire day today.

Likewise, two from Development Area, two from Dikchu, one from near Smileland, Ranipool, one from Rolep, who is presently at Swastik in Gangtok, one from near Greendale School, one from the containment zone in Sukkhapul in Upper Sichey, one from near UCO bank on Paljor Stadium road, one from Temi-Tarku, one from Ranipool, one from Namchi and one from below Shiv Mandir at Pani House also tested positive in RT-PCR testing.

He mentioned that a person from Sisa Golai in Gangtok and one from Ranipool were found positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat testing, while one person from near Deorali Girls SSS tested positive in rapid antigen testing.

Why Did India Not Record Migrant Worker Deaths?

JIWAN RAI

"No such data is maintained" was much more than an official response of the Union Minister for Labour and Employment to a question about job losses and the deaths of migrant workers during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Around 1.04 crore migrant labourers returned to their home states during the fateful lockdown. The reply was just as grammatically an erroneous sentence as it was an egregiously heartless statement, betraying zero-sympathy to those unfortunate souls.

Such a response from this data-obsessed BJP government is remarkably odd. The Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, had waxed eloquent on the importance of data saying, "data is the new oil", just seven months ago. Why was an exceptionally data-sensitive government not preparing a database of those migrant workers' deaths? Was it impossible? Was it considered insignificant? Were there any other reasons behind this utter callousness?

The supposed 'impossibility' of such a task is shameful and therefore the lamest excuse for governmental negligence to hide behind. As embarrassing as it may be to the

government of the world's largest democracy, such a database was being prepared by Times of India and other independent researchers. The fact of the unnatural deaths of their own citizens taking place under such unprecedented circumstances triggered by such peculiar reasons in such an outrageous manner in 2020 not being recorded by the government is the next level of negligence. If it had happened in an undemocratic country like China, it wouldn't have shocked our 21st century democratized conscience so much. We expect such things from China with its terrible track record when it comes to human rights, value and safety.

Why it was not considered 'necessary' is a moral question first before it is political or social. The unavailability of data dismisses the need of distributing compensation technically. But human life is worth much more than monetary compensation from a government, organization or individual. The death of every single worker walking back home is a loss of precious life and meant something to their respective families. Those people would be here today had they not been compelled to take the steps that they were compelled

to take. How could a country mourn their deaths and convey that their precious lives mattered? How could a country convey 'I am sorry' to those deceased who would otherwise have been alive here and now? The most natural and respectable way would be, at a bare minimum, by acknowledging their fateful deaths by way of an

ViewPoint

official record with genuine heartfelt sympathy. 'No such data is maintained' is the coldest dismissal of the human value of citizens by their government ever displayed in the recent or known memory of human history.

The Indian government looked far more protective of its global image than its migrant workers' lives. India, at that moment, was basking in the glory of global praise over 'how the lockdown in India was working wonders'. The government was, perhaps, in no mood to tarnish their glory by the morbid recording of the deaths of labourers. It was myopic of many in the government and its blind supporters not to see two things: One, the deaths of those workers was never going to be glossed over by the

seeming success of the lockdown. The database would someday emerge from independent sources. How could it not in a technologically vibrant age such as this? Two, the lockdown, with such minimal testing, was a flawed method right from the get go. A fact, increasingly proven in stark figures as the days goes by and India's daily numbers rise. The simplistic approach of this government - that a few weeks of lockdown were going to miraculously eradicate Covid-19 - was a denial of science and a fatally dangerous denial at that. The fundamental idea behind the lockdown was to "contain" the spread of infection within the stipulated duration. But a lockdown itself can never "eradicate" infection. During the lockdown the government should have ramped up testing as aggressively as possible to catch the maximum number of cases - a strategy which was repeatedly emphasized by the World Health Organization who issued continual warnings that countries relying on lockdown alone were playing with fire. Strangely enough, despite the epidemiologists' advice to 'test, test and test' India chose to 'ignore, ignore and ignore' such advice. Lo and behold, now we are not only the 2nd worst hit country with over 50 lakh cases and

the highest number of deaths per day but we are also the country with the steepest GDP fall of 23.9%. So much for our 'globally praised lockdown'!

As an Indian, I grapple with this thorniest of questions - what is the value of human life in my country? In a country where the deaths of migrant workers do not seem database-worthy, we hear the loud plaintive cry of the media, political parties and the entire population over Sushant Singh Rajput's death. At the backdrop of political parties amplifying this mournful sound, my question may appear political. But it is not. I ask this question in a country which is regarded by its citizens as 'mother' (Bharat Mata). Why doesn't the death of certain of her (Bharat Mata's) children do not generate even a natural sense of grief at the national level? It is therefore a question that seeks to penetrate into the substructure of our cultural edifices. My question is not directed at parliament where our leaders meet. I ask our hearts. The government, after all, is the mirror image of our collective public attitude. The country is what we are collectively and the government is merely our collective reflection. 'No such data is maintained' is a tragic strand of that larger reflection.

Decisions taken during the Cabinet meeting

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT (IPR):

The following decisions were taken during the Cabinet meeting held at Tashiling Secretariat on 16 Sept, 2020:

POWER DEPARTMENT

Financial sanction of Rs. 2,22,42,000/- (Rupees two crores twenty two lakhs forty two thousand only) as Grants-in-Aid to the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SSERC) for the financial year 2020-2021.

FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT

Financial sanction of Rs. 2,28,00,000/- (Rupees two crores twenty eight lakhs only) as State Component under National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 for transportation, handling, movement of food grains and fair price shop dealer's margin for 2020-2021.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Upper Tarnim Government Primary School renamed as Upper Tinkitam Government Primary School in South District and Martam Secondary School renamed as Nazitam Secondary School in East Sikkim.

Financial sanction of Rs. 4,50,00,000/- (Rupees four crores fifty lakhs only) as first installment of Central share to five colleges under the Infrastructure Grants Component of the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 2.0.

Financial sanction of Rs. 51,57,100/- (Rupees fifty one lakhs fifty seven thousand and one hundred only) to be released as Examination Fees for Under Graduate Students of Sikkim State Government Colleges affiliated to Sikkim University.

HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Financial sanction of Rs. 27,57,78,000/- (Rupees twenty

seven crores fifty seven lakhs seventy eight thousand only) with a State share of Rs. 275.38 lakhs and Central share of Rs. 2482.01 lakhs for implementation of programmes under HMNEH.

Approval is also solicited to transfer the same to the accounts of Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) as and when funds are released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Enbloc sanction for draws of Rs.15,66,90,000/- (Rupees fifteen crores sixty six lakhs ninety thousand only) as Central share and release the same to the State Institute of Capacity Building (SICB), Karfector for the implementation of Deen Dayal Upadhayaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).

TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT

Approval of Rs. 38,24,102/- lakhs (Rupees thirty eight lakhs twenty four thousand one hundred and two only) to be released as Grant-in-aid to Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure and Eco-Tourism (IHCAE), Chemchey, South Sikkim.

ROADS AND BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

Financial sanction of Rs. 38,46,00,000/- (Rupees thirty eight crores forty six lakhs only) for the construction of two lane highway from Adampool to Ranka-Sichey road in East Sikkim, with funding under RIDF-XXV and de-sanction of Rs. 2428.00 lakhs under State Plan.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Financial sanction of Rs. 51.62,000/- (Rupees fifty one lakhs sixty two thousand only) already released as Grant-in-aid

to five Private Aided/Unaided Schools having minority students under Scheme for Providing Education in Minorities and Madrasa(SPEMM) for the year 2011-12.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Approval of the policy regarding the prohibition on the construction of new religious structures and the removal/relocation/regularization of existing unauthorized construction of religious nature in public places.

Administrative approval of Rs. 2,82,41,000/- (Rupees two crores eighty two lakhs forty one thousand only) and financial sanction of Rs. 2,00,00,000 lakhs (Rupees two crores only) for repair and Renovation of Sikkim House at X-13 Hauz Khas, New Delhi.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Administrative approval of Rs. 200,00,000/- (Rupees two hundred lakhs only) and financial sanction of Rs.40,00,000/- (Rupees forty lakhs only) as 1st installment for formulation of Local Area Plan (LAP) under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Approval of the First Supplementary Demands for Grants 2020-21 covering 34 grants and appropriation to the tune of Rs. 4,51,23,63,000/- (Rupees four hundred fifty one crores twenty three lakhs and sixty three thousand only).

Approval of the "The Sikkim Goods and Service Tax (Amendment Bill 2020)" to amend the Sikkim Goods and Services Tax Act 2017.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Additional financial sanction of Rs. 67,44,731/- (Rupees sixty

seven lakhs forty four thousand seven hundred thirty one only) for the construction of 30 mtr span Steel Bridge over Naray Khola along Tshalumthang to Tareything Road, East Sikkim, due to revision of cost.

Administrative approval for revised cost of Rs. 2,17,00,000/- (Rupees two crores seventeen lakhs only) and additional financial sanction of Rs. 92,10,000/- (Rupees ninety two lakhs and ten thousand only) for construction of State Panchayat Resource Centre (SPRC) AT GMC office, Deorali in East Sikkim.

Administrative approval and financial sanction of Rs. 25,67,000/- (Rupees twenty five lakhs sixty seven thousand only) to be released as stipend to students studying in Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies (SHEDA).

Administrative approval and financial sanction of Rs. 97,54,000/- (Rupees ninety seven lakhs fifty four thousand only) as grant-in-aid to Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes (SCBC) for the financial year 2020-21.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Approval of the "Sikkim Municipalities Amendment Bill, 2020" with the provision of the following:

I. Insertion of new provision in the Act for deferring of Municipality election for a period not exceeding six months in one spell beyond the stipulated period and in no case election to be deferred by more than a year beyond stipulated date.

II. Insertion of section in the Municipalities Act is to be made for contesting the Municipality

election on non-political party basis.

III. Omission of Section 15 A of the Act which has provision of nominated Councillors.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Approval of "The Sikkim Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2020" to be placed in the forthcoming Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

BUILDINGS AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Administrative approval for the foreclosure of work order in favour of M/s Civil Engineers Enterprises Pvt. Ltd, Kolkata for the work "Renovation and Up-gradation of 100 bedded District Hospital to 300 bedded Multi Specialty Hospital at Namchi, South Sikkim.

FOREST AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Administrative approval and financial sanction of Rs. 1,55,00,000/- (Rupees one crore fifty five lakhs only) for the implementation of Development of Grass Reserve and Management Action Plan for grass land of North Sikkim under MH-3601(General) of National Livestock Mission Scheme.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Administrative approval for the implementation of Sikkim Urban Garib Awas Yojana (Phase-1) at the total cost of Rs.130,50,54,000/- (Rupees one hundred thirty crores fifty lakhs and fifty four thousand only) with the provision to provide 502 Unit (Beneficiary Led Household) at the cost of Rs.16.02 lakhs per unit and 270 Units of Flatted Units at the cost of Rs. 18.55 lakhs per unit to be distributed among 07 (seven) Urban Local Bodies (ULB) of

Gangtok, Jorethang and Gyalshing.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Administrative approval and financial sanction of Rs. 20,00,00,000/- (Rupees twenty crores only) and transfer the same as grants to Urban Local Bodies as recommended by 15th Finance Commission for the year 2020-21.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Approval for setting up a Board of Open Schooling and Skill Education in collaboration with a sponsoring organisation and the draft Bill in this regard.

The proposal seeks approval of "Khangchendzonga Buddhist University, Sikkim Bill 2020" to be placed in the forthcoming Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT

The proposal seeks approval for amendment of "Sikkim Essential Services Maintenance Act, 2000" by duly amending Section 2, clause (VII), to be placed in the forthcoming Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

ROADS AND BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

Approval of the following with regards to "Consultancy services for preparation of Detailed Project Report and for the construction of Highway Tunnels and its approaches enabling all weather connectivity at various locations in the State of Sikkim:

(a) Approval of the Consultancy Firm, which would be a "Joint Venture between Lion Engineering Consultants and Marsway Engineering Consultancy and Construction Services Pvt. Ltd.

(b) Approval of the agreed bid offer of Rs.50 crore (Rupees fifty crores only) inclusive of all taxes.

(c) Approval to create an independent project implementing and monitoring team.

Four families quit SDF to join SKM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

Four families from Jarrong Ward under Barfung formally quit SDF and joined SKM today, a press release informs.

The four families are those of Dhan Lal Rai, Dhan Badahur Rai, Jit Badahur Rai and Jit Man Rai. They were welcomed by SKM party functionaries with khadas and party flags.



The program had Advisor State Medicinal Plants Board cum vice president SKM CEC, Dechen Phigu Bhutia, Lobzang Bhutia (vice president CEC), and many others.

SDF mourns passing away of founder-member Rastaman Rai

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

Sikkim Democratic Front president, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, has mourned the passing away of Rastaman Rai, a founder-member of the SDF party who passed away at STNM Hospital here today.

"With his untimely demise, the state and the entire SDF family is overcome with a sense of loss," Mr Chamling writes in his condolence message.

"I am deeply saddened to hear of the

demise of Rastaman Rai, who lost his battle to Covid-19 today. He was one of the senior leaders of Sikkim and a founding member of the SDF party. His death is a tremendous loss to the party and to the people of Sikkim.

While the late Rastaman Rai was a leader within the SDF party it was more than just a position to him. He was a progressive leader with a socialist mindset. He always stood by the poor and was dedicated to their protection and progress," Mr Chamling

writes.

"Rastaman Rai was a very jolly and witty person, often filling people in his company with joyful laughter because of his humour. With his death, his friends have lost a good friend and human being, the artistic world has lost a prolific artist, his children have lost a good father and the SDF Party has lost an upright politician who stood for the poor. While he lived, he made everyone laugh. Now with his death, we are left deeply saddened by this unexpected loss."

Collaborative meeting of stakeholders for Krishi Loan Mela 2020

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT (IPR):

The collaborative meeting of stakeholders for Krishi Loan Mela, 2020 was held at the conference hall of Krishi Bhawan on 17 Sept.

The meeting organised by Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Agriculture and Horticulture Departments was chaired by ACS cum Agriculture Production Commissioner, AK Yadav.

The meeting also had the presence of Secretary, Agriculture Department, Rinzing Chewang, Secretary, Horticulture, MT Sherpa, ADC HQ, Milan Subba, CEO, Sikkim Organic Farming Development Agency (SOFDA), Dr S Anbalagan, Credit Linkage Facilitator (Consultant), Pradeep Bhandari, Chief Manager Lead Bank, Gopal Lama, AGM, RBI, Gangtok, IYT Namcho, MD SISCO Bank, P Chozam, Additional Director AH and VS, TB Ghatani, Joint General Manager, Sikkim Milk, KD Barfungpa, along with the representatives from various private and Nationalised Banks, members of KCC committee officials and staff of the Departments.

The meeting was held with an aim to facilitate Krishi Loan to the farmers under East District in order to strengthen the rural economy through the agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry sector in the State.

In his keynote address, ACS cum APC, AK Yadav mentioned that it was a welcome step by the banks to extend the credit to the farmers. He added that the scheme will go a long way in doubling the farmers' income. He further mentioned that Sikkim is famous for large cardamom, ginger and oranges and added that these are strength of the state which must be capitalised and worked upon.

He said that appropriate forums and competent authority will take note of the operational bottlenecks and resolve the problems apprised during the meeting.

He further urged the stakeholders to take a holistic views and approach to make this scheme a success.

He also thanked all the private banks operating in Sikkim for providing loans to the farmers in enhancing the rural economy.

In his address Secretary, Agriculture Department, Rinzing Chewang urged the stakeholders to educate and sensitise the farmers before disbursing the loans.

He added that viability should be ascertained before sanctioning of loans and said that the concept of schemes should be properly understood by the farmers before availing the loans. He mentioned that the Nodal Officers should be specific to the farmers regarding repayment of loans to the banks so that the farmers don't have to suffer in the long run.

Secretary Horticulture Department in his address mentioned that the applicants should be properly informed and sensitised regarding the scheme to



make informed decisions. He further added that besides this particular scheme, the banks should also categorically inform and guide the applicants accordingly regarding other ongoing schemes as well.

Earlier, Credit Linkage Facilitator (Consultant), Pradeep Bhandari highlighted on the various activities undertaken under the scheme. He mentioned that this scheme was launched from West District on 28 Aug, 2020 under the direction of Chief Minister. He added that major steps have been taken by the Government to support the farmers and their overall improvement.

During the meeting, Chief Manager Lead Bank, Gopal Lama spoke on the mobilisation of credit to the farmers. He suggested for a proper coordination between the Banks and the State Government.

AGM, RBI, IYT Namcho spoke on streamlining the loan process. He pointed out that counselling should be provided to the farmers regarding crop insurance though it was optional. He further said that there should be proper streamlining in the distributions of forms and specifically mentioned that bankers should verify eligible applicants to recover their loans within stipulated time period.

Similarly, MD

upcoming challenges under the Krishi Loan Scheme. Joint General Manager, Sikkim Milk, KD Barfungpa during the meeting highlighted on the marketing linkages of milk in the State and added that there has been an increase of milk production through the KCC scheme.

The meeting was followed by an open house discussion which featured various queries, suggestions and inputs put forth by the stakeholders regarding the scheme.



SISCO Bank, P Chozam highlighted on Kishan Credit Card and Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme (DEDS) and also spoke on benefits being availed by the beneficiaries so far.

TB Ghatani highlighted on the preliminary planning, preparedness and execution to avoid

~ 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 Roadside
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 dam 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.

Indra Hang seeks DoNER support for sports infra in Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba, met Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Development of North East Region, and apprised him on issues pertaining to Sikkim today, an SKM press release informs.

During the meeting, the MP submitted a letter



requesting DoNER complex at Dentam in West Sikkim.

He Minister has assured all possible help to the state, the release adds.

CM welcomes newly appointed Advisors and Chairpersons

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT (IPR):

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang welcomed the newly appointed Advisors and Chairpersons at a programme held at Samman Bhawan, today.

The programme was also attended by Deputy Speaker SLA, Sangay Lepcha, Cabinet Ministers, Political Secretary to CM, MLAs, Advisors, Chairpersons, Chairmen, Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, Principal Secretary Home, R Telang, Secretary to CM, officials and staff.

The Chief Minister in his address said that the Advisors and



Chairpersons have equal responsibilities and roles to play in decision making process of the State as well as to deliberate and decide on the various programmes and policies of the State Government.

The Chief Minister also spoke on roles and responsibilities, effective participation, inclusiveness in taking the welfare measures and other policies and

schemes of the State and Central Government so that it percolates down to the grass root level.

He further mentioned that all should collectively work for the betterment of the State and also called for a close coordination and cooperation from them to ensure overall development of the State.

The Chief Minister in his address also extended his greetings on the

occasion of Bishwakarma puja and also conveyed his warm wishes to the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi on his 70th birthday.

The Chief Secretary, SC Gupta in his address spoke about the importance of elected and non-elected representatives in a vibrant democracy. He added that the policy decision will aid the development and welfare of the State with their rich experience in public life.

Earlier, Principal Secretary Home, R Telang presented the welcome address and the vote of thanks was proposed by Secretary to CM, SD Dhakal.

Rashtriya Poshan Maah celebrated at KVK Namthang

NAMTHANG, 18 SEPT (IPR):

The celebration of 'Rashtriya Poshan Maah' with regard to the Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture and Innovation (NARI), an initiative under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was held at Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Namthang on 17 Sept, 2020.

The Chairman for Sikkim Poultry Development Board, Krishna Gurung attended the function as the chief guest. The program had the presence of BDO (Namthang), Ram K Tamang, Senior Scientist, IP Shivakoti, CDPO (Namchi), Laxman Tamang, DIO (South), Deepti Pradhan, Subject Matter Specialist (Horticulture), Yangchenla Bhutia, CHO (Namthang), Neelam Dahal, Nutrition Inspector (Namchi), Sophia Lepcha along with ICDS supervisors, Anganwadi workers and staff of KVK, Namthang.

Addressing the gathering, Chairman Krishna Gurung said in order to achieve the objectives of Kuposhan Mukt Bharat, collective efforts from the concerned department and grassroots worker is needed. He also emphasized that increased awareness on nutritional diet for young children, pregnant women and lactating women is extremely important especially for masses at grassroots level. He informed that one can also utilize the areas available in the household wherein they can grow and consume various vegetables and fruits, this activity can also be a recreational activity for the individual as well.

He also spoke about various benefits of rare breed of chicken 'Kadakhnath' which is rich in vitamin and proteins and extended his support for ICDS centres and to cater the needs for the supplement as nutritional diet.

IP Shivakoti highlighted about the aims and objectives of NARI. He informed about the various measures with regard to the NARI initiative undertaken by the KVK Namthang focusing on the nutrition sensitive agriculture. He emphasized to promote nutritional literacy, nutri garden in the household and centres of Anganwadi workers to achieve the goal of malnutrition free. In addition, he also informed that the KVK shall provide technical support for the setting up of Nutritional Garden in the centers. He advised to ensure for fruitfulness of the scheme as varieties of nutritional seeds are being distributed for nutritional garden so as to attain the proper nutritional diet for the students.

CDPO, Namchi, Laxman Tamang briefly informed about government schemes that have been introduced and implemented in the District. He said that

ICDS centres have also taken up the initiative of Nutritional Garden where seasonal fruits and vegetables are encouraged to grow at home.

He also spoke on the deficiency of nutrition among children and highlighted the efforts of the concerned departments in which the measurement of Severe Acute Malnutrition and Moderate Acute Malnutrition children have also been undertaken in ICDS centres in order to identify and help them attain more healthier life.

To make the students aware about the importance of Nutritional value in one's life, essay writing, drawing and painting competition have been organised in co-ordination with education department.

During the program, the distribution of agriculture tools along with nutritional seeds was handed over to the ICDS supervisors and anganwadi workers by the chief guest.

New gym hall inaugurated at Rorathang

SUMMIT REPORT
Gangtok, 18 Sept:

The new gym hall under sports committee of Rorathang Social Welfare Association at Rorathang under Rhenock Constituency in East Sikkim was inaugurated by sports personality of Rhenock, Navin Pradhan as chief guest along with strongest man of



Sikkim, Vishal Pradhan and Nanda Raj Pradhan

as special guest, a press release informs.

RSWA Rorathang and sports committee have thanked Chief Minister, PS Tamang for providing financial assistance in establishing new RSWA Gym Hall and also thanked the Panchayat, Anju Gajmer, executive body of Rorathang Social Welfare Association for their support and cooperation.

SKM condoles passing away of COVID warrior

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT: Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], has extended condolences on the passing away of frontline warrior, Assistant Nursing Superintendent Basanti Sundas, who succumbed to COVID-19

today. His party has also paid homage and offered prayers for the departed soul and conveyed deep condolences to the bereaved family, informs an SKM press release.

The Sikkimese society will never forget her contributions in the field of health services in the State.

CM launches Skilled...

The State has huge scope and potential in terms of dairy, poultry, piggery and other arrays of opportunities to explore their entrepreneurial skills and propel them towards contributing in the socio economic development, the Chief Minister added.

This is also one of the key ways to build an Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Aatmanirbhar Sikkim. He added that the current crisis has been an eye-opener and appealed the youths to utilize the scheme and make themselves self sufficient.

Minister for Commerce and Industries Department, BS Panth in his address highlighted the wide range of opportunities under this scheme for the unemployed youths of the State. The scheme is to generate entrepreneurship among the educated unemployed youths of the State and also to garnish the multi talented youths to take up entrepreneurial activities in their desired fields, he said.

He also informed that admissible financial assistance of either 50%/35% of the approved bankable project cost in the form of back ended subsidy will be provided by the Government through Commerce & Industries Department. The back ended subsidy shall be released by the Commerce & Industries Department to the concerned public sector Banks/ PSU financial institutions upon sanction and disbursement of the project by them.

The Secretary Commerce and Industries Department, HK Sharma in his welcome address highlighted about the Skilled Youth Start up scheme, an entrepreneurial scheme for the vast scope of the unemployment youths of the State. He also informed about the eligibility criteria, projects covered under the scheme and its implementation processes.

During the occasion, Chief Minister and other dignitaries also released the scheme booklet and brochure.

SSDMA hosts webinar on State Disaster Risk Reduction Day

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT: Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) under Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department organized a webinar to commemorate State Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Day at National Informatics Centre (NIC), Gangtok, today. The program was chaired by Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Kamal Kishore, Member NDMA, Vice Chairman Prof. VK Sharma and Prof. Rajib Shaw, Keio University, Japan, also participated in the webinar.

The Minister further informed on the activities carried out by SSDMA to pave a way towards making Sikkim a Disaster Resilient State. He also informed that the Government has implemented Building by laws concerning earthquake safety which is very important for a hilly and earthquake prone State like Sikkim which lies in Seismic Zone V. He also announced one time honorarium to the QRT's working under SSDMA and District Disaster Management Department (DDMAs) who are actively engaged in COVID-19 duties.

Sanitisation drive by Great Mates

SUMMIT REPORT
JORETHANG, 17 SEPT:

Considering the sudden surge of Covid-19 cases in and around Jorethang, Great Mates, a local NGO, has undertaken a sanitisation drive at all the containment zones and red zones in Jorethang and neighbouring areas.

KVK East conducts Poshan training for Anganwadi workers

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT (PIB): Celebrating Poshan Maah- 2020, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, East Sikkim, ICAR-NOFRI organized a training programme on capacity building for Anganwadi Workers and farmwomen on 17 Sept, 2020.

The programme was attended by Joint Director, Dr RK Avasthe, ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute as Chief Guest, CDPO, Samdup Bhutia, Deptt of Social Justice and Women's Welfare, ADO, Rebecca Gurung, Deptt of Agriculture, 37 numbers of Anganwadi workers, 10 number of farmwomen from Lossing village, Scientists and other staffs of KVK- East Sikkim.

During the inaugural programme Joint Director, Dr

It may be mentioned that a few days ago, IRB Pipley was contained after COVID cases were reported there.

Great Mates has urged everyone to remain calm and follow all the necessary precautions.

regard. She sought help of KVK in opening Poshan Vatikas in different Anganwadi Centres. SMS (Plant Breeding), Dr JK Singh welcomed everyone to the programme and briefed about the genesis of Poshan Maah Celebration. He also discussed the importance of balanced diet.

During the technical session Scientist (Horticulture), Dr Sudip Dutta, ICAR-NOFRI, explained about the concept and different models of nutrition garden, crop calendar for nutria gardens. SMS (Plant Breeding), Dr JK Singh spoke on hidden hunger and how deficiency of different vitamins and minerals affect ones' health and how different bio-fortified varieties of crops may help in removing under-nutrition.

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ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
NIRMAN BHAWAN
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Roads & Bridges Department invites e-tender from Class-II B Enlisted contractor's (SPWD) for participating in the Tender for the work "Construction of link road from Khandu School to Balukhop via Lower Khandu in West Sikkim (3Kms)". For further details, kindly visit website www.sikkimtender.gov.in Date of uploading of bidding documents in e-procurement portal will be on 23.09.2020

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer(S/W)
Roads & Bridges Department

Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
5th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is implementing the umbrella scheme "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities" for their empowerment through education w.e.f. 1st April, 2018. There are six components of this scheme i.e. Pre-matric, Post-matric, Top Class Education, National Overseas Scholarship, National Fellowship and Free Coaching. The brief details of the umbrella scheme are given below:

S. No.	Components	Courses covered	No. of Scholarships per year	Parental income ceiling per annum (Rs.)	Rate of scholarship	How to apply								
1.	Pre-matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	Class IX and X	25,000	2.50 lakh	Scholarship of Rs.500 per month for day scholars and Rs.800 per month for hostellers plus book grant and disability allowance ranging from Rs.2000/- to Rs.4000/- per annum.	These three scholarships scheme are being implemented through National Scholarship Portal (NSP). Apply on-line on National Scholarship Portal (www.scholarships.gov.in).								
2.	Post-matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	Class XI to Master's Degree or Diploma level	17000	2.50 lakh	There are different rates of maintenance allowance for Post-Graduate, Graduate, Diploma, professional courses leading to degree, diploma etc. in different disciplines. It ranges from Rs.900-1600 p.m. for hosteller and Rs.550-750 p.m. for day scholars plus tuition fee (maximum ceiling Rs.1.50 lakh per annum), book allowance and disability allowance ranging from Rs.2000/- to Rs.4000/- per annum.	The portal has been opened for registration from 16th August 2020. Last date for submission and verification of applications on NSP is as under:- <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Levels</th> <th>Last Dates</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Student registration</td> <td>31.10.2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Institute Verification</td> <td>15.11.2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State Verification</td> <td>30.11.2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Levels	Last Dates	Student registration	31.10.2020	Institute Verification	15.11.2020	State Verification	30.11.2020
Levels	Last Dates													
Student registration	31.10.2020													
Institute Verification	15.11.2020													
State Verification	30.11.2020													
3.	Scholarship for Top Class Education for Students with Disabilities	Graduate/ Post Graduate Degree or Diploma in 241 notified institutions of excellence	300	6.00 lakh	Monthly maintenance allowance of Rs.3000/- for hostellers, Rs.1500/- for day scholars, Rs.2000/- per month disability allowance, book grant Rs.5000/- per annum and tuition fee upto Rs.2.00 lakh per annum.	(*) for latest updates, please visit website: www.scholarships.gov.in								
4.	National Overseas Scholarships for Students with Disabilities	Master's degree and Doctorate degree in foreign universities abroad	20	6.00 lakh	Maintenance allowance of 9,900 Pound (Great Britain) per annum for UK and for other countries US \$15,400, plus Tuition fees, Annual Contingency Allowance, cost of air passage, etc.	Receipt of application is open throughout the year. The proforma for submission of application is given on the website of this Department i.e. www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in . Application may be submitted in the prescribed proforma to Under Secretary (Scholarships), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Room No.519, 5th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003								
5.	National Fellowship for Persons with Disabilities	M.Phil/Ph.D in Indian Universities	200	No Income Ceiling	Monthly Rs.31,000/- for JRF (first two years) and Rs.35,000/- for SRF (3rd year onwards up to complete duration of the course) and Contingency Grant, Escort Allowance/ Reader Allowance and House Rent Allowance (at applicable rates).	Selection is done by the University Grants Commission. The candidates may apply online as and when applications are invited by UGC. No application is required to be sent to Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.								
6.	Free Coaching	For appearing in competitive examinations for jobs in Government/ Public Sector and admission to technical and professional courses	2000	6.00 lakh	Coaching fee shall be payable to empanelled institute by this Department. Stipend and Special allowance for Disability @ Rs.7,000/- per month for outstation candidates and Rs.4,500/- per month for local candidates shall be payable.	The Coaching Institute may send their proposals in the prescribed application form with the recommendations of concerned State Govts./UTs and having registration certificate under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 for empanelment of the Coaching Institute.								

All the above scholarships are applicable to students with 40% & above disability and having a valid disability certificate to this effect issued by the competent medical authority. Disability is as defined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

For further details, please visit: www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in.

davp 38117/11/0014/2021

Any Wiser?

Disasters require preparedness, not just repairs

The State has completed nine years since the 18 September 2011 Earthquake, and it has become necessary for Sikkim and its people to make some honest appraisals of their preparedness. It is unfortunate that this still needs to be said. It should not be so, because, given that the Sikkimese have lived with earthquakes and landslides ever since they have inhabited the land, they, along with other communities living along the Himalaya, should instead have become sought-after resource persons to prepare others on how to mitigate natural disasters. That is obviously not the case, hence, the trigger of a 6.8 on the Richter Scale earthquake of 18 Sept 2011, the severest that the Sikkim Himalaya has pushed in recorded history, was required to fire awareness and involvement. Even the earth serves frequent reminders like it did again on Friday morning, sending a slight nudge to jog our memories.

But now, nine years since the event and several crores spent on reconstruction even such reminders do not seem to be working. It has now been a while since the State was visited by a temblor of consequence, and that seems to have lulled people into a false sense of security. And while it is not being suggested that Sikkim remain in a perpetual state of panic or even alert, it needs to also remember not to forget.

But, if memory serves, it had begun forgetting within a year of 2011 itself. On the first anniversary of Sikkim's Big One, a minor rattle had nudged Sikkim and managed to spread easy panic. Agreed, the 18 September 2011 experience was harrowing and nerves were expected to be on edge on its first anniversary, hence the panic which followed the anniversary shake. This is also borne out by the fact that although there have been some quakes since then, not all have triggered any real panic. But, in how most of the State still reacts, one finds areas which unfortunately still need work. Earthquake do's and don'ts are known to be forgotten (in the event of a marginally severe jolt) even before the earthquake shudders have subsided, and people end up doing everything that experts advise against in the event of a quake. A majority of the people rush out, a potentially dangerous undertaking in areas which have suffered a power blackout and downright reckless in the rush with which people tend to troop out. When it comes to Gangtok, except those around MG Marg or PS Road, others do not have convenient open spaces to accommodate the footfalls safely and people tend to spillover from footpaths on to the highway, which, in the wake of a rattle invariably have an abundance of reckless and inconsiderate drivers; their screeching brakes and persistent honking adding to the confusion.

In the face of such infectious confusion, the concerned authorities should try harder to inform and reassure people not only in advance, but also in the wake. Sikkim is not serviced by 24x7 news channels, but still needs to be updated in real-time in times of emergency and alternate communication models need to be tried out and refined. Mobile phones are not an advisable option because connectivity issues get aggravated during emergencies and hence some other alternatives need to be considered. The police walkie-talkies are an option and if police outposts were also trained to service as hubs for information in the event of a natural disaster, at least panic caused by misinformation can be contained and people reminded about what they should do and what they should avoid.

What Sikkim is essentially looking at is a population still at risk of causing itself harm [through panic responses] in the event of a natural disaster and an administration still slow on the uptake. It is also obvious that the State still awaits a customised and practical disaster preparedness plan. One must bear in mind that rebuilding and rehabilitation is a process which will progress and slow down depending on the status of funds and motivation of concerned officials. It will however eventually be completed, its quality decided by how involved the stakeholders are in the process. What will really decide how Sikkim pulls through the next major natural disaster will not be in just how well it repairs, but the preparedness levels of its people in general and its officials and social organisations in particular.

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Coronavirus is hundreds of times more deadly for people over 60 than people under 40

NIR MENACHEMI

THECONVERSATION.COM

How deadly is SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19? And what are the risks of death for people of different ages and demographics? These have been hard numbers to calculate during this pandemic.

To calculate the true death rate – more accurately called the infection-fatality ratio (IFR) – you would simply divide the total number of coronavirus deaths by the total number of infections. The problem is that with so many asymptomatic cases and limited testing for much of the pandemic, finding the true number of infections has been very difficult.

The easiest way to calculate more accurate infection and death rates is to perform random testing.

I am a professor of health policy and management. In April, in partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health, I led a team of researchers at Indiana University to randomly select and test people for SARS-CoV-2. Based on our statistical sample, we found that 2.8% of Indiana – or approximately 188,000 people – had been cumulatively infected by that time and determined the death rate in Indiana to be 0.58%.

Using the data we gathered from that testing program, over the past few months, my colleagues and I set out to determine how the infection-fatality ratio differs by age, race and other demographic factors. In a study published on Sept. 2, we report that the coronavirus is hundreds of times more deadly for people over 60 compared to people under 40, and that in Indiana, non-white people are dying at three times the rate of white people.

AGE MATTERS MOST, BUT RACE MATTERS TOO

Not all groups of people face equal risk of death from the coronavirus. Researchers and health officials have known for months that there were discrepancies, but by



calculating death rates, our paper gives the most accurate data about these differences.

Almost half of COVID-19 deaths have occurred among people in nursing homes because these people are generally less healthy and face a much higher risk of serious illness. We wanted to determine the risk of death for people not in nursing homes or other live-in institutions, so the numbers below are for Indiana residents who live out in the community.

The overall infection fatality ratio among community-dwelling people in Indiana was 0.26%, or one death for every 385 people infected. Age, more than race or sex, was the biggest factor affecting the death rate.

For people 60 or over, one in every 58 infections resulted in death, an IFR of 1.7%. For comparison, the IFR from influenza in the U.S. among people over 65 years is 0.8%. COVID-19 is approximately 2.5 times more deadly than the flu in this age

group.

Risk drops off as age decreases. For middle-aged adults between 40 and 59 years old, the IFR was 0.12% – or one death for every 833 infections.

And for infected people under 40, death was uncommon at only about one in 10,000 – an IFR of 0.01%.

While age was the strongest factor affecting the death rate, racial differences were notable too. Non-white Indiana residents across all age groups had a three-times higher risk of death if they became infected – an IFR of 0.59% – compared to white residents – 0.18% IFR.

DEATH RATES MIRROR OTHER MEASURES OF HEALTH

For COVID-19, like most diseases, the worse your health before you get infected, the worse your chances of fighting off the virus.

Researchers know that certain chronic diseases – including cardiovascular, kidney, and lung

diseases, as well as diabetes – all increase one's risk of death from COVID-19. Our team didn't collect extensive health data from the people we tested, but these chronic diseases are more common among the elderly and racial minorities in the U.S.

Other factors, like food and housing insecurity and insufficient access to care, also make fighting off disease more challenging and are more common among elderly and minority populations. The higher infection-fatality ratios we found in these groups are likely due to a combination of comorbidities and these other factors.

ARE THESE NUMBERS APPLICABLE ACROSS THE US?

Our study gave us the most accurate statewide look at infection and death rates so far in the U.S. The question is whether Indiana is a good comparison to the rest of the country.

Indiana ranks relatively low for overall health among states in the U.S. However, Indiana's median age is slightly lower than the U.S. overall and lower than many states.

I believe that the numbers we found for community-dwelling people in Indiana are likely close to national averages, but the infection-fatality ratio could vary from state to state or town to town. If your state's elderly population is healthier than the same group in Indiana, the IFR could be a little lower. If your state is less healthy, than the risk will be higher.

The most obvious way to prevent deaths and serious illness from COVID-19 is to reduce the number of people who are infected. By doing simple things like wearing a mask and practicing social distancing, everyone can help protect each other and especially our friends, neighbors, customers and counterparts who face the most risk from the pandemic.

[The writer is Professor of Health Policy and Management, IUPUI]

Iran's secular shift: new survey reveals huge changes in religious beliefs

POOYAN TAMIMI ARAB & AMMAR MALEKI

THECONVERSATION.COM

Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution was a defining event that changed how we think about the relationship between religion and modernity. Ayatollah Khomeini's mass mobilisation of Islam showed that modernisation by no means implies a linear process of religious decline.

Reliable large-scale data on Iranians' post-revolutionary religious beliefs, however, has always been lacking. Over the years, research and waves of protests and crackdowns indicated massive disappointment among Iranians with their political system. This steadily turned into a deeply felt disillusionment with institutional religion.

In June 2020, our research institute, the Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN (GAMAAN), conducted an online survey with the collaboration of Ladan Boroumand, co-founder of the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran.

The results verify Iranian society's unprecedented secularisation.

REACHING IRANIANS ONLINE

Iran's census claims that 99.5% of the population are Muslim, a figure that hides the state's active hostility toward irreligiosity, conversion and unrecognised religious minorities.

Iranians live with an ever-present fear of retribution for speaking against the state. In Iran, one cannot simply call people or knock on doors seeking answers to politically sensitive questions. That's why the anonymity of digital surveys offers an opportunity to capture what Iranians really think about religion.

Since the revolution, literacy rates have risen sharply and the urban population has grown substantially. Levels of internet penetration in Iran are comparable to those in Italy, with around 60 million users and the number grows relentlessly: 70% of adults are members of at least one social media platform.

For our survey on religious belief in Iran, we targeted diverse digital channels after analysing which groups showed lower participation rates in our previous large-scale surveys. The link to the survey was

shared by Kurdish, Arab, Sufi and other networks. And our research assistant successfully convinced Shia pro-regime channels to spread it among their followers, too. We reached mass audiences by sharing the survey on Instagram pages and Telegram channels, some of which had a few million followers.

After cleaning our data, we were left with a sample of almost 40,000 Iranians living in Iran. The sample was weighted and balanced to the target population of literate Iranians aged above 19, using five demographic variables and voting behaviour in the 2017 presidential elections.

A SECULAR AND DIVERSE IRAN

Our results reveal dramatic changes in Iranian religiosity, with an increase in secularisation and a diversity of faiths and beliefs. Compared with Iran's 99.5% census figure, we found that only 40% identified as Muslim.

In contrast with state propaganda that portrays Iran as a Shia nation, only 32% explicitly identified as such, while 5% said they were Sunni Muslim and 3% Sufi Muslim. Another 9% said they were atheists, along with 7% who prefer the label of spirituality. Among the other selected religions, 8% said they were Zoroastrians – which we interpret as a reflection of Persian nationalism and a desire for an alternative to Islam, rather than strict adherence to the Zoroastrian faith – while 1.5% said they were Christian.

Most Iranians, 78%, believe in God, but only 37% believe in life after death and only 30% believe in heaven and hell. In line with other anthropological research, a quarter of our respondents said they believed in jinns or genies. Around 20% said they did not believe in any of the options, including God.

These numbers demonstrate that a general process of secularisation, known to encourage religious diversity, is taking place in Iran. An overwhelming majority, 90%, described themselves as hailing from believing or practising religious families. Yet 47% reported losing their religion in their lifetime, and 6% said they changed from one religious orientation to another. Younger people reported higher levels of irreligiosity and conversion to Christianity than older respondents.

A third said they occasionally drank alcohol in a country that legally enforces temperance. Over 60% said they did not perform the obligatory Muslim daily prayers, synchronous with a 2020 state-backed poll in which 60% reported not observing the fast during Ramadan (the majority due to being "sick"). In comparison, in a comprehensive survey conducted in 1975 before the Islamic Revolution, over 80% said they always prayed and observed the fast.

RELIGION AND LEGISLATION

We found that societal secularisation was also linked to a critical view of the religious governance system: 68% agreed that religious prescriptions should be excluded from legislation, even if believers hold a parliamentary majority, and 72% opposed the law mandating all women wear the hijab, the Islamic veil.

Iranians also harbour illiberal secularist opinions regarding religious diversity: 43% said that no religions should have the right to proselytise in public. However, 41% believed that every religion should be able to manifest in public.

Four decades ago, the Islamic Revolution taught sociologists that European-style secularisation is not followed universally around the world. The subsequent secularisation of Iran confirmed by our survey demonstrates that Europe is not exceptional either, but rather part of complex, global interactions between religious and secular forces.

Other research on population growth, whose decline has been linked to higher levels of secularisation, also suggests a decline in religiosity in Iran. In 2020, Iran recorded its lowest population growth, below 1%.

Greater access to the world via the internet, but also through interactions with the global Iranian diaspora in the past 50 years, has generated new communities and forms of religious experience inside the country. A future disentangling of state power and religious authority would likely exacerbate these societal transformations. Iran as we think we know it is changing, in fundamental ways.

[Pooyan Tamimi Arab is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Utrecht University; Ammar Maleki is Assistant Professor, Public Law and Governance, Tilburg University]

COVID-19: Nagaland sees rise in mental health problems

DIMAPUR, SEPT 18 [NAGALAND PAGE]: Nagaland is on the verge of another health crisis. With daily increase in COVID-19 cases, isolation and fear is generating widespread psychological trauma.

According to a study, mental health problems are on the rise since the pandemic hit the State some 6 months ago.

Just as the initial outbreak of the novel Coronavirus caught hospitals here unprepared, Nagaland mental health system - vastly underfunded - appears even less prepared to handle this imminent crisis.

Conducted by the State Health & Family Welfare Department, the survey on mental health and psychosocial well-being in Nagaland during the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out from June 12 to July 15. The study surveyed 1127 people to understand how they have been coping with the pandemic situation.

The study found 21.4% respondents suffering from depression, 12% from Clinical Insomnia (moderate & severe) and 13.7% from anxiety. The prevalence of Somatization/Somatic symptoms (medium, high, very high) is also high at 31.9%.

Principal Director of State H&FW, Dr Vizolie Z Suokhrie said the survey was taken to assess the prevalence of insomnia (sleep disorder), anxiety, depression and somatization (anxiety

leading to physical pain). According to Dr Suokhrie, statistical analysis showed that women and respondents with high fear of COVID-19 (as per Fear of COVID score) were found to have significantly higher risk of experiencing insomnia. People below 30 years of age, and those with educational qualification below graduation, have significantly higher risk of experiencing depression. Frontline workers (medical and non-medical) have lower risk of experiencing depression. Other factors like marital status, living with family/staying alone does not significantly affect the risk of experiencing the common mental health conditions assessed in this survey, the PD said.

Dr Suokhrie informed that the mean age of the respondents was 32 years, while 80% of respondents were graduates or above, 65% were unmarried, 75% live in urban areas and 82% were living with families. 58.2% of respondents were males. By occupation, 13% were frontline workers (medical), 8% were frontline workers (non-medical), 3% were returnees,

and 76% were from general population/other occupations. Among the respondents, 52% perceived to have low risk of COVID at workplace, 34% at moderate risk, and 15% at high risk.

While there were respondents from all the districts, majority of the respondents were from Kohima (40%) and Dimapur (35%) districts, he said.

The study was done through an online survey with limited scope which only aims to provide a baseline prevalence data of common mental health conditions in Nagaland during the COVID-19 pandemic. The online questionnaire was hosted at www.nagahealth.nagaland.gov.in and publicized in various media platforms, and the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) tool.

Informing that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the District Mental Health Programmes, under the Health & Family Welfare Department, has collaborated with All Nagaland Counselors Association (ANCA) to provide telephonic counseling services for any mental health issues like stress, anxiety, depression, etc., Dr Suokhrie advised those in need of counseling to call the toll free State Helpline 1800 345 0019 and choose Option 2, or send a request message through WhatsApp to 7005251298 to avail the service.

159 new cases push Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 6,851

ITANAGAR, SEP 18 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rose to 6,851 on Friday as 159 more people, including 15 security personnel, tested positive for the infection, a senior health official said.

The Capital Complex region reported the highest number of new cases at 88, followed by West Kameng (11) and Lower Subansiri (11), he said.

"Eleven Army jawans and four Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel are among the new patients," State

Surveillance Officer, Dr L Jampa, said. Twelve personnel of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and one of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have also contracted the disease, he said.

As many as 180 more people have recovered from the disease and were discharged from hospitals on Thursday, the official said.

The recovery rate among the COVID-19 patients in the state stands at 72.50 per cent, Jampa said.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 1,871 active coronavirus cases, while 4,967 people have recovered from the disease and 13 patients have died of the infection so far, he said.

A total of 2,746 people, including 405 security personnel, have been diagnosed with the disease since September 1, while 2,075 people have been cured of it during this period, the official said.

Rashtriya PoshanMaah celebrated at KVK West

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 18 SEPT: Kishivi Gyan Kkendra West Sikkim celebrated Rashtriya PoshanMaah 2020 (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) at KVK Training Hall on 17 Sept, 2020.

The National Celebration was attended by District Magistrate, Karma R Bonpo as a chief guest and Zilla Panchayat, Bhaluthang, Roshan Khatiwada as guest of honour. The programme also had the presence of Joint Director, Agriculture West, TN Bhutia and CDPO Gyalshing, HB Shanker along with ICDS Supervisors, Aganwadi workers of ICDS Centres and Farm Women of West District.

Senior Scientist & Head, Dinesh Basnett proposed welcome address and briefed about the importance of Nutrition in human



life and the objectives of celebrating PoshanAbhiyan 2020.

CDPO Gyalshing highlighted on health and hygiene of pregnant women, complementary feeding and advised the ICDS workers to focus and identify the problems related with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and Stunting problems. He also stressed on PoshthikAahar/ Weaning food to be given prime importance

and requested all the ICDS workers to create awareness among the pregnant women and mothers. He also requested all the Aganwadi workers to create nutri-garden at their respective centers or rent in uncultivated land for establishment of nutri-garden.

Zilla Panchayat in his address motivated and encouraged the Aganwadi workers to work in close coordination with KVK and other departments to

achieve healthy society.

Chief Guest, Karma R Bonpo, DM West highlighted on the importance of nutrition, balance diet and removal of problems like Stunting. He also stressed on the importance and role of community participation for the programme to be successful. He stated that the main priority of this year's Abhiyan should focus on nutrition, health and education for the child to be healthy and

successful with good economic output and societal contribution in the near future. Lastly he encouraged all the ICDS Supervisors and Workers to focus on basic requirements, health & nutrition, community mobilization and work with dedication, motivation and self-satisfaction for the Abhiyan to be successful in the long run.

In the technical session SMS Horticulture, Sangay Palmoo Bhutia highlighted on the importance of kitchen/nutria-garden, Nutri-thali, Bio fortified crops with a small presentation. Later the programme concluded with a small demonstration on preparation of Nutri-thali with locally available seasonal food products. The programme concluded with distribution of vegetable seeds. The vote of thanks ceremony was conducted by SMS Agronomy, JP Dulal.

ITC Ltd.'s Sunfeast YiPPee! celebrates 10th Anniv with Guinness record

SUMMIT REPORT
SILIGURI/GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

SunfeastYiPPee!, one of India's most popular instant noodles brand, commemorated its 10th Anniversary enriched with consumers' eternal love for their bowl of YiPPee! noodles. The brand invited consumers' on its Facebook event page to capture and share their YiPPee! noodle eating moments, a press release informs. In doing so, the fun and excitement filled activity translated into achieving a Guinness World Records® title for 'Most photos of people eating noodles uploaded to Facebook in one hour'.



All participants will also be receiving a memorabilia in the form of an official letter of participation by Guinness World Records and SunfeastYiPPee!

Elaborating on the occasion and achievement, Mr.Hemant Malik, Divisional Chief Executive, Foods Division, ITC Ltd. shared "The Guinness World Records® feat aptly reflects India's love for SunfeastYiPPee!

noodles and we are glad to have enabled a befitting celebration of India's noodle-loving spirit to a global audience. A heartfelt gratitude goes out to our consumers for making YiPPee! one of the most popular noodles brand in the country. We look forward to their continued love and support as YiPPee! forays into another exciting decade with innovation and differentiation as its cornerstones'. In order to experience the brand's anniversary celebration, one can visit SunfeastYiPPee!'s official Facebook event page and witness the excitement put forth by all the participants.

LR&DM deptt constitutes 9-member committee for digitization of Col records

GANGTOK, 18 SEPT:

A nine-member Project Monitoring Unit [PMU] has been constituted by the Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department regarding the issuance of Certificate of Identification [COI] and digitization of records of COI. The PMU will have to submit its report by 20 Oct 2020 to the Secretary cum Relief Commissioner, LR&DM Department.

A notification dated 16 Sept 2020 issued by the LR&DM Department states that the PMU is being constituted in compliance with the judgement of the High Court of Sikkim on a 2015 PIL. The PMU is headed by Special Secretary, LR&DM, CKChettri.

The PMU will examine suggestions submitted by the

districts; propose the empanelled IT agency for preparation of Detailed Project Report [DPR], if any, and oversee the execution of the works as recommended by the Court in all the districts; examine the DPR and recommend the same for approval of the Government; and submit the report by 20 Oct 2020 to the Secretary cum Relief Commissioner, LR&DM Department.

Other members of the PMU are Tshering Yangchen Bhutia, Dy. Director, DILRMP, LR&DM as member secretary; ADC East, LR&DM, Bharani Kumar; SIO, NIC, Birendra Chettri; Sr Technical Director, NIC, Dr IP Sharma; Project Director, DILRMP, LR&DM; CAO, LR&DM, PP Sharma; representative of the Police Department; and two representatives of IT Department.

28 new cases push Mizoram's COVID-19 tally to 1,534

AIZAWL, SEP 18 (PTI):

Mizoram's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,534 on Friday as 28 more people, including 24 security personnel, tested positive for the infection, a health official said.

Twenty-seven new patients have travel history, while one

infection was detected during contact tracing, he said.

Nineteen cases were reported in Aizawl district, six in Lunglei, two in Serchhip and one in Kolasib, the official said.

Eighteen Assam Rifles personnel and six BSF jawans are among the new patients, he said.

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PANCHAKARMA TECHNICIAN COURSE

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India invites applications for One year, full time and self financed Panchakarma Technician Course conducted by CCRAS, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India, New Delhi at following Training Centres affiliated to Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC) - National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC):

Training Centres:

- 1) Central Ayurveda Research Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases (CARICD)
Road No. 66, Punjabi Bagh (West), New Delhi-110026
Ph. 011-25229448, E-mail: acri-delhi@gov.in
- 2) National Ayurveda Research Institute for Panchakarma (NARIP)
Cheruthuruthi, Thrissur Dist., Via Shoranur, Kerala-679531
Ph. 04884-262543, E-mail: nrp-cheruthuruthi@gov.in
- 3) Regional Ayurveda Research Institute for Urinary Disorders (RARIUD)
JDA Housing Colony, Ban Talab, Rajender Nagar, Jammu -181123
Ph. 0191-2546475, E-mail: rariud-jmu-ayush@gov.in

Duration: 1 year (October, 2020 - September, 2021)

Total Seats: 30 Seats at NARIP, Cheruthuruthi, 10 Seats at CARICD, New Delhi & 10 seats at RARIUD, Jammu (50% each for male and female candidates at all three centres)

Eligibility: 12th standard pass candidates from all over India.

Age Limit: Minimum 18 years should be completed on the date of final assessment at the end of training.

Reservation: As per rules of the Government of India, reservation policy is 15% for SC, 7.5% for ST & 27% for OBC (Non Creamy Layer). Horizontal reservation of 4% for PH (only lower locomotive disorders) and 10% for EWS category will be applicable.

Last date for receipt of applications at above centres: On or before 9th October, 2020.

Per candidate Fee: Application Fee- Rs.500/- and Course Fee- Total Rs.30,000/- (in 3 instalments).

Mode of application: Duly filled in application form along with all requisite documents and demand draft of Application Fee is to be sent to any one Institute of the choice by registered or speed post. Please visit Council's website www.ccras.nic.in for Information Brochure (details of Training Programme & Submission Process), Syllabus and for downloading Application Form.

Applications received after the last date will not be considered. Application received by one centre will not be transferable for other centre.

Assistant Director (Coord.)

davp 17216/11/0004/2021

Government of India, Ministry of Textiles
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF HANDLOOM TECHNOLOGY
(Approved by AICTE and Affiliated to Anna University)
Foules Compound, Thillai Nagar, SALEM-636 001
(Phone:0427-2296943, FAX:2295254, e-mail:iitnt.in@nic.in)

Applications are invited by Indian Institute of Handloom Technology, Salem from eligible candidates from the Indian States/Union Territories (Other than Tamilnadu) for admission into **First Year and Lateral Entry (direct 2nd Year) B.Tech. Handloom and Textile Technology Programme** for the academic year 2020-21.

FIRST YEAR ADMISSION FOR 4 YEARS DEGREE PROGRAMME B.TECH HANDLOOM & TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY

Qualifying examination and eligibility	A pass in the HSC (Academic) or its equivalent. A minimum of 45% average marks in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry put together. When the candidates produce grade certificate, they have to produce the actual marks also otherwise only the minimum marks applicable to the grades in the eligible subjects (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry) will be taken into account. For minimum eligibility, rounding of marks and normalized marks will also not be considered. Improvement marks will also not be considered. Candidate should have a valid score of marks obtained in JEE main 2020 examination.
Admission Criteria	The admission will be based on the merit of rank obtained by the candidates in JEE Main 2020.

LATERAL ENTRY ADMISSION (DIRECT 2nd YEAR) FOR 4 YEARS B.TECH.(HANDLOOM & TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY)

Qualifying examination and eligibility	Candidates who have passed Diploma in Handloom Technology / Handloom & Textile Technology / Textile Technology / B.Sc. with ancillary subject of Mathematics at B.Sc. level or studied Mathematics at +2 level or any equivalent Diploma as prescribed by Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Tamilnadu are eligible to apply. Candidates who have secured a minimum of 45% aggregate marks in Diploma/B.Sc. Degree are eligible to apply.
Selection Criteria	Selection will be based on the merit of percentage of marks obtained by the candidates in Diploma/B.Sc. Degree Course.

Applications: For downloading applications and other details/updates, please visit Web: www.iitntsaalem.edu.in. The last date for receipt of application is 15.10.2020. Applications received after the due date is liable for rejection without notice.

DIRECTOR

davp 41102/11/0002/2021

Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP: 2020-21
(Pre-Matric, Post-Matric and Merit-cum-Means) at
www.scholarships.gov.in portal

TIMELINE:	Last Date for submission of online application for fresh scholarship (first time applicant) and Renewal scholarship (applicant who has got scholarship during 2019-20) by students.	Pre-Matric scholarship	31.10.2020
		(i) Post -Matric Scholarship & (ii) Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship.	

ELIGIBILITY:

- The applicant should be the student of the notified minority communities (Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian (Parsis), Muslim, Christian).
- The applicant should be pursuing studies in India in Government or recognized Private University/ Institute/College/School.
- The course being pursued should be of minimum one year duration.
- The applicant should have secured 50% marks in the last annual Board/Class examination.

For Applicants:

- Applicants are advised to apply online against any one of the scholarship schemes on the website of National Scholarship Portal at www.scholarships.gov.in (a link to the site is also available at www.minorityaffairs.gov.in) or Mobile App-National Scholarship (NSP).
- Detailed 'Instruction' for filling in online application and 'Frequently Asked Question' (FAQs) are available on the National Scholarship Portal homepage.
- Applicant is advised to give the current and active bank account details as per bank's instructions so that the payment of scholarship does not fail.

For Universities/Institutes/Colleges/Schools:
All Universities/Institutes/Colleges/Schools, where a minority student is studying, should get themselves registered (if not done earlier) on National Scholarship Portal.

For detailed information- Visit the website of Ministry of Minority Affairs, i.e. www.minorityaffairs.gov.in Samadhaan Helpline (Toll Free)-1800-11-2001 (Timing 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday to Friday, except holidays).

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Barcelona president Bartomeu to face vote of no confidence

BARCELONA, SEP 18 (AP): Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu faces a vote of no confidence after club members gathered for a referendum on his future.

The vote will be held after the club verifies all the signatures. Bartomeu would have to step down if two thirds of the votes are against him, and new elections would have to be scheduled.

The opposition members had announced their intention to remove Bartomeu from the presidency after Lionel Messi told the club last month he wanted to leave amid one of its worst crises ever.

Messi criticized Barcelona club directors last season and said he did not like the direction the club was headed. He

later personally accused Bartomeu of not keeping his promise to let him leave for free at the end of the season.

Pressure on Bartomeu increased after the team's embarrassing 8-2 loss to Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League, one of the worst in the club's history. The defeat prompted Bartomeu to announce big changes at the club and call for new presidential elections for next March.

Also Thursday, former coach Quique Setien, who was replaced by Ronald Koeman after the loss to Bayern, released a statement saying he planned to take legal action against the club because of how he was let go. He said it wasn't until Wednesday that he was officially told that he was fired.

FIFA confirms new international dates as fixtures pile up

ZURICH, 18 SEPT [REUTERS]: FIFA has confirmed a new window for international matches in January 2022 as World Cup qualifying fixtures continue to pile up because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

World soccer's ruling body said in a statement that the window was ratified by the decision-making FIFA Council on Thursday.

It applies to all continents apart from Europe, will last from Jan. 24 to Feb. 1 2022, and means European clubs will be obliged to release their players during that period.

FIFA has also agreed that the CONCACAF Gold Cup will take place from July 10 to Aug. 1 next year and that the Africa Cup of Nations --

postponed from 2021 -- will be played in January 2022.

Apart from this month's UEFA Nations League matches, international football has been on hold since March because of the pandemic, causing widespread disruption to the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Six match days have been postponed in the Asian qualifiers while the South American qualifiers, due to start in March, will not get under way until October at the earliest.

The CONCACAF qualifiers, which should have started this month, will not begin until March. Although the format has been modified, teams could still have to play up to 18 matches to reach Qatar.

Premier League urges govt to stick to Oct 1 date for fans return



LONDON, 18 SEPT [REUTERS]: The Premier League has urged the British government to stay committed to its plans for a controlled return of fans into stadiums from Oct. 1.

The government last week restricted pilot events to 1,000 spectators after a spike in COVID-19 cases, and said it would review the date for when fans could enter stadiums.

The Premier League said in a statement on Thursday that clubs remain committed to ensuring stadiums will be a safe environment for supporters.

"Clubs will adopt a range of common standards, which will help deliver the bio-secure, safe environments for fans across the League," the league said.

The English top-flight, which has had no fans at stadiums

since last season resumed in June, had written to the government, saying clubs face losses of up to 700 million pounds (\$906.78 million) if matches continue to be held behind closed doors.

"Clubs reaffirmed that the continued loss of matchday revenues is having a significant impact across the League as well as on the football pyramid and local and national economies," the league said.

"Taking into account the high safety standards which will be set by the Premier League in conjunction with relevant public authorities, the League and clubs urge Government to remain committed to the Oct. 1 date for the controlled return of fans to sporting venues."

Anatomy of a masterpiece: Glenn Maxwell innings leaves cricket craving more

GEOFF LEMON LONDON, 18 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: "I don't understand how I'm able to hit sixes." Glenn Maxwell said that in an interview. It sounds strange, because so far in professional cricket he has hit 539 of them. What he meant was that when he looked in the mirror, he did not see much to suggest that six-hitting was on the agenda.

It is true that Maxwell is not one of those athletes who look like they were engineered in a lab. Nor are lots of cricketers, but not many cricketers hit more sixes than he does. The few whose records compare, like Andre Russell or Kieron Pollard, are giant slabs of human muscle.

When you see Maxwell at the batting crease though, his ability makes a sort of sense. While almost slender, he is rubbery, loose-jointed. His arms are long, his limbs seem to hang in the breeze rather than tensely await contact. The way he stands speaks of potential energy about to be transformed.

When the transformation comes, he can dip his knees, splay his feet, extend those arms, twist or contort any part of his frame, and snap that energy back through the ball and into the atmosphere.

A Glenn Maxwell innings creates more joy than an equal number of runs from anyone else. Science cannot quantify this but the human heart knows. There is the predictability: you know he is going to launch soon. There is the unpredictability: you do not know how. There is the unorthodoxy, the mad inventiveness: the reverse hook, the switch hit, the lookaway cut shot over backward point. He plays the game as flamboyant self-expression, having trained flamboyancy into a refined skill.

The consequence is that he leaves you wanting more. His presence alone promises a world of entertainment



that probability cuts short. His style means he is employed to close innings more than open them, in flurries that do not get the scope to become storms. After several years of bouncing around within Australia's one-day team, he is now back to batting at No 7, the job late in the day that means fireworks or fizzle.

This was the context for Maxwell's efforts on Thursday morning Australian time, when early risers were rolling out of bed, while evening viewers in England had their attention on Old Trafford in Manchester for the decider of a series that had been packed with plot twists.

With Australia collapsing at the top of the order, Maxwell had the canvas for something ambitious. He has won matches off his own bat before, but this was bigger in scope. He walked in to join Alex Carey at 73 for five. No team has ever recovered from a score that bad to chase over 300. Australia needed 303.

What followed was not just a marvel because they produced that comeback. It was the way that Maxwell marshalled the chase. The composure, the strategy. His customary flair, but channelled into efficiency and effectiveness. This was Maxwell's masterpiece.

Even before the fifth wicket, Australia were frazzled. Two

wickets fell to part-time spin from Joe Root. Marcus Labuschagne should have been run out taking a panicked single, and marked his reprieve by getting run out attempting another panicked single.

Maxwell replaced all of that with confidence. He had set up Australia's win in the first match of the series with 77 from 59 balls. The new pitch for this third match was close to one side of the ground, creating a short boundary. That was on his leg-side when he faced Jofra Archer. So from Maxwell's third ball, he flicked Archer off his pads for six.

The shot changed the atmosphere. The opposition's primo fast bowler, spanked as casually as you like. Maxwell scored nine runs from his first four balls. England had the game in the bag, but he was indicating that he would not make it easy.

We have Archer to thank for the dramatic hours that followed, too, given he overstepped the bowling crease to spare Carey from a catch at third man. Maxwell took a chance to unsettle Archer in the same over with a little uppercut over the keeper for four.

The double-act worked. Carey was struggling, but even when he could not turn over the strike through a maiden from Tom Curran, Maxwell's scoring rate had forestalled any panic. On 17 from 31 balls,

Carey dragged away a boundary and started to get into the game.

Maxwell forged ahead. He hit Root out of the attack with a straight loft, making England bring on Adil Rashid's leg-spin for the crucial match-up of the night. His slice off Curran was precision, diverted from outside the tram tracks to split backward point and short third man.

Part of his magic has always been the things that do not work, the audacious looking ridiculous. In the midst of swapping his bat position to reverse-sweep, Maxwell realised a ball from Rashid was too straight and low, and had to fall over in a flurry of limbs to make contact in front of his stumps. The fact that he got the wristband of his glove on the ball, sparing him from a leg-before-wicket dismissal in front of middle stump, was classically Maxwell.

With the left-handed Carey starting to find singles, the pair fed one another the strike depending who had the short boundary in their leg-side hitting arc. Maxwell sent a six there off Curran, then found his range against Rashid. His first slog-sweep against the leg-spinner disappeared down a stairwell. The second hit the window of the hospitality stand on the second storey.

When Maxwell

missed a reverse-sweep to a wide ball, he was criticised on commentary for aiming at the larger boundary. But he knew that Rashid was now trying to hide outside off stump, so he wanted to make that line seem risky. When Rashid brought the line in, Maxwell duly swept another six, adjusting to inward drift to hit flat over the fence.

The lookaway pull shot got an outing against Archer, while England's focus on protecting the short leg-side boundary let Maxwell clout over mid-off. He whipped another six off Curran to raise his century. Throughout the innings, there was the delight of seeing what was often a cameo in a feature-length format.

There was all of Maxwell's extravagance: the way he gallops around the crease, the way he throws his whole body into a shot. There was the ball soaring away, seven times in all. There was also judiciousness and sense. There was risk -- a comeback of that magnitude demanded it. And there was a managed approach to that risk.

Even the shot that got him out with three overs to go had a purpose: with Rashid having to bowl again, and with Maxwell having the short boundary available, it was a chance to get the runs required below the number of balls remaining. Changing tack to prod singles could equally have come undone.

There was an equally telling sign after the match: he seemed satisfied, not delirious. In the past, given the criticism he has always received for his style of play, Maxwell has often come across as under pressure, his successes not something to be enjoyed but a way to prove a point. This time he came across a player who believed he could do something special, and did. The rest of us were lucky enough to go along for the ride.

After US Open run, Shapovalov piling up more wins in Rome

ROME, SEP 18 (AP): From singles to doubles, hard courts to clay courts, North America to Europe, Denis Shapovalov just keeps playing and, for the most part, winning. After spending more than 22 hours on court over the previous two weeks at the U.S. Open, where he reached the quarterfinals in both singles and doubles, Shapovalov is still going strong after crossing the Atlantic.

The Canadian recovered from an early break in the second set to beat Spanish qualifier Pedro Martinez 6-4, 6-4 Thursday and reach the third round of the Italian Open.

A few hours later, Shapo was back on court for doubles and teamed with Rohan Bopanna to knock out the top-seeded duo of Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah.

"Luckily, I'm still 21 years old, Shapovalov said. It's been a lot of tennis. For sure I'm feeling it physically, no question about it. But I'm getting good treatment

every day. I'm just pushing through it.

"It's very tough, especially after the Grand Slam. Your body just kind of naturally wants to relax. ... But I'm really happy with the way I have been able to maintain my level and maintain physically. Shapovalov will continue playing singles and doubles at the French Open, which starts in 10 days.

Shapovalov also won his opening singles match in Rome in straight sets, over Argentine clay-courtier Guido Pella.

"I'm a hard-court player, so it's definitely not easy matchups for me, Shapovalov said. I'm really happy to be through and really happy with the way my game has transitioned from the hard courts to the clay courts.

Known for his attacking game and stylish shot-making, the 14th-ranked Shapovalov worked on adding more patience to his repertoire with new coach Mikhail



Youzhny during the five-month break for the coronavirus pandemic.

"Obviously I like to pull the trigger and go for my shots as early as possible, Shapovalov said. We had a lot of time to really build up the game. Shapovalov was the first player to reach the quarterfinals in both singles and doubles at the U.S. Open since Youzhny achieved the feat 14 years earlier.

"He's really trying to make me more of all-rounded and smarter player, Shapovalov said of his coach.

Shapovalov will next face Ugo Humbert, who eliminated Fabio Fognini 7-5, 7-6 (4).

Lorenzo Musetti, an 18-year-old Italian who needed a wild card

just to get into qualifying, continued his dream run with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Kei Nishikori -- having beaten Stan Wawrinka in straight sets two days earlier.

Musetti became the youngest player to reach the third round in Rome since Fabrice Santoro in 1991.

Nishikori was returning from right elbow surgery and missed the U.S. Open after testing positive for COVID-19.

Also at the Foro Italico, which is devoid of fans this year because of the pandemic, Dusan Lajovic defeated Milos Raonic 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2 and will next face nine-time Rome champion Rafael Nadal; and Hubert Hurkacz beat U.S. Open quarterfinalist Andrey Rublev 7-6 (6), 3-6, 6-2.

German football team socially distance from opponents, lose 37-0

BERLIN, 18 SEPT [REUTERS]: German amateur side SG Ripdorf/Molzen II sacrificed a tight defence for social distancing as they fielded only seven players as a coronavirus precaution in a 37-0 loss to local rivals SV Holdenstedt II.

The preparations for Sunday's match in Lower Saxony's 3. Kreisklasse -- the 11th tier of German football -- were complicated when it emerged that Holdenstedt players had been in contact with an opponent infected with Covid-19 in a previous match.

While all members of the Holdenstedt squad later tested negative for the virus, Ripdorf, from Uelzen in Lower Saxony, did not feel the conditions were safe and were able to field only seven players -- the minimum number required for a match.

"We are thankful those seven players volunteered, otherwise the club would have faced a 200-euro fine for abandoning the match," Ripdorf co-chair Patrick Ristow told ESPN.

"That's a lot of money for us, especially amid the pandemic."

Holdenstedt showed no mercy and scored a goal nearly every two minutes, while their opponents watched on from a safe distance.

"When the game kicked off, one of our players passed the ball to the opponent and our team walked to the sidelines," Ristow said.

"The Holdenstedt players did not understand. But we did not want to risk anything. For the rest of the match, our players returned to the field but they only stood on the pitch."

The match result has since created a stir on social media but Ristow said Ripdorf only focused on what was best for the wellbeing of all the players on the pitch.

"There is no perfect solution for it. And we went down this route," he added. "We wished Holdenstedt no harm."

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Japan's new PM Yoshihide Suga, self-made and strong-willed

Virus clusters at French universities give Europe a lesson

PARIS (AP): Can mandatory masks offer enough protection in lecture halls so packed that late arrivals have to sit on the floor?

That's what worries many students at the centuries-old Sorbonne University in Paris as the coronavirus is on the rebound across France.

At least a dozen COVID-19 clusters have emerged since French campuses and classrooms opened this month. The clutches of cases are a warning sign for countries elsewhere in Europe, where most universities are readying to resume teaching and research in coming weeks.

"We go back to university in conditions that are a bit extreme, and we fear we might get COVID-19," Elise Gilbert, 20, who is studying literature at the Sorbonne, said of the overcrowding students encountered.

France's experience so far stands in contrast to what's happening in Britain, where virus-driven changes on campuses mean university life will look a lot different this term. Germany and Italy are also adapting their delivery of higher education in response to the pandemic.

The French government was determined to get people back to classrooms to bridge education inequities that the pandemic has exacerbated. The government also urged workers to return to offices and job sites to resuscitate the economy and to "learn to live with the virus."

At universities, the main change this year is mandatory mask-wearing at all times. But keeping physical distances appears impossible in many places.

Some students are raising their grievances on Twitter, using the hashtag #Balancetafac ("Squeal on your uni") to share pictures of packed classrooms and corridors.

They describe situations where there's no soap to wash their hands and where rooms, sometimes with no windows to provide fresh air, are not being disinfected between lectures.

"We are doing our best to respect social distancing, but sometimes we can't," Corentin Renoult, a 20-year-old Sorbonne journalism student, said.

Nevertheless, the Sorbonne is maintaining in-person classes for the time being.

"It's quite hard at the moment because we haven't got any extra means," Franziska Heimbürger, assistant director of the university's English department, said. "We don't have any more teachers, we don't have any more space, so we basically have to teach as best we can."

Heimbürger said instructors won't penalize students for pandemic-related absences. "I've had students who live with their grandparents and they are worried of taking (the virus) back home with them," she said.

Many students also expressed anger when French authorities appeared to blame the country's recent virus outbreaks mostly on students attending parties.

One factor in the overcrowding is more students are attending French universities. The number of students enrolled jumped by 270,000 to 2.8 million after the exam which allows high school students access to universities was canceled due to the pandemic. Students were instead granted access based on school grades, and many more qualified than usual.

The safety precautions differ broadly among schools. Some have strict public health measures in place, with small class size limits and a mix of in-person and online classes.

But others have had to temporarily shut down after dozens of students tested positive in multiple sites, from engineering to medical and business schools. They moved teaching online, as when the country was locked down at the height of its epidemic which has killed some 31,000 people in France.

In the UK, most universities do not begin their fall terms until late September or early October, and are readying big changes.

TOKYO (AP): Before he got Japan's top government job, Yoshihide Suga was known as a "shadow" prime minister and the right-hand man for his long-serving predecessor.

When Shinzo Abe announced last month he would resign due to ill health, his chief Cabinet secretary, Suga, said he would come forward to pursue Abe's unfinished work.

The self-made politician was elected by Parliament on Wednesday as Japan's new prime minister, two days after he succeeded Abe as leader of the governing Liberal Democratic Party.

Suga's low-key image from government briefings contrasts with his behind-the-scenes work managing bureaucrats and pushing policies.

As the chief Cabinet spokesman under Abe, the straight-faced Suga offered bland commentary at twice-daily televised news briefings highlighted last year when he became known as "Uncle Reiwa" for unveiling Emperor Naruhito's imperial era name, Reiwa.

But behind the scenes, Suga is known for stubbornness, an iron-fist approach as a policy coordinator and influencing bureaucrats using the power of the

prime minister's office, leading politics watchers to call him the "shadow prime minister."

Some bureaucrats who opposed his policies have said they were removed from government projects or transferred to other posts. Suga recently said he would continue to do so.

As his parents' eldest son, Suga defied tradition by leaving for Tokyo rather than taking over the family strawberry farm in Akita prefecture. He worked at a cardboard factory before entering university, paying his tuition by working part-time jobs, including one at the Tsukiji fish market.

His classmates remember Suga as quiet but a person of determination. Suga, who played baseball in junior high school, insisted on keeping his batting stance despite an instructor's advice, saying his style made better sense, his old friend Yuri Masashi told the Mainichi newspaper. Apparently Suga was not talking off the cuff, and practiced and mastered the technique of a pro baseball star from Akita. "Once he makes a decision, he never sways and he is still the same," Masashi said.

He was a secretary to former trade minister Hikosaburo Okonogi for 11 years before becoming a Yokohama



city assemblyman in 1987.

"I jumped into politics, where I had no connection or relatives, literally starting from zero, (asterisk) he said Monday.

Suga was elected to the lower house of parliament in 1996 at age 47, a late start compared to politicians like Abe, a third-generation blue-blood politician elected to parliament at age 29.

Suga was a loyal supporter of Abe since Abe's first stint as prime minister from 2006 to 2007, and helped Abe return to power in 2012 and become Japan's longest-serving prime minister.

Suga has said his top priorities will be fighting the coronavirus and turning around a Japanese economy battered by the

pandemic. He has repeatedly praised Abe's diplomacy and economic policies when asked about what he would like to accomplish as prime minister, but his vision of a future Japan remains unclear. He also defended favoritism and cronyism scandals that occurred under Abe, saying the investigations into the cases were properly handled.

Suga, at 71, says he is in good shape and fit for the leadership job. His disciplined daily routine includes sit-ups and walking—while wearing a business suit so he can immediately head to work in an emergency. He commutes from a parliamentary apartment and hardly goes to his home in Yokohama.

He says his weakness is sweets, especially

sweet pancakes and daifuku mochi, a Japanese rice treat filled with sweet bean paste.

Suga says he is a reformist and has broken bureaucratic barriers to secure policy achievements. He credits himself for a boom in foreign tourism, which he hopes to revive when the coronavirus pandemic subsides, as well as lowering cellphone bills and bolstering agricultural exports.

He is also known to support what would be a historic change in Japan's immigration policy to allow more foreign laborers to offset the decline in Japan's workforce as the country ages. Abe and his nationalistic supporters were not keen on the change.

Suga has pledged to

target vested interests and rules hampering reforms to get more done. One such plan is to form a new agency to promote digital transformation, an area where Japan lags and has delayed efforts to fight the coronavirus.

"Where there is a will, there is a way," is Suga's motto. He says he seeks to build a nation of "self-support, mutual support, then public support, (asterisk) urging self-help for individuals, though that has raised concerns he envisions a government that is cold to the weak and the needy.

Compared to his political prowess at home, Suga has hardly traveled overseas and his diplomatic skills are unknown, though he is largely expected to pursue Abe's priorities. Suga said Abe's approach to diplomacy, including his personal contacts with U.S. President Donald Trump, is outstanding and that he may seek Abe's advice.

Suga also inherits other challenges, including China, which continues its assertive actions in regional seas. He will have to decide what to do with the Tokyo Olympics, postponed to next summer due to the pandemic, and establish a good relationship with whoever wins the U.S. presidential race.

New Zealand economy shrinks record 12 per cent due to virus lockdown

WELLINGTON, SEP 18 (AP): New Zealand's economy shrank by a record 12.2 per cent in the second quarter due to a strict coronavirus lockdown, but forecasts indicate activity is bouncing back.

Statistics New Zealand released figures Thursday showing GDP had fallen far more than ever previously recorded and signaling the nation of 5 million people is officially in recession for the first time in 11 years. On an annual basis, GDP fell by 2 per cent.

Economists said the decline will likely be followed by a record increase in economic activity during the third quarter as many businesses get back to

work. And forecasts released by the Treasury this week predict unemployment will peak at 7.8 per cent, lower than earlier predictions of nearly 10 per cent.

Many countries have seen large drops in economic activity due to the virus.

When the second quarter began in April, New Zealand was in a full lockdown, which was gradually eased until all restrictions were lifted in June.

The largest city Auckland temporarily reentered a lockdown last month due to a new outbreak of the virus, with the impact of that to be reflected in the third-quarter numbers.

The second-

quarter figures showed construction activity declined by 26 per cent, manufacturing fell by 13 per cent, and household spending was down by 12 per cent when compared with the previous quarter.

Kiwibank Chief Economist Jarrod Kerr said there were few surprises in the numbers.

You lock up the economy, activity falls, he said in a statement.

The focus must now turn to the recovery. And the current quarter looks pretty good. It's the path we take over the next three years that needs attention.

Kerr predicted GDP would jump by 10 per cent in the third quarter, but said more needs to be done over the medium term to return the nation to full employment.

Finance Minister Grant Robertson said the

lockdown was necessary to save thousands of lives and get on top of the virus so the economy could bounce back faster.

He said the fall in GDP was better than initial Treasury forecasts of a 16 per cent contraction.

New Zealand's government has pumped billions of dollars into the economy to sustain activity and minimize unemployment.

As a result, net government debt is expected to shoot up from just over 20 per cent of GDP before the pandemic to 54 per cent of GDP by 2023.

New Zealand continues to pursue a bold strategy of trying to eliminate the virus altogether rather than just contain its spread. It has reported just over 1,800 cases and 25 deaths.

Pope seeks to "liberate" Virgin Mary from the Mafia

ROME (AP): Pope Francis is giving his blessing to a new Vatican think tank that is seeking to prevent the Mafia and organized crime groups from exploiting the image of the Virgin Mary for their own illicit ends.

The Vatican's Pontifical Marian Academy launched the think tank Friday at a conference entitled "Liberating Mary from the Mafia." It was a reference to the historic relationship between the Italian mob and the Catholic Church, and the popular displays of Marian devotion by mobsters in Italy and beyond.

In a message from

the pope read out at the start of the conference, held at Rome's Museum of Civility, Francis said the religious and cultural image and patrimony of the Madonna "must be preserved in its original purity."

He said any popular displays of devotion to Mary must "conform to the message of the Gospel and the teachings of the church," and that people participating in them must be true Christians who look out for others, and especially the poor.

The Catholic Church in Italy has long been associated with the Mafia, thanks in part to their post-war

common cause against communism. While some Catholic priests have courageously opposed the mob — and paid for it with their lives — others have been called to explain their celebration of funerals, weddings and other sacraments for mafia dons, acceptance of their donations and participation in their religious processions.

St. John Paul II in 1993 famously demanded Mafiosi convert, change their ways or face the wrath of God's final judgment as he made a historic visit to Sicily after the mob slayings of two leading anti-Mafia prosecutors.

Francis has followed in that tradition, declaring that mobsters were "excommunicated" and saying mobsters cannot live Christian lives because their lifestyle "blasphemes" God. Marian devotion is particularly important to Francis, history's first pope from Latin America, where displays of such popular piety are common.

Francis' message to the new think tank, which includes clergy as well as law enforcement experts involved in the fight against organized crime, was dated Aug. 15, a major Catholic feast day devoted to Mary.

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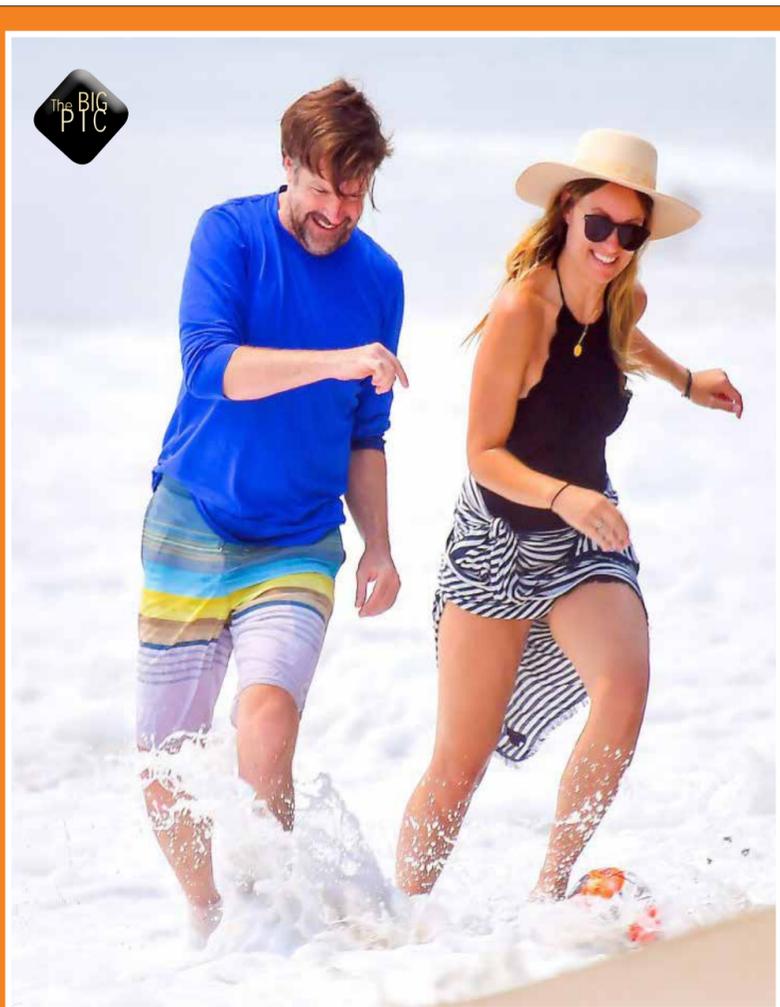
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SummitTIMES

'Cheer' star Jerry Harris arrested on child porn charges



OODLES OF FUN! The love birds, Jason Sudeikis and Olivia Wilde were all smiles chasing after a ball on the beach in Malibu, California.

'Melrose Place' actress headed back to prison for 2010 crash

Former "Melrose Place" actress who has already served a prison sentence for a fatal 2010 drunken driving crash in New Jersey is headed back behind bars after a judge agreed with prosecutors Thursday that her initial sentence was too lenient.

Saying Amy Locane still refuses to fully acknowledge her culpability in the crash that killed 60-year-old Helene Seeman and severely injured Seeman's husband, state Superior Court Judge Angela Borkowski sentenced her to eight years in state prison. Factoring in the more than two years she's already served, she will be in prison for more than four years before she's eligible for parole, her attorney, James Wronko, said.

Locane apologized to the Seeman family in a brief statement. She was placed in handcuffs and taken into custody by court deputies after the proceeding in state court in Somerville.

It was a startling development in a case that has bounced around the New Jersey court system for nearly a decade and has now featured four sentencings in front of three judges, plus numerous appeals. Locane — who acted in 13 episodes of the popular 1990s Fox series and has also appeared in several movies — was convicted on several counts including vehicular manslaughter, and faced a sentencing range of five to 10 years on the most serious count. The state initially sought a seven-year sentence, but a trial judge sentenced her to three years in 2013. An appeals court ruled he misapplied the law, but at a resentencing, the same judge declined to give her additional time.

Last year, a different judge sentenced her to five years, but an appeals court ruled he didn't follow guidelines it had set and ordered yet another sentencing. Wronko had argued unsuccessfully that sentencing her again would violate double jeopardy protections

since she had already completed her initial sentence and parole term.

According to witnesses, Locane had consumed several drinks before she headed home on the night of the accident and slammed into the Seemans' car as it turned into their driveway in Montgomery Township, near Princeton. The actress contended a third motorist, whose car Locane had bumped into at a traffic light minutes earlier, distracted her by honking at and chasing her.

Locane wasn't indicted for drunken driving, but a state expert testified her blood alcohol level was likely about three times the legal limit and that she was driving roughly 53 mph (85 kmh) in a 35-mph (56-kmh) zone at the time of the crash.

Fred Seeman, who nearly died from his injuries suffered in the crash, attended Thursday's proceeding and said Locane's shifting of blame "shows contempt for this court and the jury that rendered the verdict."

The judge took a similar view, and said Locane's past alcohol abuse makes her a risk for reoffending.

"You made a conscious decision to drink that day and continued to drink, recognizing at the onset that you needed a ride but didn't obtain one," Borkowski said. "If you hadn't gotten behind the wheel of your vehicle on this night, the incident never would have happened."

Wronko called the sentence "outrageous. She has always taken full responsibility," and criticized the judge for not taking into account Locane's current sobriety and her work counseling others against alcohol abuse.

Locane has 45 days to appeal her sentence. Wronko said he is waiting to see if the state Supreme Court decides to hear his appeal on the double jeopardy question.

CHICAGO (AP): Jerry Harris, the star of the Netflix documentary series "Cheer," was arrested Thursday and charged with producing child pornography, three days after twin boys filed a lawsuit alleging he sent them sexually explicit photos of himself and cornered one of them in a bathroom and begged for oral sex.

According to the complaint, Harris admitted during an interview after FBI agents raided his home in the Chicago suburb of Naperville on Monday that he had asked one of the teens to send him photographs and videos of his penis and buttocks on Snapchat. He also admitted that he repeatedly asked the teen, identified only as Minor 1, between December 2018 and March of this year for such photographs and videos.

Further, Harris admitted to requesting and receiving on Snapchat child pornography from "at least between 10 to 15 other individuals he knew were minors," according to the complaint.

Harris, who was taken into custody on Thursday, will remain in jail until at least Monday after a judge ordered him to return for a detention hearing on Monday morning.

The boy's mother told the newspaper that both of her sons had spoken to the FBI, and the lawsuit alleges that she also reported the allegations to Fort Worth police, the FBI and others. The complaint contends that the mother contacted authorities after she saw messages from Harris on one of her son's cellphones. Prosecutors said they recovered several text messages



between Harris and the boys, as well as Harris' admission that he had solicited pornographic images and videos from the boys and had sent explicit images of himself.

Harris, 21, was the breakout star of the show that followed the cheerleading team from Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas, as it sought a national title.

Harris did not respond for comment from USA Today, and attempts by The Associated Press to find a phone number for Harris have not been successful.

In interviews with USA Today at their Texas home, the boys — who are now 14 years old — described a pattern of harassment both online and at cheer competitions, which began when they were 13 and Harris was 19. They said it continued for over a year.

Besides accusing Harris of sexual misconduct, the lawsuit alleges that cheer organizations failed to protect the boys. The organizations

named in the lawsuit are U.S. All Star Federation, which governs competitive cheerleading; Varsity Spirit, which puts on competitions; and the Cheer Athletics, a chain of gyms.

A Varsity official in Aug. 1 letters to police in Florida and Texas said the organization had learned of "inappropriate sexual conduct" allegations against Harris, USA TODAY reported.

Cheer Athletics owner Angela Rogers told the newspaper that Harris hasn't been affiliated with the gym since March 1. Rogers told the newspaper that she learned of the allegations against him in mid-May and reported them to police.

"Cheer" was an instant success when it was released in January, and Harris drew fans for his upbeat attitude and his encouraging "mat talk." Earlier this year, he interviewed celebrities on the red carpet at the Academy Awards for "The Ellen DeGeneres Show."

Van Morrison targets virus restrictions in 3 new songs



LONDON (AP): Van Morrison has never been one to hold back over the years. Why start now?

The 75-year-old singer-songwriter is certainly not holding back on what he thinks of the lockdown restrictions put in place by governments around the world in response to the coronavirus.

Morrison, whose decades as a musician produced classic hits such as "Brown Eyed Girl," "Gloria" and "Moondance," revealed Friday that he is releasing three protest songs that call for the restrictions on routine activities to be lifted.

In "No More Lockdown," the Northern Irishman says the curbs "enslave" people, effectively labels the British government as "fascist bullies," condemns celebrities for "telling us what we are supposed to feel" and charges scientists for "making up crooked facts."

"I'm not telling people what to do or think. The government is doing a great job of that already," Morrison said. "It's about freedom of choice, I believe people should have the right to think for themselves."

Morrison, who was knighted in 2016 for his services to music and to tourism in Northern Ireland, is also releasing "Born To Be Free" and "As I Walked Out." The former is due to be released on Sept. 25, followed by the other two songs a month later.

Morrison, or "Van the Man" as he is fondly referred to by his legions of fans, plans to perform the songs during his upcoming shows at the London Palladium.

She-Hulk casts Tatiana Maslany in title role

LOS ANGELES, SEP 18 (PTI): Orphan Black star Tatiana Maslany is in talks to play the lead role in Marvel Studios' She-Hulk series for streaming platform Disney Plus.

The new show comes from showrunner Jessica Gao, who won an Emmy for penning "Pickle Rick" episode of animated series "Rick and Morty".

According to Deadline, Kat Coiro has also been roped in to direct multiple episodes of the series.

She-Hulk aka Jennifer Walters was the last major character to be co-created by Stan Lee for Marvel Comics.

Walters is an attorney and cousin of Bruce Banner (The Hulk). She got her power after an emergency blood transfusion from Banner, but contrary to him she was able to keep her intelligence and personality when she 'Hulked' out.

The character first appeared in comics as a member of the 'Fantastic Four' in the 1980s.

Selena Gomez to return as Mavis in Hotel Transylvania 4, will serve as EP

LOS ANGELES, SEP 18 (PTI): Actor-singer Selena Gomez is set to reprise her role of Mavis in the fourth installment of animated franchise Hotel Transylvania.

According to Variety, the former Disney star is also attached as an executive producer on the project.

Actor-comedian Adam Sandler voices Mavis' father, Dracula, the proprietor of a spooky hotel that serves as a haven for monsters who cannot live among humans.

Hotel Transylvania 4 will be directed by Jennifer Kluska and Derek Drymon.

Series creator Genny Tartakovsky, who directed the first three films, is on board as screenwriter and executive producer.

Kluska has previously worked as a story artist on Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation and Hotel Transylvania 2, while Drymon has served as creative director on SpongeBob SquarePants.

ARIES:

It's not that you're doing too much, it's that you're doing so little of what makes you happy. No wonder you're as exhausted as you are at this moment! Inner alignment is the need of the hour, Aries. That and a much-needed reality check. Remember, you don't have to continue walking on this road just because you have been for a while now. You'll never know what's out there until you decide to take the path less trodden.

TAURUS:

Are you living, existing, or merely surviving? Taurus, there's a good chance you're operating on autopilot mode, checking off your to-do list and doing what's being asked of you. But a life that's devoid of joy doesn't look good on you. Today, the cards are urging you to step away from what you are creating and reflect upon the things that awaken your sense of joy. Classical music, for instance, or the smell of your favourite pie.

GEMINI:

You could continue walking down this path and everything will work out 'alright' for you, or you could shake things up, awaken that reservoir of infinite potential, and realign with the life you're truly meant to live. Great risks promise great rewards, Gemini. Things are getting hot and heavy on the romantic front too. You and your partner are finding new ways to express your passion towards each other, which in turn is taking your relationship to a whole new level.

CANCER:

Opportunities for growth will present themselves on the

business front. You are prepared for this change. Trust yourself and move forward. Consulting a male mentor you trust (or your father) could prove to be beneficial at this point. There's good news for those who've been wanting to settle down. A grand proposal could come your way from another city or town. The suitor in question promises to have all the credentials you've been looking for.

LEO:

We spend so much time dimming our sparkle and lowering our expectations, because we do not believe that we are actually capable of living our highest potential. As a result, we make peace with a mediocre existence. But what if you decided to reclaim your inherent power? To create a reality that is in alignment with your soul's purpose? It's time to turn the game around. What the Universe wants you to remember: you can live a life that is satisfying on the creative, emotional, spiritual, and financial front.

VIRGO:

Many times, asking for help is mistaken as a sign of weakness. But, you are well aware of your own potential, and the potential of those around you. So, work smart rather than working hard. Give the crew a chance to take on what they are good at, so that you can focus on your strengths. This will not only make the process more efficient, but also help you create quality work. Delegation is a superpower that can be cultivated once you free yourself from your own expectations.

LIBRA:

Pythagoras once said, "Man know thyself; then thou shalt know the Universe and God." Self-inquiry is taking centre stage, which in turn is helping you open many doors within your own subconscious. The guidance you have been seeking is being revealed, along with the path you're meant to walk on. Adopt 'discipline' and 'commitment' as your power words, Libra. Some of you could be studying under the guidance of a mentor or spiritual teacher. Learning to surrender will assist you in your journey towards the light.

SCORPIO:

It's never going to be good enough, Scorpio. Every time you move closer to the finish line, you will be hit by another truth bomb. It's true that retracing your steps will improve the quality of your work, but it will also keep you stuck in an endless loop. What the cards are urging you to do today: get into action mode as you let go of the excuses. It's like the old and the wise say, "Done is better than perfect."

SAGITTARIUS:

There will always be more landmarks to cross and things to achieve. But can material possessions compensate for that growing void within? Are they capable of bringing us joy and happiness? It's time to ask yourself some tough questions, Sagittarius. Remember, the only way out is in. So set some time aside to meditate and reconnect with you spiritual practice. Making a gratitude list will also help you redirect your gaze towards all the good things in your existence.

CAPRICORN:

If the Universal law of karma is to be believed, then every action we take has a repercussion. In other words, we need to be mindful of the seeds we're planting in our reality. Remember, heaven and hell are not faraway concepts. They exist right here, right now, in this dimension. If and when you find yourself becoming a victim of your unruly emotions, step into the role of the observer. Call upon your higher self for clarity. The path of meditation will help you become receptive to divine wisdom.

AQUARIUS:

Your soul circle is strong, Aquarius, and it's holding space for you to rise to new levels. Be grateful for all the love and support you are receiving in this moment. If anything, this phase of your life is teaching you that we're not meant to worry about the 'how' and the 'why'. Things work out seamlessly for us when they are meant to. This could also be a time of joy and celebration on the family front with somebody close to you getting ready to tie the knot.

PISCES:

If the law of attraction is to be believed, the Universe works as a catalogue. Each thought we put out there is charged with intention, which in turn helps us co-create our destiny. By that logic, our life is the most precious canvas we will ever have the opportunity to paint. The real question is: will you make yours a masterpiece? In the words of inspirational speaker Anthon St Maarten, "You are a divine being. An all-powerful creator."