



BURNING MAN MULLING MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINES FOR AUGUST

pg 08

EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE COLLAPSE: US FOOTBALL OWNERS BADLY MISREAD SUPPORTER CULTURE IN ENGLAND

pg 04

HANNAH BROWN, IGGY AZALEA AND TAYE DIGGS WILL PLAY FOR LOVE ON THE CELEBRITY DATING GAME

pg 08



Summit **TIMES**

Vol 06 | Issue 107 | Gangtok | Friday 23 April 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Covid claims 137th life in Sikkim; State breaks 100 daily cases mark for sixth time

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 22 APR:

Sikkim recorded its 137th COVID-related death in the passing away of a 53-year-old lady from Padamchen in East District here at STNM Hospital on Thursday morning. Also today, the State recorded more than one hundred daily cases for the sixth time since the virus has been among us. Records compiled at 8AM Thursday morning reveal that 124 cases were detected in the State in the preceding 24 hours.

The fatality has officially been included in the list of "COVID deaths

with comorbidities" as the patient was also a diabetic and was dealing with hypertension.

Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltzen Bhutia, informs that the patient was admitted to STNM Hospital on 18 April after testing positive for COVID-19.

She passed away this morning at around 8:20 AM due to COVID pneumonia and cardiac pulmonary arrest.

On the other hand, 1,213 people received COVID vaccines in Sikkim on Wednesday. Of these, 802 were given the first dose while 411 completed their vaccine schedule

with the second dose.

The first time that Sikkim had reported more than a hundred cases in a day was on 22 July last year when 108 new cases were reported. Shortly after, on 14 August, 149 new cases were detected, then 105 on 04 September and 122 on 19 December.

The numbers had come down steadily since then until they spiked with the second wave around ten days back. This resurgence in cases had thrown up 105 cases on 18 April, Sunday [in screenings carried out on Saturday], and 124 today.

15 of the new cases required hospitalisation today, 14 at STNM Hospital and one at Mangan District Hospital. There are currently 62 Covid patients in hospital and, thankfully, no one in ICU.

The number of active cases of coronavirus in Sikkim have now jumped to 640.

Of the 124 new cases, 107 were reported from East District, three from South District and 14 from North Sikkim. These 124 cases were picked up from the testing of 653 samples on Wednesday.

Among the new cases are 12 persons from Sonam Gyatso Mountaineering Institute quarters

at Baluwakhani. In this dozen are two staff members of the institute and others are people who had come for a mountaineering course. Some days back, two people who had come for the course had tested positive, it may be recalled.

Another set of twelve new cases were reported from the Tadong area of which three are from Lumsey, three from Tadong bazaar, one from Upper Tadong, one from Daragaon, one from 5th Mile, one from Gairi Gaon, one from Baha'i School Road and one student of SMIMS 5th Mile.

turn to pg02

CM CHAIRS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON COVID-19

Re-constitute State Task Force, says CM

GANGTOK, 22 APR (IPR):

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang chaired a high-level meeting at Samman Bhawan today, to assess the Covid-19 situation in the State and to take stock of the overall preparedness.

At the outset, Chief Secretary, SC Gupta gave a brief overview of the situation and highlighted some areas which need urgent attention.

Health Department Officials briefed about the medical preparedness and the status of vaccination. It was informed in the meeting that STNM Hospital is equipped with an Oxygen plant having adequate supply, and the Covid dedicated Hospital has 125 beds, which includes 77 beds with Oxygen, 40 beds without Oxygen (for less serious patients) and 8 ICU beds.

The Chief Minister in his address called for re-constitution of the State Task Force for overall coordination and crisis management. He directed that the State Task Force



should immediately set up an office and start functioning. He said that the Task Force should monitor the movement of people from outside the State in all the borders in coordination with the District Administration.

He maintained that people should refrain from travelling outside the State unless it is unavoidable. He also issued directives to ensure that all returnees should stay under home quarantine for the stipulated number of days. He also laid emphasis on the need to monitor the movement of labour force from outside the State.

The meeting also took

stock of the safety protocol in place for tourists and other visitors. It was decided that officers of the Tourism Department would be deputed to monitor the movement of tourists under the overall supervision of the District Collectors.

It was decided in the meeting that strict measures will be adopted to prevent further spread of Covid-19 in the State.

The meeting had the presence and participation of Cabinet Ministers, Press Advisor to CM, DGP, Additional Chief Secretaries, Heads of Departments, and Health Department officials.

India records world's biggest single-day rise in coronavirus cases

NEW DELHI, 22 APR [REUTERS]: India recorded the world's highest daily tally of 314,835 new COVID-19 infections on Thursday as a second wave of the pandemic raised new fears about the ability of crumbling health services to cope. Health officials across northern and western India including the capital, New Delhi, said they were in crisis, with most hospitals full and running out of oxygen. Some doctors were advising patients to stay at home, while a crematorium in the eastern city of Muzaffarpur said it was being overwhelmed with bodies and grieving families had to wait their turn. A crematorium east of Delhi built funeral pyres in its parking lot.

"Right now there are no beds, no oxygen. Everything else is secondary," Shahid Jameel, a virologist and director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University, told Reuters. "The infrastructure is crumbling." Some hospitals in New Delhi had run out of oxygen and authorities in neighbouring states were stopping supplies being taken to the capital to save it for their own needs, the city's deputy chief minister, Manish Sisodia said. "It might become difficult for hospitals here to save lives," Sisodia said in a televised address.

India's total cases are now at 15.93 million, while deaths rose by 2,104 to reach 184,657, according to the latest health ministry data.

The previous record one-day rise in cases was held by the United States, which had 297,430 new cases on one day in January, though its tally has since fallen sharply. Television showed images of people with empty oxygen cylinders crowding refilling facilities as they scrambled to save relatives in hospital. In the western city of Ahmedabad, a man strapped to an oxygen cylinder lay in the back of a car outside a hospital as he waited for a bed.

SKM to form COVID-19 crisis management teams to facilitate vaccination and generate awareness



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 22 APR:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has announced plans to form COVID-19 crisis management teams at the constituency level to facilitate what is expected to be a much larger vaccination process come 01 May when vaccines are to be made available to everyone aged above 18. This, and other matters relating to the upcoming budget session and the party's membership drive were discussed at the party legislators meet chaired by Chief Minister PS Tamang, who is also the SKM party president, here at Mintokgang today, an SKM press release informs.

The meeting, the press

release informs, "vigorously discussed" the Covid situation in the state and the various precautionary measures to be taken in the coming days.

Mr Tamang informed his legislators that the State Government was committed to provide free vaccination and that as per government data, 2.96 lakh people will be covered in this initiative.

He called on all party workers to work together to make the vaccination drive a massive success, and it is towards this end that the party will be forming COVID-19 Crisis Management teams at the constituency level.

The CM also made special mention of the party's

Jan Kalyan Prakosta which he commended for delivering "exceptionally good service" to in-need patients in the state.

He also informed that all labourers entering the state will henceforth need to undergo compulsory COVID-19 testing.

As for support extended to patients in the past year, he is reported to have informed that Rs 11,08,65,000 has been provided to needy patients of Sikkim as medical relief from the Chief Minister's Fund in the last 12 months.

He assured that the government was fully committed for continue improving the healthcare system in Sikkim.

turn to pg02

Nor'wester wreaks havoc in Siliguri

SILIGURI (WB), APR 22 (PTI): A nor'wester packing a wind speed of 120 km per hour lashed Siliguri and neighbouring towns in north Bengal on Thursday morning, officials said.

The squall, known as 'Kalbaisakhi' in local parlance, uprooted several trees that disrupted power supply and blocked important roads,

they said. A cloud cover engulfed the city around 10 am as the nor'wester brought in moderate rain, they added.

Hill Cart Road, Sevoke Road, SF Road and Burdwan Road were closed to traffic as uprooted trees blocked the roads, officials said.

Electricity was also disrupted in several areas with trees falling on

overhead power lines, they said. Disaster management personnel were deployed to clear the roads. Besides, several ward coordinators were also seen helping them in removing the uprooted trees.

The storm also affected normal life in neighbouring Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar with several trees being uprooted.

CIVIL SERVICES DAY OBSERVED AT MANAN KENDRA

CM announces Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Civil Services Award

GANGTOK, 21 APR (IPR):

The Civil Service Officers' Institute, Sikkim in coordination with the Department of Personnel, Government of Sikkim organised Civil Services Day 2021 at Manan Kendra in Gangtok on 21 Apr, 2021.

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang graced the occasion as the Chief Guest in the presence of Deputy Speaker, SLA, Sangay Lepcha, Cabinet Ministers, Kunga Nima Lepcha, LN Sharma, Sonam Lama, Bhim Hang Limboo, BS Panth, MN Sherpa and Arun Upreti, Advisors, Chairpersons and Chief Secretary, SC Gupta. Also present on the occasion were DGP, AS Rao, Principal Secretary, Home, R Telang and all Civil Service Officers of the rank of Additional Secretary and above and former Secretaries retired in the last two years.

In his opening address, Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, extended warm welcome to the Chief Guest, the dignitaries present and all the former retired Secretaries to the Government of Sikkim.

He informed that a coordination meeting was held on 20 April with all the Heads of Departments and Secretaries to the Government of Sikkim



wherein various issues were addressed including attendance and punctuality, proper drafting of proposals to the Cabinet, fiscal management, reviewing of system of resource allocations and other such administrative matters that requires attention.

The Chief Secretary also urged the HoDs to go beyond issuing circulars and notices and put action on the ground for effective reinforcement of rules in order to achieve desired and visible impact in running the State administration productively.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang congratulated the Department of Personnel and Training for organising the Civil Services Day 2021 programme, the first-of-its-kind event in the State of Sikkim, to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of the civil service officers in the State.

turn to pg02

Ojhal... Timi

RELEASING ON 23RD APRIL 2021

FROM BUDHA SUBIDA DIGITAL OFFICIAL YOUTUBE CHANNEL

CAST - LEEZUM LEPCHA | PURAN TAMANG | BIJAYATA PRADHAN | VOCAL / LYRICS / COMPOSE / CONCEPT - BIKASH RAI (THULUNG)

MUSIC ARRANGE / PROGRAMMING - AJNISH RAI | RECORDING & MIXING AT - MATRIX SOUND LAB (DARJEELING) | GUITAR / BASS - VEDANTA RAJ BARAILY

DOP/EDIT - NIMESH PRADHAN | ASST. DOP / POSTER DESIGNED BY - UJJAL RAI SHAMPANG | 2ND ASST. DOP - KARAN KHALING RAI | ADARSH PRADHAN | PRAYAG PRADHAN

MUA/HAIR DRESSER - AMBER PRADHAN | SUPPORTED BY - NABIN MANI PRADHAN | ANU NAIBEDHYA RAI | DIRECTION - NIMESH PRADHAN (FUTURE - I)

PRODUCED BY - LEEZUM LEPCHA (NAMCHI, SIKKIM)

"National Emergency": Supreme Court asks Centre for Oxygen, vaccine plan

NEW DELHI, 22 APR [NDTV]: The Supreme Court asked to see a "national plan" on oxygen supply, essential drugs and method of vaccination and issued notice to the Centre on a day India recorded the world's biggest surge in Covid cases - 3.14 lakh cases and over 2,104 deaths in a day.

"We want to see the national plan on this issue," said Chief Justice of India SA Bobde. The hearing will take place tomorrow. The Supreme Court has stepped into the case at a time six High Courts across the country are hearing related petitions involving the crisis of oxygen, beds and the anti-viral drug Remdesivir in hospitals.

"We want to know. In regard to the four issues of supply of oxygen, supply of essential drugs, method and manner of vaccination and we want to keep the power to declare lockdown with the states," said the Chief Justice. "We wish to take suo motu cognisance of certain issues we find in six High Courts

- Delhi, Bombay, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Calcutta and Allahabad. Now they are exercising their jurisdiction in best interest. But what is happening is some kind of confusion and diversion of resources."

In a separate hearing on Vedanta's petition to open its closed copper plant in Tamil Nadu for the production of oxygen, Chief Justice Bobde remarked that "the present situation is like national emergency". For three days, the Delhi High Court has been hearing emergency requests for oxygen and other resources from the city government and various hospitals in the city.

Two emergency hearings at the Delhi High Court ended late last night after an oxygen tanker left for a hospital of the Max Group, the city's biggest hospital chain, which had approached the court pleading for help as it was almost out of oxygen for its Covid patients.

West Dist officials receive training on e-Services

GYALSHING, 22 APR [IPR]: Department of Information Technology, in collaboration with West District Administrative Centre, conducted an intensive one-day training on the delivery of e-services under the e-District project today at the Conference Hall of West District Zilla Panchayat Bhanu, Kyongsa, Gyalshing.

E-District is a Mission Mode Project of the Government of India, under NeGP (National e-Governance Plan) being implemented in the State through the Department of Information Technology.

The main aim of the said project is to improve and enhance the efficiency of issuance of various certificates being dealt by the District Administration by replacing the existing manual system through an integrated and seamless automation of governance, back end computerization and data digitization.

The training programme was conducted



to impart skills on achieving paperless governance, delivery of government services at the doorstep of the citizens, efficient & transparent governance and ease for the citizens to avail any services from the comfort of their home.

The speakers of the programme were Prem Ashis Pradhan, Assistant Director (Department of Information Technology), Roshan Pradhan, Senior Programmer (National Informatics Centre), Phunshok Gyatso Toppay/Programmer (National Informatics Centre).

Addressing the house,

Assistant Director briefed about the e-District Project and presented PowerPoint presentations.

During the course of presentation, he informed that seven services are live under the said portal namely Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Other Backward Classes, Senior Citizen, Unmarried, Property and Income Certificates.

Further, he informed that Department of Information Technology has signed an agreement with Reliance JIO to provide internet connectivity at 17 BACs and 117 GPs.

The speakers sen-

sitized the officers and trainees about effective use of technology and operational methods regarding devices provided on the portal. They also conducted hands on demonstration of the application processing for Scheduled Tribe Certificate online for SWS (Single Window System), LDC (Lower Division Clerk), SDM (Sub-Divisional Magistrate).

The training programme was attended by SDMs (Soreng, Dentam), BDOs (Soreng, Daramdin, Chongrang, Dentam, Geyzing, Chumbung, Kaluk) and trainees from several Offices.

SKM team visits three East Sikkim villages

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR: Chairman (Sikkim Housing Board) cum Sikkim Krantikari Morcha [SKM] Chief Convener (Students Wing), Karma Tashi Bhutia along with SKM general secretary Press & Media (HQ), Boom Tshering Yonzon visited Tareythang, Bering and Angkuchen villages today, a press release informs.

The main objective of the visit was to take stock of the constituency,

grievances of public, and discuss strengthening of party and activities in Sikkim, the release mentions.

While visiting these villages, they met party workers and villagers of Chujachen constituency and Gnathang Machong constituency. They heard the grievances placed by the local public and assured them that the same will be placed before the Chief Minister and other higher authorities for solutions.

Was not flouting COVID protocols, clarifies Gangtok MLA

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR: Responding to allegations on social media that Gangtok MLA, YT Lepcha had defied COVID-19 protocols of wearing a face mask, Mr Lepcha today said that a few individuals are trying to mislead and instigate the public against him.

It may be mentioned that a photo taken during a program held at MG Marg recently showed the MLA without a mask and was doing the rounds on social media which drew the ire of the public.

Mr Lepcha clarified

that the photo was taken when he had momentarily taken off his mask to drink water. He also appealed to the general public to strictly follow all guidelines and protocols of the government to stay safe during the present surge in coronavirus cases in the State and the nation.

The MLA also handed over 3,000 numbers of face masks to SHO Sadar Thana and urged the police to provide two face masks to each individual who is found without a mask in public places along with the fine receipt.

Covid claims 137th...

Among the other cases reported from in and around the capital are seven persons from Development Area, six from Sichey, five from Upper Shyari, two from Helipad [Burtuk], one from Lower Burtuk, one from Tathangchen, two from Lower Shyari, one from Kazi Road, one from Decheling, one from Middle Shyari, two from Gangtok bazaar, one from Pani House, one from Swastik, one from New Market, one from Bojoghari, one form Upper Arithang, one from Church Road, one from Deorali, one from Raj Bhawan Colony and one from Burtuk.

Elsewhere in East District, five persons from Karthok, four from Pakyong, three from Ranka, three from NHPC, two from Namrang Tumin, two from IBM Rangpo, two from Rangpo, two from SMIT Majitar, one person from Bardang, one from Lower Sumin, one form Luving, one from Ranipool, one form Pacheykhani, one from Nandok, one from Sirwani, one from Marchak, one from Riwa Machong, one from Agriculture University hostel, one from Rangpo Tar and one from ITBP camp were found positive for COVID-19.

In West District, one person form Mangalbaria, one from Dentam and one from Gyalshing were reported positive for COVID-19.

Four persons from Lower Tingchim, two from Tingchim, three Lachung, two from Pentok, two from Munal, one from Chunghang and one form Mangan in North District reported COVID-19 positive.

Likewise, one form Namchi, one form Mamley, one from Nandugaon, Namchi, one from Jorethang Road, one from Yangyang, one from Namphok and one from Forest Block Namchi in South District have also tested positive for COVID-19.

Mr Bhutia informed a tourist from Mumbai who had stayed in a local hotel has also tested positive for COVID and has already returned to Mumbai.

On the other hand, the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim has improved to 6,014 with the release of 18 persons from home isolation after completing their isolation period. Sikkim's tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim has now reached 6,970.

CM announces Sardar...

He stated that the programme brought together officers of various Services under one roof and thus helped forge unity and camaraderie.

Hailing government employees as the backbone of every government, the Chief Minister said that the State government has prioritised the welfare of government servants since the formation of the new government back in the year 2019. The most important role of every government employee is to act as a noble bridge between the State government and the people of Sikkim, he added.

The Chief Minister added that ensuring punctuality and efficiency in government offices leads to an active administration followed by an increase in productivity which in the long run works for the welfare of the citizens, society and the State as a whole.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the presence of former Secretaries of the Government of Sikkim who retired from the service in the last two years.

The Chief Minister also made the following announcements during the course of his address:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Civil Services Award to be presented to the best performing civil servant for distinguished services from next year onwards. He added that the award would

also comprise of cash prize and Citation. The Citation will also reflect in the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of the Government official, he informed.

2. Housing flats for all Sikkim Government Officers on payment basis. Land acquisition expense to be borne by the government.

3. Compulsory training for Civil Service Officers in India and abroad.

4. Training for District Officers on legal and criminal procedures.

5. Implementation of "Government on doorstep" approach by mobilizing a system to decentralise all services like residential certificates, domicile, land parcha, etc. into online mode whereby the people can apply online and the delivery will be done to their homes. He urged the office of the District Collectors and BDOs to prepare an implementation roadmap.

6. HoDs and concerned departments directed to send clear and detailed proposals to the Planning and Development Department and the Finance Department for their concurrence. The Planning and Finance Departments were directed to clear the proposals and files within 10 days of receiving them. In case of no clearance within 10 days due to certain issues, the HoDs and concerned officers have been directed to immediately hold a meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Secre-

Adequate O2 supply at STNM Hospital, MS assures

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR:

Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital, Dr KB Gurung, assured today that the hospital was well provided for with adequate supply of oxygen and other consumables and prepared to meet the challenge of the second wave of COVID-19 in the State. STNM Hospital has its own oxygen bottling plant and what is more, this capacity is set to be further expanded in a week's time with an additional plant scheduled to go operational there by 30 April.

"We have our own plant to bottle oxygen to supply in the hospital and also have enough stock of oxygen cylinders to face any emergency situation," he said.

He appealed to the people of Sikkim not to panic in this regard since STNM Hospital was fully equipped.

Dr Gurung's assurance were clearly triggered by news of Oxygen shortage coming from hospitals across the country.

"The Chief Minister is also very concerned and is in constant touch with me to ensure that people do not face any problems. At the same time, the Principal Secretary and other officials of the Health Department are also actively working to keep the hospital prepared to face any situation," the Medical Superintendent said.

STNM Hospital, for instance, received Rs 50 lakh on Wednesday itself to procure more medicines, testing kits



and other essential materials.

The MS urged people not to panic and strictly follow COVID-appropriate behavior given the present surge in coronavirus cases.

He also appealed to COVID positive patients, especially the asymptomatic patients, to stay under strict home quarantine and follow all prescribed protocols.

STNM Hospital has 125 beds for COVID patients and in case of an emergency, the 8th and 9th floors of STNM Hospital were also ready and on standby if more patients need to be accommodated. At present there are 62 Covid patients admitted in hospital.

Assistant Engineer [Biomed-

ical], STNM Hospital, Ravi Chauhan, in turn informs that STNM Hospital has a Pressure Swing Adsorption oxygen plant which was installed in October last year. This system does not need any consumables since it bottles Oxygen from ambient air and requires only maintenance.

He added that the hospital also has an oxygen manifold system which can install 48 jumbo cylinders at a time. Further, the Central government has sanctioned another oxygen plant for STNM Hospital the civil works for which have already been completed and the plant scheduled to be installed by 30 April.

tary for the needful measures to resolve the issues.

7. Expenditure in the month of March which is the last month of the Financial Year to be restricted to 20% of the budget.

8. Transfer, promotion and deputation policy to be formulated soon.

The event also featured a series of presentations made by District Collector, West, Karma R Bonpo, DC, North, Tenzing T Kaleon, Additional DC, East, Tushar G Nihare, District Child Protection Officer, South, Roshnila Gurung, and Vice Chancellor, Sikkim Manipal University, Dr (Lt. General) Rajan Singh Grewal, AVSM, VSM.

Retired Director of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussorie, Sanjeev Chopra, also joined the event and gave his presentation via video conferencing.

It was informed during the event that a certain mechanism has been devised to monitor and evaluate the best practices of each district which were presented today. Based on this evaluation, the Best Performing District Award will be presented on the occasion of Civil Services Day next year.

Chief Architect, Building and Housing Department, Rajesh Pradhan, also delivered a brief presentation on status and progress of the state-of-the-art

"Civil Services Officers' Institute" which is under construction at Chintan Bhanu premises.

The programme also witnessed the presentations of awards and felicitations. The award of Appreciation for the Best Cabinet Memo was presented to the Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Sikkim while the award of Appreciation for the Best Task Management System was presented to the Department of Information Technology, Government of Sikkim.

Likewise, the award of appreciation for the Best Police Station was awarded to Pakyong Police Station. It is informed that this award was presented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to Pakyong PS for bagging the 7th position in the list of 10 Best Police Stations all over India.

The CM also handed over token of appreciation to all former Secretaries who have retired in the last two years to honour and acknowledge their contributions and services to the State.

The Civil Services Day was dazzled by a series of cultural performances by the civil service officers from various batches.

Earlier, the welcome address was delivered by Principal Secretary, Home, R Telang, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Special Secretary, DOP, Tashi Chophel.

DECLARATION

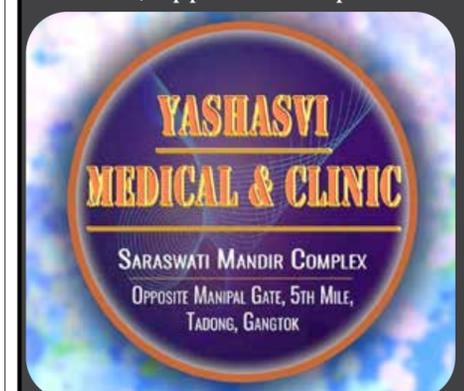
I, Sushma Gurung, d/o Late Dharam Prasad Gurung resident of Arithang, Gangtok, East Sikkim would like to make a declaration that owing to my regination as Director of Project Orchid Valley pertaining to real estate of Prashant Sharma, s/o A.K. Sharma r/o Kolkata, West Bengal; I have no association whatsoever with the above project. I neither had nor have active participation in whatsoever business transactions carried out by Mr Prashant Sharma in the name of Project Orchid Valley.

Sushma Gurung
Arithang, East Sikkim

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

4 katha land available for sale at Middle Palas, Siliguri. Price negotiable. Interested buyer may contact: 9647889596

YASHASVI MEDICAL & CLINIC, 5th Mile, Opposite Manipal Gate.



NEW CLINIC TIMING.

Doctor Available: (Monday- Saturday)

1. General Physician: 7 AM-9AM,
2. OBG & Gynecologist: 9-10AM.
3. Pediatrician: 8:30-9:30 AM.
4. Skin Specialist: 5-7PM.
5. Orthopaedic : 5-7 PM.
6. Cardio Specialist: 4-6PM.
7. Medicine (Gastrointestinal Specialist) :5-6PM.

Call For Appointment : 6294683018 / 7908242665

Contribution of the Visually Challenged to Nepali Christian Music

ViewPoint

JIWAN RAI

Imagining the Indian Gorkha civilization without the twin Darjeeling-Kalimpong hills and what that conjures up in our minds is the monotonously boring story of a community without any fizz in it. The Darjeeling Gorkhas studied their history of bravery with the glitter of their feats in literature, music, plays and other forms of the arts. As a matter of fact, Darjeeling, in many ways was far ahead of Kathmandu. Nepalese dramatist Bal Krishna Sama famously noted, "What Darjeeling thinks today, Nepal think tomorrow".

CK Shrestha, noted thinker and internationally acclaimed playwright argues that Nepali language and literature (and by extension other forms of arts) in Darjeeling were growing parallelly without depending on the development of their counterparts in Nepal. One distinct difference that we can note is that, while in Nepal it was Hindu scholars who had a great influence on language development, in Darjeeling, it was Christian missionaries who had the dominant impact on language and literature development among Nepali speakers.

In this article, I will highlight the contribution of visually challenged Nepali individuals to Nepali Christian music. It is fascinating that a huge percentage of Nepali Christian masterpiece hymns were written by visually challenged Christians. What is even more interesting is the fact that all of them were students of the Salvation Army Mary Scott Home and School for the Blind in Kalimpong. While Darjeeling produced a man, Ganga Prasad Pradhan, who translated the Bible into Nepali, it was Kalimpong that produced some of the most legendary hymn writers and musicians. (Although Ganga

Prasad Pradhan, who translated the Bible into Nepali, was a Nepali subject, he was taught by Scottish missionaries in Darjeeling and lived the rest of his life in Darjeeling after he was permanently exiled by the king of Nepal, Tribhuvan in 1914).

The golden era of Nepali Christian hymn writing and composition started in 1967 and lasted till approximately 1975. These gifted men in the Kalimpong based Salvation Army School came up with legendary hymns one after the other. It is beyond the scope of this short write up to enumerate all of those hymns. However, it is worthwhile to mention some of them. Birendra Rongong's Bhulne Chaina Ma Tyo Drishya, Prabhu Yeshuko, Kalbhari Bhaniney Thaumma Uhan Taginubho" (I will never forget that scene of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross of Calvary), John D Khawas' Stuti Hos Prabhu Khristko (Praise to the Lord Jesus Christ) and Sampurna Jiwan Mero (I surrender my life in entirety), Sukbir Rasaily's Chadaaachhu Prabhu Dhanayavad Aaja (I thank Thee Lord today), Joseph Mangal's Mitra Timilai Yo Khabar Chha (Here is good tiding for you my friend), Kishor Moktan's Andhakar Maya Jiwan Tyagera (Forsaking a darkened life), Chedup Jonah Fanning's Trankarta Prabhu Yeshu (Saviour Lord Jesus), Manbahadur Chettri's Paapko Kalo Baklo Andhakar (The black thick darkness of sin) have been ever-living songs among Nepali churches across India and Nepal. Thupden Bhutia was a great singer whose voice given to Bauriuthnu Bhaeko Prabhulal Jiwan Bheti Chadaaachhu (I surrender my life as a gift to the risen Lord) will be remembered for many years to come. Dalbahadur Philemon Mukhia's music composition for Herana Raktammye Kalbhari (Look at the blood-stained cross of Calvary)

made the song perennially popular.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that without the contribution of these gentlemen, Nepali Christian music would have been so much poorer. What makes their contribution remarkable was their deep conviction of Christian doctrine (the gospel in particular), their personal devotion and extraordinary musical talents. The same cannot be said of many contemporary Christians songs, most of which are replete with fundamental doctrinal errors. They are mostly me-centric rather than Christ-centric with an excessive emphasis on the feelings of the song writer. Many modern Nepali Christian songs are not informed by sound Christology, clearly indicating that many of them are not well-taught. Generally, the most meaningful songs have been written by those who have the lived experience of the theme that they are writing about. Many of these visually challenged gentlemen lived their Christian beliefs out in the toughest of situations intensified by their physical blindness and social stigma. Even in the Bible, the best of psalms was written by palmists in the worst possible situations. They did not write their hymns, songs and psalms in emotionally charged up situations. Expressed in their songs were the real longstanding experiences of their lives which were ridden with hardship, suffering and persecution. What a challenge to those who write their songs reclining on plush sofas and air-conditioned studios! How apt is G Michael Hopf, a combat veteran of the U.S. Marines Corps when he writes, "Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And, weak men create hard times."

Team of officials inspects West Pendam roads

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 APR:

As per the direction of Speaker, LB Das, a team headed by Chairman (Sikkim Housing Board), Karma Tashi Bhutia along with Sikkim Krantikari Morcha CLC president, Hari Dangal, SDM Rangpo, DE, AE (Roads & Bridges Dept) and other officials inspected the Rangpo-Pendam road and Duga-Cheuri botey road today.

A press release informs that the two roads falling under West Pendam constituency have been in miserable condition for a long time and the Chief Minister, PS Tamang, in his last visit, had directed the concerned department to execute the repair and upgradation of the roads at the earliest.

During the course of the visit, Chairman Karma Tashi Bhutia directed officials to execute the repair and upgradation of the two roads as early as possible for the welfare of the local public and ensure quality work.

Similarly, he also inspected the ongoing black topping of the Duga-Cheuri botey road.

SSDMA provides safety kits for Transport Deptt personnel

GANGTOK, 22 APR [IPR]: Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA), as the nodal agency for planning and coordination for disaster management, is continuously working towards minimising risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the state.

SSDMA along with District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMA) has been actively engaged to create awareness and sensitise the public on Covid Appropriate Behaviour using various media and it is also involved in sanitising public and private spaces while enforcing the COVID Containment Guidelines.

SSDMA has also been



providing support to critical sister departments, District Disaster Management Authorities and Urban Local Bodies of the State by providing essential Covid-19 preventive materials like PPE kits, Sodium hypochlorite disinfectant solution, face masks etc to be used by the frontline workers.

As a continuing assistance towards the fight against Covid 19, on 22 Apr, 2021, Minister in

Charge Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha handed over COVID Safety Kits to Minister in Charge, Building and Housing and Transport Department, Sanjit Kharel in the presence of Relief Commissioner cum Secretary, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, TN Bhutia, Secretary, Transport Department, PN Sherpa

and General Manager, Transport Department, KN Bhutia.

The Transport Department of Sikkim has been playing an important role in these difficult times and in order to give moral support and enhance protection to all the drivers and conductors of the Transport Department during this second wave of Covid-19, the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority under Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department has come forward to provide them with PPE kits, hand gloves, sodium hypochlorite disinfection solution and sanitisers to fight this second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
PARYATAN BHAWAN
TADONG - EAST SIKKIM
Website: www.Sikkimtourism.gov.in
Phone no. 03592-232218, Fax: 03592-232216
Email: secy_tourism@yahoo.com

No:-

Dated:

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed quotations are invited from interested parties and local educated unemployed youth(s) for taking on lease "New Cafeteria at Bakthang Waterfalls" situated at Bhojoghari, East Sikkim of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department on AS IT IS WHERE IT IS BASIS". The details of the properties/assets and additional information can be obtained from the Office of Under Secretary (Assets), Paryatan bhawan, Tadong East Sikkim during office hour.

SL. No.	Name of the property	Rent per months(Rs.)	TDR(Security Deposit) (Rs.)	Cost of tender form(Rs.)
01	New Cafeteria at Bakthang Waterfall, Bhojoghari, East Sikkim	26000	1,56,000	1300

Time Schedule:-

1. Sale of Tender form : Dated 03.05.2021 office hour.
2. Receipt of Tender Form along with the relevant documents : Date 18.05.2021 Time : 01.00 p.m.
3. Opening of Tender Documents in Office of Additional Secretary, Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim. : Dated 18.05.2021 Time : 02.00 p.m.

The intending contractors/bidder may visit the website of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department i.e. www.sikkimtourism.gov.in for information and further details or contact Office of the "under Secretary (Assets) in Paryatan bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim.

R.O. No. 34/IPR/Pub/Classi./21-22
Dated: 22.04.2021

Sd/-
Additional Secretary
Tourism & Civil Aviation Department

Swadeshi Jagaran Manch starts Bhumi Suposhan Abhiyan

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 APR:

Rashtriya Bhumi Suposhan Abhiyan was kickstarted in Sikkim today by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) from Sumbuk (South Sikkim) in the presence of local farmers & Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Prant Pracharak, Nandan Kumar, a press release informs.

The Abhiyan is being conducted all over India by SJM and even during Covid times aims at

reaching every nook and corner of the country for promoting "healthy land for healthy lives".

State Convenor, Shirish Khare stressed on the need to keep cultivable land safe and organic by not contaminating it with chemicals & fertilizers.

RSS Prant Pracharak, Nandan Kumar urged farmers to use natural manure so that we pass on healthy land to the coming generations.

SJM Prant Sangath-

ak, Bhupendra Giri conducted the program and requested to keep the age-old farming culture for health benefits including cow dung and cow urine's importance for bhumi suposhan.

SJM Prant Pracharak, Pramukh, Tikaram Sunuwar thanked the farmers and urged them not to leave any farming land unutilized so that Sikkim does not need to import unhealthy food from outside the state.



No.55/GSCDL/21-22

File No.235/GSCDL/20-21/09
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited,
5th Floor Kissan Bazaar, Lal Bazaar Road,
Sikkim - 737102
E Mail - gangtoksmartcity@gmail.com
CIN - U930909WB20175GC223807

Date:20/04/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of general public residing within the Municipal Limit of Gangtok Municipal Corporation that Gangtok Smart City Development Limited is going to conduct property survey within Gangtok Municipal Corporation wef 25th April 2021. The main purpose of conducting property survey is to capture the details of property within the city and to create a GIS based layer for future planning of water supply, sewerage, electricity, other developmental schemes and other scientific purposes.

In this regard it is hereby appealed to all the citizens residing within the city to kindly co-operate with the surveyors and enumerators by way of providing accurate information so that a robust city level database can be created.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited



"I appeal to everyone to get vaccinated for the safety of oneself and others against COVID-19"

- Champa Prasad
Governor of Sikkim

Do not believe in rumours being spread about the vaccine

Focus on the 5 fold strategy

Follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour



#SikkimFightsCorona

#VaccineSavesLives

#Unite2FightCorona

Let's come together to make the Hon'ble Prime Minister's initiative "Dawai Bhi Kadai Bhi" successful and beat COVID-19

GANGTOK SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

Sokaythang, Gngatok,
Sikkim - 737102

e-mail: gangtoksmartcity@gmail.com CIN - U930909WB20175GC223807
FILE NI. 229/GSCDL/2019-20

Memo NO: 28/GSCDL/2021-22

Dated: 07/04/2021.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Gangtok Smart City Development Limited (GSCDL) is undertaking the work 'Construction of Multi Level Car Park cum Shopping Hub' at old STNM Complex (below NH). The preliminary Drawings of the project is uploaded in our website <https://smartcitygangtok.com>

Architects, Urban Planners and the General Public are requested to give their valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement of the drawing. Changes that are feasible within the scope of the work shall be incorporate at the time of finalizing the Drawings. However, GSCDL reserves the right to incorporate the changes. Comments and suggestions may be sent by email to ae3smartcity@gmail.com within one month of issue of this public notice, please.

Sd/-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.



Ref No. 51/GSCDL/2021-22

Dated: 19/04/2021

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF CITY DATA OFFICER UNDER GANGTOK SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for filling up one post of City Data Officer (CDO) on contractual basis for a period of 6 months (Probation) + 1 Year (Full Time Contract with renewal) under Gangtok Smart City Development Limited. The job specification details along with qualification requirement, technical and professional skills may be downloaded from official website <https://smartcitygangtok.com>. Applications by eligible and willing candidates matching all the required criteria may be submitted to Nodal Officer, Gangtok Smart City Development Limited on or before 30th April 2021, 1600 hours.

Nodal Officer
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited

CONTACT

SUMMIT TIMES
REPORTERS

SINGTAM
8170070813

MANGAN/ DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213

GANGTOK
9800571148

8116388176

9832424750

8016270440

Save the Minors

POCSO started a process, but saving children will require more

Cases booked under the POCSO Act come with unnerving frequency in Sikkim. And before anyone jumps to the conclusion that this is a recent phenomenon, take a pause and take stock - minors have always been at risk in the hands of sexual predators. Such violations had been occurring so often that the country now has a specific law to deal with such crimes, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

Data on child sexual abuse also reveals that in most of the cases, 94.8% as per the Crime in India Report of 2015, the perpetrator is someone known to the child. People in this circle have not developed sexual deviance in recent years, there have always been predators in our mix. What has happened instead is that the "circle" around children has changed. Where they used to earlier fall victim to relatives, it is now neighbours and teachers. This change in the profile of who we surround our children with has probably made the decision to file police complaints easier, because the vileness is not from within the family. This higher degree of separation also perhaps makes it slightly easier for children to report the violations since it is not an elder in the family they are pointing fingers at. Hopefully these speculations are inaccurate and the reason why more complaints are being filed nowadays is instead because parents and families have become more responsible and aware. That is probably not the case though, but let us hope for the sake of our children that we are evolving towards it, because unless there is genuine empathy and awareness about how such cases need to be handled and pursued, the children will not be secured a safe childhood.

What is also noticeable is that while one reads often about cases being booked under POCSO Act and pedophiles being taken into custody, one does not hear often about them being convicted. Agreed, the POCSO Act itself is barely six years old, but it should have delivered much more given the fact that it was drafted to address a situation which was not getting enough attention and leaving too many minors scarred for life. National data on POCSO cases reveals that in as many as 85% of the cases, the victims turn hostile, retracting their allegations. This is obviously not because they were mistaken about the crime committed against them but because their families could not withstand the pressure to "compromise" and "settle" the matter. Once the family collapses, the child cannot stand up either. One needs to go back to all POCSO cases in Sikkim and verify how many cases have led to acquittals. Only in the rare case will the investigators or prosecutors weaken such cases on their own, but would do so in a small State like Sikkim if the victim's side settles the matter with the other side. This cannot be allowed to happen because then all institutions that a child would have trusted - the family, the police, the law and courts - would have failed them.

Let no one be surprised if these children then grow up to become antisocial. This is not a matter that can be taken lightly. Not only is the harm enormous, but even the scale is frighteningly large. A top Delhi police official, while speaking at the launch of a new campaign - "It Takes Every Indian to End Child Sexual Abuse and exploitation" - by World Vision India that 50 per cent of children in our country have suffered some form of sexual abuse. That is too much suffering without any healing.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: news@summittimes.com



Exercise boosts immunity and makes vaccines more effective – new study

SEBASTIEN CHASTIN
theconversation.com

The availability of vaccines has brought hope for the end of the pandemic. Yet COVID deaths and cases are still surging around the world. As we try to immunise the world, the most likely scenario for the next few years is that COVID-19 will be like other infectious diseases, such as flu, that we will need to continuously manage and protect ourselves against.

One of the best ways to do that is by being physically active.

We already know that physical activity is one of most effective ways to prevent chronic diseases, along with diet and quitting smoking. A study from 2008 found that physical inactivity is responsible for more than five million premature deaths every year.

Now, a new systematic review of evidence by me and my colleagues shows that regular physical activity strengthens the human immune system, reduces the risk of falling ill and dying from infectious disease by more than a third and significantly increases the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns. This has important implications for pandemic responses.

In our study, we systematically gathered and reviewed all available evidence relating to the effect of physical activity on the risk of falling ill and dying from infectious diseases such as pneumonia - a frequent cause of death from COVID-19 - on the functioning of the immune system and on the outcome of vaccination. The study was conducted too early in the pandemic to include research into COVID-19 itself, but the findings are highly relevant to the current pandemic response.

We found consistent and compelling evidence across six studies involving more than a half million participants that meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity - 30 minutes of activity, five days a week - reduces the risk of falling

ill and dying of infectious diseases by 37%.

This adds to the results of another new study conducted in the United States specifically on COVID-19. The effect is at least as strong if not more so than the effect reported for other risk factors of COVID-19 such as age or having a pre-existing condition such as diabetes.

We also found reliable evidence that regular physical activity strengthens the human immune system. Across 35 independent randomised controlled trials - the gold standard for scientific evidence - regular physical activity resulted in elevated levels of the antibody immunoglobulin IgA. This antibody coats the mucosal membrane of our lungs and other parts of our body where viruses and bacteria can enter.

Regular physical activity also increases the number of CD4+ T cells, which are responsible for alerting the immune system of an attack and regulate its response.

Finally, in the randomised controlled trials we studied, vaccines appear more effective if they are administered after a programme of physical activity. A person who is active is 50% more likely to have a higher antibody count after the vaccine than somebody who is not active.

This can be a cost-effective and easy way of boosting vaccination campaigns. Considering the difficulties in supply chains, this could be a wise move to make every dose count.

HOW PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WARDS OFF DISEASE

There are three mechanisms that make physical activity an effective medicine against infectious diseases.

First, it protects against risk factors of severe and fatal infection. Physically active people are less likely to develop obesity, diabetes, respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Epidemiological studies have shown that COVID-19 and other respiratory infectious diseases are more severe for people who have these conditions.

Physical activity also reduces stress and chron-

ic inflammation, in turn reducing the likelihood of adverse and fatal infections. Most COVID-19 and pneumonia fatalities have been as a result of uncontrolled inflammatory response.

Finally, our immune system is stronger if we are physically active.

WE NEED TO GET MOVING

Physical activity is undeniably an important way to make populations less vulnerable to infectious diseases and future epidemics and pandemics. It should be used more urgently and effectively in fighting the current COVID-19 outbreak, but also as a long term investment to prevent the devastating social and economic impacts this pandemic has had on society.

Governments encouraged people to stay active early in the pandemic to cope with lockdown measures. There was a surge of interest in exercise immediately following lockdown in most communities. Unfortunately, this has not translated into positive change in activity levels.

Instead, an apparent decrease in physical activity levels has been seen globally in the past year. This is a dangerous trend that could make the population more vulnerable to infectious and chronic diseases in the short term. Left unchecked, it will also leave a damaging long-term legacy and increase the burden of disease and its associated social and economic cost.

Underestimating the impact of physical inactivity could also exacerbate the unsustainable and unacceptable health inequalities highlighted by the pandemic. Generally, physical activity levels are lower in societies with greater economic inequalities and this affects women most.

It is now more important than ever for governments and health professionals to galvanise all sectors of society to promote physical activity.

Every move counts in fighting this pandemic and managing infectious disease in the future.

[the writer is Professor Health Behaviour Dynamics, Glasgow Caledonian University]

European Super League collapse: US football owners badly misread supporter culture in England

ROBERT BUTLER
theconversation.com

Barely two days after it was unveiled, the European Super League (ESL) is dead in the water. All six of the English clubs who made up the 12 founding members of the proposed breakaway competition pulled out, following loud opposition from everyone from the FA to Uefa to the UK government to fans. With the owners now hastily apologising and trying to make amends, the ESL founder and Juventus chairman, Andrea Agnelli, has conceded defeat.

There is much discussion about what exactly the owners of these 12 clubs were hoping to achieve with their ESL announcement, but it surely wasn't this debacle. One aspect of this story that is particularly noticeable is that American owners figured heavily in the English end of the breakaway, with Liverpool, Arsenal and Manchester United all controlled from the US.

While England and the US have a lot in common, the design and administration of field sports is not one of them. This very short-lived super league has demonstrated just how big these differences are.

PLACE POWER

The franchise model of the US is as much about cooperation off the field as it is competition on it. Things that would be unconscionable in England are commonplace in the US. Relocation is probably the best example.

Beginning in 1936, the National Football League's Los Angeles Rams have also been called the Cleveland Rams and St Louis Rams. Most recently, the NFL's Oakland Raiders have shifted to Las Vegas (they also had a

stint in Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s).

And it doesn't end with American football. In baseball, the Salt Lake City Trappers were forced to move several hours away to Pocatello, Idaho in 1993 and then Ogden, northern Utah in 1994. This was because the Portland Beavers, who played in a superior league, did a deal with Salt Lake City officials to move to the city and use the Trappers' baseball park. The Beavers renamed as The Salt Lake City Buzz, and following several more name changes, they are now known as the Salt Lake City Bees.

English football fans do not tolerate this kind of thing. In June 2012 the Malaysian owners of Cardiff City announced that the club would be changing from their traditional blue jerseys to a new red kit, emblazoned with a dragon rather than the blue-bird that had first appeared in the 1960s.

Outrage immediately ensued from the supporters. The blue of Cardiff, first worn around 1908, was not for changing. A statement issued by the club at the time, focusing on broadening the club's appeal to "international markets" and "major and significant" investment, did nothing to appease the fans. The red jersey had to go.

Following two and a half years of pressure from fans, Cardiff City announced on January 9 2015 that the "club will wear a blue home kit and red away kit next season (2015/16)". The crest was also going to be redesigned to feature the traditional blue-bird. So much for Welsh dragons.

Around the same time, Hull City supporters entered a protracted battle with the Allam family, which owns the football club. Hull's chairman,

Assem Allam, a British-Egyptian industrialist, was seeking to change the name to Hull Tigers. After more than two years of protests and disagreement, a vote confirmed that the change had been resisted. The fans had won again.

What both owners apparently failed to appreciate were the historical roots of these clubs, stretching back more than 100 years. Supporters have deep emotional attachments to club colours or names that are intertwined with customs, habits and ways of behaving.

WHY THE ESL GOT RELEGATED

The owners of England's big six clubs seem to have made a similar mistake on a massive scale. The idea that six clubs, all members of the oldest set of interconnected leagues in the world, could simply walk away from nearly 140 years of tradition, league design and competitive behaviour as well as unravel 70 years of European competition by moving to a system with no promotion or relegation, was never going to work.

The sanctity of promotion and relegation is what sets European football apart from most American team sports. A super league in which the biggest teams automatically took part would have had devastating consequences for domestic leagues: weakened teams, meaningless fixtures, reduced attendance demand - the list goes on.

While the fallout from this is yet to be known, almost everyone agrees that European football needs to change to reflect the modern game. There are too many international commitments for players, and the group stages of the Champions League have become largely uncom-

petitive. This is down to both the seeding of the draw by Uefa and the large number of top clubs in the competition, many of whom appear every year, since three or four clubs from each league qualify each season.

However, the new Champions League system that is due to begin in 2024-25 looks like a move even further in this direction. It will expand the competition in a way that will make it possible for two or three more big clubs to qualify even if they don't finish in the top four places in their domestic league the previous season (or win the previous year's Champions League or Europa League).

It means almost twice as many European matches each year and moves closer to a system in which the biggest clubs are always guaranteed to qualify - though clearly not guaranteed enough from the perspective of the breakaway 12. It is not clear whether they these teams will now accept this system or insist on further negotiations with Uefa.

Whether the collapse of the ESL could now change the direction of travel to reduce the dominance of the top clubs in this system is an interesting question. The fabric of the game and the wishes of supporters throughout Europe should be protected, though there is not much sign of opposition to the Champions League reforms.

At any rate, Uefa and the breakaway clubs are co-dependent and will inevitably have to come back together. The European Super League was not the answer but it may still act as the catalyst for a way forward.

[the writer is Director of the Centre for Sports Economics and Law, University College Cork]

Nepal sets climber quotas to prevent crowds on Everest

SANGAM PRASAIN

KATHMANDU, 22 APR [KATHMANDUPOST]: Nepal has introduced a quota system setting the maximum number of climbers that will be permitted to make an attempt on Everest in a desperate measure to prevent overcrowding on the world's tallest peak as the country braces for a record number of mountaineers this season beginning May.

Issuing a directive on Wednesday, the Department of Tourism said a specified number of mountaineers, selected on the basis of their climbing permit numbers, would be allowed to make attempts at the summit during the first "weather window" that becomes available after the ropes and ladders are fixed up to the top. Another specified number will be allowed to make attempts at the summit during the second weather window, or a period of good weather when it is safe to climb, and so on.

If this plan does not work, the expedition outfitters will have to coordinate among themselves and organise the climbing, limiting numbers to a maximum of 170 individuals in one weather window, the Department of Tourism said.

According to Guinness World Records, which lists ultimate record-breaking facts and achievements, the most number of people to reach the peak of Everest on a single day is 354, with 212 climbers from the Nepal side, as recorded on May 23, 2019.

The previous record of 266 people was set on May 19, 2013.

In 2019, the government issued 381 Everest climbing permits, a record number so far, leading to "traffic jams" on the icy route to the top of the world. Also, 10 people died on the Nepal side, the highest death toll in four years.

An undated photo shows a queue of climbers making a final push towards Everest summit. Photo courtesy: Kami Rita Sherpa

This year, in the midst of the second wave of Covid-19, the number of permits issued is expected



to hit another record high. As of Wednesday, the department has issued climbing permits to 377 individuals.

"Based on the current trend, we estimate the number of permits to be close to 400," said Mira Acharya, director of the Department of Tourism. "We have issued a slew of measures to control crowds this year. If this does not work this season, we will come up with other measures next year."

With every fee-paying climber hiring a guide, Everest may see a throng of more than 800 people crawling up its slopes this year, raising worries of yet another record crowd on the planet's highest point.

"We are concerned about the climbers' safety," said Acharya.

Dambar Parajuli, president of the Expedition Operators Association, said the new directives sound good so far and expeditions must adhere to the government decision, but it is not "practically implementable".

"The influx of climbers is manageable as long as the weather is good. In a situation where Everest opens for less than a week, it causes havoc leading to a traffic jam. Everyone wants to climb anyhow because they have paid for it, and the money is non-refundable," said Parajuli. "But let's see if this plan works this year."

According to Parajuli, expedi-

tion organisers had been allowed to fix the number of climbers based on mutual understanding in past years too. "But this year, it has come as a decree," he said.

A "traffic jam" like situation occurs on Everest when many climbers vie for the summit at the same time, and when it happens above 8,000 metres, the "Death Zone", it can be hugely dangerous. The last steep challenge before the summit is the Hillary Step, a vertical rock face at 8,790 metres, which many climbers said was dislodged in the 2015 earthquake.

In a "traffic jam", exhausted climbers are often forced to wait for several hours, awaiting their turn to ascend or descend on a single rope, increasing chances of exhaustion, frostbite or altitude sickness.

Climbers could also run out of oxygen during the final phase of the ascent.

Under the latest directive, a climber is not allowed to make an attempt on another mountain immediately after finishing the first ascent in the wake of the Covid-19 threat.

According to the guideline, a climber must submit a negative polymerase chain reaction test report before heading for another climb.

This condition, however, is not applicable to climbers on Everest and Lhotse as the two peaks are

connected by South Col which is 7,906 metres high.

Mountaineer Colin O'Brady's plans to climb Everest and then the 8,516-metre Lhotse, the world's fourth highest peak this season.

This double-summit feat was achieved by American guide Michael Horst on May 14, 2011. Horst climbed Everest and Lhotse in less than 21 hours.

While Horst had used supplementary oxygen during the two climbs, according to alpinist.com, O'Brady plans to achieve the feat of back-to-back ascents of Everest and Lhotse without bottled oxygen.

Everest remained shut for climbers last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, as climbers have assembled at Everest base camp, at an altitude of 5,500 metres, from where expeditions start their ascent, concerns are growing about the coronavirus.

The sudden surge of virus cases in Nepal has become a cause for concern. The country has been reporting a steady rise in the number of new infections for the last two weeks.

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Health said the country reported 2,220 new infections in the last 24 hours, a sharp rise from 580 on April 14.

On April 15, a Norwegian climber reportedly complained of

a cough and fever, also the symptoms of Covid-19, at Everest base camp, and was immediately airlifted to a hospital in Kathmandu.

The incident has stoked concerns among the mountaineering community and on social media if the coronavirus has made it to Everest base camp, where around 2,000 people have gathered.

"It's not confirmed yet. The hospital where the patient is being treated has informed us that he is suffering from pneumonia," said Acharya. "After people started saying on social media platforms that the situation is getting out of control, we immediately launched an inquiry."

Acharya dismissed social media posts as rumours.

"Based on officials' reports from base camp, we can say there is nothing to worry about," said Acharya. "People also suffer from 'Khumbu cough' and it's not a new phenomenon."

Khumbu cough is a high-altitude cough and is caused by a combination of high altitude and low relative humidity. It can be severe enough in some instances to result in broken ribs.

Lakpa Norbu Sherpa, who has been coordinating rescue missions on Everest since 2003 as the base camp manager of the Himalayan Rescue Association, told the Post over the phone that there were rescues conducted over the past

two weeks, and many cases were related to high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), a potentially fatal form of severe high-altitude illness.

HAPE is a type of noncardiogenic pulmonary edema caused by hypoxia. It affects the lungs and is characterised by increased breathlessness with exertion progressing to breathlessness during rest, a dry cough, chest tightness or congestion, rapid heart beat, general weakness, and blue/purple skin tissue coloration.

Developing HAPE symptoms can be life threatening if untreated. Immediate descent to a lower altitude and administration of oxygen are imperative.

An official of Simrik Air, who wished not to be named, told the Post that they had rescued several people from Everest base camp, but the hospital or clinics where the patients were treated have not informed them about any Covid-19 case.

"If there was a Covid-19 case, we would have been informed by the hospital for contact tracing," said the official at the helicopter company.

Climbers are required to hold a negative PCR report before they are allowed to head for the mountain trails; but it is not mandatory for Nepalis and high-altitude climbing guides, which is a cause for concern, according to him.

The rescue from Everest base camp nonetheless set off alarm bells in Kathmandu.

The Department of Tourism on Wednesday issued circulars to all expedition outfitters, asking groups not to mix with other groups.

Acharya, who is also the head of the mountaineering division at the department, said they had issued orders to fix ropes separating one camp from another.

"All should remain isolated," said Acharya, adding that only a limited number of people are allowed to dine together. "But they are not allowed to bring new members to the dining tent."

More than 200 out of 350 swab samples test positive for Covid-19 at Nepal's Bheri Hospital

RUPA GHATARA]

KATHMANDU, 22 APR [KATHMANDUPOST]:

Of the 350 swab samples collected and tested at the Bheri Hospital in Banke, 204 samples have tested positive for Covid-19 until Thursday morning.

As per the hospital records, until 10am on Thursday 350 samples were tested for Covid-19 and of them 204 came positive.

In view of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases, the District Administration Office in Banke has decided to impose a lockdown in Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City from Wednesday midnight to April 25 midnight to contain the virus surge.

Meanwhile, an 86-year-old woman who was admitted at Nepalgunj Medical College and had tested positive for Covid-19 on April 20 died at around 2am Thursday. As of Thursday, 67 people have died in Banke district due to Covid-19-related complications.

Mamata Banerjee calls resurgence of COVID-19 in India "Modi-Made Disaster"

CHANCHAL, 22 APR [PTI]: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday sharpened her attack on the Prime Minister over the resurgence of COVID-19, terming it a "Modi-made disaster" and demanded that he quit if unable to provide adequate medical supplies to combat the disease.

She alleged that 65 per cent of the drugs manufactured in the country for tackling the pandemic have already been exported.

"The COVID-19 pandemic had subsided in the country but has surged in a second wave owing to the monumental failure of the central government and negligence and total incompetence on its part," she said addressing public meetings at Chanchal in Bengal's Malda and at Harirampur in the Dakshin Dinajpur districts.

As the Election Commission did not accede to Trinamool Congress' request to hold the last three of the eight-phase election in West Bengal on a single day, Mamata Banerjee said she is forced to combat the sharp rise in infections in the state as its Chief Minister as well campaign for Trinamool Congress, her party.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mamata Banerjee said "The country is facing a Modi-made disaster. Modi babu will have to take responsibility on why medicines to treat COVID-19 are not available in the market... You have to provide medicines or leave the chair. Either you control Corona or move out."

"The second Covid wave is more intense. There are no injections or oxygen. Vaccines and medicines are being shipped abroad even as there is a scarcity of these items in the country," she said earlier a rally at Balurghat in Bengal's Dakshin Dinajpur district.

"It is not a man-made disaster,

it is Modi-made," she added.

Alleging that 65 per cent of drugs manufactured in the country to treat coronavirus have been exported, she said while medicines may be given to other countries, it has to be also ensured that Indians get adequate supply on a priority basis.

BJP is attempting to break the spine of Bengal (but) we (TMC) have resolved to break its backbone," Mamata Banerjee claimed, adding that none other than her had the strength to fight PM Modi.

"Bengal is the land of Royal Bengal Tiger and we fight like one," Mamata Banerjee asserted.

Analysts feel that as Malda-Murshidabad districts of Bengal have been traditional bases for the Congress party, Mamata Banerjee is attempting to break the Congress stranglehold by positioning TMC as the only alternative to BJP in the state.

The Chief Minister claimed that her government has done a lot for the welfare of Rajbanshis (an ethnic group inhabiting parts of North Bengal, Assam and Meghalayas) and minorities in the state.

Mamata Banerjee urged the people "not to allow division of votes" and to unitedly support the Trinamool Congress. Addressing a gathering in the Muslim-dominated Malda district, Mamata Banerjee asked the electorate to cast their votes in favour of TMC irrespective of their religious beliefs as she claimed it to be the "only party which has not allowed any division on grounds of religion."

There is "no one else in the market" to ensure a government which will protect religion and rights of all people other than the TMC, Mamata Banerjee asserted and urged people not to divide the votes against BJP by supporting the Congress or the Left Front.

Earlier addressing an election rally at Balurghat, the Trinamool chief asserted that West Bengal will be run only by a "Bengal engine government" and not by "Modi's double-engine".

"Our state will be run by a Bengal engine government and not by Modi's double-engine government. We will not allow Gujarat to capture our state or run it from Delhi. Bengal will rule Bengal," she said. The term "double-engine government" often used by BJP leaders denotes the government of the same party at the Centre and the state.

The TMC chief also urged people not to vote for Left-Congress-ISK alliance candidates claiming that voting for them will strengthen the BJP's hand.

Mamata Banerjee said that the Centre had said seven months ago that the pandemic has subsided.

"Now, with elections underway in West Bengal, the BJP is bringing in people from other states and spreading the infection among the people here," she alleged.

She said that her administration is finding it difficult to set up safe homes as many government accommodations are being used to house central forces.

"We are finding it difficult to set up safe homes. Although we have increased the number of beds, I would suggest that patients who don't have severe symptoms, remain in home isolation," Mamata Banerjee said.

She claimed that the BJP is saying different things at different places on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Elections to the 294-member state assembly are being held in eight phases from March 27 to April 29. Results will be announced on May 2.

Two-day Fish Mela at MG Marg concludes

GANGTOK, 21 APR (IPR): The two days long Fish Mela organised at MG Marg, Gangtok, concluded on 21 Apr, 2021 with a valedictory function.

The closing ceremony was graced by the Minister, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, Lok Nath Sharma as the Chief Guest and the Minister for Power Department, MN Sherpa, Minister for Forest Department Karma Loday Bhutia, Minister, PHE Department, Bhim Hang Limboo were present as the Guests of Honour.

The programme was organised by the Directorate of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, Government of Sikkim in collaboration with National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad, Government of India.

Addressing the valedictory session, Lok Nath Sharma, congratulated all fish exhibitors and winners of best performing stalls in various categories. He also outlined the objective of organising Fish Mela in the State and mentioned that fish farming would also strengthen the rural economy and contribute a remarkable role in making Sikkim, a self-reliant state. He also appealed the youth to adopt the profession of fish farming and other livestock farming to build their future.

Underlining the huge requirements of fish annually in the State, he appealed the unemployed youth and farmers to involve themselves in fish farming to meet up the growing demands. The Minister also advised interested youth to submit an application at the concerned District Level Office to get benefitted with all required inputs, including tanks, feeds and other technical supports to start up the fish farming.

He also elaborated various initiatives taken up by the State Government under the leadership of the Chief Minister to boost farmers economy in piggery, dairy, agriculture and allied sectors. He also acknowledged the Directorate of Fisheries for their dedication in organising the Fish Mela amidst numerous challenges and also advised departmental officials to put extra ef-

fort in execution of assigned responsibilities for the ultimate benefits of the farming community in the state.

The Minister for Forest Department, Karma Loday Bhutia in his address, applauded the initiative of Directorate of Fisheries in organising the Fish Mela to encourage farmers from rural areas in the State. He also touched upon varieties of indigenous fish available in the State and said that fish farming would be a sustainable source of livelihood and will have greater impact in uplifting the economy as the State has huge fish market.

During the programme, the five best performing stalls were awarded in various categories. The Aerika Aquarium Rangpo received the Best Ornamental Fish Exhibit Award while Upper Sribadam Trout Rearing Cooperative Society presented with Best Rainbow Trout Exhibit Award. Similarly, Carp Fish farmers from Daramdin was given the best award in Grass Carp category and Carp Fish farmers of South Sikkim was presented the Best Common Carp exhibit. Likewise, local fisherman of East District received the Best Indigenous Fish Exhibit Award. The Chief Guest and other dignitaries also handed over certificates to all the participants.

Earlier, the Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Dr Sangey D Bhutia proposed welcome address and the Director, Directorate of Fisheries N Jaswant presented the Vote of Thanks. Director Fisheries also mentioned that the exhibitors sold out the fishes of One Thousand Four Hundred Seventy-Six (1476) Kilograms by 3.00pm today, and collected price value of Rupees Ten Lakhs Thirty Eight Thousand and Three Hundred.

It may be mentioned that the fish farmers who had participated in the exhibition were from Regu, Bashilakha, Tenkilakha, Pakyong, Rangpo from East District, Upper Sribadam, Upper Rumbuk, Upper Rimbik, Daramdin and Timburbong from West District, Men-Rongong, Theng and Dzongu from North and Sokpay/Chouridara, Sumbuk and Rabitaar from South Sikkim.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?
email us: news@summittimes.com

Olympic bodies launch competitive series in virtual sports

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND (AP): A competitive virtual sports event was launched Thursday by the International Olympic Committee.

The Olympic Virtual Series will include five sports — baseball, cycling, auto racing, rowing and sailing — and runs from May 13 to June 23. The Tokyo Olympics open on July 23.

Gaming brands involved in the project include Gran Turismo, Zwift and eBaseball Powerful Pro Baseball 2020.

"(The series) will mobilize virtual sport, esports and gaming enthusiasts all around the world in order to reach new Olympic audiences," the IOC said in a statement. Details of prizes offered in some events are being finalized, the IOC said.

The Olympic body is hoping to reach more young people with a strategy for virtual sports and gaming and said the series "allows participants around the world to compete from home or their training facilities."

Tokyo Olympics torch relay has first positive COVID-19 case

TOKYO (AP): Tokyo Olympics organizers said Thursday that a policeman tested positive for COVID-19 a day after his assignment last week at the Olympic torch relay.

It is the first positive test connected to the relay since it began March 25 from northeastern Fukushima prefecture. Organizers say the policeman, who is in his 30s, was assigned to control traffic on the April 17 leg in southwestern Kagawa prefecture. They said the officer developed symptoms and tested positive the next day. Local health authorities are investigating.

Officials say the policeman was wearing a mask and taking social-distancing precautions and other measures. The report comes as Japan is preparing to declare a third state of emergency in western metropolitan areas around Osaka, and in Tokyo. It is expected on Friday and is being re-instated after current measures failed to slow the latest resurgence fueled by a new, more contagious variant of the virus detected earlier in Britain.

Japan had 541,496 cases and 9,710 deaths as of Tuesday. These results are good by global standard but poor in Asia. Without compulsory lockdowns, people in Japan have become less cooperative with preventive measures. The organizers said all participants and officials are taking the best precautions and that the case will not affect the subsequent legs of the torch events.

The torch relay involves 10,000 runners crisscrossing Japan for four months, ending at the arrival at the National Stadium on July 23 to kick off the scheduled opening ceremony.

Suns survive heave from Embiid in 116-113 win over 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (AP): Joel Embiid grabbed a two-handed rebound, turned and heaved an 85-foot, right-handed strike with a throw ripped from Bryce Harper's playbook that banked off the glass and rattled off the front and back of the rim and out.

The Philadelphia center was flat on his back in disbelief over the near-make that would have sent the game to overtime.

"It would have made for a long flight, long night and not a lot of sleep," Suns coach Monty Williams said.

Rest easy, Phoenix. Chris Paul, Devin Booker, Mikal Bridges and the Suns walked off winners on the road for the second time this week against one of the top teams in the East. Paul scored 28 points, Booker had 19 and Bridges 18 to lead the Phoenix Suns to a 116-113 victory over Philadelphia on Wednesday night. Embiid had 38 points and 17 rebounds and one oh-so-close shot.

"When I threw it, it looked good," Embiid said. Paul, a 93% free-throw shooter, missed one from the line that would have sealed the win instead of giving Embiid a glimmer of high-light-reel hope.

"If you're up three, I always want to make the free throw to go up four," Paul said. "That shot was in-and-out. I ain't never seen anything like



it." Neither had the rest of the Suns. "That was a heck of a display of a throw right there," Suns forward Cameron Johnson said.

Said Bridges: "I don't know how I would have reacted. That was crazy."

The Suns improved their NBA-best road record to 19-7 and are second overall at 42-16 — 1 1/2 games behind Utah for the league lead.

Paul hit five 3s and Bridges, a former Villanova standout, continued to haunt the Sixers three years after an ill-fated draft-night deal. The Sixers selected Bridges with the 10th overall pick in

2018 — a feel-good story because of the Nova connection and his mother worked for the 76ers' parent company. Zhaire Smith played only 13 NBA games and is out of the league while Bridges turned into a breakout star for the blossoming Suns.

The Sixers again played without starters Ben Simmons (unspecified illness) and Tobias Harris (right knee). Simmons missed his second straight game and Harris his third, the Sixers certainly secure enough in playoff spot to the point they don't have to rush either one back. Seth Curry also missed

the game with a left hip flexor — three starters down certainly one reason why FanDuel Sportsbook had the Suns as three-point favorite.

The Sixers would certainly like all three back in time for this week's two-game set in Milwaukee. Shake Milton, Furkan Korkmaz, and Matisse Thybulle joined Embiid and Danny Green (18 points) in the lineup. "I know we got a lot of guys out, but we still want to win the game," 76ers coach Doc Rivers said.

Embiid left in the third when he slammed his left knee on the court and sat behind the basket with a towel

around his leg. He rested on his back and stretched his knee as the teams went basket-for-basket. Embiid jogged in place on the baseline and played cheerleader as the short-handed Sixers tried to hang with the Suns. Embiid has missed 18 games this season with injuries, notably a bone bruise on his right knee that cost him 11 games after the All-Star break. Rivers said he did not know who would be available for both games against the Bucks.

Paul buried consecutive 3s for an 85-81 lead in Embiid's absence and the All-Star center did not check back in until

a shade over 6 minutes left the game and the Sixers down seven. Embiid buried a 3 in a late-game lineup in which he was the only regular starter.

The Suns, coming off an overtime win in Milwaukee, got big baskets down the stretch from Booker — including a nice bank off the glass and he swished a fall-away jumper for the dagger with 13 seconds left in the game.

TIP-INS
76ers: Rivers, who stumped for Joe Biden during his campaign President, welcomed the guilty verdict of the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of murder and manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. "The fact that we celebrated a man who committed murder is going to jail, I thought about that last night and I'm not so sure if we've come a long way or we have a long way to go," Rivers said. Rivers said he talked to the team about the verdict and felt "it was my responsibility" as coach to discuss current events with his players.

Suns: Count Rivers among the fans of Williams. "Monty is a terrific coach. When you talk to other coaches and who you have to prepare for, who runs good stuff, Monty's name always comes up. Now he has the talent," Rivers said. The Suns will make the playoffs for the first time since 2010. ... Jae Crowder left the game with a sprained right ankle.

Knicks beat Hawks 122-119, win streak at NBA-best 8 games



NEW YORK (AP): Julius Randle had 40 points and 10 rebounds to lead New York to a 122-119 overtime victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Wednesday night, the Knicks' NBA-best eighth straight win.

Randle's driving layup with eight seconds left in regulation gave New York a 122-119 lead, but Bogdanovic hit a 3-pointer with 6.2 seconds left to send the game into overtime.

The Knicks scored the first 10 points of the extra session.

"We've been challenged throughout the season and sometimes they haven't gone our way," Randle said. "But right now, we're finding ways to close games and win games."

Derrick Rose and Immanuel Quickley each scored 20 points for New York. Reggie Bullock added 18 and RJ Barrett had 16. Nerlens Noel had 12 rebounds.

"This was a playoff-type atmosphere," Quickley said. "As an NBA player, you have to be ready to step up."

Trae Young had 20 points and 14 assists for the Hawks, but left the game with 1:13 remaining in the third quarter after suffering an ankle injury and did not return. X-rays were negative and he is expected to get an MRI on Thursday.

Chris Capela had 25 points and 22 rebounds for Atlanta. Bogdanovic scored 20 points. John Collins finished with 18 and Kevin Huerta 17.

Atlanta took a game-high 11-point lead, 95-84, when the Knicks' Norvel Pelle was called for goaltending on a shot by Onyeka Okongwu with 1:47 left in the third quarter.

Young left the game soon after and the Knicks took advantage, moving into fourth place in the Eastern Conference with the victory.

"We were searching tonight to get ourselves going," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "But, we have a true team. As we head down the stretch, we

want to be playing our best." The Knicks pulled within two at 109-107 on the second of Quickley's consecutive 3-pointers with 7:01 remaining, then took their biggest lead of the game at 116-109 on Rose's 3-pointer with 4:46 left.

Lou Williams added 11 points for the Hawks, who had won nine of their last 11 games.

"I saw a lot of fight from our guys," Nate McMillan said. "We just didn't have enough in overtime to win this game."

TIP-INS
Hawks: Atlanta's last win at Madison Square Garden (114-107) came on January 21, 2018. ... The Hawks had won five consecutive road games against Eastern Conference opponents.

Knicks: Randle, the reigning Eastern Conference Player of the Week, is the first Knicks player to earn that distinction since February 2017 (Kristaps Porzingis).

IRON MEN
Only one player from each team has seen action in all of his team's games this season. Kevin Huerta has played in all 59 for the Hawks, starting 44. Barrett has played and started in all 60 games for the Knicks. Randle and Solomon Hill have only missed one game each this season.

LOOKING FOR A PLAYOFF PAYOFF
Neither the Knicks nor the Hawks have reached the playoffs for quite a while. Atlanta hasn't seen postseason action since the 2016-17 season, while New York hasn't been in the playoffs since the 2012-13 campaign.

HOW SWEEP IT IS
The Knicks won all three meetings against the Hawks this season. New York had not swept Atlanta since winning all three games during the 2012-13 season.

UP NEXT:
Hawks: Host Miami Heat on Friday. Knicks: Host Toronto Raptors on Saturday.

Curry finally goes cold, Beal rallies Wizards past Warriors

WASHINGTON (AP): After a four-point first half that was shocking by his recent standards, Stephen Curry faked out Alex Len and tried a wide-open floater from the lane that clanked off the rim. He slapped his hands in frustration as he ran down the court.

A minute later, he tried another floater that Len swatted away.

Coming off a historic run in which he made 78 3-pointers, the most in any 11-game stretch in NBA history, Curry was bound to have a bad night eventually, and it happened Wednesday night as the Golden State Warriors closed out a five-game trip with a 118-114 loss at Washington.

Guarded primarily by Russell Westbrook, Curry was frigid early and cooled off again late, and Bradley Beal rallied the Wizards to their season-best sixth straight victory as Washington welcomed back fans for the first time in more than a year.

Curry, who came in having overtaken Beal for the NBA scoring lead, had 18 points on 7-of-25 shooting, including 2 of 14 on 3s. He hadn't scored fewer than 32 points in a game since March 17.

"It was a great run. It was something that hadn't been done before, and it was going to end at some point," Curry said. "Now you've got to start another one."

Beal scored 29 points as the glamorous matchup with Curry mostly fizzled until Washington rallied from 11 points down in the fourth quarter. He pounded his chest after scoring on a drive with 2:44 left and drawing a sixth foul on Draymond Green. Beal converted the three-point



play to bring Washington within one, and he found Davis Bertans for a 3-pointer that put the Wizards ahead for good with 2 minutes remaining.

Westbrook had 14 points, a season-high 20 rebounds and 10 assists. The triple-double was his 27th of the season and 173rd of his career, second to Oscar Robertson's 181, but coach Scott Brooks was more thankful for Westbrook's defense.

"That's the thing that Russell probably won't get a lot of credit for, but he did a great job of guarding him, putting pressure on him, making him take tough shots. It wears him out," Brooks said. "Every now and then, an amazing player like Steph will have an off game, and a lot to do with it was Russell."

Kelly Oubre Jr. led Golden State with 24 points in his second game at Washington, and first with the Warriors, since the Wizards traded him to Phoenix in December of 2018. Jordan Poole added 22 points and hit back-to-back 3-pointers midway through the fourth quarter that put the Warriors up by 11.

Curry started 2 for 13 from the floor and 0 for 7 from 3-point range before he made a layup and a 3 in a 21-second

span to get Golden State rolling midway through the third quarter. But he wasn't consistent enough to hold off Beal and Westbrook late. His final 3-point attempt from straight away with 1:17 left wasn't even close.

Fighting for a Western Conference playoff spot, the Warriors went 3-2 on their trip, also losing a close game at Boston despite 47 points from Curry.

"I think it could have easily been a 5-0 trip, but yeah, tonight we definitely lost a game we should have won," Green said. "That's never good."

The Wizards lost rookie Deni Avdija to a scary-looking right ankle injury late in the first half. The 20-year-old from Israel lay on the floor for several minutes before being taken off in a wheelchair. The Wizards did not provide any detail on the injury after the game, but Brooks would not rule out Avdija returning this season.

Reserve center Daniel Gafford had his best game for the Wizards since he was acquired in a trade with Chicago, finishing with 19 points and 10 rebounds. Bertans also scored 19 points and Raul Neto had 18.

PAYING CUSTOMERS
The District of Columbia agreed last week to allow 10% capacity at

Capital One Arena, which equates to 2,100 per game.

Half the seats in the lower bowl remained covered by blue plastic and masked fans were sprinkled throughout all levels. Among those in attendance were 100 invited front-line health workers. The game hosts and dancers entertained fans virtually, and the national anthem was prerecorded.

Beal took a microphone at half court to thank the fans before tipoff.

TIP-INS
Warriors: F Juan Toscano-Anderson remains in the NBA's concussion protocol. He suffered the injury and a head laceration when he tumbled over the scorer's table while diving to save a loose ball in Saturday's loss at Boston. Toscano-Anderson required more than 30 stitches, coach Steve Kerr said. ... G Damion Lee sat Wednesday after Philadelphia's Joel Embiid stepped on his left foot Monday night. Lee cracked his big toenail "and he's been in a lot of pain," Kerr said. ... Andrew Wiggins reached 10,000 points, the first player born in Canada to hit that milestone. Canada's Steve Nash, with 17,387 points, was born in South Africa.

Wizards: F Rui Hachimura sat for the second consecutive game with a sore left knee. He remains day to day, Brooks said.

UP NEXT
Warriors: Play nine of their final 13 games at home, starting Friday night against Denver.

Wizards: At Oklahoma City on Friday night. Washington beat the Thunder at home on Monday.

Australia ends China deals on national interest grounds

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA (AP): Australia's cancellation of two infrastructure deals with China prompted Beijing on Thursday to accuse its leaders of a "Cold War mentality" and threaten a possible response.

The clash adds to strains in relations that are at a multi-decade low after Beijing blocked imports of coal and other goods from Australia in retaliation for its call for an investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic.

The two contracts with Victoria, where the major city of Melbourne is located, were vetoed under a law allowing the government to overrule agreements that violate the national interest, Foreign Minister Marise Payne announced Wednesday.

They were part of Beijing's multibillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative" to expand trade by building ports, railways and other facilities across dozens of countries from the South Pacific through Asia to Europe.

The signing of those agreements in 2018 and 2019 led Australia's parliament to enact the law permitting the national leadership to intervene. It took effect in December.

Payne also announced cancellation of contracts signed by Victoria's Education Depart-



ment with the governments of Syria in 1999 and Iran in 2004.

The four deals are "inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy or adverse to our foreign relations," Payne said.

The Chinese government criticized the decision, though Payne said Thursday she didn't expect Beijing to retaliate.

The decision "seriously damaged relations and mutual trust," said a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin.

"China reserves the right to make a further reaction," Wang said. He gave no details of possible retaliation.

"We urge the Australian side to abandon its cold war mentality" and "not to go further down the wrong path so as to avoid making China-Australia relations,

which are already facing serious difficulties, even worse," Wang said.

China blocked imports of Australian coal, beef, wine, lobsters and other goods last year after Australia called for an investigation into the coronavirus, which emerged in central China in late 2019.

Chinese ministers refuse to take calls from their Australian counterparts.

China is Australia's No. 1 foreign market, but the sanctions impact has been limited, because Chinese steel mills still buy Australian iron ore, the country's most valuable export.

The decision "isn't about any one country," said Payne. "It is most certainly not intended to harm Australia's relationships with any countries."

The opposition leader in Victoria, Michael O'Brien, welcomed the decision.

O'Brien, who belongs to the same conservative Liberal Party as the foreign minister, complained the Victoria government had "given away major infrastructure contracts to Chinese-owned companies."

"In return, the Chinese government has smashed our farmers with tariffs on barley" and "smashed our wine exporters with trade sanctions," O'Brien said.

Observers describe the Victoria deals as vague and non-binding.

Some suspect their value to China's ruling Communist Party was to exploit disagreements in Australia over "Belt and Road" deals.

Defense Minister Peter Dutton expressed

concern about Chinese military activity and possible cyber attacks.

Agreements with China "against our national interests" are "used for propaganda reasons, and we're just not going to allow that to happen," Dutton said.

The vast Chinese steel industry's need for iron ore is likely to restrain Beijing from taking drastic action, said Fitch Ratings in a report. It said blocking imports would hurt Chinese employment and economic growth.

Any further penalties are likely to target "smaller export categories," Fitch Ratings said.

Australian exports to China fell by 2% from a year earlier in the second half of 2020, the government says. Excluding iron ore, the decline would have been 40%.

Laos locks down capital over virus outbreak tied to Thailand

BANGKOK (AP): Laos locked down its capital and closed its international borders to most traffic Thursday after identifying a COVID-19 cluster connected to its bigger neighbor Thailand.

Residents of the capital Vientiane are barred from leaving the city and outsiders must get permission to enter. Its international borders were closed except to trucks carrying goods and in cases allowed by the nation's COVID-19 taskforce, state news agency KPL reported.

It said the lockdown order signed by Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh also prohibits all Vientiane residents from leaving their homes except for essential food shopping, hospital visits and other authorized tasks. The restrictions last until May 5.

The report said they were ordered after 28

new COVID-19 cases were confirmed Wednesday, bringing the country's total to 88. The total population of Laos is about 7.5 million, including about 700,000 in Vientiane.

The government-owned Vientiane Times reported on its website that 26 of the 28 new cases are residents of the capital who had contact with a student at the National University of Laos who had caught the virus from a Thai man. It said the other two were workers who had returned from Thailand to the southern province of Champassak.

Neighboring Thailand is fighting its worst wave of the illness but has not imposed a national lockdown this year so far, though many provinces have ordered quarantines for visitors, especially from places with active outbreaks.

Thai officials re-

ported 1,470 new cases Thursday, pushing the total past 48,000. It also reported seven deaths, its highest for a single day, bringing total fatalities to 117. Vientiane was locked down April 1-19 last year after the country's first nine COVID-19 cases were reported.

Under the new restrictions, all gatherings of more than 20 people, including wedding parties, cultural festivals and religious activities are prohibited, and entertainment venues, bars, massage parlors and gyms are closed.

Enterprises deemed essential and allowed to keep operating include hospitals, banks, supermarkets, restaurants and public utilities.

KPL reported that the Foreign Ministry has been instructed to help facilitate the exit of foreigners who wish to return to their home countries.

Syria receives batch of UN vaccines to speed up virus fight

DAMASCUS, SYRIA (AP): The Syrian government received a batch of 203,000 COVID-19 vaccines Thursday, the health minister said, in a move aimed at speeding up a sluggish inoculation process in the war-torn country.

The arrival of the United Nations-secured jabs came as a new wave of infections has overwhelmed medical centers around Syria. The AstraZeneca vaccines will be part of a campaign aiming to vaccinate 20% of the country's population before the end of the year.

Syria's government controls two-thirds of the country, with the rest held by rebels and Kurdish factions. Millions have fled the country or been displaced, and the war has killed some half a million people from the pre-war population of 23 million.

Health Minister Hassan Ghabbash made the announcement during a news conference held in the capital Damascus. He said the vaccine will be given first to frontline workers, the elderly and those with chronic dis-

eases. Akjemal Magtymova, the representative of the World Health Organization in Syria, said that the government drafted a plan with the WHO and U.N. children's agency UNICEF to distribute the vaccine equally across the country.

Thursday's announcement came a day after Syria's last rebel-held enclave received its first batch of 53,800 COVID-19 vaccines, brought in from neighboring Turkey.

The 203,000 jabs that arrived in Damascus will cover government-held areas and those under the control of Kurdish fighters in the northeast. Hundreds of thousands more are scheduled to arrive in the coming months.

"The priority for immunization will be frontline health workers who are the first line of defense against COVID," said Ted Chaiban, regional director for the Middle East and north Africa at UNICEF. Speaking with The Associated Press from neighboring Jordan, Chaiban added that after health workers, older people will be

vaccinated. The Syrian government has registered over 21,500 cases — including 1,483 deaths — in areas under its control since the first case was reported in March 2020. Over 21,000 infections and over 640 deaths have been recorded in rebel-held northwestern Syria, while the Kurdish areas in the northeast registered 14,400 cases including 477 deaths.

Officials in government-controlled areas had already rolled out limited vaccinations following an announcement by Damascus in February that it received an undetermined amount of vaccine from an unnamed friendly country.

Separately, the United Arab Emirates said it sent a shipment of COVID-19 vaccine doses that arrived Tuesday in Damascus to help Syria fight the pandemic. It didn't say how many doses or which vaccine.

The WHO had said the vaccination campaign in Syria was expected to start in April. It aims to inoculate 20% of the population by the end of 2021.

Japan raises emissions cut target to 46% by 2030

TOKYO (AP): Japan said Thursday it will raise its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to 46% on 2013 levels from 26%, NHK television reported.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has set a goal to achieve carbon neutrality in Japan by 2050.

Suga on Thursday announced a new more ambitious target of 46% in emissions reduction by 2030, significantly up from the current 26% from the 2013 levels, NHK said.

It comes hours before Suga attends a virtual climate summit hosted by President Joe Biden.

Japan has been under pressure from European countries to do more than its earlier target of 26%.

Suga, during his visit to Washington last week, agreed to cooperate in leading global efforts to decarbonize by promoting clean energy technologies and implementing the 2015 Paris accord.

Indonesia looking for submarine that may be too deep to help

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP): Indonesia's navy ships on Thursday were intensely searching for a submarine that likely fell too deep to retrieve, making survival chances for the 53 people on board slim. Neighboring countries rushed their rescue ships to support the complex operation.

The diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise Wednesday when it missed a scheduled reporting call. Officials reported an oil slick and the smell of diesel fuel near the starting position of its last dive, about 96 kilometers (60 miles) north of the resort island of Bali, though there has been no conclusive evidence that they are linked to the submarine.

Indonesia's navy chief of staff, Adm. Yudo Margono, told reporters Thursday that oxygen in the submarine would run out by 3 a.m. on Saturday. He said rescuers found an unidentified object with high magnetism in the area and that officials hope it's the submarine.

The navy said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet) — much deeper than its collapse depth estimated at 200 meters (656 feet) by a firm that refitted the vessel in 2009-2012.

Ahn Guk-hyeon, an official from South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, said the submarine

would collapse if it goes deeper than around 200 meters because of pressure. He said his company upgraded much of the Indonesian submarine's internal structures and systems but it lacks latest information about the vessel.

Frank Owen, secretary of the Submarine Institute of Australia, also said the submarine could be at too great a depth for a rescue team to operate.

"Most rescue systems are really only rated to about 600 meters (1,969 feet)," he said. "They can go deeper than that because they will have a safety margin built into the design, but the pumps and other systems that are associated with that may not have the capacity to operate. So they can survive at that depth, but not necessarily operate."

Owen, a former submariner who developed an Australian submarine rescue system, said the Indonesian vessel was not fitted with a rescue seat around an escape hatch designed for underwater rescues. He said a rescue submarine would make a waterproof connection to a disabled submarine with a so-called skirt fitted over the rescue seat so that the hatch can be opened without the disabled submarine filling with water.

Owen said the submarine could be recovered from 500 meters (1,640 feet) without any damage but couldn't say if it would have implod-

ed at 700 meters (2,297 feet). In November 2017, an Argentine submarine went missing with 44 crew members in the South Atlantic, almost a year before its wreckage was found at a depth of 800 meters (2,625 feet). In 2019, a fire broke out on one of the Russian navy's deep-sea research submersibles, killing 14 sailors.

Indonesia's military said that navy ships, submarines and aircraft were searching an area where the submarine was last detected. A hydro-oceanographic survey ship equipped with underwater detection capabilities also was on its way to the site around the oil spills.

Rescue ships from Singapore and Malaysia are expected to arrive between Saturday and Monday. The military said Australia, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, India and Turkey have also offered assistance. South Korea said it has also offered help.

"The news of the missing submarine is deeply concerning," Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said during a visit to New Zealand. "We will provide any assistance that we can. There's no question that submarine search and rescues are very complex."

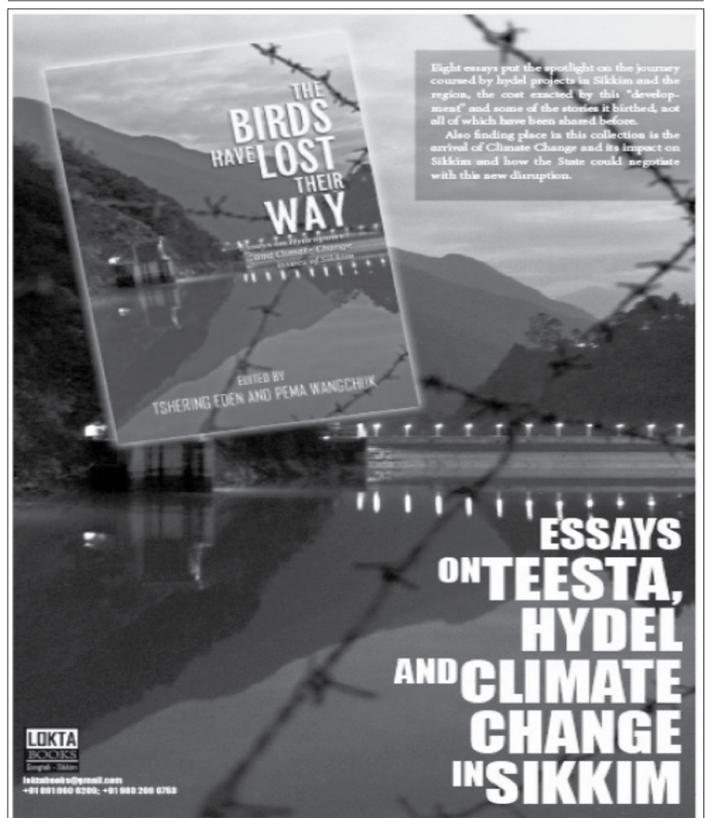
Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton called the incident "a terrible tragedy." He told Sydney Radio 2GB that fact that the submarine is "in a very deep part of

waters" makes it "very difficult for the recovery or for location." "Our fervent prayers and hopes go out to the crew of KRI Nanggala, for their safety and resilience," Singapore's Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen wrote on Facebook.

Indonesia's navy said an electrical failure may have occurred during the dive, causing the submarine to lose control and become unable to undertake emergency procedures that would have allowed it to resurface. It was rehearsing for a missile-firing exercise on Thursday, which was eventually canceled.

The German-built submarine, which has been in service in Indonesia since 1981, was carrying 49 crew members, its commander and three gunners, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said. It had maintenance and overhaul in Germany, Indonesia and most recently in South Korea, from 2007 to 2012.

The world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands has faced growing challenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands. Last year, President Joko Widodo reaffirmed the country's sovereignty during a visit to the islands at the edge of the South China Sea, one of the busiest sea lanes where China is embroiled in territorial disputes with its smaller neighbors.



Burning Man mulling mandatory COVID-19 vaccines for August

RENO, NEV. (AP): Burning Man festival organizers have said that they are considering requiring attendees to prove they have been vaccinated for COVID-19 if the organizers move forward with plans to hold this year's counter-culture festival in the Nevada desert.

The organizers backed off an earlier statement indicating that they had already decided to make the shots mandatory. They say they won't decide for sure until the end of the month whether the event that was canceled last year because of the pandemic will take place this summer. Burning Man CEO Marianne Goodell said in a video message posted on the group's web site on April 8 that "vaccines will be required to come to Burning Man." She erroneously said at that time that the state of Nevada requires that people have proof of being vaccinated at large gatherings.

She acknowledged last weekend in an updated statement on the group's web site that she "misspoke." Citing a backlash from many long-time attendees at the annual event that draws more than 80,000 people to the Black Rock Desert about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of Reno, Goodell clarified that organizers had been formulating their own guidelines on mandatory vaccinations as part of the health and safety plan they must submit to state and

county officials. "We are weighing the gravity of what that does," Goodell said. "And we know that challenges the concept of 'radical inclusion.'"

She said civic responsibility is an important part of organizers' guiding

by the end of this week and at the latest by April 30. "At this point, the government agencies involved in collaborating with us have been really super supportive and super helpful. They are not putting up any roadblocks. We are all look-



principles but that they realize people in some countries haven't had access to vaccines, nor have most children. "That's not quite figured out yet. There are plenty of people that are challenging whether it is necessary," she said.

Goodell added: "We hear you. The question of vaccines and how to basically require them, and even from a logistical standing, frankly — all of that, we're taking a look at." Goodell said organizers also have not decided whether to require or provide testing at the event. She said they hope to reach a decision

ing at the resources to have to make it happen and get this done," Goodell said. Goodell said the application organizers must submit for a special use permit to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management by April 23 seeks an attendance cap of 69,000, down from the 80,000 cap approved for some past festivals.

She said current input from leaders of the largest theme camps indicate about 20% to 30% so far are committed to returning to the playa in August, which would suggest overall attendance in the range of 60,000 to 65,000.



BUTTERFLY MOMENT! Actress Brie Larson rocked a one-piece bathing suit in Hawaii.

Hannah Brown, Iggy Azalea and Taye Diggs Will Play for Love on The Celebrity Dating Game

Hannah Brown, Iggy Azalea and Taye Diggs are among the celebs looking for true love on ABC's upcoming series, *The Celebrity Dating Game*, premiering on June 14.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. And after Hannah Brown struck out in *The Bachelor* franchise, she's ready to try her luck on a new dating show.

ABC has cast its former Bachelorette lead as one of the first contestants on its upcoming show, *The Celebrity Dating Game*. Hannah, along with rapper Iggy Azalea and Broadway star Taye Diggs, will be among the celebrity contestants on the show, the network announced this week.

The Celebrity Dating Game, a new version of *The Dating Game*, is hosted by New Girl alum Zoey Deschanel and Grammy winner Michael Bolton.

As described by ABC, "The Celebrity Dating Game offers a wry wink at modern dating with a star-studded roster of celebrity singles from television, music, comedy, reality TV and feature film in their pursuit to find love," as it offers "the same iconic feel as the original classic dating show."

Each episode centers on two celebrities, who each pick one suitor from a hidden panel of three potential lovers, based on their answers to various questions.

However, the suitors don't know the identity of the celebrity and are given clues "via hilarious parody song performances" from Michael.

In 2019, Hannah got her start in the reality TV world by competing for Colton Underwood's heart on *The Bachelor*. She then starred in season 15 of *The Bachelorette* and selected Jed Wyatt as her fiancé.

Shockingly, they ended things after he was accused of being with another woman all along (he denies he cheated). She later tried to make it work with her runner-up, Tyler Cameron. Although their relationship didn't

take off, they were there for each other in difficult times during the pandemic.

In February, Hannah seemed to make things official with boyfriend Adam Woolard when they appeared in the music video for



Jordan Davis' single "Almost Maybes." "Every day is so great. He's just awesome," Hannah said during a YouTube Q&A in March. "I'm telling y'all, he's the nicest person I've ever met." It appears their romance didn't work out, because the 26 year old is now searching for love once again on *The Celebrity Dating Game*.

As for Iggy, she confirmed in October 2020 that she was no longer dating Playboi Carti, the father of her son, Onyx Kelly, who is about 1 year old. The "Fancy" vocalist has also reportedly dated Tyga, Quavo, French Montana and A\$AP Rocky in the past. Taye's dating history is just as star-studded. He was married to Frozen star Idina Menzel from 2003 to 2014, and the pair shares 11-year-old son Walker Nathaniel Diggs.

"Rent is literally the gift that keeps on giving. I met my baby mama there, it was the beginning of my career," he reflected during his appearance on *The Drew Barrymore Show* in January. "That's where it all started."

Watch Hannah, Iggy and Taye try to find their next match when *The Celebrity Dating Game* premieres on June 14 on ABC.

Jana Kramer Files for Divorce From Mike Caussin After 6 Years of Marriage

Jana Kramer and Mike Caussin have broken up after nearly six years of marriage. The "I Won't Give Up" singer announced the split on Instagram, saying, "I just can't fight any longer." It's officially the end of the road for Jana Kramer and Mike Caussin. The country music singer has filed for divorce from her husband of nearly six years, a source confirms to E! News. Jana, 37, announced the breakup with a message on Instagram on Wednesday, April 21. She wrote, "As I try to make sense of a reality I never wanted to believe could be possible again, those words have now become a reality. I've fought y'all. I've loved hard. I've forgiven. I've put the work in. I've given everything I have, and now I have nothing else to give. It's time."

She went on, "Please know that I still believe whole heartedly in marriage, love, and rebuilding. I just can't fight any longer. It's time to heal. Thank you for all the love, heart, and support, in many ways you have fought on this journey alongside me, and for that I am grateful."

Her message ended with, "I'll always encourage you to continue the good fight, but you can't fight it alone." The couple shares children Jolie Rae, 5, and Jace Joseph, 2. As for the reason behind the divorce, a source tells E! News, "Mike broke her trust yet again. He had so many chances to make this right and she tried and tried, but she was really left with no choice."

They previously separated in August 2016 and have publicly discussed infidelity issues in their marriage.

In fact, Mike went to rehab in 2016 for two months to help treat his sex addiction, and he shared details of the experience during an episode of on Jana's podcast in 2019.

The athlete, now 34, recounted, "Jana kind of gave me an ultimatum when everything came out, and she discovered everything, and she looked at me and said, 'You need to go somewhere. Basically, you need to figure out what's going on and what this is, or I'm gone,

period.'" The spouses have been working on their relationship ever since and spoke with E! News earlier this month about the journey. "When I found out about Mike's affairs, there was no other option but to just pray," Jana said. "Through that process and through the last few years of recovery with Mike and getting our marriage back on track, it's been an up and down process."

As the "I Got the Boy" singer put it, "Marriage is hard no matter what."

Mike added, "I had so much shame about my behavior for years and I was like, there's no way God is going to accept me with the things that I've done."

In September 2020, Jana revealed on the *Whine Down* with Jana Kramer and Michael Caussin podcast that Mike actually filed for divorce in 2016, per People. He made the decision while in rehab, when she was a contestant on *Dancing With the Stars*, she said.

Jana read an excerpt from her 2020 book, *The Good Fight*, which explained, "Mike was in rehab and I was in an all-out war with my emotions. Most days, I would push Mike out of my brain and tried to live in the world as if he didn't exist. Other days I was too weak to push and I missed him, and I hoped he would be in the audience watching me perform, rooting for me."

She continued, "Regardless of how I was feeling, whenever he would call me from rehab, I would lash out at him and tell him I didn't want anything to do with him. I would hang up and realize that I had no idea what direction my life was headed in or what I should do. They only times that gave me calm was when I looked at our baby girl. I knew that regardless of the outcome, I wanted the best for her."

The *One Tree Hill* actress said that she decided to reconcile with the former football pro after "a voice in my head finally spoke up in defense of this man and our marriage." As she read from her book, "I knew what I wanted... I said to him, 'I want to try.'"

Prince fans pay respects at Paisley Park 5 years after death

CHANHASSEN, MINN. (AP): Paisley Park, where Prince lived and worked, welcomed back select fans Wednesday to mark the fifth anniversary of his death from inside his creative sanctuary. Some wore custom Prince clothes and shoes and left flowers and other mementos as tributes to the late superstar.

The sprawling studio's atrium opened to 1,400 people who were able to snag free reservations, while other fans paid their respects in front of a statue erected outside the front doors in the shape of his famous purple Love Symbol.

A custom-made ceramic urn shaped like Paisley Park with Prince's symbol on top was originally placed in the middle of the atrium when the pop legend's 65,000-square-foot studio in suburban Minneapolis first opened as a museum in October 2016. At the request of Prince's family, the ashes were moved to a less prominent spot in the atrium and eventually removed entirely from public view, disappointing the superstar's legions of fans.

Wednesday was the first time the urn has returned to the atrium for display to the public. "He reached me through his music and through his words and everything. My daughters.

THE DAY AHEAD

Aries: It's easy to stand in your truth when you're standing amongst strangers. But, it's not always easy to be who you are when you're in the company of those you love. Challenge yourself to drop the barriers nonetheless. Challenge yourself to let go of the judgments you have about yourself. Moving into a space of authenticity will bring about a magnificent shift in your relationships.
Tip: Drop the barriers, wild one.

Taurus: The thing is, you're looking at this situation all wrong. You're moping about how it isn't adding anything tangible to your life today. But obsessing over short-term gains isn't going to get you anywhere, Taurus. So keep the long-term vision in mind and start working towards it right away. What the cards want you to remember: you are where you need to be and you are making magnificent progress.
Tip: Go the distance.

Gemini: We're all gifted with a sense of inner knowing that helps us assess what is right for us and the action we need to take in each moment. The more we tune in, the easier it is for us to make decisions that serve our highest good. Today, you're being asked to pay

attention to what this voice of wisdom is telling you (even if the guidance does not make sense logically). You are ready to move to the next level, Gemini. So, take that leap of faith and know that the world is ready to see you shine!
Tip: Trust what that inner voice is telling you.

Cancer: Creative rebellion has been a big theme for you, Cancer. You've been challenging yourself to break past your own barriers. However, your need to shake things up may or may not bode well with those around you. Word for the wise: gauge the room. Understand the expectations they're bringing to the table. Sticking to the rulebook, for now, will help move things that have been stuck for a while now.
tip: It's a good idea to play it safe.

Leo: This chapter has come to its logical conclusion and you know that with every fibre of your being, Leo. So, let go of your unrealistic expectations. Stop trying to control the given situation. Remembering that like happiness, closure too is an inside job will help you make peace with where you are today.
Tip: The given chapter has come to its logical conclusion.
Virgo:

This is a beautiful time in the Virgo HQ. Things are coming together seamlessly for you. The Universe is giving you one sign after another about what you need to do in order to realise your highest potential. So honour that voice of wisdom within. Take inspired action right away. What the cards want you to remember: the risks you're about to take will pay off in more than one way.
Tip: Tick-tock!

Libra: You can repeat the story of loss and failure, and, in doing so, you will give the pain immense power. But, the truth is, it all transpired for a reason. You attracted certain experiences in your life in order to awaken to your truth and realise your sacred purpose. So, take a moment to be grateful for it all, including the situations that threatened to tear you apart. Libra, the cliché 'what doesn't break you makes you stronger' comes to mind when we see you being your most glorious self.
Tip: It all transpired for a reason.

Scorpio: If overthinking was a sport, then you would take home the prize. So pause and breathe, Scorpio. Take a moment to observe the antics of your monkey mind. The truth is, things are as they appear.

Digging deeper is a colossal waste of your time. When it comes to decision-making, rely on logic. You know exactly what you need to do in order to resolve the given situation. Take inspired action right away.
Tip: Things are as they appear.

Sagittarius: Everything happens for a reason, Sagittarius. We repeat: everything happens for a reason. Remember this when things are not working out for you. Remember this when things are falling apart around you. You are protected in more ways than one, and you are about to see solid proof. What's more, an opportunity you let go of in the past is finding its way back to you in a brand new form. Remember Tina Fey's quote when you find yourself struggling to make a decision, "Say yes and you'll figure it out afterwards."
Tip: From chaos to cosmos.

Capricorn: Does the pain we refuse to acknowledge disappear into the multiverse, or does it continue to live and breathe inside our DNA? We believe you already know the answer to this one. What the cards are urging you to do is become aware of the unprocessed emotions. To hold space for a creative

catharsis. PS: Remembering the phrase 'turn your broken heart into art' will serve you well, Capricorn.
Tip: Hold space for a creative catharsis.

Aquarius: What makes you unique, Aquarius? What makes you, "you"? This is a time of introspecting *and* acting on your purpose. A time of realising the gifts that were granted to you at birth. Don't expect the path to be easy, though. Don't expect to receive a pat on your back for every courageous move. What you want to do instead is be prepared for opposition, and challenge yourself to move forward and onwards nonetheless.
Tip: It's time to get into action mode.

Pisces: There's something about being in love that transforms everything around us. You would know all about that, wouldn't you, Pisces? This is a magical, magical time in your world. You and your soulmate are feeling closer than you ever have before. Those who've been facing challenges for the past year or so will find that their journey together is getting easier. Pisceses flying solo are being asked to practice patience. Cupid has had his eyes on you for a while. Expect something special in the coming days.
Tip: What a magical time this is!