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Summit TIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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93 new cases, 99 recoveries and no Covid deaths in Sikkim in past 24 hours

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Covid infections, although substantially low of late, continue to remain erratic and registered a mild spike today with daily test positivity rate coming in 11.7% [after having remained sub-10% for the past few days] and the 93 new cases reported in the past 24 hours noticeably higher than the below-50 that Sikkim has been recording rather consistently. While only 46 new cases were reported on 03 Sept for instance, on 02 Sept this number was 71 and on 01 Sept, new cases came in at 76 and a day before that it was 37. On a more reassuring note, no new Covid deaths were reported in the past 24 hours; a welcome relief after the virus claimed two lives a day earlier.

As things stand, Sikkim Covid death toll holds at 373 for now.

As per the Daily Report of Covid-19 in Sikkim issued by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department on Saturday morning, the 93 new cases detected in the past 24 hours were picked up from the testing of 793 samples collected yesterday giving Sikkim a daily test positivity rate of 11.7%.

While 34 of the new cases were registered in East district, 32 were in West district, 23 in South and four in North Sikkim.

While the absolute numbers suggest that East Sikkim continues to be bearing the brunt of infections, when the data is broken down to test positivity rate, it is North Sikkim that tops the chart. The

4 cases in North Sikkim came from the testing of 19 samples, giving it a TPR of 21.05%. In that sense, South Sikkim appears to be doing better in that it has the lowest TPR in the state at 9.58% [23 positive from 240 tests], followed by East Sikkim with a TPR of 10.89% [34 positive from 337 tests] and then West Sikkim at 16.24% TPR [32 positive from 197 tests].

Simultaneously, with 99 people making full recoveries from Covid in the past 24 hours, Sikkim's count of active cases also came down marginally to 983 after having come down below hundred yesterday.

Of these 983 active cases, only 60, including 10 who were admitted in the past 24 hours, are nursing symptoms severe enough to require hospitaliza-

tion. Of these 60, ten are admitted in ICU at STNM Hospital and CRH. Against eight [6 at STNM and 2 at CRH] under-18 year olds in hospital with Covid, one is in the ICU the IDSP report informs.

With Covid restrictions getting further relaxed, and schools scheduled to reopen partially next week, Sikkim's vaccination statistics offer some reassurance in that 95.07% of the adult population has already received at least the first dose of Covidshield while 32.24% of the eligible population has completed its vaccination schedule with both the doses. Yesterday, a total of 3,667 people received their vaccine jabs, of whom 3,315 completed their vaccine schedule with the second shot while 352 received their first shot.

SKM Govt has no right to celebrate Teachers' Day: Chamling

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Former Chief Minister and president of Sikkim Democratic Front, Pawan Chamling has conveyed his good wishes and congratulations to the teachers for their unparalleled contribution for the overall development of Sikkim. He has also demanded that the state government issue an apology to the teachers of the state for mistreating and letting them down.

"Until the government fulfils their demand

and gives them justice, the SKM government has no moral ground to celebrate Teachers' Day," SDF has said in a press release.

Recalling the growth of education sector in the state, the former CM has said that Sikkim's development is the outcome of its teachers' hard work, dedication, perseverance and commitment.

Mr Chamling has accused the SKM government of being "anti-knowledge, anti-teacher and anti-intellectualism". "A government that

treats teachers like criminals and drags them into police vans in the night when they were simply asking for an interview to be conducted for the continuance of their service does not deserve to celebrate Teachers' Day. A government that mercilessly expels students who want to meet the Education Minister has no moral worth to observe Teachers' Day," he adds.

He has demanded that the Government apologize to teachers who have been mistreated and humiliated.

Tarundeep meets CM, presents Olympic kit

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Olympian Tarundeep Rai met the Chief Minister, PSTamang at Mintokgang today. He presented the CM with the official Indian Olympic jersey, badge and official plaque of the Indian Olympic team, a press release informs.

Tarundeep thanked the CM for announcing the establishment of Tarundeep Rai Archery Academy on the occasion of National Sports Day 2021. He said that the Archery Academy would help make dreams of young talented sports enthusiasts a reality and help establish the state as a hub of excellence striving towards building a strong foundation for the youth.

The CM announced that the upcoming Archery Academy would be a world class infrastructure producing highly



professional individuals in the field of sports with the focused aim of creating an Academy for national professionals. He invited Tarundeep to impart technical knowledge in making the Academy a hub of excellence.

Tarundeep, in return, stated that he would be more than happy to be a part of the project and would strive towards building an Academy which would help shape the future of local youth of Sikkim.

Sikkim should not witness saddest Teachers' Day: HSP

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Hamro Sikkim Party has expressed solidarity with the protesting ad-hoc teachers and demanded that the government and the concerned department come to an amicable solution.

In a press release issued today, the party has said that it is "deeply saddened by the apathy shown towards the

genuine demands and issues raised by the Ad hoc teachers."

Sikkim should not witness the saddest "Teachers Day" with them on hunger strike on the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the release states.

The party has said that it will come out to support them for the greater good if the demands are not met at the earliest.

No odd-even rule on vehicular movement from Monday

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

State Government has withdrawn the odd-even rule on vehicular movement in the state starting 06 Sept, 2021, as per a fresh order issued by the Home Department today.

"The existing odd-

even arrangement for movement of vehicles shall be lifted for all types of vehicles," the order states.

However, vehicular movement at night continues to be restricted from 10:30 pm till 5 am, except for emergency purposes.

India records 42,618 Covid cases, 330 deaths in a day; weekly positivity rate 2.63 pc

NEW DELHI, SEP 4 (PTI): India's COVID-19 infection tally rose by 42,618 in a day to reach 3,29,45,907 while the number of active cases touched 4,05,681 following an increase for the fourth consecutive day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

The death toll climbed to 4,40,225 with 330 more people succumbing to the viral disease, showed the data updated at 8 am.

In a span of 24 hours, the active caseload rose by 5,903. The number of active cases now comprise 1.23 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate

was recorded at 97.43 per cent, the ministry said.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.50 per cent and the weekly positivity rate was 2.63 per cent. It has been below three per cent for the last 71 days.

As many as 17,04,970 tests were conducted on Friday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of COVID-19 in the country to 52,82,40,038.

Under the nationwide vaccination drive, a total of 67.72 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far.

Of the 330 fatalities recorded in a day 131 are from Kerala and 92 from Maharashtra.

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Lack of bridge poses threat to commuters at Changay



RUDRA KAUSHIK
GYALSHING, 04 SEPT:

Changay, located between Pelling and Dentam in West Sikkim, is a well-known tourist destination but lack of a bridge has made it difficult for people travelling via this route.

Few days back a wooden foot bridge built for pedestrians was washed away due to heavy rain. A concrete bridge with tourist cafe-

teria costing around Rs 4 crore was sanctioned 4-5 years back by the previous Government. However, the bridge is yet to be completed.

It has become risky for two wheelers and small cars crossing this rivulet, especially during heavy rains.

It is learnt, that the contract had been given to a local contractor of the village, but recently it was transferred to a well-known con-

tractor from Namchi. Local public are asking whether the delay is due to this change if contractors.

After demolition of the old bridge and excavation of rocks for reconstruction the beauty of the Changay falls has also depreciated.

People of the area have requested the Government and concerned department to look into this matter on priority basis and take required action.

Restore Mahasweta Devi's 'Draupadi', other dropped works: DU English teachers

NEW DELHI, 04 SEPT [PTI]:

A section of English teachers of Delhi University has accused a varsity panel of making a mockery of the "democratic and the due process" in drafting the subject's syllabus and demanded reinstating of dropped works, including Mahasweta Devi's celebrated short story "Draupadi".

In a statement issued on Friday, about 115 English teachers from across DU colleges slammed the dropping of works of Devi, Bama, and Sukirtharani by the Oversight Committee during redrafting the English syllabus for semester 5.

According to the

teachers, the "entire process was flagrantly violated and bypassed by the Oversight Committee".

"It (the Oversight Committee) single-handedly seeks to destroy a syllabus that has been put together after years of careful discussion and debate, where democratically elected committees have chosen democratically diverse texts that seek to represent all sections of society," they said in the statement.

"We demand the reinstatement of works by Mahasweta Devi, Bama, and Sukirtharani in the Core Women's Writing paper of semester V," they added.

The varsity's Academic Council last month

dropped Devi, and two Dalit authors from BA (Hons) English course, while approving changes in its syllabus on recommendations of the Oversight Committee.

"The voices that have been throttled are those of Dalit and non-Dalit women writers writing about Dalit/tribal women. "What else could be less inclusive than excluding these powerful women narratives, Mahasweta Devi's 'Draupadi', Bama's Sangati (chapters 2-4) and Sukirtharani's two poems 'Debt' and 'My Body', that congeal caste and gender oppression with that of patriarchal

turn to pg02

Karbi Anglong Agreement signed, more autonomy promised in exchange for abjuring violence

NEW DELHI, 04 SEPT [PIB]: In the presence of Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, a historic Karbi Anglong Agreement to end the decades old crisis ensuring Assam's territorial integrity was signed in New Delhi today.

Present on the occasion were Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Minister of AYUSH, Nityanad Rai, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Tuliram Ronghang, Chief Executive Member of KAAC, representatives of Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front/ KLNLF, People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri/ PDCK, United People's Liberation Army/ UPLA, Karbi People's Liberation Tigers/KPLT factions along with senior officers from Union Ministry of Home Affairs and Government of Assam.

With this historic agreement, over 1000 armed cadres have abjured violence and joined the mainstream of society. A Special Development Package of Rs. 1000 crores over five years will be given by the Union Government and Assam Government to undertake specific projects for the development of Karbi areas.

Amit Shah said that the Karbi Agreement is another milestone in Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's vision of "Insurgency free prosperous North East".

He said that today's historic Karbi Anglong agreement will be written in golden letters in the history of Assam.

He said that since becoming Prime Minister, northeast has not only been an area of focus for Narendra Modi, but all-round development of northeast, peace and prosperity there has been the top priority for the Government.

Amit Shah said that it is the policy of the Modi Government that those who give up arms are brought into mainstream and we talk to them even more politely and give them more than they ask for. Shah said that due to this policy only, we are getting rid of old problems one by one that the Modi Government had inherited. Union Home Minister said that we fulfil all clauses of agreements signed during our Government's tenure and this has been Modi Government's track record.

Salient features of the Agreement:

This Memorandum of Settlement will ensure greater devolution of autonomy to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, protection of identity, language, culture, etc. of Karbi people and focussed development of the Council area, without affecting the territorial and administrative integrity of Assam.

The Karbi armed groups have agreed to abjure violence and join the peaceful democratic process as established by law of the land. The Agreement also provides for rehabilitation of cadres of the armed groups.

The Government of Assam shall set up a Karbi Welfare Council for focussed development of Karbi people living outside KAAC area.

Upper Burtuk MLA urges Govt to resolve ad-hoc teacher issue

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Upper Burtuk MLA, DR Thapa, who is with the BJP, an SKM ally in government now, has urged the Government and the Education Department to immediately give teachers an opportunity to be heard and resolve this deadlock by extending their services as promised.

In a press statement

issued today, Mr Thapa, who is a BJP MLA, has said, "It is disheartening to see how the Education Department has mistreated our teachers. Ever since the protest began, they have not received even one meeting with the ACS and other authorities, all they have received are confusing and roundabout notifications which has worsened their condi-

tion."

He states that lack of a proper policy for regularization, teachers have to spend many years in ad hoc positions without job security or stability and now even their livelihood has become completely dependent on the whims and fancies of the administration.

"In a democracy, such a situation should

never arise where a group of people are forced to beg the government to listen to them. There should be stakeholder participation and transparency in decision making," Mr Thapa mentions.

Further stating that the pandemic has badly affected education and teachers have been working hard despite the challenges, the BJP

MLA has condemned the behaviour of the administration towards protesting teachers.

"Now as our schools are finally beginning to reopen, instead of being thankful to our teachers, the administration is unnecessarily and carelessly delaying their appointments and playing with their futures and the futures of our children," Mr Thapa has said.

Cong Sewa Dal slams SKM Govt

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

All India Congress Sewa Dal, Sikkim in-charge, Kiran Chettri is on a three-day visit to Sikkim. In a press conference held today at the Congress Party office, 6th mile, Gangtok, he slammed the SKM government's performance till now.

He alleged that SKM has failed to fulfil its election promises adding that bringing CBI to Sikkim was one of its main agenda which it has completely forgotten.

If they can't fulfil

their promises then they can dissolve the government, there are many other parties which can handle the state better, said Kiran Chettri.

He said that ONORC may hamper Sikkim in the long run like the way Kashmir did.

Adhoc teachers who cleared interviews are now facing injustice but some teachers are being appointed from "backdoor", he further alleged.

He also reminded the SKM government of its promise to bring the 17th Karmapa to Sikkim.

Supreme Court to take up young girl's letter to Chief Justice on physical hearings

NEW DELHI, 04 SEPT

[PTI]: A letter from a young girl to Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana has prompted the Supreme Court to register a public interest litigation (PIL) petition on courts resuming in-person hearings completely.

Supreme Court judge Justice Vineet Saran today referred to a letter that a young girl has written to Chief Justice Ramana, on courts beginning in-person hearings which were stalled last year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Speaking at an event organised by the Bar Council of India to felicitate Chief Justice Ramana, Justice Saran said, "Yesterday someone told me that a young girl has written to the CJI that if all other things are opening up and even schools are reopening, then why not courts. I have been told that the CJI has decided to treat it as a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) and will hear the matter."

In a similar incident earlier this year, a Class 5 Kerala student's letter to Chief Justice Ramana evoked a heart-warming response from him. The

little girl had thanked him for the court's orders passed in connection with oxygen supply amid the second wave of the pandemic. As a token of his appreciation, he has also sent the girl, Lidwina Joseph, a signed copy of the Constitution of India.

The Supreme Court resumed in-person hearings on September 1 amid a dip in the COVID-19 cases in the country. The court now holds a hybrid model for hearings, with both physical and virtual hearings.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) wrote to the Chief Justice, objecting to several conditions of the SOPs issued by the court for resumption of physical hearings. The Bar body objected to many conditions, including the one which prohibits the entry of lawyers to the high security area of the Supreme Court without special passes.

Delhi High Court and district courts in the capital, meanwhile, started physical hearings in a restricted manner from August 31 and 24 respectively.

Philippines to lift travel ban on India, 9 other nations from Sept 06

MANILA, 04 SEPT [REUTERS]:

The Philippines on Saturday decided to welcome travellers from India and nine other countries from September 6, according to a Presidential Palace announcement. The announcement came even as the country recorded its second highest number of COVID-19 cases with 20,310 infections on Friday, pushing the national tally to 2.04 million, The Manila Times ewspaper reported.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte approved the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to lift the cur-

rent travel restrictions on India and nine other countries starting September 6, Presidential Palace spokesperson Harry Roque was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

The other countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the official said.

International travelers coming from the 10 countries will, however, comply with the appropriate entry, testing and quarantine protocols, depending on their approved "listing," Roque said.

Governor's greetings on Teacher's Day

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, has extended his best wishes to all the teachers of the State on the occasion of Teacher's Day.

In his message, the Governor said, "On the occasion of Teacher's Day, I pay homage to Dr S Radhakrishnan who was a philosopher, academician and educationist."

The Governor stressed on Guru-Shishyaparampara which is a characteristic feature of our Indian culture and heritage.

"We are very fortu-



nate and blessed as a civilization to have always had since time immemorial great Gurus who has led seekers of truth to their goal. Let us pray on this auspicious day that our Gurus continue to help and guide us indi-

vidually and collectively in building strong nation defined by wisdom, peace and harmony.

I congratulate Mingma Sherpa and Prem Das Chettri for winning National Teachers Award 2021. Let us take the opportunity to convey our wishes to all our teachers, who have given impeccable contribution in shaping us.

On behalf of people of Sikkim, the Governor called new "National Education Policy 2020" as visionary for bright future of country," he has said.

PWD team takes stock of rainfall damage in Yangang

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Incessant rainfall on the night of 02 Sept has caused severe damages to properties in Yangang, South Sikkim, a press release informs.

Today, a PWD team headed by their Principal Chief Engineer, DorjeeDadul Bhutia, Chief Engineer, Hari Shankar Sharma and Additional Chief Engineer, BasantTamang visited Yangang Constituency to take stock of

the damages, the release mentions.

They visited SirisayDara where a major landslide has occurred thus hindering road traffic. The team took stock of the situation at Ting Tingdhara, Upper GagyongWard, inspected minor slips along the way, examined roads damaged due to overflowing of drainage water and instructed concerned Engineers to resolve the issue at the earliest.

The team also visited

Pathing Ward to inspect the perennial Gaguney landslide which has severely damaged the YangangRavangla highway and en route examined TaksakeyDhunga as well. The team closed its tour at Dhapar, Upper Yangang. The team assured all support to resolve the problems.

The team was joined by BDO Yangang, BishnuThapa, AE PWD,MukeshJairu, JEs and SKM functionaries.

"Justice delayed is justice denied": Rijiju on pending court cases

NEW DELHI, 04 SEPT

[NDTV]: India's judicial system needs to give priority to common man, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said today at the Bar Council of India's felicitation event for Chief Justice NV Ramana while he stressed: "Justice delayed is justice denied". At the event, he also showered praise on Chief Justice Ramana, underlining that he will "create a new dawn for the judiciary".

Mr Rijiju, 49, who took charge as the Law Minister in July after a huge cabinet reshuffle, today raised the issue of pending court cases in the country at the event. "People keep raising the issue of cases pending in courts. It's the lower courts where we need to look at with urgency. When a person of a humble background or from a rural area looks up to get justice, he gives it his all. Sometimes he even has to sell off his land and other assets," the Union Minister stressed.

"Then if the justice gets delayed, it's a big

question mark on all of us. Justice delayed is justice denied. The last-mile-man...the common man needs to be given priority," he added

"Law has often been seen as a rich man's profession. Slowly the situation is changing. Opportunities are opening up. Lakhs of people in India are unable to approach courts. Lack of money and time delays are a big challenge," Chief Justice Ramana said at the event.

Praising Chief Justice Ramana, the Law Minister said: "The Chief Justice of India is doing exactly what needs to be done."

Recalling his first meeting, the Minister said: "When I met Chief Justice Ramana for the first time, I did not know him well. I had heard about him from (a) friend and media. He has proven to be a person of high integrity who will create a new dawn for the judiciary."

After Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Chief Justice is a "good human being and a good

judge," Mr Rijiju said in jest: "I agree with all that has already been said in his honour. If I try to add or do anything more now... it will lead to a disaster."

The Law Minister also assured at the event that the government will try to help "by taking all appropriate measures" as lawyers raised grievances about financial issues amid the pandemic.

"The Supreme Court and the Indian judiciary have set an example for all other nations during the challenging pandemic period. Mr Mishra (BCI Chairman MK Mishra) informed us about problems of lawyers who don't have the protection of legal firms. I promise from here (from this podium) that we will do everything we can for them. In the last cabinet meeting, we have approved the revamping of infrastructure of the lower judiciary. At one go, we will create important infrastructure in the lower courts," Mr Rijiju assured.

Centre reviews Covid vaccination at 11 NE and Hill States and UTs

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Union Health Secretary, Rajesh Bhushan, today reminded 11 northeaster and hills states to "quickly saturate" first dose coverage among the 18+ population and pace first and second dose vaccination and restrict wastage of vaccines to below 2%, a press release issued by the Press Bureau of Information informs. Each vial of vaccine contains ten doses and when these are opened for less than 10 people, the remaining doses get wasted.

The PIB release informs that the Union Health Secretary made these comments during a high-level review meeting he chaired with officials from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu &

Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

He also urged the states to focus on the 60+ age group as the coverage of both the doses in this category is unsatisfactory in Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Meghalaya.

The attention of the States was brought to the fact that the administration of the first dose has progressively outpaced the administration of second dose. It was suggested that States earmark doses, earmark days and target the completion of the exercise for these beneficiaries.

The details of State/UT-wise balance stock of 0.5 ml Syringes, Vaccination Coverage among

Special Groups (Transgender Persons, Persons with Disabilities, PWI and Prisoners), COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage among women particularly pregnant and lactating women was also discussed.

States/UTs were advised to closely monitor the stock from State Vaccine Stores to Cold Chain Point, check rational distribution and restrict vaccine wastage to below 2%, update data on eVIN (electronic vaccine intelligence network) on a daily basis, check supply of other denomination syringes as per availability (0.5 ml/ 1ml/ 2 ml/ 3ml Auto Disposable/Re-use Prevention Syringes(RUP)/Disposable) for COVID vaccination.

Chhattisgarh orders probe after surgeon operates on 101 women in 7 hours

RAIPUR, 04 SEPT [PTI]:

The Chhattisgarh government has ordered a probe into irregularities at a recently-held government-run sterilisation camp in Surguja district, where a surgeon allegedly performed tubectomies on 101 women in seven hours, an official said today.

The sterilisation camp was held on August 27 at Narmadapur community health centre in Mainpat development block of the district, located over 300 km away from the capital Raipur, the official said.

Local newspapers had reported alleged irregularities in the camp, following which the department swung into action and issued show-cause notices to the surgeon and a local health official.

Following complaints regarding the sterilisation camp, a probe has been ordered, based on which further action will

be taken, said Dr Alok Shukla, Principal Secretary of the state's Health and Family Welfare department.

"A total of 101 surgeries were performed by a (government) surgeon in the camp. The women who underwent the procedure were reported to be in a normal condition. However, as per the government guidelines, a surgeon can perform a maximum of 30 surgeries in a day and hence, an enquiry has been ordered to ascertain why the guidelines had been violated," Dr Shukla said.

The surgeon has claimed that a large number of women had turned up for the procedure and urged him to perform the operations, citing that they had come from remote villages and cannot travel frequently, he said.

Earlier, Surguja Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) PS Sisodiya had on August 29 issued a show-cause notice to

surgical specialist Dr Jibnus Ekka, who performed operations in the camp, and Block Medical Officer (BMO) Dr R S Singh seeking their reply in this regard.

The Chief Medical and Health Officer had also constituted a three-member committee to probe the matter.

"The surgeries were conducted from 12 pm to 7 pm on August 27. Once the enquiry committee submits its report, further action will be taken against people who are found guilty," Dr Sisodiya said.

In November 2014, at least 83 women had developed complications after undergoing a procedure at a government-held sterilisation camp in Bilaspur district, and 13 of them had died, triggering widespread criticism against the government-run programme offering free sterilisation.

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Restore Mahasweta...

state violence from the syllabus," they asked.

Earlier while redrafting the syllabus, the DU had claimed it strives to bring out the "inclusive nature of the syllabus" through a "careful perusal".

The teachers also alleged that the English department head was coerced into consenting on the refurbished syllabus. They said that the OC recommendation that "Draupadi" should be deleted came on July 19 -- less than 24 hours before classes were scheduled to begin.

The English department wrote twice to the OC, they claimed, presenting all the "academic and pedagogic reasons" in favour of keeping the story, but the committee rejected their argument.

The OC "held the Department of English to ransom by not notifying its BA (Hons) English Semester V syllabus on the website until the 1st of September 2021 (44th day of the Vth semester, a week after the registrar's press re-

lease)," they alleged.

Recounting the sequence of events, the teachers said that the English department HOD received the notice from the assistant registrar to drop "Draupadi" by Devi on August 9.

But when department dropped the story and suggested to replace it with "Hunt", a work by the same author, the OC in a letter on August 11, vetoed the move citing "ideological" differences, and offered to choose from six alternatives.

Professor Raj Kumar, HOD of English department at the university, told PTI that he approved the course "only in the interest of teachers and students since it was being held for months".

According to Kumar, the English department had put in "3000 hours of work" on the syllabus between 2017 and 2019.

"Two international professors and professors from other central universities had also approved the syllabus," he said.

of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

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

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

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Strength-lifters thank CM for cash incentive encouragement for sportspersons

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Sikkim Strength Lifting Association [SSLA] today thanked the State Government and Chief Minister PS Tamang for providing cash incentives to 22 medal-winners of the State on the occasion of National Sports Day celebrations on 29 August. Eleven strength lifters of Sikkim were among the 22 who received cash incentives on the occasion.

Addressing a press conference, SSLA working president Allen Targain expressed gratitude towards the State gov-

ernment and the CM for providing "handsome cash incentives" to meritorious sportspersons.

"Many organisations and individuals, including a few rehab centres, have been contacting us to join strength lifting after our lifters received the cash incentives. So, we have now decided to introduce strength lifting in rehab centres and at different parts of the State in the near future," he said.

Mr Targain mentioned that as strength lifting was already included in school games so the

SSLA would also work to introduce strength lifting in schools.

SSLA has not been able to conduct its activities so far due to the pandemic but now that the situation was improving, local athletes have begun training for upcoming national and international competitions, he said.

"Efforts have been made to include the strength lifting in the Olympics and we are very hopeful that local athletes from Sikkim will soon represent the country in the Olympics in the near future," he said.

He also expressed gratitude towards the CM for his announcement to set up the Tarundeep Rai Archery Academy as a mark of honour to Olympian Tarundeep Rai.

Likewise, SSLA publicity secretary Chandra Kala Pradhan also thanked the CM for providing cash incentives to eleven strength lifters, including four women lifters. She highlighted that this was also a step towards women's empowerment and will encourage other women to take up sports.

"Sikkim has huge po-

tential to perform better in strength lifting and other iron games so the state government should support and encourage iron games to produce international athletes from Sikkim," she expressed.

SSLA is also working to hold a state-level championship in October.

On behalf of SSLA, SSLA chief coach Pema Dorjee Bhutia thanked the Minister, Secretary and officials of the department of Sports & Youth Affairs for their support to strength lifting and its members.

MLA inspects Ravangla-Legship road construction work



**BIKASH CHETTRI
NAMCH, 04 SEPT:**

MLA Barfung Con-stituency and Chairman of the Estimates Committee, Government of Sikkim, Tashi Thendup Bhutia, inspected the ongoing construction work of the road from Ravangla to Legship by

NHIDCL in Ravangla, South Sikkim.

During the inspection, the MLA asked the General Manager of NHIDCL, AK Singh, and Project Manager NHIDCL, Saubhagya Ranjan Senapati, to ensure quality in the construction of the road.

Nicole Scherzingersued by Pussycat Dolls founder Robin Antinover reunion tour

Pussycat Dolls' Robin Antin sued Nicole Scherzinger for allegedly trying to back out of their agreement to host a reunion tour. Antin accused her of "extortion" and of demanding "creative control."

Those hoping to see The Pussycat Dolls back on tour might need to wait a minute. Founder Robin Antin is suing singer Nicole Scherzinger for allegedly "refusing" to perform in the reunion tour despite an agreement in 2019.

In the lawsuit obtained by E! News, Antin says she spent two years negotiating with Scherzinger over the relaunch and, in 2017, received \$600,000 from Live Nation that hinged on Scherzinger agreeing to perform in the reunion tour. According to the suit, the pair came to an agreement, dubbed the Memorandum of Understanding, in February 2019 that Scherzinger would be an "active partner" and perform in a reunion tour, including up to 45 live performances expected to start in December 2019. The break-out star would receive 49 percent of the shares and profits of a new Pussycat Dolls business, PCD Worldwide, according to the lawsuit. Antin would get the other 51 percent.

However, the coronavirus pandemic changed their plans.

"Before the originally scheduled dates of the tour, a once-in-a-century global pandemic halted music touring activity,"

the lawsuit states. They had "no other option than

to indefinitely postpone the tour until it became safe and economically viable to reschedule."

It was initially rescheduled to May and June 2021 in Europe, but later rescheduled again.

In April 2021, Scherzinger offered new terms of the agreement, requesting to become the owner of 75 percent of PCD Worldwide, get "complete creative control" and become the "final decision-making authority," per the complaint.

The reason behind the new terms? The lawsuit states she cited "the growth of her personal brand and the opportunities she would have to forego" in order to continue with the partnership. However, Antin's team says she was "already contractually obligated to be an 'active partner' under the terms of the MOU."

In May 2021, The Masked Singer judge "expressly stated" she would not join the reunion tour and "refuses to participate," the lawsuit states.

The debacle has caused a headache for tour promoters, agents, merchandising companies and others involved, according to the lawsuit.

"Tour dates were planned but are unable to be confirmed because of Scherzinger's extortion," it reads, stating that Live Nation has demanded the return of its \$600,000 investment.

Antin wants to be awarded damages, including all profits lost as a result of Scherzinger refusing to perform.

CM urges teachers to explore alternative techniques

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang, in his Teachers' Day message, has highlighted the need for teachers to "build a solid bond of understanding with the students to promote a healthy learning environment and boost their confidence."

"The application of research-based methods and alternative techniques in teachings are also important. In this regard, I urge our teachers to explore such ave-

nues to provide a quality learning experience," he adds in his message.

Extending his best wishes "to all the teachers of India for their dedication and contributions in guiding the children who are the leaders of tomorrow," the CM recognizes that the pandemic had caused difficulties for everyone, including the teachers and the students and remarks that the state government has initiated online classes "which have assisted in the continuation of edu-

cation and learning"

He remarks that the state government was focused on providing the best training and exposure to teachers by conducting visits to various educational institutions in the country and abroad, but due to the pandemic, the program is on hold but will commence once the situation is favourable, he adds.

He has also congratulated Mingma Sherpa and Prem Das Chettri on being chosen for the National Teachers Award 2021.

Veteran Boys FC lifts Futsal tourney in Gangtok



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Veteran Boys Football Club emerged champions of Futsal Tournament 2021 held here at Infinity Futsal Arena on Saturday.

The daylong tournament was organised by Gangtok-based Jagriti Rehab Centre under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction initiative and was sponsored by

the Social Justice & Welfare Department.

Four rehab centres - Veteran Boys Football Club, North Sikkim Rehab Centre, Mangan, Freedom Facility, Tathangchen and Jagriti Rehab Centre have participated in the tournament.

In the final match, Veteran Boys FC outplayed North Sikkim Rehab Centre 9-4 to lift the trophy.

Norbu Lepcha of North Sikkim Rehab Centre was adjudged Best Player of the Tournament and the Best Disciplined Team trophy went to Freedom Facility.

Joint Secretary, Social Justice & Welfare Department, Abinash Rai, who is also the nodal officer for the programme, was present as chief guest today.

MUSS distributes prizes of quiz competition



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

The winners of the Global Online Quiz Competition organized by the AkhilBharatiyaManavUthanSewaSamiti were today awarded prizes and letters of commendation by the Urban Development Minister, ArunUpreti.

A special event was organized at-Sambala Ashram, the head office of the ManavUthanSewaSamiti, Sikkim, at Tibet Road, to present prizes and certificates to the winners of the competition, a press release informs.

Minister ArunUpreti was the chief guest while Councilor of Tathangchen Ward, PemaLamtha, and youth coordinator of Sikkim KrantikariMorcha party, GyamchoTamang, were the special guests.

The Global Online Quiz Competition was organized by the ManavUthanSewaSamiti on 01 Aug. The quiz competition was attended by youth from 65 countries and the results of the competition were announced on 08 Aug.

Students from various schools and colleges of Sikkim also participated in the competition, which was organized in junior and senior categories.

Representing the state of Sikkim in the competition, Premjit Sharma and MridulMayankJha came first in the se-

nior category and junior category respectively.

Similarly, SushmaRai and Chiwang-Paljor Bhutia came second and third respectively in the senior category while BipanshikaSubedi and Rajat Kumar Gupta came second and third respectively in the junior category.

The winners were presented with certificates of appreciation by Minister ArunUpreti, Councilor PemaLamta, Youth Coordinator GyamchoTamang and Mahatma GyanBaiji and Mahatma KritikaBaiji.

In his address, Chief Guest Minister ArunUpreti expressed his gratitude and congratulations on behalf of the Government of Sikkim to the AkhilBharatiyaManavUthanSewaSamiti for organizing the quiz competition for students.

Addressing the gathering, Sadhvi Mahatma GyanBaiji of the ManavUthanSewaSamiti said that human beings need to do spiritual development along with physical development in life.

The program was also addressed by president of ManavUthanSevaSamiti Sikkim, PurnaBahadurYonjan and zonal youth coordinator, PravinGurung.

On this occasion, devotional hymns were also presented by the BhajanMandali of the committee.

Raikkonen out of Netherlands GP with coronavirus, Kubica in

ZANDVOORT, Netherlands (AP): Alfa Romeo driver Kimi Raikkonen has tested positive for the coronavirus and will be replaced by Robert Kubica for the Netherlands Grand Prix.

The 41-year-old Raikkonen, who is retiring from Formula One at the end of the season, tested positive following on-site testing at the Zandvoort track.

"In accordance with COVID-19 protocols he will take no further part in this event. All contacts have been declared," F1 said in a statement on Saturday. "The procedures set out by the FIA

and Formula 1 will ensure no wider impact."

Alfa Romeo said that 2007 F1 champion Raikkonen was showing no symptoms.

"He has immediately entered isolation in his hotel," the team said in a statement on Saturday. "There is no further impact expected for the team for the remainder of this event."

There was a third and final practice session Saturday ahead of qualifying later in the day. The race is on Sunday.

The 36-year-old Kubica has not raced since the season-ending Abu Dhabi GP in 2019. It will

be his 98th start and first for Alfa Romeo, where he is a reserve driver.

Kubica was once considered among the most talented and quickest drivers in F1, securing one win among his 12 podium finishes between 2006-10.

The following year, a gruesome rally accident in 2011 left the Polish driver needing seven hours of surgery on a partially severed right hand.

When he returned to F1 in 2019, he scored one point for the struggling Williams team with a 10th-place finish at the German GP.

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Virus pummels French Polynesia, straining ties with Paris

PAPEETE, TAHITI (AP): France's worst coronavirus outbreak is unfolding 12 times zones away from Paris, devastating Tahiti and other idyllic islands of French Polynesia.

The South Pacific archipelagos lack enough oxygen, ICU beds and morgue space - and their vaccination rate is barely half the national average. Simultaneous outbreaks on remote islands and atolls are straining the ability of local authorities to evacuate patients to the territory's few hospitals.

"The problem is, there are a lot of deaths before we get there," lamented Vincent Simon, the head of the regional emergency service.

French Polynesia is France's latest challenge in juggling resources to battle the pandemic in former colonies that stretch around the world. With more than 2,800 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, it holds the national record for the highest infection rate.

And that's only an estimate: Things are so bad that the multi-ethnic territory of about 300,000 residents stopped counting new infections as local health authorities redeployed medical staff to focus on patient care and vaccination

instead of testing. Of the 463 virus-related deaths reported in French Polynesia throughout the pandemic, most took place over the past month. Vaccine skepticism, high obesity and diabetes rates, and the decision to reopen to some tourists this summer have been among the explanations for the current health crisis.

Tensions have surfaced with other virus-ravaged French territories. While the central government in Paris sent hundreds of health care workers to the French Caribbean over the summer, Polynesia received just 10 backup nurses. After weeks of pleading by Polynesian officials, the government promised this week to send 100 more.

French Polynesia, whose 118 islands stretch across an area as large as Europe, has broad autonomy from Paris but relies on the central government for health care.

"We need help. We have said it before: we cannot get by without it," Tony Tekuataoa, the head of emergency services at the French Polynesia Hospital Center in Tahiti, told local television.

More than 330 people are currently hospitalized with the virus, including

55 in intensive care - well beyond the territory's capacity. Beds, mattresses, oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators: Everything is lacking. With 15 to 20 new deaths per day, funeral directors can no longer meet the demands of families. The macabre dance of ambulances and coffins animates local media coverage.

Hospital authorities are opening new COVID-19 wards. All medical and paramedical professionals have been requisitioned. The regulatory agency dispatches equipment and personnel in a permanent state of emergency.

The surge is taking a toll on the mental health of medics. Meanwhile, disputes over vaccinations are tearing some families apart.

"The caregivers were not prepared to see so many deaths," Philippe Dupire, medical director of the French Polynesia Hospital Center, said.

The hospital's workers appealed directly to Macron with a photo shared on its Facebook page showing the lobby where the president made a speech during a July visit and the same lobby a month later - now packed with 20 hospital beds occupied by virus patients.

To curb infections, local authorities

imposed a curfew at first, then localized lockdowns, and now they've shut down schools. Obligatory vaccinations have been announced for some sectors, despite objections in certain quarters.

Vaccinations are rising, but eight months into the campaign, only 38% of the total population is fully vaccinated, while 50% have received a first dose. That compares to 67% and 73% nationwide. Meanwhile, more than 90% of those in intensive care are unvaccinated, as are a large majority of those who have died.

The government's minister for overseas territories, SebastienLecornu, blamed the lag on vaccine skepticism in a population particularly sensitive to disinformation. Distrust of authorities is also an issue among indigenous populations, scarred by the legacy of France's nuclear tests on Polynesian atolls and decades of efforts for reparations.

Concerned about the potentially deadly consequences of vaccine avoidance, the leader of an independence party appealed to all communities to get the injections and to reject false information shared online.

SummitTIMES

Groom Them to Adapt

Education to connect, not alienate

The generation that grew up in the seventies and eighties went through an education of overt alienation from their roots. The generation before them received Western education, but also had a strong sense of purpose in desiring to use their learning and education to help in the nation-building process, or, for the generation of the twenties and thirties, securing a free nation for themselves and the future. By the time the seventies rolled out, the nation had been achieved and the idealism of nation-building had been jaded by the business of surviving and nepotism. With nothing left to reconnect them to their roots, this generation was deeply indoctrinated by modern education. They learned the subjects well, but lost the perspective, and worse still, because they grew up at school, as against also learning at home like the previous generations, they lost cultural nuances and even developed a bias against everything “desi”. The generations that have come since have tried to reclaim their roots, but the challenge is stiff because we have lost an entire generation to disinterest. The communication gap is being bridged with shallow nationalism and palpably aggressive identity politics. We see this in varying degrees all over the world, across India and among the various communities which call Sikkim home. But it need not be so. A slight tweaking of how and what we teach in schools could undo the damage.

Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge and values are best imbibed in the formative years when the knowledge becomes instinctive. And yet, the moment a toddler steps into school, we begin the process of having them unlearn everything they have inherited at home and replace it with alphabets, words and numbers which they are made to learn by rote. It is ironic that where monolingual societies are trying to get their young conversant in at least two languages because of its obvious benefits, we, with children who grow up in homes where at least two languages are spoken and can pick up a third in school, begin classes by penalizing multilingual skills! And from there begins the subconscious alienation from their selves. With their language somehow made to feel inferior, because speaking in it attracts punishment and fines, the children subconsciously begin believing everything local/ rural/ unlettered as somehow unworthy. This is not a debate over whether local cultures are superior or western models better. What this is setting out to argue is that sidelining of local references and traditional knowledge base is ill-informed and dangerous because it has been grooming generations which don't fit well anywhere – neither at home nor in the global ranks. As the cliché goes, strengthen their roots, and their will weather through life well. As mentioned earlier, since early childhood education draws most of its influences from Western education and curriculum, it alienates children from their own culture and traditions. The morals, values, life-lessons that the story-reading sessions in schools seek to deliver definitely has many examples in the local languages and cultures. If these were included into the curriculum, children would grow up with a more confident idea of self and less suspicious of outside influences because they will have reference points from their own homes and cultures to distil and explain the world. A good place to begin will be to set aside one section at least every week where local elders are invited to narrate local folktales to children and also explain proverbs from local languages. This will make the elders feel required, make the young appreciate the depth of their cultural heritage, and will also be fun. Over time, these could be worked into the formal curriculum and expanded to cover stories of local places of interest, practices and rituals. One could also consider reworking the school timings so that the students can participate in local economies and practices more meaningfully. The current timings are too strict to allow for this. The school in a village dependent on dairy farming could rework timings to allow children to help with livestock chores, and elsewhere, timings could be adjusted to allow for kids to help at paddy fields or with cardamom harvests... and the list could go on. Connect them so, the children receive an education which connects them better to their roots. Don't do it, and education continues alienating.

Formal education has its benefits and one of its strongest aspects is its adaptability. Unfortunately, in the hands of uninspired school managements, this fluidity of learning is compromised, even sacrificed. Where classrooms should celebrate learning, they end up force-feeding lessons. Where local communities should be invited to participate in how their children and taught and educated, they are made passive recipients of a centrally dictated, Department driven model of education.

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Pandemic hardship is about to get a lot worse for millions of out-of-work Americans

JEFFREY KUCIK & DON LEONARD
theconversation.com

Millions of unemployed Americans are set to lose pandemic-related jobless benefits after Labor Day – just as surging cases of coronavirus slow the pace of hiring.

In all, an estimated 8.8 million people will stop receiving unemployment insurance beginning on Sept. 6, 2021. An additional 4.5 million will no longer get the extra US\$300 a week the federal government has been providing to supplement state benefits.

But with the pandemic still raging thanks to the rise of the delta variant, particularly in Southern states, the expiration of these benefits seems ill-timed. While some claim that the aid is no longer needed and doing more harm than good, we believe that the data tell another story.

BENEFITS LOST

Three federal programs created to support workers hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns expire on Sept. 6:

- The Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation program offers 13 additional weeks in state unemployment benefits. An estimated 3.3 million people who were getting benefits through this program are set to lose them.

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance provides aid to gig workers and others not normally eligible for unemployment benefits. About 5.5 million people were receiving aid because of this program – including those who just joined the rolls in the second half of August.

- The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program supplements state benefits with an additional \$300 in aid per week – down from \$600 when it began in April 2020.

All told, the end of these programs may affect 35 million people when you include families of the unemployed.

DROPPING AID DIDN'T BOOST JOBS GROWTH

Critics of these federal supplemental benefits claim they reward Americans for not working by offering more in aid than they'd get from a job. This is why many Republican governors opted to drop out of one or more of the federal programs in re-

cent months.

“We see ‘Help Wanted’ signs everywhere,” Idaho Republican Gov. Brad Little said on May 11, 2021. “We do not want people on unemployment. We want people working.”

But the data we have so far simply doesn't back up these claims.

We compared employment growth in the 25 states that decided to drop the federal \$300 sup-



plement with those that kept it.

Total job creation in states that kept offering the federal supplement was 35% higher than in the ones that ended the program, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, suggesting the benefits aren't keeping workers on the sidelines.

The same pattern holds for sectors of the economy hit hardest by COVID-19. Leisure and hospitality jobs, such as waitstaff and cooks, accounted for roughly 1 in 4 of all jobs lost in 2020. Hiring in those areas was 39% higher in July 2021 in states that kept the federal benefit.

This is consistent with a growing number of studies that show no correlation between the higher unemployment payments during the pandemic and lagging job growth.

We won't know whether the trend continued until the state-by-state employment breakdown is released in mid-September. But for now, the evidence doesn't support the claim that benefits keep folks at home.

JOBLESS AMERICANS STILL NEED SUPPORT

But we do know that people who want to work are still being prevented from doing so because of COVID-19.

The latest jobs report, released on Sept. 3, 2021, showed that 5.6 million people were unable to work in August because their employer closed or lost business because of the pandemic, up from 5.2 million in July.

That may help explain why companies hired only 235,000 in August – a third of what economists had expected. And there were no gains in leisure and hospitality, which pay some of the lowest wages of any industry.

As recently as late May, before the delta variant began causing caseloads to climb, pandemic-related unemployment claims were falling across all 50 states. Then, over June and July, claims spiked again as COVID-19 cases rippled across the country.

All this shows why all three programs are still so important.

The extended benefits give unemployed people more time to find a job while helping them cover basic expenses. Gig workers, like Uber drivers and other independent contractors, need unemployment benefits too, especially as 60% of them lost income during the pandemic and many continue to struggle as business activity remains subdued. These workers are also less likely to

receive employer-sponsored benefits like health care.

And the \$300 federal supplement is important because pre-pandemic state benefits – which are typically about \$340 a week – replaced only 30% to 50% of lost earnings. Even with the supplement, for most people, it's still less than what they were earning from their job.

TOUGH CHOICES AHEAD

That's why the expiring benefits mean so much to lower-income families, especially now that the Supreme Court has struck down the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ban on evictions.

For many, losing the benefit could be the difference between choosing to pay for food or rent, or forgoing a doctor's visit because of the high costs of health care.

But after the benefits expire on Labor Day, making ends meet and staying in their homes will be significantly harder for millions of American families.

[Jeffrey Kucik is Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Arizona; Don Leonard is Assistant Professor of Practice in City and Regional Planning, The Ohio State University]

Dance and movement therapy holds promise for treating anxiety and depression, as well as deeper psychological wounds

LANA RUVOLO GRASSER
theconversation.com

A few years ago, framed by the skyline of Detroit, a group of about 15 children resettled as refugees from the Middle East and Africa leapt and twirled around, waving blue, pink and white streamers through the air.

The captivating scene was powerfully symbolic. Each streamer held a negative thought, feeling or memory that the children had written down on the streamers. On cue and in unison, the children released their streamers into the air, then sat down nearby. Then they gathered up the fallen streamers, which carried their collective struggles and hardships, threw them in a trash can and waved goodbye.

The children were participating in a dance therapy activity as part of our team's research program exploring body-based approaches to mental health treatment in people resettled as refugees.

In 2017, our lab – the Stress, Trauma and Anxiety Research Clinic – began piloting movement therapies to help address trauma in refugee families. We are learning that movement may not only provide a way to express oneself, but also offer a path toward healing and lifelong strategies for managing stress.

On average, every year about 60,000 children are resettled as refugees in Western nations. Now, the refugee crisis resulting from the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is bringing renewed attention to their needs. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that 6 million Afghans have been displaced over the past 40 years, and a new wave of tens of thousands are now fleeing from Taliban rule.

I am a neuroscientist who specializes in understanding how trauma reshapes the nervous system of developing youth. I use this information to explore creative arts and movement-based therapies to treat stress

and anxiety. The instinct to move the body in expressive ways is as old as humanity. But movement-based strategies such as dance therapy have only recently been given much attention in mental health treatment circles.

As a dancer myself, I always found the nonverbal emotional expression offered through movement to be incredibly therapeutic – especially when I was experiencing significant anxiety and depression in high school and college. Now, through my neuroscience research, I am joining a growing number of scholars working to bolster the evidence base supporting movement-based interventions.

ONE MIND AND BODY

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the incidence of anxiety and depression doubled in youth. As a result, many people are searching for new ways to cope with and handle emotional turmoil.

On top of the pandemic, conflicts around the world, as well as climate change and natural disasters, have contributed to the growing global refugee crisis. This demands resources for resettlement, education and occupation, physical health and – importantly – mental health.

Interventions that offer physical activity and creativity components at a time when children and people of all ages are likely to be sedentary and with reduced environmental enrichment can be beneficial during the pandemic and beyond. Creative arts and movement-based interventions may be well-suited to address not just the emotional but also the physical aspects of mental illness, such as pain and fatigue. These factors often contribute to the significant distress and dysfunction that drive individuals to seek care.

WHY DANCE AND MOVEMENT THERAPY?

Body movement in and of itself is known to have a multitude of benefits – including reducing perceived stress,

lowering inflammation in the body and even promoting brain health. In fact, researchers understand that the majority of our daily communication is nonverbal, and traumatic memories are encoded, or stored, in nonverbal parts of the brain. We also know that stress and trauma live in the body. So it makes sense that, through guided practices, movement can be leveraged to tell stories, embody and release emotions and help people “move” forward.

Dance and movement therapy sessions place an emphasis on fostering creativity and adaptability in order to help people develop greater cognitive flexibility, self-regulation and self-direction. This is especially important because research shows that early-life experiences and how children learn to cope with them can have a lasting impact on their health into adulthood.

According to the Child Mind Institute Children's Mental Health Report, 80% of children with anxiety disorders are not receiving the treatment they require. This might be due to barriers such as clinician availability and cultural literacy, cost and accessibility, and stigma surrounding mental health conditions and treatment.

We are finding that dance and movement therapy and other group behavioral health programs can help fill important gaps. For instance, these strategies can be used in combination with services people are already receiving. And they can provide an accessible and affordable option in school and community settings. Dance and movement therapy can also instill coping skills and relaxation techniques that, once learned, can last a lifetime.

BUT DOES IT WORK?

Our research and that of others are showing that dance and movement therapy can build up children's sense of self-worth, improve their ability to regulate their emotions and reactions and empower them to over-

come obstacles.

Much like yoga and meditation, dance and movement therapy has, at the root of its practice, a focus on deep breathing through the diaphragm. This intentional breathing movement physically pushes on and activates the vagus nerve, which is a large nerve that coordinates a number of biological processes in the body. When I work with kids, I call this form of breathing and nerve activation their “superpower.” Whenever they need to calm down, they can take a deep breath, and by engaging their vagus nerve, they can bring their bodies to a more restful and less reactive state.

An analysis of 23 clinical research studies indicated that dance and movement therapy may be an effective and appropriate method for child, adult and elderly patients experiencing a wide array of symptoms – including psychiatric patients and those with developmental disorders. And for both healthy individuals and patients, the authors concluded that dance and movement therapy was most effective for reducing the severity of anxiety compared with other symptoms. Research from our team has also shown promise for the benefits of dance and movement therapy in reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety in youth who resettle as refugees.

We have scaled up these programs and brought them into the virtual classroom for six schools throughout the metro Detroit region during the pandemic.

Perhaps the most promising evidence for dance and movement therapy isn't, as the saying goes, what the eyes cannot see. In this case, it is what the eyes can see: children releasing their streamers, their negative emotions and memories, waving goodbye to them and looking ahead to a new day.

[The writer is Ph.D. Candidate and Graduate Research Fellow, Wayne State University]

HM Amit Shah honours Olympic champion MirabaiChanu

NEW DELHI, SEP 4 (PTI): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday felicitated Olympic champion MirabaiChanu here for bringing laurels to the country in weightlifting.

The 27-year-old sportsperson, appointed as additional superintendent of police in her home state Manipur after the recent win, was honoured during the 51st raising day celebrations of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), a central government think tank.

Shah presented the athlete with a shawl and memento.

He said Chanu brought honour for the country by winning a medal at the Tokyo Olympic games and is now a proud member of the police force.

I thank her for her hardwork and dedication, the home minister added.

"This is a small gesture by BPR&D to welcome her (SaikhomMirabaiChanu) to the fraternity on behalf of the Indian police," an official statement said on Friday.

Chanu had clinched a silver medal in the 49kg category weightlifting that opened India's account at the recently-concluded Tokyo Olympics. India won a total of seven medals at these games.

The home minister also gave away trophies and medals for excellence in training to winner states/UTs and central police organisations and forces, and seven authors who wrote on policing subjects in Hindi.

The BPR&D, an organisation under the Ministry of Home Affairs, was founded in August, 1970.

Ladakh records 3 fresh COVID-19 cases

LEH, SEP 4 (PTI):Ladakh registered three fresh cases of COVID-19, taking the overall infection tally in the region to 20,576, officials said on Saturday.

The Union territory has registered 207 Covid-related deaths -- 149 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. As many as 20,299 patients have recovered till date.

The officials said 4,159 people, including 2,192 air travellers, were tested for COVID-19 in the twin districts on Friday and three of them tested positive for the disease in Leh.

One patient was cured of coronavirus infection in Leh, they said, putting the number of active cases in the region at 70 52 in Leh and 18 in Kargil.

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Alcaraz, 18, upends No. 3 Tsitsipas at US Open; Osaka out



NEW YORK (AP): Until now, 18-year-old Carlos Alcaraz has exhibited enough promise and precociousness to make people think he eventually could succeed Rafael Nadal as Spain's top tennis player. On Friday at the U.S. Open, with a dramatic five-set victory over No. 3 seed StefanosTsitsipas, Alcaraz showed why he's been getting so much attention already.

With a tenacity to match his talent, and boosted by a rowdy Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd a tad tired of Tsitsipas' penchant for taking lengthy breaks between sets, Alcaraz won 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 0-6, 7-6 (5) in just over four hours to become the youngest man in the fourth round at Flushing Meadows since a couple of guys named Pete Sampras and Michael Chang in 1989.

"I just don't know what happened out there in the court," the 55th-ranked Alcaraz said after what was only his 10th Grand Slam contest. "I can't believe that I beat StefanosTsitsipas in an epic match. For me, it's a dream come true."

His was not the only significant victory for an 18-year-old against a top player: Later in that same arena, 2018 and 2020 champion Naomi Osaka tossed and spiked her racket as she let her lead slip away in what turned into a 5-7, 7-6 (2), 6-4 loss to Canadian teen Leylah Fernandez.

Afterward, a teary-eyed Osaka said she is considering taking another hiatus from the sport; she pulled out of the French Open and went on a mental health break after saying she gets anxiety when she speaks to the media and has dealt with depression for

years. "This is very hard to articulate," she said Friday. "Basically, I feel like I'm kind of at this point where I'm trying to figure out what I want to do, and I honestly don't know when I'm going to play my next tennis match."

Both Alcaraz and Fernandez made sure during on-court interviews to thank the fans, who are making up for last year's absence — no spectators were allowed because of the coronavirus pandemic then, but it's full capacity now — with plenty of noise.

They booed Osaka for turning her back to the court and holding up action in the final game. They chanted "Let's go, Carlos!" during his win and rose to their feet for ovations at various points, including right before the concluding tiebreaker, with Alcaraz waving his arms to request, and receive, even more

support. "He can be a contender for Grand Slam titles," said Tsitsipas, the runner-up at the French Open this year. "He has the game to be there."

In earlier action, three women with multiple major titles each — GarbiñeMuguruza, SimonaHalep and Angelique Kerber — pulled out three-set victories to advance to Week 2.

Muguruza got past Victoria Azarenka, a three-time U.S. Open runner-up including a year ago, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 and next faces French Open champion BarboraKrejcikova. Kerber, who won the title in New York in 2016, defeated 2017 champ Sloane Stephens 5-7, 6-2, 6-3. And Halep was a 7-6 (11), 4-6, 6-3 winner over Elena Rybakina.

Alcaraz showed off so many skills against Tsitsipas. Big cuts off both wings, so big that this was the assessment

offered by Tsitsipas: "I've never seen someone hit the ball so hard." And that was backed up by the stats, none more remarkable than the one showing that Alcaraz finished with 45 winners off forehands and backhands, compared with 14 for Tsitsipas.

There was more. So much more.A serve with some pop, reaching 134 mph. Returns that were too much to handle. And drop shots. So many drop shots, some of which claimed points outright, others of which laid the groundwork for a lob or a just-the-right-angle passing winner.Alcaraz even won one point with the help of a back-to-the-net, through-the-legs tweener.

As impressive as all of that may have been, nothing stood out about the kid as much as the mental strength required to hang in there in the crucible of a Grand Slam fifth set

in the biggest arena in tennis against a top player. Especially after getting shut out in the fourth.

"He dealt with it really well," Tsitsipas said.

And he meant everything: the scene, the setting, the stakes. Alcaraz had some fun along the way, too, interacting with the ticket-holders, pumping his fists, yelling "Vamos!" and, after some of his best shots, nodding confidently in the direction of his coach, 2003 French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero.

When it ended with Alcaraz smacking an inside-out forehand winner, he flung away his racket, dropped onto his back and covered his face with both hands.

"I had to be aggressive until the last point," he said later. "I think I did."

He stayed down for several moments, his chest heav-

ing. After rising to go to the net, Alcaraz got a pat on the shoulder from Tsitsipas. Alcaraz then again put his palms over his eyes and squeezed his eyes shut.

This is the sort of triumph others have seen coming for him, and the milestones keep arriving.

He already was the youngest man to make two third-round runs at a major since Novak Djokovic in 2005. And the youngest to win at least one match at each Slam in a year since 1989, when that was done by GoranIvanisevic, the 2001 Wimbledon champion who now is one of Djokovic's coaches.

Now add this: Alcaraz is the youngest man to beat a top-three player at a Grand Slam tournament since the ATP computerized rankings started in 1973.

"It was supposed to be my match. Today was a match that I shouldn't have lost," said Tsitsipas, who had been the subject of criticism from first-round Andy Murray and others for taking what they thought was too long when heading off court for several minutes for an allowed toilet break. This time, Tsitsipas did leave after the third set, but just for a few minutes (Alcaraz departed, too, and returned 30 seconds sooner). After the fourth, Alcaraz got treated on the sideline by a trainer who massaged his legs and lower back.

At the end of the fifth set, with the outcome in the balance, Alcaraz was better.

"You feel like you're in control and it doesn't really go your way at the end," Tsitsipas said. "It's kind of bitter, I would say."

Osaka weighs another break from tennis after US Open loss

NEW YORK (AP): Naomi Osaka looked over at her agent and said she wanted to tell the world what the two of them had discussed privately in an Arthur Ashe Stadium hallway after her U.S. Open title defense ended with a racket-tossing, composure-missing, lead-evaporating defeat in the third round.

His reply: "Sure."

And then Osaka, pausing every so often as her voice got caught on her words and her eyes filled with tears, said Friday night she is thinking about taking another break from tennis "for a while."

"I feel like for me, recently, when I win, I don't feel happy, I feel more like a relief. And then when I lose, I feel very sad," Osaka said at her news conference following a 5-7, 7-6 (2), 6-4 loss at Flushing Meadows to Leylah Fernandez, an 18-year-old from Canada who is ranked 73rd and never had been this far in Grand Slam competition. "I don't think that's normal."

The moderator in charge of the session with reporters attempted to cut things off, but Osaka said she wanted to continue.

"This is very hard to articulate," she said, resting her left cheek in her hand. "Basically, I feel like I'm kind of at this point where I'm trying to figure out what I want to do, and I honestly don't know when I'm going to play my next tennis match."

Crying, she lowered her black visor over her eyes and offered an apology, then patted her palms on both cheeks.

"Yeah," Osaka added as she rose to leave, "I think I'm going to take a break from playing for a while."

This was the first Slam tournament for the 23-year-old Osaka since she pulled out of the French Open before the second round to take a mental health break after having announced she would not participate in news conferences in Paris.



She also sat out Wimbledon, before participating in the Tokyo Olympics, where she lit the cauldron as one of Japan's most famous athletes.

Osaka owns four Grand Slam titles, including at the U.S. Open in 2018 — beating Serena Williams in a chaotic final — and a year ago, plus two more on the hard courts of the Australian Open. When she took a hiatus after Roland Garros, she revealed that she endures waves of anxiety before meeting with the media and has dealt with depression for three years.

Over the last week, Osaka has written on social media and spoken about her thoughts on the importance of self-belief and how she wants to ignore others' expectations.

The first sign Friday that things were not entirely OK with Osaka came when she smacked her racket against the court after dropping one point. Moments later, Osaka chucked her equipment, sending it bounc-

ing and skidding halfway to the net. Then came a full-on spike near the baseline.

Afterward, she compared that behavior to acting "kind of like a little kid."

"I was telling myself to be calm, but I feel like maybe there was a boiling point," Osaka said. "Like, normally, I feel like I like challenges. But recently I feel very anxious when things don't go my way, and I feel like you can feel that."

Her game was off. Her game face was gone. By the end, the crowd was booing her for turning her back to the court and taking too much time between points.

Soon enough, the No. 3-seeded Osaka was out of the bracket.

This day had that sort of vibe: Earlier in Ashe, another 18-year-old new to this territory surprisingly eliminated a No. 3 seed when Carlos Alcaraz of Spain edged French Open runner-up StefanosTsitsipas

6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (2), 0-6, 7-6 (5) to become the youngest man into the fourth round at Flushing Meadows since Michael Chang and Pete Sampras in 1989. Osaka came in with a 16-match winning streak at majors. Still, Fernandez declared: "Right before the match, I knew I was able to win." For Osaka, maybe the time away from high-level competition was an issue.

Another possible factor in her failure to close things out while serving for the victory against the left-hander Fernandez at 6-5 in the second set: Osaka hadn't played a match since Monday. The usual day-on, day-off rhythm at Slams was disrupted because the woman Osaka was supposed to meet in the second round, Olga Danilovic, withdrew with an illness.

"I've never had a walkover in a Grand Slam, so that was definitely a really weird feeling," Osaka said.

On Friday, Osaka was quite good

down the stretch in the opening set. She grabbed 12 of 13 points, including the last nine, with a break at love to go up 6-5, and a hold at love with the help of a pair of aces at 112 mph and 114 mph to end it.

Seemed on track for a similar conclusion in the second set, leading 6-5 and serving. But when Osaka sailed a forehand wide, Fernandez had her first break of the match to make it 6-all. "Finally, I found a pattern to her serve," Fernandez said. "I just trusted my gut and hit the ball."

And so began Osaka's downward spiral. She fell behind 5-0 in the ensuing tiebreaker, missing shots and displaying her frustration as she occasionally has done in the past — by flinging her racket.

Chair umpire Alison Hughes did not sanction Osaka then, although later a warning was issued for hitting a ball into the stands.

"I wasn't really focused on Naomi," Fernandez said. "I was only focused on myself, my game, what I needed to do."

More to the point, Osaka was not at her best. She left the court with a white towel draped over her head after the second set, then sat in her changeover chair in that same block-out-the-world manner.

Fernandez, smiling and holding her right fist overhead after the biggest of points, certainly had something to do with the outcome.

She won 18 of 19 first-serve points — and never faced a break point — in the third set.

Fernandez's knee-to-the-ground, quick-redirect style at the baseline is reminiscent of another lefty, Angelique Kerber, a three-time Grand Slam champion who won the 2016 U.S. Open.

And who just so happens to be the next opponent for Fernandez.

"I'm going to put on a show like I did tonight," Fernandez said, "and we're going to see how it goes."

Collision between train, minibus leaves 6 dead in Turkey

ISTANBUL (AP): A collision between a freight train and a minibus in northwest Turkey killed six people and injured six others Saturday, Turkish news agency Demiroren reported.

The crash at a railroad crossing in Ergene, Tekirdag province, involved a minibus carrying factory workers and a train headed to nearby Cerkezoy at 8 a.m. local time (0500 GMT), the news agency said.

The people who died all were in the minibus, which was dragged in front of the train after the impact. Images showed the crumpled vehicle lying on its roof alongside the train tracks.

In 2018, 25 people died when a passenger train derailed in nearby Corlu. That accident was blamed on heavy rain causing an embankment to collapse.

Last year, Turkey's Chamber of Mechanical Engineers said railway accidents in the country were three times the global average, while labor unions warned that cost-cutting has led to safety issues.

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Brazil starts booster shots while many still await a 2nd jab

SAO PAULO (AP): Some cities in Brazil are providing booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine, even though most people have yet to receive their second jabs, in a sign of the concern in the country over the highly contagious delta variant.

Rio de Janeiro, currently Brazil's epicenter for the variant and home to one of its largest elderly populations, began administering the boosters Wednesday. Northeastern cities Salvador and Sao Luis started on Monday, and the most populous city of Sao Paulo will begin Sept. 6. The rest of the nation will follow the next week.

France, Israel, China and Chile are among those countries giving boosters to some of their older citizens, but more people in those countries are fully vaccinated than the 30% who have gotten two shots in Brazil. A U.S. plan to start delivery of booster shots by Sept. 20 for most Americans is facing complications that could delay third doses for those who received the Moderna vaccine, administration officials said Friday.

About nine out of 10 Brazilians have been vaccinated already or plan to be, according to pollster Datafolha. Most have gotten their first shot but not their second.

Brazil's cases and deaths have been falling for two months, with 621 deaths reported in the seven days through Sept. 2 — far below April's peak of more than 3,000 reported deaths over a seven-day period. Older Brazilians have expressed concern about the efficacy of the Chinese Sinovac vaccine against the delta variant, prompting authorities to offer the booster shots.

Diana dos Santos, 71, received two shots of the



Sinovac vaccine even after President Jair Bolsonaro spent months publicly criticizing it. Dos Santos, who lives Rio's low-income Maré neighborhood, is diabetic and was hospitalized for a heart condition. She refuses to leave home until she gets her booster.

"I can't go out like before and I'm still afraid of all of this," dos Santos said. "I will feel safer (with a booster)."

Because of the variant, some experts say the government should slow the rollout of boosters and focus on distributing second doses. Delta is the most contagious variant identified, and many studies have suggested that one dose doesn't protect against it. Two shots provide strong protection, with nearly all hospitalizations and deaths among the unvaccinated.

Ethel Maciel, an epidemiologist and professor at the Federal University of Espirito Santo, said pushing boosters at this early stage recalls the lack of concern given the gam-

ma variant that overwhelmed Amazonian city Manaus earlier this year, only to feed a new wave nationwide. Brazil has seen more than 580,000 deaths from COVID-19, making it home to world's eighth-highest toll on a per-capita basis.

"It seems we're in the same movie, repeating the same errors," Maciel said. "It's only a matter of time until what's happening in Rio leads to a greater number of more serious cases in the rest of the country."

The delta variant already is dominant in Rio de Janeiro state, detected in 86% of the samples collected from COVID-19 patients, according to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Intensive care units have reached full capacity in eight municipalities, although only a small rise in deaths have been recorded so far.

Authorities in Sao Paulo state expect a similar scenario within weeks. It registered its

first confirmed death from the delta variant on Tuesday, a 74-year-old woman who had received two Sinovac shots.

Globally, doubts have plagued Chinese vaccines, especially as the delta variant has gained hold in many countries. Chinese officials have maintained the vaccine protects against delta, particularly preventing hospitalizations and severe cases.

Still, Brazil's Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga said Aug. 25 that people aged 70 or older or who have a weak immune system will be eligible for a third dose, starting Sept. 15 -- preferably with the Pfizer vaccine. He said that people over 18 will have received their first doses by then, although he didn't address their vulnerability to the delta variant without a second shot.

He also criticized governors and mayors who sought to deliver booster shots earlier, saying it could lead to vaccine shortages.

Carla Domingues, former coordinator of Brazil's national immunization program, agrees with the need to provide the elderly boosters, but not for people aged 70 and up right away. Shots should first go to nursing homes and people who are bed-ridden, she said, then people 80 and above, with the age slowly decreasing as supply allows.

"Certainly there will be problems with shortage, because there won't be enough vaccine," Domingues said.

Japan and South Korea both wrestled with slow vaccine rollouts, and under half their populations are fully vaccinated; their governments are only planning booster shots in the fourth quarter of this year. Malaysia also is considering boosters, but Health Minister Khairy-Jamaluddin said the priority is those who haven't received a first dose.

Thailand began giving booster shots even as most

people wait to be vaccinated — but only for health and front-line workers who received two Sinovac shots. The decision came after a nurse died of COVID-19 in July.

Russia, Hungary and Serbia also are giving boosters, although there has been a lack of demand in those countries for the initial shots amid abundant supplies.

In addition to doubts over boosters, the issue is sensitive due to implications for global vaccine distribution. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has called for a moratorium on boosters "to allow those countries that are furthest behind to catch up."

Epidemiologist Denise Garrett, vice president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, which advocates for expanding global vaccine access, said in an interview there is no doubt about the need for two jabs, but she sees no scientific or moral justification for a third.

"Authorities giving a third dose are prioritizing protection against light disease instead of shielding people in poor countries from death," said Garrett, who is Brazilian. "That is shameful, immoral, and this vaccine inequity must end."

That doesn't sway 97-year-old Maria Menezes, who wants to spend time outside her home where she has lived for the last seven decades in Rio's western region. Her two daughters say Menezes wants a booster shot.

"She asked us to take her for the third vaccine," said daughter Cristina França, 38. "It will be important to beef up her immunity to reduce her risks. Her life won't change much after the third dose, because she is more frail now, but she would live with more calm."

Extremist was released from New Zealand jail despite fears

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP): New Zealand authorities imprisoned a man inspired by the Islamic State group for three years after catching him with a hunting knife and extremist videos — but at a certain point, despite grave fears he would attack others, they say they could do nothing more to keep him behind bars.

So for 53 days from July, police tracked the man's every move, an operation that involved some 30 officers working around the clock. Their fears were borne out Friday when the man walked into an Auckland supermarket, grabbed a kitchen knife from a store shelf and stabbed five people, critically injuring three.

Two more shoppers were injured in the melee. On Saturday, three of the victims remained hospitalized in critical condition and three more were in stable or moderate conditions. The seventh person was recovering at home. The youngest victim was a 29-year-old woman, the oldest a 77-year-old man.

Undercover officers monitoring the man from just outside the supermarket sprang into action when they saw shoppers running and heard shouting, police said, and shot him dead within a couple of minutes of him beginning his attack. A bystander's video records the sound of 10 shots being fired in rapid succession.

The attack has highlighted deficiencies in New Zealand's anti-terror laws, which experts say are too focused on punishing actions and inadequate for dealing with plots before they are carried out. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said lawmakers were close to filling some of those legislative holes when the attack occurred. She vowed law changes by the end of the month.

Police Commissioner Andrew

Coster said the law they were working under required the man to make the first move.

"We might have an understanding of intent, and ideology, and we might have high levels of concern," Coster said. "But that is not sufficient for us to take any enforcement action."

Authorities have not yet released the man's name. They say he was a Sri Lankan national who arrived in New Zealand 10 years ago, at the age of 22, on a student visa. He was first noticed by police in 2016 when he started posting support for terror attacks and violent extremism on Facebook.

Police twice confronted him but he kept on posting. In 2017, they arrested him at Auckland Airport. He was headed for Syria, authorities say, presumably to join the Islamic State insurgency. Police searches found he had a hunting knife and some banned propaganda material, and he was later released on bail. In 2018, he bought another knife, and police found two Islamic State videos.

The man spent the next three years in jail after pleading guilty to various crimes and for breaching bail. On new charges in May, a jury found the man guilty on two counts of possessing objectionable videos, both of which showed Islamic State group imagery, including the group's flag and a man in a black balaclava holding a semi-automatic weapon.

However, the videos didn't show violent murders like some Islamic State videos and weren't classified as the worst kind of illicit material. High Court Judge Sally Fitzgerald described the contents as religious hymns sung in Arabic. She said the videos described obtaining martyrdom on the battlefield by being killed for God's cause.

A court report warned the man had the motivation and means to commit violent acts in the community and posed a high risk. It described him as harboring extreme attitudes, living an isolated lifestyle, and having a sense of entitlement.

But the judge decided to release the man, sentencing him to a year's supervision at an Auckland mosque, where a leader had confirmed his willingness to help and support the man on his release.

The judge said she rejected arguments the man had simply stumbled on the videos and was trying to improve his Arabic. She said an aggravating factor was that he was on bail for earlier, similar offenses and had tried to delete his internet browser history.

Fitzgerald noted the extreme concerns of police, saying she didn't know if they were right, but "I sincerely hope they are not."

The judge also banned the man from owning any devices that could access the internet, unless approved in writing by a probation officer, and ordered that he provide access to any social media accounts he held.

"I am of the view that the risk of you reoffending in a similar way to the charges upon which you were convicted remains high," the judge concluded. "Your rehabilitation is accordingly key."

Two months later, the man took a train from a mosque in the Auckland suburb of Glen Eden where he was living to a Countdown supermarket in New Lynn, tailed at a distance by police. He wheeled a shopping cart around the store like the other customers for about 10 minutes. The store was less crowded than normal due to coronavirus distancing requirements, and undercover police were hanging back so as not to be noticed.

Concerns rise over UK flu outbreak amid vaccine delays

LONDON (AP): One of the U.K.'s largest suppliers of seasonal influenza vaccines warned Saturday that there could be delivery delays of up to two weeks as a result of a shortage of truck drivers.

In a statement that has accentuated concerns about the potential scale of this winter's flu outbreak, vaccine company Seqirus blamed "unforeseen challenges linked with road freight delays" for the disruption to deliveries in England and Wales.

The company said it "is working hard to resolve the delay to allow customers to reschedule their influenza vaccination clinics."

Though the severity of flu outbreaks vary each year, there are concerns that past lockdowns put in place to combat the coronavirus pandemic might make U.K. residents more susceptible to the flu in the coming months.

"Clearly influenza immunization this year is really important, and the reason it's so important is because of lockdowns, we've had very low circulating influenza levels last winter," Oxford University professor Anthony Harnden said. He is deputy chairman of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which advises the British gov-

ernment on the rollout of vaccines. "So we do know when there are low circulating influenza levels the year before, often we get high infection rates in the following year so it's quite possible that we'll have a high instance of influenza this year," Harnden told the BBC. Dr. Richard Vautrey, the chair of the British Medical Association's General Practitioners Committee, said any shortage of flu vaccines is likely to affect a "significant proportion" of local practices and warned of a "serious impact" on GPs and patients. Free flu vaccines will be available to more than 35 million people this winter, including all secondary school students, according to the government. Companies in a variety of industries have reported delivery disruptions due to a truck driver shortage, which has been blamed on an array of factors.

A major reason is that drivers from European Union countries returned to the continent as a result of Britain's departure from the EU and the coronavirus pandemic. Among the many companies struggling to maintain stock levels are pub company JD Wetherspoon, whose founder was an ardent supporter of Brexit, and fast-food chains KFC, McDonald's and Nando's.



Imagine Dragons dive into the darkness with brave new album

NEW YORK (AP): The new Imagine Dragons album cover depicts a man falling through space, gravity gently pulling him down. Inside is the sound of a man grappling with his own fall.

Lead singer, songwriter and lyricist Dan Reynolds has poured heartache, tragedy and his struggles with sobriety into the raw, confessional and searing “Mercury — Act 1,” a brave album from a band refusing to retreat into past hits.

“In a lot of ways I felt like my foundation was completely ripped from under me over the last decade. I spent a lot of my time embracing that self-pity and wallowing in it,” he says from his home in Las Vegas. “This record is primarily about taking action and rebuilding.”

The 13-track collection uses Reynolds’ falsetto to great effect to explore different sonic landscapes, and his lyrics ache with a portrait of a man who has lost friends to cancer, had his personal life collapse and battled depression and addiction.

“I’m finding it hard to love myself,” he sings on “My Life.” On “Lonely,” he offers: “These days, I’m becoming everything I hate.” The song “Dull Knives” has Reynolds’ almost screaming in anguish: “Won’t someone please save my life?” and one song has the sing-along chorus: “It’s OK to be not OK.”

The album was written over a three-year period and much happened in Reynolds’ life. He separated from wife AjaVolkman, but the couple reunited in late 2018 after a seven-month break and welcomed a fourth child, son Valentine, the next fall. He lost loved ones to cancer, including his business manager, an ex-girlfriend and his sister-in-law, which inspired “Wrecked.”

The deaths had the effect of reminding Reynolds how short life is, and he says he wants to make the most of the days he has left, staying present and vulnerable.

“I want to grow as close as I can with those that I love, and that really requires

being raw and honest. Vulnerability is a superpower. I certainly have not even begun to master it, especially being an introvert, but it is one of my greatest life goals.”

Imagine Dragons — which includes guitarist Wayne Sermon, drummer Daniel Platzman and bassist Ben McKee — have always evolved their sound, but this, their fifth studio album, is a quite radical step. The big arena-ready sounds of “Believer” and “Radioactive” earlier in their career have given way to murkier,

tion of sobriety and addiction. Because in its most honest sense, there is nothing beautiful or alluring about it at all. It can look incredibly painful and ugly,” he said.

“I have watched my friends die to drug addiction. The last thing that I want to do is to glorify it. But I also don’t want to shame anyone for their circumstances. And the point of art is to share our darkest moments as well as the light ones. I believe that by singing about my own struggle with it, it hopefully will



smaller songs with electronic flourishes.

For “Mercury — Act 1,” the Dragons leaned on superstar producer Rick Rubin, who urged the band to go deeper into the darkness and not worry if what they found would alienate fans.

“Rick reminded me that over the last decade my fans have grown up with me. They not only want to grow with me, but they expected it. He told me to never worry about pushing them in uncomfortable ways,” Reynolds said. “And that I really would be doing them a disservice if I ever tried to re-create the past or sugarcoat the present. I owe them vulnerability and honesty only.”

Reynolds said he agonized about frankly discussing his own addiction battles, worried that fans might wrongly think he was glorifying drugs.

“I just tried to paint an honest depic-

bring someone else some sort of peace or resolve.” For all its anguish, “Mercury — Act 1” ends with two upbeat songs, the tropical-tinged “No Time for Toxic People” and the Hawaiian-flavored “One Day,” with the hopeful lyric: “I know that one day/I’ll be that thing that makes you happy.” It evokes perfect waves and sun through the clouds.

“This record deals with a lot of searching and loneliness, struggling with the finite state of reality. However, I really wanted it to end on a celebratory note. Setting the foundation for a more steady and stable future,” said Reynolds.

“I wanted to end the record by focusing on all the things that make me happy. The simple things that keep me going every day. Looking to the future. Pointing out to myself all the beauty that surrounds me.”

John Cena pays tribute to SidharthShukla on Instagram

MUMBAI, SEP 4 (PTI): Bollywood star John Cena on Saturday paid a tribute to the actor SidharthShukla, whose sudden death has stunned the Indian showbiz industry and his fans.

Shukla, 40, who became a household name with his role in the long-running TV show BalikaVadhu and emerged as the winner of Bigg Boss 13, was declared dead on arrival on Thursday morning when he was taken to a hospital in suburban Juhu.

Several Bollywood and TV celebrities expressed shock and were in a state of disbelief over the untimely demise of Shukla.

Taking to Instagram, Cena simply shared a black-and-white picture of Shukla without any caption.

Cena is known for posting photos on Instagram with-

out captions. His bio on the social media platform reads, “Welcome to my Instagram. These images will be posted without explanation, for your interpretation. Enjoy.”

His post has since garnered 453,059 likes and 8,325 comments.

Bollywood star VarunDhawan, who worked with him in 2014 movie Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania, also liked Cena’s post on the social media platform.

The exact cause behind Shukla’s death is not known yet, even though several reports suggested that a heart attack took the life of the actor.

Shukla, who is survived by his mother and sister, was cremated in Mumbai on Friday in the presence of his family, friends and colleagues.

Gwendoline Christie does audio for Brian Selznick novel



NEW YORK (AP):The latest adventure for “Game of Thrones” actor Gwendoline Christie is the audiobook for one of publishing’s most imaginative storytellers, Brian Selznick.

Selznick’s “Kaleidoscope,” the latest work from the author of “The Invention of Hugo Cabret,” comes out Sept. 21 in hardcover, e-book and audio, which will feature Christie’s narration and music from Obie winner Robert E. Scholastic is billing the book as “a multi-layered and spellbinding story about love, loss and friendship.”

Christie added her own su-

perlatives Thursday, saying in a statement that she found the book “captivating, wildly imaginative and thrillingly phantasmagorical.”

“Let him gently take you by the hand on this sensitive multilayered journey through time, space, and emotion. Brian makes us realize the magic in simply being human,” said Christie, also known for her roles in “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” and “Star Wars: The Last Jedi.” She is scheduled to appear, as Lucifer, in the Netflix series “Sandman,” based on the Neil Gaiman comic book.



BLONDE BOMBSHELL! Actress Kristen Stewart looked glam at the premiere of *Spencer* at the 78th Venice International Film Festival.

Kristen Stewart gains perspective on fame playing Diana

VENICE, ITALY (AP): Kristen Stewart has long chafed at how her teenage “Twilight” fame robbed her of her privacy and a normal life, but don’t get the wrong idea: It’s nothing compared to what Princess Diana endured.

“She was the most famous woman in the world,” Stewart said Friday. “I have tasted a high level of that, but really nowhere near that monumental, symbolic representation of an entire people or nation.”

Stewart gained that perspective filming Pablo Larrain’s “Spencer,” the latest cinematic look at the late Princess of Wales, which premiered Friday at the Venice Film Festival. Coming out in between seasons of Netflix’s “The Crown” and with the Broadway musical “Diana” about to open, Larrain’s upside-down fairy tale focuses on the three-day Christmas holiday in the early 1990s that preceded Diana’s formal separation from Prince Charles.

Much has already been said, seen and written about the collapse of the royal marriage, Diana’s deep unhappiness and the cruel confines of the British monarchy. “Spencer” doesn’t add new information or novel insights to the Diana pantheon, allowing itself instead to imagine what transpired in those three days at the queen’s Sandringham estate in Norfolk, as the “people’s princess” unraveled. “I think the really sad thing about her is that she — as normal and casual and disarming as her air is immediately — she also felt so isolated and so lonely,” Stew-

art told a Venice press conference. “She made everyone else feel accompanied and bolstered by this beautiful light, and all she wanted was to have it back.”

This is the second 20th Century icon-in-crisis that Larrain has brought to Venice, after he premiered “Jackie,” a portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis starring Natalie Portman, in 2016. Larrain said he decided to profile Diana because he “wanted to make a movie that my mother would like.”

The Chilean director said his mother adored Diana, dressed like her and even had her hair done like her — the famous Lady Di feathered shag. But he said the more he researched Diana, “I realized that she carried an enormous amount of mystery, and that mystery combined with the magnetism she had creates the perfect elements for a movie.”

Indeed, Diana has been the subject of at least a dozen movies and TV series, from two U.S. made-for-TV movies about the 1981 royal wedding, released a year later, to a 1993 film based on the book “Diana: Her True Story” to the 2013 movie “Diana” starring Naomi Watts as the princess.

None have been particularly flattering to the monarchy. Queen Elizabeth II’s motto is often summarized as “never complain, never explain.” On that principle, Buckingham Palace has refrained from commenting on the many fictionalized accounts of the royal family’s life, from “The Queen” — Stephen Frears’ 2006 film about the aftermath of Diana’s death — to Netflix’ “The Crown.”

in your case, it’s challenging you to grow differently. It doesn’t matter how many times you’ve been let down before or how many times you will be let down in the future. Stay present to this connection. Open, allow, and receive. Let your heart expand with love.

Tip: Be present to the connection the Universe is offering you in this moment.

Cancer:

Cancer, you’ve been down this road before, where you said yes to everything that came your way and took on more responsibility than you’re equipped to handle—and the thing about this road is that it leads to utter and complete chaos. But, it’s not too late now, is it? You still have the chance to unburden yourself. So, release the shame associated with being vulnerable as you make space for your fellow warriors to step in.

Tip: How much is too much?

Leo:

Today, the cards are urging you to celebrate your soul family. The Motley Crew that is attuned to your frequency, and shares a connection with you that goes beyond space and time. Pay attention to how they are showing up for you. The manner in which they are supporting your ascension and propelling you towards the light. Today, in your special way, let them know how their presence has enriched your life.

Tip: It’s time to celebrate your Motley Crew, Leo! Virgo:

You’ve got that big goal energy about you that reads ‘the impossible is possible’. It’s all about commitment and consistency in the Virgo HQ, coupled with the ability to take both success and failure in your stride. Besides, it’s the things that don’t work out that teach us more than our victories ever will. Acknowledging the contribution of your team members is also showing up as a big theme in your cards. Lead by example, wild one, and let both your actions and words reflect how grateful you are for their efforts.

Tip: It’s all about that big goals energy here!

Libra:

You’ve been down this road, Libra. You’ve made the same mistakes over and over. Do you really want to get stuck in this endless loop once again, knowing how much it affects your mental and emotional health? Step back and reassess, beautiful. As you do, remember that you don’t need anybody else to validate your efforts, tell you that you’re worthy, or give you the pat on the back that you deserve.

Tip: Become aware of your tendency to repeat unhealthy patterns.

Scorpio:

It’s transition time, baby! In other words, you’re moving

away from the turbulent waters and making your way to calmer shores. It’s been one helluva ride, hasn’t it? But, you wouldn’t trade your experiences for anything, as they have helped you deepen your awareness of the self and become the person you are today. So, take a moment to reflect upon the lessons from your past as you turn your knowledge into wisdom. It gets better from here—we promise.

Tip: It’s transition time!

Sagittarius:

This is a wonderful time for you, Sagittarius. Those who have been fighting to be in the public eye will find that their big dream is finally taking concrete form. Ditto for those who have been working behind-the-scenes and are seeking recognition for their work. Don’t let your glories make you complacent, though. There’s a lot more to achieve this year. Even when things seem a bit slow on the outside, find the courage within you to keep moving forward.

Tip: You’ve got fame + recognition on your cards.

Capricorn:

Clarity is an integral part of the manifestation process. The clearer you are about what you’re calling in, the easier it is for the Universe to deliver your share of blessings to you. Sending out mixed signals, on the other hand, is only going to attract the energy of chaos. So, step back

and reflect, Capricorn. As you do, ask yourself how and where you need to realign with your purpose. Remember: It’s not for you to worry about ‘the how’ and ‘the why’. Your job is simply to show up for what you love and to let the divine plan unfold as it must.

Tip: Set back, realign, and set focused intentions.

Aquarius:

The cards are pointing towards the ever elusive work-life balance. The idea that you can have a creatively, spiritually and emotionally fulfilling life whilst making a lot of money and serving humanity at large. Something tells us you are going to perfect the balancing act in the days to come. When it comes to decision making, the balance you need to strike is between your mind and your heart. Keeping the collective in mind will help you make an unbiased decision here.

Tip: Before you make the decision, find a balance between your head and your heart.

Pisces:

So what if it didn’t work out the first time? So, what if you faced many, many challenges along your path? Beware of making failure and rejection a part of your story, especially when the Universe is presenting you with another reality. Motivate yourself to try a little harder this time around. If only you knew all the strings that were being pulled on your behalf!

Tip: The Universe has got your back!

Aries:

This is a time of connecting with your sibling(s) on a deeper level, of moving past the differences and focusing on the sacred threads that bind you together. Some of you may be connecting with your old friends too, especially the ones you went to school or college with. On the work front, things may not be looking picture-perfect, though. We’ve got a ‘bad boss’ situation at hand or a case of colleagues who try to sabotage your growth. Word for the wise: protect your interests and set boundaries where you need to. Tip: This is a time of connecting with your sibling(s) on a deeper level.

Taurus:

When a brand new opportunity knocks at your door, don’t waste time worrying about ‘the how’ and ‘the why’. Simply say ‘yes’ and give yourself the permission to figure everything out as you go along. Remember, things that are slow to build have a way of delivering in the long run. Venusians who’ve been making space for love will find that this is a time of deepening your intimacy. A time of breaking past the barriers and allowing your beloved to see who you truly are.

Tip: A brand new work opportunity could come knocking at your door.

Gemini:

Let’s take a moment to revisit your monthly reading: love is not logical, Gemini. It’s beautiful and messy all the same, and