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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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East Sikkim emerges best performing in North East in meeting sustainable development goals

SUMMIT REPORT

NEW DELHI, 26 AUG:

East district has emerged as the best-performing district in the North East Region in meeting targets set for the Sustainable Development Goals, a press release from Press Information Bureau informs.

With a score of 75.87, East Sikkim edged past Gomati district in North Tripura districts which scored 75.73 points in the North Eastern Region District SDG Index Report and Dashboard 2021-22 released by the NITI Aayog and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region today.

A total of 103 districts in the eight states of the North East Council were evaluated for the Report and received points ranging from 53 to the highest received by East Sikkim at 75.87.

The NER District SDG Index & Dashboard, developed with technical support from UNDP, is a first of its kind in

the country as it focuses on the North Eastern Region, the release adds.

The Index measures the performance of the districts of the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura on the Sustainable Development Goals and their corresponding targets and ranks the districts based on the same.

The index itself is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index - the principal and official tool for monitoring progress on the SDGs at the national and State and Union Territory levels and shares the common ethos of benchmarking performance and ranking on the SDGs to foster competition among the districts.

The index, the release adds, offers insights into the social, economic, and environmental status of the region and its districts as they move towards achieving the SDGs.

The government has held

it up as a unique policy-tool which has immense potential to measure district level progress, highlight critical gaps, facilitate resource allocation, and also provide a handy tool for policy makers in the North Eastern states, Ministry of DoNER and other Union Ministries.

NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson, Dr Rajiv Kumar, Union Minister of DoNER, G Kishan Reddy and Union Minister of State for DoNER, BL Verma, launched the report today in the presence of Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog; Dr Inderjit Singh, Secretary, Ministry of DoNER; Nadia Rasheed, Resident Representative (i/c), UNDP; and Sanyukta Samaddar, Advisor(SDG), NITI Aayog, the release adds.

In his remarks, The NITI Aayog Vice Chairman said, "The North Eastern Region District SDG Index is an important milestone in our SDG journey aimed at leaving no one behind and will strengthen SDG localization, by putting

the districts, especially in our 8 Northeastern States, at the forefront of SDG adoption, implementation, and monitoring."

The DoNER MoS in turn observed, "What the North Eastern Region needs today is proper planning coupled with efficient execution and robust monitoring, which will be offered by the North Eastern Region District SDG Index."

The NER District SDG Index, the release adds, aims at delineating progress at the district level on a basket of indicators and enhancing analytical understanding of sectoral issues as well as data gaps, while assisting in designing future courses of action in the region. The modular nature of the index makes it a policy tool and a ready reckoner for gauging progress of districts on the expansive set of the Global Goals, including health, education, gender, economic growth, institutions, climate change and environment, among others.

Chief Minister hands out CMDG grants



GANGTOK, 26 AUG (IPR): Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang handed out cheques from the Chief Minister's Discretionary Grant (CMDG) at Samman Bhawan today.

The Chief Minister urged the beneficiaries to utilise the funds for their specific requirement

against which they were being issued and said that the government was regularly providing funds for multiple purposes, primarily for medical treatment.

He added further that the government will continue to assist individuals, especially those who are finan-

cially weaker and will render every support to improve their condition.

The beneficiaries included religious organisations, Self-Help Group (SHG), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and individuals for various developmental and business purposes.

Sikkim goes without any Covid deaths for three days for third time in 112 days

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

With no Covid deaths reported in the past 24 hours, Sikkim went three days without a Covid fatality only for the third time in the 112 days that the second wave has kept Sikkim in its grips since 22 April, 2021. The only other set of three days without any Covid deaths here were 12-14 June and 2-4 July. The

number of Covid deaths in Sikkim has held at 367 for three days now. 231 of the Covid deaths have come in the second wave alone.

Meanwhile, both, the number of new cases and the number of new recoveries, came in double-digits for the past 24 hours.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in

Sikkim issued by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department on Thursday morning, while 73 new cases were picked in the past 24 hours, 79 people made full recoveries and were discharged from home and facility isolation over the same period.

The 73 fresh cases were detected from the

...turn Pg2

GJM assures support for drivers overcome pandemic slump

SMRITA KHAWAS

DARJEELING, 26 AUG:

Hill Tarai Doaars Transport Union and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha convened a meeting today at Darjeeling GDNS Hall in the presence of GJM president Bimal Gurung.

The meeting discussed problems faced by the transport sector during the pandemic because of the lockdowns, restrictions and crashing economy.

The GJM president informed a press conference later that the party would take up problems being faced by the drivers with the concerned authorities and try to



solve their problems.

"And from our party's side, we have assured the union that we will provide scholarship for chil-

dren whose education was suffering. Although there are many drivers who have been affected, we will select 5 each

from Darjeeling, Tarai and Doaars for this aid," he said, adding, "Kanchenjunga School has been closed since

the day I left Darjeeling but the School has reopened now and will be used to serve the students for free."

With no withdrawals, Arithang-II by-election to be three-way contest



Gangtok, 26 Aug [IPR: The Municipal Returning Officer East, Ragul K informed that all three candidates who filed nomination papers for the by-election called for Arithang-II ward of the Gangtok Municipi-

pal Corporation will be contesting as there were no withdrawals.

He also convened a meeting with the contesting candidates and briefed them about the date of the election which will be held on 17

Sept, 2021.

The Municipal Returning Officer also allotted the symbols to the contesting candidates.

The three candidates in the fray are Dawa Sherpa [candle], Passang Tamang [can] and Ranjeny Gurung [ring].

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SDF demands judicial enquiry into forged FIR scandal

SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

Sikkim Democratic Front today demanded a judicial enquiry headed by a retired High Court judge into the forged FIR scandal which has been playing out in the public domain for the past few days.

Addressing a press conference, SDF vice-president [cheli morcha], Sakun Gurung, contended that since a big name of the present government had been dragged into the complaint, only an independent enquiry will be able to get to the truth and nail those behind the forged FIR which has led to despicable comments aimed at defaming a



woman.

She also expressed disappointment with the deafening silence of the State Women's Commission on the issue even though a woman has been

so publicly targeted.

"It is also very disappointing to see that there is still no word from the Chairperson of the State Women Commission on the matter. If the Chair-

person cannot give justice to a member of the commission, then how can she give justice to the lay women of Sikkim," she contended.

On the same, she fur-

ther alleged that the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha and its government have no genuine concern for women.

She also lashed out against Sikkim Police for

its disinterest in getting to the bottom of the case and effectively investigating who was behind the forgery or finding out how the FIR leaked.

SDF general secretary [cheli morcha], Divya Sharma, in turn challenged the Sikkim Police claim of the case having being closed on 22 July and went on to claim that she has evidence related to the allegations which she would share only with a judicial enquiry or the Sikkimey Naagarik Samaj which had released copies of the FIR and demanded action.

SDF also stands with Sikkimey Naagarik Samaj on the issue if they were genuine in their concern, they added.

BJP trains NHVC volunteers from Temi-Namphing constituency



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

The Bharatiya Janata Party today held a training workshop for volunteers under its National Health Volunteers Campaign for Temi Namphing constituency.

The campaign aims to train volunteers at the village level to support health infrastructure in combating the third wave if and when

it arrives.

The workshop also had the presence of the BJP-Sikkim president, DB Chauhan, NHVC State Coordinator Bhupendra Giri, Resource person Dr Raju Giri, IT Coordinator IK Ransail and other party office-bearers, a press release informs.

The session was attended by 30 village-level volunteers from the constituency.

SKM convenes constituency level coordination meetings for Maneybong-Dentam and Rinchenpong



PRITAM LAMA

RINCENPONG, 26 AUG:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha convened two constituency-level coordination meetings in West Sikkim today covering Maneybong-Dentam and Rinchenpong constituencies.

Speaking at the meeting, Maneybong-Dentam constituency Incharge Purna Hang Subba explained the idea behind this statewide drive of the party while the party's vice-president, SBS chairperson DB

Gurung, called on the CLCs to ensure cooperation and coordination among party workers for effective communication of the party's programs and policies.

Deliberation were also held on carrying out a membership drive.

SKM's media cell meets



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

A coordination meeting of the press & publicity and media cell of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was held here at Deorali on Thursday, a press release informs.

The meeting had Minister Arun Uprety as chief guest accompanied by vice-president [in-charge] Birendra Tamling, vice-president Manoj Pradhan and general secretary Navraj Gurung along with district-level committee members from all four districts.

The meeting discussed various agendas related to the cell and resolved that the cell should play an important role to take pro-people works and programmes of the government to the people at the grassroots level, the release adds.

Mr Tamling shared that the social media cell of the party had played an important role in the party's 2019 election victory and further urged the cell to work with the same energy to take forward the programmes of the government to the people.

As Kerala's Covid cases spike, its response shows lessons learnt: Report

MALAPPURAM, 26 AUG [REUTERS]:

Vilified by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party for its high COVID-19 cases, Kerala's apparent poor record may actually hold crucial lessons for the country in containing the outbreak as authorities brace for a possible third wave of infections.

The opposition-ruled, densely populated southern state is currently reporting the most number of coronavirus cases in the country and accounts for the second-highest national tally - unflattering headline numbers that PM Modi's BJP has seized upon as a reflection of bungled local leadership.

However, a Reuters analysis of national and state data, and interviews with epidemiologists and Kerala health authorities paint a different picture.

It shows the state's containment measures have helped to catch infections early, allowing authorities to better manage the illness and dramatically lower the death rate - a stark contrast to people dying in carparks and outside hospitals for lack of oxygen and beds in big cities like Delhi at the height of the health crisis a few months earlier.

"While the government may have its views on rapid antigen tests, it is important to consider that the state's strate-

gies have by and large succeeded in not just keeping mortality low but also in being able to detect one in six cases compared to one in 33 nationally," said Rajib Dasgupta, head of the Centre of Social Medicine & Community Health at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The efficient detection rate and its population density at more than twice the national average explain the high number of cases in Kerala.

All the same, at 0.5%, Kerala still has the lowest fatality rate among all but one thinly populated state. The national figure is 1.4% and it is 1.3% for the country's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh.

The difference comes down to Kerala's reliance on rapid antigen tests to detect and strictly isolate infected people at home, an approach the health ministry has sharply criticised but which state officials argue has helped them to better allocate hospital beds and oxygen supplies for those who really need them.

The government-recommended RT-PCR tests are more accurate but take longer to produce results, meaning by the time a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed the infected person is more likely to have developed severe symptoms and passed it on to others in a

vicious cycle of more infections and deaths.

Kerala's rapid test results allow for early treatment in home isolation which then narrows the virus' path to infections, state officials say.

These factors, along with the strained medical resources across much of India, largely explain why the overall national death rate is much higher than in the state.

Kerala officials also say a state-run support service that includes phone consultation, provision of drugs and pulse oximeters that detect blood oxygen levels for people recovering at home provide a bulwark in the battle against the disease.

Delhi had a similar support structure but it collapsed when cases surged.

"We do have a different model and our fatality rate shows our model is on the right track," Kerala Health Minister Vee-na George told Reuters.

But Kerala officials acknowledge that the fast-evolving pandemic can undo even the best thought-out plans unless authorities remain nimble and flexible.

When Reuters recently visited Kerala's most populous Malappuram district, which is reporting the greatest number of infections in India, a quarter of the 344 COVID beds in its biggest hospital were vacant and oxygen supply was ample.

Sikkim goes without any Covid deaths for three days for third time in 112 days....

testing of 804 samples on Wednesday giving Sikkim a daily test positivity rate of 9%. The tally of confirmed cases reported so far since testing began on 28 Feb, 2021, has now reached 29,597.

While 39 of the new cases were picked up in RT-PCR testing of 316 samples, 34 tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 804 samples.

Out of the 73 new cases, 41 were reported in East District, 18 in West District, nine in South District and five in North District.

There are currently 1,409 active Covid cases in the State, of whom only 99 are admitted in hospital and the rest are recovering under home or facility isolation. Of those in hospital, only four are under 18 years of age and one of them is in the ICU. In all, there are 12 Covid patients admitted in ICU facilities of STNM hospital and Central Referral Hospital.

India adds 46,164 new Covid cases

NEW DELHI, AUG 26 (PTD):

With 46,164 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases has increased to 3,25,58,530, while the active cases increased to 3,33,725, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

The death toll climbed to 4,36,365 with 607 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The active cases comprise 1.03 per cent of the total infections while the national COVID-19

recovery rate was recorded at 97.63 per cent, the ministry said.

An increase of 11,398 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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

If you seek help, you may call :

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New STNM

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

SD Dhakal named for Sahitya Akademi Award

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG:**

Shankar Deo Dhakal has been named for the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 in Nepali.

Sahitya Akademi president, Dr Chandrashekar Kambar, approved Mr Dhakal's name for his book, Kirayako Kokh.

The award carries an engraved copper-plaque and a cheque of Rs 1,00,00 and will be presented at a special function to be held at a later date, informs a press release from Sahitya Akademi. The release informs



that the book was selected on the basis of a recommendation made by a 3-member jury comprising of Yuvraj Kafley, Dr Shanti Chettri and Prem Pradhan.



UDID enrollment drive reaches Mangan

MANGAN, 26 AUG (IPR):

The on-going UDID enrollment drive initiated by Social Justice & Welfare Department (SJEDW) was conducted at Mangan District hospital today. Joint Secretary (SJEDW), Abinash Rai, Joint Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Dr MB Chettri, DMS Mangan, Dr RD Bhutia and UDID State Coordinator, Sameer Pradhan were present along with officials of Health and SJEDW.

It may be informed that the online enrollment will be done by the officials of SJ&WD in coordination with the Health Department/District Hospital, after the submission and verification of the mandatory documents mentioned below:

1. Disability cer-



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

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

3. One recent coloured passport size photograph.

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

certification done by the Doctor.

Abinash Rai informed that the main objective of the campaign was to enable the enrollment of PwDs in order for them to avail schemes & benefits laid by the Government. He further appealed to all the stakeholders to help facilitate the enrollment process by spreading awareness about the drive and by helping the beneficiaries reach the enrollment venue or the Dis-

trict Hospital in their respective district. He said that the Chief Medical Officers have been forthcoming in their support to the enrolment drive and doctors in the district hospitals have been oriented about the enrollment drive.

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

A total of 144 beneficiaries were enrolled today. It was also informed that the left-out beneficiaries could enroll themselves in the office of the CMO, District Hospital, Mangan.

Make 'bumper-to-bumper' insurance mandatory: Madras HC

CHENNAI, AUG 26 (PTI)

In a significant order, the Madras High Court has ruled that "bumper-to-bumper" insurance should be mandatory whenever a new vehicle is sold, from September 1.

This must be in addition to covering the driver, passengers and owner of the vehicle, for a period of five years.

Thereafter, the owner of the vehicle must be cautious in safeguarding the interest of driver, passengers, third parties and himself/herself, so as to avoid unnecessary liability being foisted on the owner of the vehicle, as beyond five years, as on date there is no provision to extend the bumper to bumper policy, due to its non-availability, Justice S Vaidyanathan said in a recent order.

The judge was allowing a writ petition from the New India Assurance Company Limited in Avalpoondurai, challenging the orders dated December 7, 2019 of the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal, Special District Court in Erode.

The Insurance company pointed out that the insurance policy in question was only an "Act Policy", which would cover only the risk that might be confronted by a third party to the vehicle and not its occupants. The coverage for an occupant of the vehicle could be extended upon payment of additional premium by the owner of the car, the insurance company contended.

The judge passed this order, which would go a long way in coming to the aid of lots of accident victims. He, however, could not come to the rescue of the claimants in this case, as the vehicle, in which their breadwinner was travelling/driving, was covered only with third-party insurance.

Left with no other choice but to deprive the claimants of the accident benefits ordered by the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal in Erode, the judge quashed the order of the Tribunal awarding a compensation of Rs 14.65 lakh to K Parvathy and three others.

The judge, however,

made it clear that this order will not preclude the claimants from claiming compensation for the death of the deceased from the owner of the car, as per the terms of the policy for which the car was insured.

Before parting with this judgment, the judge said that it is saddening to point out that when a vehicle is sold, the purchaser/ buyer is not clearly informed about the terms of policy and its importance. Similarly, at the time of buying the vehicle, the buyer is also not interested in thoroughly understanding the terms and conditions of the policy, as he/she is more concerned about the vehicle's performance and not about the policy.

When a buyer is ready to pay a huge amount for purchase of a vehicle, it is really shocking as to why he/she is not interested in spending a paltry sum to take a policy so as to safeguard himself/ herself and others.

"Therefore, this court directs that whenever a new vehicle is sold after

September 1, it is mandatory for coverage of bumper to bumper insurance every year, in addition to covering the driver, passengers and owner of the vehicle, for a period of five years. Thereafter, the owner of the vehicle must be cautious in safeguarding the interest of driver, passengers, third parties and himself/ herself, so as to avoid unnecessary liability being foisted on the owner of the vehicle, as beyond five years, as on date there is no provision to extend the bumper to bumper policy, due to its non-availability, the judge said.

In view of untoward incidents like the present one on hand, the order shall be circulated by the Additional Chief Secretary, Transport department, to all the insurance companies and he must ensure that the above direction is followed scrupulously in letter and spirit without any deviation, the judge added and posted the matter on September 30 for reporting compliance.

DC inspects safety measures adopted by NHPC at Legship project site

**BIKASH CHETTRI
NAMCHI, 26 AUG:**

District Collector (South) inspected NHPC hydel project at Legship to assess abidance to guidelines stipulated by the High Court of Sikkim for public safety measures to be adopted by the project developer.

He was accompanied

by Sub Divisional Magistrate (Ravangla), Dy Director (Land Revenue & Disaster Management, Ravangla), District Project Officer (South), Revenue Surveyor. Also present were General Manager, NHPC Stage III Legship, and other NHPC officers stationed at Legship.

The DC inspected the

alternate road connecting the dam site with Kewzing which is currently being used by residents of Tashiding to travel to Ravangla and Legship. The team then inspected the old PWD road at Nardang ward that used to connect Legship to Tashiding, a press release informs.

The team also in-

spected the dam site and power house to assess measures adopted for public safety. The sites inspected were Spillways, Control Room, Dam Structure, River Surge area, Power House etc.

The DC then issued necessary directions to enhance public safety measures at the project site.

Horticulture Technological Intervention introduced for Takshang farmers



GANGTOK 26 AUG [PIB]:

A project on the "Augmenting Farmers' Income through Horticulture Technological Interventions in Takshang Village in Sikkim" was launched in the Takschang under Amba GPU, Pakyong, on 25 August by Dr Diwakar Hegde, General Manager, NABARD, Sikkim in the presence of Dr Rampal, Director, ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong.

The project is being implemented by ICAR-NRCO in collaboration with NABARD. In his introductory remarks, Dr Rampal stressed the importance of each technology taken up for the demonstration under the project and benefit out of it compared to conventional method of cultivation.

Dr Diwakar Hegde in his chief guest address

put forward the role of NABARD in the formation of Self Help Group, uses of Kisan Credit Card and scientific based crop production for increase in productivity from the small fragmented land system.

The project was launched with distribution of inputs for the vegetable nursery and vermi-compost units. Beneficiaries of mulching sheet technology

shared their experience and benefits out of it. Mr Kalaivanan, NS Nodal Officer of the project welcomed the gathering and Thulsi Dungal, President Durga SHG presented vote of thanks.

30 farmer beneficiaries from Kasthuri, Sunakari and Durga SHG, scientists and staff from ICAR-NRCO and AGM & Development Assistant from NABARD attended the event.

"Still witnessing 2nd Covid wave": Centre warns of festive season spike

NEW DELHI, 26 AUG


[NDTV]: Parts of India are still in the midst of the second Covid wave that began earlier this year, the Union Health Ministry said today. It warned of a possible spike in the weeks ahead as a result of the approaching festive season.

"The second surge has not yet concluded. It is not over and, therefore, we have to maintain all necessary precautions, particularly in light of our experience that after every festival we see a spike," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said today at a press briefing in New Delhi.

"The coming months of September and October are crucial for us because we would be celebrating a few festivals. Thus, festivals have to be celebrated with Covid-appropriate behaviour."

Mr Bhushan's comments came a day after Kerala reported a huge surge of over 30,000 new cases, which was dubbed "Onam Spike" by the state government. The state celebrated its annual harvest festival last Saturday.

Over 46,000 new cases were reported in the country in the past 24 hours. Of these, 58 per cent were reported from Kerala while the rest of the states were still showing a declining trend, Mr Bhushan.



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
MILE LUMSEY, TADONG
GANGTOK**

Memo No. 23/GOS/184/SJ&WD/EC/2021-22 Dated: 26.8.2021.

RE-AUCTION NOTICE

The social Justice & Welfare Department located at Lumsey in East Sikkim shall be auctioning a non-functional Biscuit Manufacturing Plant on 'AS IS WHERE IS' basis. The lowest value for the available has been kept as Rs. 6,02,000/- (Rupees six lakhs two thousand) only.

1. Interested parties inspect the material from 31/08/2021 to 10/09/2021 during office hours and sealed quotations may be sent to the office of the undersigned on or before 16/09/2021 till 1.00 pm along with security deposit (5% of Rs.6,02,000/-) Rupees Six lakhs two thousand) only in the form of TDR/FDR for an amount of Rs.30,100/- (Rupees thirty thousand one hundred) only drawn in favour of CAO, SJ&WD, for a validity period of 3(three) months.
2. The quotations shall be opened on 16.09.2021 at 2.00 pm in presence of the interested bidders and the highest bidder shall be allowed to lift the materials after the production of Demand Draft drawn in favour of the Managing Director, Extruder Food Processing Plant for the rate quoted.
3. Form for quotation can be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engineer (N/E) on submission of Bank Receipt (drawn from the State Bank of Sikkim on Head of account 0235.60.800.03 other receipts) for an amount of Rs. 2500/- (Rupees two thousand five hundred) only.
4. The last date for obtaining form for quotation is on 15/09/2021 (during office hours).
5. Certificate of Identification (as a proof of Sikkim Subject) should be invariably submitted with the quotation).
6. Further, the materials, should be lifted within a period of one month from the issue of the lifting order, failing which the TDR shall be forfeited and offer shall be given to the second highest bidder. Rate quoted below the set back value shall be summarily rejected. The second highest bidder shall be given one month's time to lift the materials after duly depositing the quoted amount. If he/she fails to lift the materials within stipulated time, his/her TDR shall be forfeited and fresh tender as deemed fit by the government will be taken up.
7. The Department reserves the right to reject the bid without assigning any reason thereof.

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Social Justice & Welfare Department
Government of Sikkim
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Allow Students to Think

Open doors, don't spoon-feed

What Sikkim requires its schools to create are sensible citizens who can think for themselves, weigh options and take practical decisions. In these times of fake news and manufactured consent, an open mind willing to learn and analyse will be required to side-step the shackles of time-serving mediocrity. The pandemic and its attendant compromise of online education might just end up doing some good if we could leverage the potential it contains to allow students to explore and discover on their own. And we would all wish that for the next generation, won't we? The one place where clear thought can be honed into an instinct is the classroom [or through the screens in the present times] – allow the education system to adopt genuinely learning-friendly practices and future generations will dazzle with their confidence and carry Sikkim forward. Don't do so, and a majority will remain hesitant and unsure, seeking out charlatans to form their beliefs, ideologies and pursuits.

If education was approached with the aim to open minds, not suppress inquisitiveness, the quality that everyone seeks to infuse into the system will become a reality. What the present system delivers, and this is a national malaise, is infectious indecisiveness. Students are not encouraged to enquire or seek clarifications and every effort is made to drill them into an army of monotony, their uniqueness and differences brushed over by soul-sapping rigour and mind-numbing routine. It is rare to find students with wide-ranging interests any more. In fact, the syllabus and pattern of education does not even allow children the space to develop any meaningful interests any more. Even when these interests are displayed at annual day functions they are mostly hobbies decided for them by the teachers or “talents” singled out by them for display. Student projects for interschool competitions are prepared by teachers and every intonation of a poetry recital for competition dictated to them. We just won't allow them to make their mistakes and learn from them or stand by the side in case assistance is required; we believe that we are serving them by hand-holding them through their years in school, college, university, and if we have the “contact”, even their employment.

More and more teachers are so scared that students will “fail” them that they end up spoon-feeding them. At the other extreme are teachers who see no hope in their students so they don't get involved at all. In both scenarios, the student meets the same fate – a confidence stamped down even before it could develop. A good way to start delivering Sikkim a more confident generation would be to allow students to discover more things by themselves and in doing so, they will also discover the confidence required to think and decide for themselves later in life.

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Taliban's Religious Ideology – Deobandi Islam – has roots in colonial India

SOHEL RANA & SUMIT GANGULY
THECONVERSATION.COM

Following the Taliban's rapid taking of power in what it describes as a reestablished “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan,” fears of a certain kind of Islamist ideology being brought back have led a large number of Afghans to flee, or fear for their lives.

The Taliban were known for their oppressive rule. They ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, at which point they were pushed out of power by U.S. and British troops. Under the Taliban rule, religious minorities and other Muslims who did not share their fundamentalist understanding of Islam were not tolerated. The Taliban also severely restricted the rights of women and girls.

As scholars who research ethno-religious conflicts in South Asia, we have studied the origins of the Taliban's religious beliefs. The roots of this ideology – Deobandi Islam – can be traced to 19th century colonial India.

COLONIALISM AND ISLAM

Deobandi Islam emerged in India in 1867, 10 years after a major Indian nationalist uprising against the rule of the British East India Company.

Two Muslims clerics, Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and Maulana Rashid Muhammad Gangohi, were behind the setting up of the Deobandi school. Their aim was to indoctrinate Muslim youth with an austere, rigid and pristine vision of Islam. At its heart, Deobandi Islam was an anti-colonial movement designed to revitalize Islam.

This school of Islamic thought had a very particular understanding of the faith. The Deobandi brand of Islam adheres to orthodox Islamism insisting that the adherence to Sun-

ni Islamic law, or sharia, is the path of salvation. It insists on the revival of Islamic practices that go back to the seventh century – the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It upholds the notion of global jihad as a sacred duty to protect Muslims across the world, and is opposed to any non-Islamic ideas.

The first madrassa – or Islamic school – to educate Muslim youth in the Deobandi tradition was set up in the north Indian state of present-day Uttar Pradesh toward the end of the 19th century.

The Deobandi school system spread over the next several decades and attracted Muslim youth in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. For instance, the Deobandi tradition became the most popular school of Islamic thought among the Pashtuns, an ethnic group living in an area on either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Pashtun leaders played an instrumental role in establishing and expanding the Deobandi curriculum and tradition in the Pashtun belt across the Durand line, the colonial border separating British India from Afghanistan.

FUNDING AND ENROLLMENTS

After British India was partitioned in 1947 between India and Pakistan, many prominent Deobandi scholars migrated to Pakistan, setting up a large number of madrassas.

With the independence of India and Pakistan, the school placed its full attention on training the students within this fundamentalist Islamic tradition.

In the years and decades after the independence of Pakistan, Deobandi madrassas spread across Pakistan, and one of their principal causes of political activism became India's treatment of Muslims in the Indian-controlled portion of Jammu

and Kashmir.

According to one estimate, by 1967 there were as many as 8,000 Deobandi schools worldwide and thousands of Deobandi graduates mainly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Malaysia.

At first, the Deobandi madrassas tended to be poorly funded. One event that greatly boosted the growth of enrollment in Deobandi madrassas was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The CIA's covert involvement in the war fueled Islamic militancy and inadvertently helped organize and orchestrate a resistance movement mostly composed of ardent religious fighters. A substantial number of these Afghan fighters were drawn from the Deobandi madrassas, especially the Pashtuns, who played a leading role in the resistance.

During that time, the Deobandi madrassas also gained financial assistance. This assistance, as scholar Thomas Hegghammer writes, came mainly through American aid dollars meant for Pakistan and money from Saudi Arabia.

Saudi leaders, in fact, used the influence of their money to push their own interpretation of Islam – Wahhabism – at the Deobandi madrassas. Wahhabism is a deeply conservative form of Islam that believes in a literal interpretation of the Quran. At this point, the Deobandi madrassas moved far away from their religious roots.

TIES OF KINSHIP

Following the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979, millions of Afghan refugees, in several waves, took shelter in Pakistan, especially in its Pashtun belt.

Keen on obtaining a strategic foothold in Afghanistan, Pakistan actively recruited young men in refugee camps, imbuing them further

with religious zeal to fight the Soviets.

Driven out of their homes in Afghanistan, the dispossessed young Afghans thrived in the refugee camps, in part due to ties of ethnicity as Pashtuns. Drawn to a religiously based offensive against what they deemed to be an infidel, or foreign occupier, they became ready recruits to the anti-Soviet cause.

Many of the Taliban's key leaders and fighters, including Mullah Omar, the founder of the organization, had studied in the Deobandi seminaries in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the fighters continued to enjoy the support of Pakistan's security establishment and private actors for financial assistance.

When Afghanistan plunged into a civil war in 1992, various factions of the anti-Soviet resistance vied for power. Among them was the Northern Alliance, a group that India and Russia had backed and was under the leadership of an ethnic Tajik, Ahmed Shah Massoud, who resisted the Taliban and acquired an almost mythic status.

However, as scholar Larry P. Goodson writes, with the crucial and substantial assistance of Pakistan's security establishment, the Taliban emerged victorious and seized power in 1996.

Once in power, they imposed their distinctive brand of Islam on the country – far removed from its religious roots in colonial India.

[Sohel Rana is PhD Student, Indiana University; Sumit Ganguly is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and the Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations, Indiana University]

Afghanistan: What Responsibility Do Other Nations Have Towards People Fleeing the Taliban?

TASAWAR ASHRAF

THECONVERSATION.COM

With the Taliban back in Kabul, thousands of Afghan nationals who serviced the ousted government, the US and its allies are desperately attempting to seek asylum. Many attempted to board US jets at an airport in Kabul, some even clinging to the outside of aircraft as they took off. Videos show gruesome scenes of people falling from the sky after trying to escape.

The US has pledged to accept up to 22,000 Afghan servicemen and their families. Among the allied countries, Canada will accept 20,000 people and the UK “up to” 20,000 in the next few years, beginning with 5,000 in the immediate term.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is pushing for commitments on helping people who serviced the Afghan government, but nothing has been confirmed yet. France and some other EU member states have pledged to resettle Afghan refugees in relatively small numbers.

The US has also been asking other nations, such as Qatar and Ghana to accept people on its behalf. This “external management” approach has been adopted by European member states in recent years as a way to delay or block asylum-seeking at their own borders.

It's important to note that the current evacuation is largely focusing on specific groups of people rather than anyone fearing persecution more generally. Beyond those who have worked for the former government and allies, there are many more people who have a legitimate case for asylum.

LAST-MINUTE SCRAMBLE

Because the Taliban took control of Kabul much faster than the US and allied forces had anticipated, evacuating their troops, diplomats and nationals has become the top priority. Many Afghan servicemen who assisted the allied forces in Afghanistan as interpreters, suppliers, contractors and their families have been left stranded.

By focusing support largely on people who have travel documents and documentary proof of providing services to allied forces, these missions will necessarily leave many people behind. That includes a huge number of ordinary people who have a legitimate fear of oppression under the Taliban – particularly women.

Despite high levels of public concern about the fate of people left in Afghanistan, the wider asylum schemes being proposed by western nations come with significant caveats. The terms of the UK and European resettlement policies are vague, but the resettlement policies generally cover asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status by the United Nations High commissioner



for Refugees (UNHCR) or any state. It may be that Afghan asylum seekers have to seek refugee status in neighbouring states first to be eligible for resettlement schemes. There are already millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

And while the UNHCR prioritises vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children and single mothers, it generally operates on a first-come, first-resettled basis. So any Afghan asylum seekers still in the country, including those desperately waiting outside the Kabul airport, may not be eligible for these resettlement schemes any time soon.

PROTECTION FROM INHUMAN TREATMENT

The Taliban has announced an amnesty for all its adversaries, including those who served the ousted government and allied forces. But the situation outside the Kabul airport remains chaotic and dangerous.

One of the main grounds for seeking refuge in the US and allied states is knowing that there is a foreseeable threat of inhuman and degrading treatment. In such circumstances, Article 33 of the Refugee Convention (1951) and Article 3 of the Convention against Torture (1984) prohibits states from returning asylum seekers to a territory. The European Court of Human Rights and the Inter American Court of Human Rights have, in multiple cases, ruled that nations who sent people back to unsafe places to face such treatment were responsible for their suffering.

In the case of Afghan asylum seekers, the immediate threat to their lives might have been averted after the Taliban's announcement of amnesty. Nevertheless, there remains a significant threat that basic human rights will be violated under the new regime. A particular point of con-

cern is how the legal system will operate under the Taliban.

During the last Taliban rule, men and women were often tried in front of unofficial, ad-hoc courts and punished without the right to appeal. The Taliban police could whip women in public if they were not wearing a burka or if their knees were visible. Men could face punishment for not having a beard.

It is because of this history that people have a legitimate fear of inhuman and degrading treatment now that the Taliban have returned. Afghan nationals are clearly therefore eligible to seek refuge in the US, the UK and EU member states, if they arrive at the borders of these states.

However if these people remain inside Afghanistan – rather than making it across any borders – it is for the US and allied states to decide whether to evacuate them on humanitarian grounds. If not, they will have to find their way across a border.

The US has announced special immigrant visas for Afghan servicemen. Similarly, the UK has agreed to allow the Afghan servicemen to travel without passports.

Nonetheless, the US and allied states are showing reluctance when it comes to evacuating ordinary Afghan asylum seekers despite the existence of a foreseeable threat of inhuman and degrading treatment. The situation warrants a larger-scale evacuation on humanitarian grounds. Until the Taliban regime shows satisfactory policies on basic human rights, protecting Afghan asylum seekers will remain a responsibility of the international community, particularly the US and its allies.

[the writer is PhD Researcher, Glasgow Caledonian University]

Arunachal Pradesh reports 116 new COVID-19 cases

ITANAGAR, AUG 26 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rose to 52,525 as 116 more people tested positive for the infection, a senior health official said here on Thursday.

The COVID-19 death toll in the frontier state remained at 259, as no new fatality was reported in the last 24 hours, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

The Capital Complex Region recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 48, followed by Lower Subansiri (13), East Siang (8), Tawang (7), Papumpare (5) and four each from Leparada, Lohit and West Kameng, the official said.

Fresh cases each were also reported from Upper Subansiri, Namsai, Lower Dibang Valley, An-



jaw, Changlang, Kra Dadi, Longding, West Siang, Tirap, Upper Siang, Siang and Pakke Kessang district, the SSO said.

Of the fresh cases, 107 were detected through rapid antigen

test, 4 through RT-PCR and 5 through TrueNAT method, the official said, adding 57 people have symptoms of COVID-19.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 1,162 active COVID-19 cases,

while 51,104 people have recovered from the disease, including 81 patients on Wednesday, Jampa said.

The COVID-19 recovery rate in the state now is 97.29 per cent while

the active percentage stands at 2.21 and the positivity rate at 3.25 per cent, the official said.

The Capital Complex Region - comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas - has the highest number of active cases at 256, followed by Lower Subansiri (125), West Kameng (108), Papumpare (93) and Upper Siang with 82 cases.

Altogether, 10,41,130 samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state so far, including 3,565 on Wednesday, Jampa said.

Meanwhile, State Immunisation Officer (SIO) Dr Dimong Padung said that a total of 9,39,642 people have been administered COVID-19 vaccine doses so far in the state.

Mother, 2 children die in house collapse in Kanpur



KANPUR, AUG 26 (PTI): A woman and her two children were killed after a three-storey house in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur collapsed on Thursday morning, police officials said.

The incident occurred in the Bekanganj area in the city. It was not immediately clear what led to the collapse of the building.

A woman, in her mid-

30s, and her two children died when the roof of the first floor of the house collapsed, while her husband sustained injuries and is undergoing treatment, police said.

"The husband, his wife and their two children lived on the ground floor of the house. The house collapsed in the morning after which a fire brigade team and lo-

cal police officials rushed to the spot and pulled out the family members trapped in the rubble," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Kanpur East) Anoop Singh said.

"They were rushed to the Ursula Hospital where doctors declared the wife, the son and the daughter (both minors) dead," Singh said. The condition of the husband is stated to be stable, he said.

Abhishek Bachchan undergoes surgery, says back to work after 'freak accident'



MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): "The Big Bull" actor Abhishek Bachchan said he has resumed work after suffering an injury in his hand on the Chennai set of his upcoming film.

Last week there were reports that Abhishek had an accident and was being treated at a hospital in suburban Mumbai after his veteran star-fa-

ther Amitabh Bachchan and sister, author Shweta Bachchan Nanda were photographed at the medical facility.

In an Instagram post on Wednesday night, the 45-year-old actor confirmed that he had a "freak accident" in which he fractured his right hand.

"Had a freak accident in Chennai on the

set of my new film last Wednesday. Fractured my right hand. Needed surgery to fix it! So a quick trip back home to Mumbai. Surgery done, all patched-up and casted," Abhishek captioned his post-surgery photo.

The actor thanked fans for their wishes and informed them that he was back to work.

Nusrat Jahan becomes mother of baby boy

KOLKATA, AUG 26 (PTI): Trinamool Congress MP and actor Nusrat Jahan gave birth to a baby boy at a private hospital in Kolkata on Thursday afternoon, sources said.

Jahan, who was admitted to the hospital in Park Street on Wednesday evening, gave birth to the child around 12.20 pm, a source at the hospital said.

Both the mother and the baby are doing fine and under the watchful eye of the doctors, the source said.

Jahan's actor-friend Yash Dasgupta was present at the hospital, a film industry source said.

Jahan's estranged husband Nikhil Jain said, "There might be differences between us, but I am wishing the newborn and his mother all the best. I wish the baby boy has a bright future."



ED summons Tollywood personalities in drug case

HYDERABAD, AUG 26 (PTI): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned over 10 Tollywood (Telugu film industry) personalities as part of a money laundering probe in connection with a drug racket of supplying high-end narcotics in and around Hyderabad in 2017 that was busted by the Telangana's Prohibition and Excise department, official sources said.

The drug racket was exposed in July 2017 and several cases related to drug trafficking were registered and over 20 people were arrested including a US citizen, who was a former aerospace engineer and had worked with the NASA, a Dutch national, a South African national besides seven B.Tech degree holders employed with multi-national companies here.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Telangana's Prohibition and Excise department, as part of its investigation had also probed the alleged drug-links with Tollywood, and had then questioned 11 people connected to the Telugu film industry including actors and directors besides the driver of one of the actor and had also collected hair and nail samples.

The SIT questioned them to find out if they had any links with the racket as consumers or suppliers or with those arrested.

The ED summoned the Tollywood personalities who were among those questioned by SIT and they were asked to appear before the central agency on different dates from next week, the sources said.

The SIT investigators had suspected that the

gang's clientele included nearly 1,000 customers including students of city-based schools and colleges, people associated with Tollywood, senior officials of MNCs and employees of IT firms in Cyberabad.

Active Covid-19 cases rise in AP

AMARAVATI, AUG 26 (PTI): With fresh cases outnumbering recoveries, the active Covid-19 case count in Andhra Pradesh increased further by 387 to 14,448 on Thursday.

The latest bulletin said 1,539 fresh infections, 1,140 recover-

ies and 12 coronavirus deaths were reported in the state in 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday.

The gross positives now climbed to 20,07,730 while recoveries and toll increased to 19,79,504 and 13,778 respectively.

The seven hotspot

districts continued to report new cases in excess of 100 each.

Chittoor registered the highest 243, East Godavari 228, Krishna 194, SPS Nellore 176, West Godavari 163, Guntur 127 and Prakasam 126 fresh cases in 24 hours.

Visakhapatnam reported 92, Kadapa 80, Vizianagaram 54, Anantapuramu 26 and Kurnool and Srikakulam 15 each.

Chittoor and Krishna had three fresh Covid-19 deaths each and Prakasam two while four districts had one each in a day.

Letitia Wright injured on 'Black Panther 2' set, released from hospital after undergoing treatment

LOS ANGELES, AUG 26 (PTI): Actor Letitia Wright suffered minor injuries due to an incident with a stunt rig on the Boston set of Marvel Studios' "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and was admitted to a local hospital for treatment.

"Letitia Wright sustained minor injuries today while filming a stunt for Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. She is currently receiving care in a local hospital and is expected to be released soon," reported Deadline quoting a spokesperson for Marvel.

The 27-year-old star has since been dis-



charged, sources told the publication on Wednesday.

The incident will not have an impact on the film's shooting schedule,

they added.

The primary shoot of the much-awaited "Black Panther" sequel has been underway in Atlanta since the end of June.

In the upcoming superhero film, Wright is reprising her role as the brilliant tech wiz and Wakanda princess Shuri.

Original cast members Danai Gurira, Daniel Kaluuya, Winston Duke, Lupita Nyong'o, Florence Kasumba and Angela Bassett along with director Ryan Coogler are also returning.

"Wakanda Forever" is the sequel to the 2018 global hit "Black Panther", headlined by Hollywood star Chadwick Boseman who passed away on August 28, 2020 following a private, four year-long battle with colon cancer.

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Afghanistan's Tokyo Games Paralympians safely evacuated, says IPC

TOKYO, AUG 26 (PTI): Afghanistan's two para-athletes, who were forced to pull out of the Tokyo Paralympics because of Taliban's takeover of their country, have been safely evacuated, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said but declined to comment on their whereabouts.

The two taekwondo athletes, Zakia Khudadi and Hossain Rasouli, were due to compete at the Tokyo Paralympics but were forced out of the Games after the Taliban's takeover trapped them in their own country.

When asked about the athletes and the possibility they will compete at the Games, IPC spokesman Craig Spence said, "The situation hasn't changed."

"We displayed the flag in the Opening Ceremony as a sign of solidarity. The two athletes are outside of Afghanistan now, they've been evacuated. We know where they are," he added at the daily press briefing.

The Afghan athletes were forced to withdraw from the Games as all flights out of capital Kabul got cancelled after the Taliban seized control of the country.

Spence added, "Our priority at the moment is not to focus on sport, it's their health and wellbeing, and we're working with relevant people to ensure that."

"What's important is they're safe, and they are."

Before the Games began, the IPC confirmed that the Afghan athletes would not be able to compete in Tokyo.

The Afghan flag, however, featured during Tuesday's opening ceremony as the IPC stood by the country.

IPC chief Andrew Parsons had said on Monday the Tokyo Paralympics opening ceremony would feature the flag of Afghanistan as a "sign of solidarity".

These days I bowl less in nets and save it for matches: Anderson

LEEDS, AUG 26 (PTI): Ageless English pacer James Anderson says the secret to his longevity in Test cricket lies in cutting down on his time at the nets to save it for the matches.

Anderson's masterclass was full on display in an awe-inspiring spell of 8-5-6-3 with the new ball as England bowled India out for 78 after Virat Kohli opted to bat in the first Test here on Wednesday.

"As I get older, I feel like I have to work that little bit harder in the gym. I feel like I bowl less in the nets, and try to save it for when it matters in the middle," the 39-year-old said after the first day's play.

"The biggest test in Test cricket is mentally getting yourself up for bowling big spells and playing in big games. It's about keeping yourself switch on through games and switch off when you are not bowling -- that's something I've always had."

Just a week ago during the Lord's Test, Anderson, having grabbed a five-for in the first innings, was over-bowled in the second as the Indian tail frustrated the hosts with its remarkable resilience and invaluable runs.

"Walking off the pitch during the second Test at Lord's, pretty much everything hurt, but that gives so much satisfaction knowing that I have put a shift in for the



team."

Asked about his problematic right shoulder, he said: "It still hurts. You just find a way of putting up with it. It's just part and parcel of the job."

Anderson said that after all the talk during the Lord's Test, the aim here was to "shut the noise" and focus on the job.

India took a 1-0 lead at Lord's riding on the tail-enders' brave display with the bat followed by their excellent bowling.

"We have made a conscious effort of trying to just focus on us, on what we do well and try and ignore everything else, the outside noise or wherever there might be going on, and make sure

there's a real focus on what we do well," Anderson said.

He did admit that they had a chat in the dressing room.

"Yeah, I think there was a bit of chat about that. We were just making a point of trying to focus on what we do well."

"I think that you know the first three or four days at Lord's, we probably played brilliantly and maybe until day three, and then after that, just at times it did affect a little bit."

"We're individuals, at the end of it. We have made a conscious effort to try and focus only on us, what we do well: try and ignore everything

else, the outside noise, or whatever that might be, going on."

At Headingley, Anderson took off by dismissing KL Rahul with the fifth ball and then deceived Cheteshwar Pujara with an incoming delivery that swung away, but the biggest breakthrough came when he won his mini battle with Indian skipper Virat Kohli.

"I think so (it was special). We have had some great battles over the years. He is someone you want to keep quiet. Especially, in a five-match series, if he gets going he can be very disruptive," Anderson said of Kohli after dismissing him for the seventh time in Tests.

"I think the way we have bowled to him throughout the series has been very good. We just got to keep doing that and keep him quiet as often as we can."

In reply, England openers Haseeb Hameed (60) and Rory Burn (52) remained unbeaten as the scorecard read 120 for no loss with a lead of 42 runs after day one.

Rating England's show as one of the best, Anderson drew parallel with their famous Boxing Day Test in 2010 when they had skittled out Australia for 98 before Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook put on a 157-run opening stand.

"It doesn't get much

better than that. These days don't come around very often, so you just have to be happy when they do."

"The only difference with Melbourne is that I was keen to bowl there and I wasn't today for some reason. I was trying to tempt Joe into batting."

"But losing the toss, being asked to bowl and then putting in a performance like that, it doesn't get much better. We've talked about trying to bowl as a unit, as a group, and we just absolutely nailed it. With both ball and bat we've displayed exactly what we wanted to do."

Showering praise on their opening duo, he said: "It was outstanding batting and exactly what we have been asking for."

"When you bowl someone out for less than 100 you're never quite sure whether you've bowled well or if the wicket is not as good as you think it might be. So to see the way they both went about their business, just felt so calm in the dressing room."

"The way they were so measured, they were solid in defence, left well and put away the bad ball when they got one. I just thought it was brilliant Test match batting."

Anderson was particularly happy for his former Lancashire teammate Hameed who shrugged off his Lord's disappointment with a half century.

Six Indians in finals of Asian Youth boxing in Dubai

NEW DELHI, AUG 26 (PTI): Six Indian boxers advanced to the finals of the Asian Youth Championships in Dubai with two of them getting walkovers after their Kazakh opponents were quarantined following a COVID-19 case in the contingent.

Of the six Indians who made the summit clashes, two were men and four women.

In the women's draw, Simran Verma (52kg) and Sneha (66kg) progressed after getting walkovers from Kazakh rivals Khava Bolkojeva and Anar Turynbek respectively.

"One of these girls tested positive for COVID-19 and the other



had to be also quarantined as she was the infected girl's room partner. That's why we got walkovers in these two categories," India coach

Bhaskar Bhatt told PTI.

Joining them in the finals were Preeti (57kg) and Preeti Dahiya (60kg).

Preeti outclassed

Narika Rai of Nepal RSC in the third round to book her final berth. Preeti Dahiya, on the other hand, defeated Uzbekistan's Rukhshona

Uktamova 3-2.

Among the men, Vanshaj (64kg) defeated Iran's Faridi Abolfazl 5-0, while Vishal (80kg) out-punched Kazakhstan's Dauren Mamyr by a similar margin to move ahead.

However, Daksh (67kg) lost to Uzbekistan's Solijonov Samandar 4-1.

Also ending with bronze medals were Abhimanyu (92kg) and Aman Singh Bisht (+92kg).

While Abhimanyu lost to Uzbekistan's Tokhirov Nusratbek 5-0, Bisht also went down to an Uzbek in Zokirov Jakhongir.

India's assured

medal tally stood at over 20 on the day of the draws itself as many countries either skipped or fielded smaller squads due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The tournament, which is being held simultaneously for junior and youth boxers (both men and women) offers the gold medalists in the youth category a prize money of USD 6,000 while silver and bronze medallists will claim USD 3,000 and USD 1,500 respectively.

The junior champions will be awarded with USD 4,000 for gold and USD 2,000 and 1,000 for silver and bronze medallists respectively.

Australian mourns beloved aunt with heart-shaped love ewes

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA (AP): An Australian farmer couldn't go to his aunt's funeral because of pandemic restrictions so he paid his respects with a novel alternative: dozens of sheep arranged in the shape of a love heart.

Drone-shot video of pregnant ewes munching barley in a paddock while unwittingly expressing Ben Jackson's affection for his beloved Auntie Deb was viewed by mourners at her funeral in the city of Brisbane in Queensland state this week.

Jackson was locked down at the time across a state border at his farm in Guyra in New South Wales state, 430 kilometers (270 miles) away.

"It took me a few goes to get it right ... and the final result is what you see. That was as close to a heart as I could get it," Jackson said on Thursday.

Jackson started experimenting with making shapes with sheep to relieve the monotonous stress of hand-feeding livestock during a devastating drought across most of Australia that broke in the early months of the pandemic.

He discovered that if he spelled the names of his favorite musical bands with grain dropped from the back of a truck that the flock would roughly adopt the same shape for several minutes.

Japan suspends 1.63M doses of Moderna over contamination

TOKYO (AP): Japan suspended use of about 1.63 million doses of Moderna vaccine Thursday after contamination was found in unused vials, raising concern of a supply shortage as the country tries to accelerate vaccinations amid a COVID-19 surge.

The health ministry said contamination was reported from multiple vaccination sites. Some doses might have been administered, but no adverse health effects have been reported so far, officials said.

Takeda Pharmaceu-

tical Co., a Japanese drugmaker in charge of sales and distribution of the vaccine in Japan, said it decided to suspend use of doses manufactured in the same production line as a safety precaution.

It asked Moderna to conduct an emergency investigation and told medical institutions and organizers to stop using the vaccine produced in Spain and shared the production numbers that may be affected.

The health ministry and Takeda did not give details on the type of contamination

or if the doses in question may have been distributed outside Japan.

The Moderna vaccine problem came just as Japan struggles with surging infections, with daily new cases hitting new highs in many parts of the country and severely straining the health care system.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told reporters the government and Takeda are discussing ways to minimize the impact on Japan's vaccination progress.

"We will do utmost

in order to avoid any impact on vaccination progress, especially at worksites and large-scale centers," Kato said.

Japan relies entirely on foreign-developed vaccines by Moderna, as well as Pfizer Inc. and AstraZeneca. Moderna has been since mid-June at large-scale centers and workplace inoculations and has helped speed up Japan's rollout.

About 43% of the Japanese population have been fully vaccinated, with daily doses of about 1 million.

Ball was thrown at Siraj from stands, reveals Pant

LEEDS, AUG 26 (PTI): A ball was thrown at India pacer Mohammed Siraj from the spectator stands on the opening day of the third Test against England here, his India teammate Rishabh Pant has revealed.

TV cameras showed a visibly agitated India captain Virat Kohli asking Siraj, who was stationed at the boundary at that time, to throw the object out on Wednesday.

When asked about it at the end of day's play, Pant revealed what had transpired.

"I think, somebody (from the crowd) threw a ball at Siraj, so he (Kohli) was upset. You can say whatever you want, chant, but don't throw things at fielders. It is not good for cricket, I guess," Pant said at the end of the first day's play in which England were 120 for no loss after bowling India out for 78.

The 27-year-old Siraj, who played a key role in the team's win in the second Test at Lord's, was also targeted earlier this year when the Australian crowd in Sydney abused him which led to eviction of a few spectators and brief stoppage of play.

Siraj had, back then, complained to the umpires that he was being abused by a section of the Australian supporters.

Even during the Lord's Test, Kohli was angry as a few champagne bottle corks were popped near the boundary gallery and they fell near the fielder KL Rahul.

Mumbai City FC complete loan move for C ssio Gabriel

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Reigning ISL champions Mumbai City FC on Thursday announced the signing of Brazilian midfielder C ssio Gabriel on a season-long loan from Campeonato Brasileiro Serie B club Vila Nova.

Fondly known as 'C ssinho', the 29-year-old started his youth career at Fluminense's under 20s side and went on to play for a number of Brazilian clubs such as Paysandu SC, Bento Gonçalves, Guarani, Anapolis, ASEEV-Go, Penapolense, Piracicaba, Sao Bento, Botafogo and Mirassol before joining Vila Nova in June 2020.

C ssio, who can play on either wings or in the middle, made 12 appearances for Vila Nova and has one assist to his name.

"Mumbai City have a great profile back home in Brazil. There are a number of Brazilians who have played at Mumbai City and I've only heard positive things about the Club," Gabriel was quoted as saying in a media statement issued by the club.

"Mumbai City are the defending champions and their ambition is what convinced me that this is where I want to be. The club wants to win titles, they want to be the best, not only in India but at a continental level, and I am really excited to be part of a Club of this mentality," he added.

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Greek health care workers protest against mandatory vaccines

ATHENS, GREECE (AP): Workers at public hospitals in Greece held a five-hour work stoppage Thursday to protest a government decision making vaccination against COVID-19 mandatory for all health care workers in the public and private sector. About 300 hospital workers rallied outside the health ministry in Athens to protest the measure, which goes into effect on Sept. 1. The government has made clear that no extension will be granted.

Those working in the public and private health care sector and those working in care homes who haven't received at least one dose of the vaccine by that date, or who don't have a certificate of recent recovery, will be suspended from work.

The public hospital workers' union said that while it supports the vaccines, it opposes making them mandatory.

"We will not leave defenseless the health care and social care workers who have a personal right to vaccination," the union said. "Patients are not at risk of catching the coronavirus from health care workers. Hospitals are filling up again with patients suffering from the coronavirus which they caught in the community."



Health Minister Vasilis Kikilias said those who were protesting against the measure were "small minorities" who frequently protest about an assortment of issues related to the national health system.

"They are in the opposite direction of the majority of Greek society, which wants to protect public health," he said.

Speaking on Skai TV, Kikilias announced the start of a pilot program to have mobile vaccination units administering shots in town squares outside churches. The program would start this

Sunday on the island of Crete, the minister said, and would expand to the country's main cities.

Greece has been seeking to boost its vaccination drive with a series of incentives. It has been seeing a steady increase in confirmed coronavirus cases and deaths, as well as hospitalizations and intubations, over the past several weeks. ICU beds for COVID-19 patients are more than 69% full, while regular COVID-19 wards are 45% full, health ministry figures show.

On Tuesday, Kikilias

said that "significantly more than 90% of patients who are in COVID ICUs are unvaccinated," without specifying whether some of them had received one vaccine dose and weren't yet fully vaccinated.

More than 11 million vaccine doses have been administered, with 5.6 million people now fully vaccinated in this country of about 11 million people.

COVID-19 vaccines are freely available in Greece to anyone over the age of 12. Vaccination is not mandatory except for those in the health

care sector, but on Tuesday the government announced new testing requirements and restrictions on access to various venues for people who are unvaccinated.

The measures, which will be in effect from Sept. 13 until March 31, include mandatory weekly or twice-weekly testing for unvaccinated public and private sector workers, and indoor access to venues such as restaurants, bars, cafes and entertainment venues allowed only for those with a certificate of vaccination or recent recovery.

Palestinian twins open cafe in converted jet in West Bank

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK (AP): Few Palestinians in the occupied West Bank get to board an airplane these days. The territory has no civilian airport and those who can afford a plane ticket must catch their flights in neighboring Jordan. But just outside the northern city of Nablus, a pair of twins is offering people the next best thing.

Khamis al-Sairafi and brother Ata have converted an old Boeing 707 into a cafe and restaurant for customers to board.

"Ninety-nine percent of Palestinians have never used an airplane. Only our ambassadors, diplomats, ministers and mayors use them. Now they see an airplane and it is something for them," said Khamis al-Sairafi.

After a quarter century of effort, the brothers opened "The Palestinian-Jordanian Airline Restaurant and Coffee Shop al-Sairafi" on July 21.

Families, friends and couples turned up for drinks in the cafe situated below the body of the plane. Many others came to take photos inside at a price of five shekels (about \$1.50) per person.

Customers said they were motivated to visit after seeing pictures of the renovated plane circulating online. "For a long time, I have wanted to see this place. I wish I had seen this place before it was turned into a cafe," said customer Majdi Khalid.

For years, the jetliner sat along the side of a major highway in the northern West Bank, providing endless fodder for

conversation for passersby baffled by its hulking presence.

The 60-year-old identically dressed twins' dream of transforming the airplane into a cafe and restaurant was born in the late 1990s when Khamis saw the derelict Boeing aircraft near the northern Israeli city of Safed.

At the time, the plane already had an illustrious history. The aircraft was used by the Israeli government from 1961 to 1993 and flew then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the United States in 1978 to sign Israel's historic peace agreement with Egypt, according to Channel 12 TV.

It was later bought by three Israeli business partners who dreamed of turning it into a restaurant, but the project was abandoned following disagreements with local authorities, the station said.

After tracking down one of the owners, the brothers agreed to buy it for \$100,000 in 1999. They spent an additional \$50,000 for licenses, permits and to transport it to the West Bank.

Khamis said the then-mayor of Nablus, Ghassan Shakaa, quickly approved the transportation and renovation of the airplane.

Moving the plane to Nablus was a 13-hour operation, requiring the wings to be dismantled and the temporary closure of roads in Israel and the West Bank. At the time, Israel and the Palestinians were engaged in peace talks and movement back and forth was relatively easy.

Looking at 'options' on diplomatic presence in Afghanistan after Aug 31: US



WASHINGTON, AUG 26 (PTI): The US has said it is looking at a number of "options" on its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan after the August 31 withdrawal deadline.

August 31 is the cut-off date set by both the US and the Taliban for America's pullout from the war-torn country.

"With regard to our own potential presence going forward after the 31st, we're looking at a number of options, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters at a press conference on Wednesday.

"I'm sure we'll have more on that in the coming days and weeks, but we're looking at a variety of options, he said, referring to America's diplomatic presence in Afghanistan after the withdrawal deadline.

Over the next few days, Blinken said, the focus of the US is on getting American citizens, other Afghan partners, third-country partners -- who were working in Afghanistan with the US -- out of Afghanistan and to safety.

And for that purpose, "whether we like it or not," it's important to work with the Taliban, who are "largely in con-

trol of Afghanistan", to try to facilitate and ensure the departure of all those who want to leave, Blinken said.

"And that has actually been something that we've been focused on from the beginning of this operation, because as a practical matter it advances our interests, he added.

According to Blinken, the US has been engaged with the Taliban for some time diplomatically going back years in efforts, to try to advance a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan.

There's still talks and conversations underway even now between the Taliban and former members of the Afghan government with regard, for example, to a transfer of power and some inclusivity in a future government. I think it's in our interest where possible to support those efforts, he said.

Going forward, Blinken said, the US will judge its engagement with any Taliban-led government in Afghanistan based on one simple proposition: America's interests, "and does it help us advance them or not".

"If engagement with the government can ad-

vance the enduring interests we will have in counterterrorism, the enduring interest we'll have in trying to help the Afghan people who need humanitarian assistance, in the enduring interest we have in seeing that the rights of all Afghans, especially women and girls, are upheld, then we'll do it, he said.

But fundamentally, the nature of that engagement and the nature of any relationship depends entirely on the actions and conduct of the Taliban, Blinken asserted.

If a future government upholds the basic rights of the Afghan people, if it makes good on its commitments to ensure that Afghanistan cannot be used as a launching pad for terrorist attacks directed against us and our allies and partners, and in the first instance, if it makes good on its commitments to allow people who want to leave Afghanistan to leave, that's a government we can work with, he said.

If it doesn't, we will make sure that we use every appropriate tool at our disposal to isolate that government, and as I said before, Afghanistan will be a pariah, said the top American diplomat.

Israel to allow goods into Gaza in move to ease tensions



JERUSALEM (AP): Israel said that it would be easing commercial restrictions on the Gaza Strip and expand entry of goods to the Palestinian enclave following days of heightened tensions. The announcement came after hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated Wednesday near the Israeli border, calling on Israel to ease a crippling blockade days after a similar gathering ended in deadly clashes with the Israeli army.

Hamas kept the crowds from approaching the barrier, and the protests ended without a repeat of Saturday's intense clashes that left one Palestinian dead and an Israeli border policeman critically injured after being shot from

point-blank range.

The defense ministry body in charge of Israel's crossings with the Palestinian territory said in a statement late Wednesday that it would increase imports of new vehicles, goods and equipment for civilian projects in the Gaza Strip, and issue more permits for Gazan businessmen to enter Israel starting Thursday.

The easing of restrictions would be "conditional upon the continued preservation of the region's security," and could be further expanded if the border situation improves, the body, known as COGAT, said.

Hamas officials said Egypt would also be partially reopening its key border crossing with the

Gaza Strip Thursday, after closing it in a bid to persuade Hamas, the Islamic militant group ruling the territory, to reimpose calm.

Egypt has been trying to broker a long-term cease-fire between the enemy sides since May's 11-day war that killed around 260 Palestinians and 13 people in Israel.

Israel and Hamas have fought four wars and numerous skirmishes since 2007, when the militant group seized power in Gaza in an armed coup following its victory in the Palestinian elections. Israel and Egypt imposed a devastating blockade since Hamas took control, which Israel says is necessary to keep Hamas from rearming.

N. Korean parliament to meet in Sept. over strained economy



SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (AP): North Korea will convene its rubber-stamp parliament next month to discuss efforts to salvage an economy strained by pandemic border closures after decades of mismanagement and U.S.-led sanctions.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday the Supreme People's Assembly will meet on Sept. 28 in Pyongyang to discuss economic development, youth education, government organizational matters and other issues. The report didn't mention any plans for discussions on foreign policy.

Talks between the United States and North Korea have stalled since the collapse of a summit between former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim

Jong Un in 2019, when the Americans rejected the North's demand for a major easing of economic sanctions in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Kim has since pledged to bolster his country's nuclear deterrent while urging his people to stay resilient in a struggle for economic self-dependence in the face of U.S. pressure.

But experts say Kim is now facing perhaps his toughest moment as he approaches a decade in rule, with North Korea maintaining a border lockdown indefinitely to keep out the coronavirus and with no prospect in sight to end international sanctions.

Meetings of the full Supreme People's Assembly are usually brief affairs intended to approve budgets, formalize

personnel changes and rubber-stamp Kim's policy priorities.

During its previous session in January, the Assembly passed decisions made during a rare congress of the ruling Workers' Party earlier that month where Kim vowed to strengthen his nuclear arsenal and laid out economic development plans for the next five years. The congress came months after Kim during another political conference showed unusual candor by acknowledging that his plans to improve the economy weren't succeeding.

Despite its economic troubles, the North has so far rejected the Biden administration's overture to resume nuclear diplomacy, saying that Washington must discard its "hostile" policies first.

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LaKeith Stanfield heading to Apple for 'The Changeling' series adaptation



LOS ANGELES, AUG 26 (PTI): Oscar-nominated actor LaKeith Stanfield is set to star in a series adaptation of "The Changeling" by Victor LaValle, set up at Apple Studios. Described as a fairytale for grown-ups, the series promises a never-before-seen look at New York through a horror story, a parenthood fable, and a perilous odyssey.

According to Variety, "Queen & Slim" director Melina Matsoukas will helm and

executive produce the show.

Stanfield, who received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor for his role in the 2021 film "Judas and the Black Messiah", will also executive produce in addition to starring.

Kelly Marcel, whose credits include "Venom" and "Cruella", will adapt the novel for screen. She will serve as showrunner and executive producer on the series as well.

The series will be produced by Apple and Annapurna.

Megan Ellison, Sue Naegele, Patrick Chu, and Ali Krug will executive produce "The Changeling" on behalf of Annapurna.

Matsoukas, who has directed episodes of acclaimed shows like "Insecure" and "Master of None", will executive produce through her De La Revolution Films, and Khaliah Neal and LaValle are co-executive producers.

Showtime renews 'Your Honor' for second season

LOS ANGELES, AUG 25 (PTI): "Your Honor", a legal thriller starring "Breaking Bad" star Bryan Cranston, is returning for a second run on Showtime.

According to Variety, the new season will consist of 10 episodes and will start production next year.

Originally set up as a limited series, the second season will see Cranston return as respected New Orleans judge Michael Desiato.

In season one, Desiato's son is involved in a hit-and-run that leads to a high-stakes game of lies, deceit and impossible choices.

Peter Moffat, known for acclaimed "The Night of", will also return as writer, showrunner, and executive producer.

Gary Levine, co-president of entertainment for Showtime, said like other fans of the show, he is excited about the new chapter.

"We were blown away by



'Your Honor'... by the power of Peter's storytelling, by the depth of Bryan's performance, and by the overwhelming reaction from our subscribers who watched in record numbers.

"Imagine our delight when we learned that Peter believed he had more story to tell and Bryan felt he had more depths to plumb.

So, along with its millions of fans, I am gleefully shouting 'Encore!'" Levine said.

Season one also starred Hope Davis, Michael Stuhlbarg, Hunter Doohan, Carmen Ejogo, Isiah Whitlock Jr, Sofia Black-D'Elia, Maurra Tierney, Amy Landecker, Margo Martindale, Lorraine Toussaint, Benjamin Flores Jr, Chet Hanks, Lamar John-

son, and Lilli Kay.

CBS Studios produces the show in association with KingSize.

"Your Honor" is based on the Israeli series "Kvodo" created by Ron Ninio and Shlomo Mashiach. It also got an Indian adaptation, a Sony LIV series which starred actor Jimmy Sheirgill in the lead role.

Indian adaptation of French series 'Call My Agent' to premiere on Netflix

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): "Call My Agent: Bollywood", the Indian adaptation of the popular French series, is heading to Netflix, the streaming platform announced Thursday.

Produced by Applause Entertainment in association with Banijay Asia, the project was announced last October.

The original workplace comedy, which was titled "Dix Pour Cent" in French, was created by Fanny Herrero and showrun by Cedric Klapisch.

Starring Aahana Kumra, Ayush Mehra, Rajat Kapoor and Soni Razdan, the Indian version will follow "four savvy, street smart talent agents manage fragile star egos and real human emotions to save their agency from closure after the sudden death of the founder".

Billed as a funny, quirky, heartwarming take on the world of showbiz, "Call My Agent: Bollywood" is written by Abbas & Hussein Dalal and directed by Shaad Ali of "Saathiyaa" and "Bunty Aur Babli" fame.

Sameer Nair, CEO, Applause Entertainment, said the team is "ecstatic" to collaborate with Netflix for the series.



"At Applause, it has been our endeavour to curate and create the best stories from across the world. Call My Agent: Bollywood is a show that has been delightfully reimagined to showcase the colourful world of Bollywood through humour and heartwarming emotions," Nair said in a statement.

Monika Shergill, VP, Content, Netflix India said a heady mix of quirky writing and a marvellous cast with an Indian twist makes "Call My Agent: Bollywood" a delightful watch.

"We are excited to partner with Applause Entertainment to bring an Indian

adaptation of Dix Pour Cent, a French comedy drama series that has a huge following on Netflix," added Shergill.

Audiences will also see an array of Bollywood personalities make a guest appearance in the series. It will give audiences a hilarious and refreshing look into the glamorous world of Bollywood, the ups, the downs, and everything that goes into building the stars of today.

Original series "Dix Pour Cent", a reference to the 10 per cent talent agents make from their clients' deals, has already been adapted for audiences in Turkey and the UK.

Jugal Hansraj wraps shoot of 'Shiv Shastri Balboa'

MUMBAI, AUG 25 (PTI): Actor Jugal Hansraj on Wednesday said he has finished filming his upcoming movie "Shiv Shastri Balboa", co-starring veterans Anupam Kher and Neena Gupta, in New Jersey.

Directed by Ajayan Vengopalan, the film marks Hansraj's return to movies five

years after he last featured in the Sujoy Ghosh thriller "Kahaani 2: Durga Rani Singh".

"Shiv Shastri Balboa" is billed as a "fascinating tale of survival of an Indian in a small town in America".

The 49-year-old actor took to Instagram and shared a video with Kher, with whom he

has worked in his 2010 directorial "Pyaar Impossible!", Aditya Chopra's "Mohabbatein" and the 1996 romantic drama "Papa Kehte Hai".

"This is the end of my sixth film with Kher saab. It was a wonderful experience, I got to learn a lot. He is very patient, taught me a lot and is always a

lot of fun. Thank you sir," Hansraj said in the clip.

To which, the 66-year-old actor replied, "It was wonderful working with him for six films. We will do 60 more."

"Shiv Shastri Balboa" also stars "The Family Man" actor Sharib Hashmi and "Rockstar" fame Nargis Fakhri.

THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES:

Beating around the bush has never been your style, Aries. Why start now? The cards are pointing towards that one area of your life where you are shying away from speaking your truth. So start a dialogue with yourself before you approach the other person(s). Moving into a space of clarity is the only way to get things done around here.

TAURUS:

There is so much literature on choosing yourself and eliminating all that is toxic within and without. But does this superficial process of elimination help us eradicate the root of the trouble? Something to think about as you sip on your morning latte, Taurus. This phase of your life requires you to dig deeper. To understand the childhood traumas that have caused you to repeat certain patterns. Shadow work can be a painful process. So, remember to keep your soul family (or therapist) in the know, so you always have somebody to lean on.

GEMINI:

The trouble is, you know what's going wrong here, and you've known it for a while, beautiful. So, what's keeping you from addressing the given matter? This chapter of your life requires you to address the unaddressed issues, without the fear of how you will be perceived as a result. But that doesn't mean we're encouraging you to have an emotional outburst unexpectedly. We're merely suggesting the art of non-violent communication that will help you resolve matters tactfully. Word for the wise: only you can free yourself from the

cycle you've found yourself trapped in.

CANCER:

This is a time of looking back and gauging your progress. Take a moment to understand the methods that have and haven't worked, because making the same mistake twice does *not* look good on you. The cards are also urging you to reassess certain relationships, especially the ones you've been conflicted about. Trust your instinct when it says a certain someone is merely a fair-weather friend. You may not want to sever ties with them, and that's okay. However, having certain boundaries in place will protect your interest.

LEO:

You didn't think you would get here, yet you have. That inner fire has helped you power through the perceived challenges, and create a beautiful life for yourself. So, take a moment, Leo. Take a moment to be grateful for the fruits of your labour that surround you, as you recommit to your path and purpose. Something tells you you have many mountains to move over the next one year.

VIRGO:

The trouble is, we're too hung up on how things should and shouldn't be. As a result, we end up missing major red flags from the Universe. So, beware of making that mistake yet again, Virgo. Surrender, instead of resisting the flow. Yes, that means allowing certain things in your life to come undone, for it is destruction that ultimately clears the path to start anew.

LIBRA:

It's all coming together for you, Libra. The life that you have been manifesting for yourself. But, in order to create the new, there are certain parts of your old life that you will have to let go of. So, pay attention to what the signs are telling you, and loosen the grip wherever necessary. Yes, you will experience moments of grief, loneliness, and melancholy in the process, and that's okay. Know that your ancestors and guides are holding space for you to heal and feel whole again.

SCORPIO:

Yes, it gets lonely at the top, Scorpio. But, you've got to do what's right for you and for the collective (or the organisation that you're a part of). This will require you to break up with your inner people-pleaser, stat. As such, embracing your power fully is going to be a big theme for you in the weeks to come. So, address those self-worth issues, baby! Strengthen your core and let your solar plexus do the talking. If the world of crystals is something you feel drawn towards, adopt the mighty tiger's eye as your talisman.

SAGITTARIUS:

Your romantic side is catching up with you this week, inspiring you to take that leap of faith with your beloved. A secret ceremony may also be on the cards for some—think something that honours your roots and that of your partner. Others may feel called to get their soul families involved. Now is the perfect time to bring them home or organise a get-together where everybody can connect in an informal manner.

CAPRICORN:

Here's the thing, Capricorn: not everybody is going to like what you have to say. They don't have to. It's *your* truth, and it's time for you to honour it. Honesty is showing up as a big theme for you, and it requires you to break up with the people pleaser that's sitting inside of you. Boundary issues are also coming to the fore. How and where do you need to reaffirm them? Trust that your inner guide is leading you in the right direction.

AQUARIUS:

Morbid as it sounds, the human plane of existence is synonymous with pain, suffering and challenges of all kinds. Everybody is going through their own karmic lessons, despite what the smiles on their faces will have you believe. Today, you're being asked to let go of all the lower vibrational emotions as you bring the gifts of kindness and compassion to the table. Your love has the power to heal the world, Aquarius.

PISCES:

Knowing that your fate is in your hands, and actively playing the role of the co-creator are two different things. The real question is: are you practicing what you preach, Pisces? Are you projecting yourself as the victim or becoming the change you want to see? It's time to stop making excuses, baby! It's time to remember that things are happening *for* you, not to you, and that you have signed up for these soul lessons in order to transcend to the next level of consciousness.