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 Summit TIMES Daily

Training on banana cultivation conducted in Yuksom

GYALSHING, 25 JUN [IPR]: Under Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan, training on banana cultivation and its diseases and pest management was conducted by Horticulture & Cash Crop Department, West Sikkim today at Yuksom in West Sikkim.

The training was attended by 100 progressive farmers and bananas [variety G-9] were distributed to them. A team from H&CC Department led by Deputy Director, Suren Gurung, conducted field demonstration on transplant and pre-planting methods of bananas.

Sikkim dedicates 10 Minutes to Earth

contd from pg01

Secondary School, Buriakhop, Soreng by planting 180 flowering, fruit-bearing and ornamental trees.

MLA DN Sherpa attended the event at Buriakhop as chief guest with Chairperson, YK Megi, as guest of honour. Mr Sherpa also adopted a Rani Chaanp tree at the school complex as Mith tree.

In East Sikkim, the officers and staffs of Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary observed the event.

Avenue plantation from Tashi Viewpoint to Ganesh Tok under Gangtok Territorial Range was carried out today in collaboration with GREF, local people, hawkers, by planting about 450 plants like cherry, azelia and hydrangea.

At Tamzey in East Sikkim, Ten Minutes to Earth programme was organized by East and North Environment and Soil Conservation Division. About 350 saplings of rhododendron, juniper, silver fir and medicinal plants were planted in and around Tamzey army cantonment area with the participation of army personnel, BRO, NGO, EDC members and local public.



ATMA conducts exposure visit for SHGs of East Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

Agriculture Technology Management Agency [ATMA], East Sikkim conducted exposure visit to Mushroom Unit at Majhitar in East Sikkim for Self Help Groups of Pakyong, Martam, Gangtok, Duga and

Parakha today.

The programme was attended by 60 female farmers of different SHGs along with Deputy Director of Mushroom Unit, Yogesh Sharma, as resource person, a press release informs.

During the first session of the

visit, demonstration on Oyster mushroom cultivation was conducted.

Resource person, Mr Sharma, gave a presentation on the technical aspects of production of a variety of mushrooms.



SOYABEAN SEEDS DISTRIBUTED TO DENTAM FARMERS

GANGTOK, 25 JUN: Under Kisan Kalyan Abhiyan, a mini-kit distribution programme was organised today at Dentam in West Sikkim wherein seeds of soyabean variety JS9560 of 8 kg each was handed over to the progressive farmers of Dentam, a press release informs.

Singtam Basibiyalo condoles member's demise

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

On behalf of all the members of Singtam Basibiyalo, its founder, Mohan Pradhan Neeraj, has condoled the untimely demise of its member, Dushyant Tamang, who passed away on 24 Jun at Shantinagar in Singtam. A press release informs that Late Tamang had played an important role in the growth of Singtam Basibiyalo, a literary and cultural event for individuals seeking a platform to showcase their talents.



Training on organic farming at Middle Okhrey & Takuthang

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

Mevedir organized Ward level trainings on organic farming at Middle Okhrey Ward, under Okhrey GPU, and at Takuthang Ward, under Chuchen Takuthang GPU, in Soreng Sub Division, West Sikkim on 24-25 Jun, a press release informs.

Master trainers from Mevedir demonstrated the preparation and usage of herbal spray for controlling red ants and other pests. The farmers were informed about extraction of medicinal properties from plants during the fermentation process.

The master trainers in the

subsequent session also briefed about the ICS documentation processes such as Farmers Diary, Internal Inspection Checklist etc and Approval Committee procedures. The farmers were requested to provide proper information during farm inspection procedures.

Demonstration on preparation of Amrit Jal was also conducted during the trainings at both Wards.

Takuthang Ward Panchayat, Ratna Kumari Manger, encouraged the farmers to join hands in the flagship programme of the State Government and appealed to all farmers to take up organic farming seriously.

New party Sikkim United Front launched



NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

A new political party, Sikkim United Front, was launched today in a function held at Ranipool in East Sikkim.

The new political outfit has Narendra Adhikari as its president along with Peter Tamang, Ashish Rai, Mani Chettri, Kumar Karnal, Kunga Tashi Lepcha, Kumari Limbu as working presidents and Ramesh Khanal as its general secretary.

While speaking at the programme, president, Mr Adhikari, said that it was necessary to form a political party based on

principles in the State.

He also held that unification of Sikkimese society and to install a sense of patriotism among all sections of Sikkimese population is one of the party's prime agenda.

Adding further he said that a dearth of proper opposition and lack of sincere leaders has been felt in the State which is why even after anti-incumbency factor, the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front has been winning elections.

He also said that the party will run for 2019 general elections.

Party member, Ashish Rai, stated that due to

vested interests of the present dispensation, the youth have not received a platform and the party aims to work for the welfare of all.

The programme had the presence of former Minister, Sonam Tshering Bhutia, as chief guest and Delay Namgyal Kazi of SNPP as the guest of honour along with other opposition figures like MK Subba, Padam Bahadur Chettri, Radha Pandey, Narmada Sharma, Krishna Adhikari and GS Khanal as other guests.

It is informed that the party was registered in April this year.



Ten Minutes to Earth in North district

SUMMIT REPORT

MANGAN, 25 JUN:

A massive plantation drive was carried out today across North district as part of the Ten Minutes to Earth programme, a press release informs.

Forest Minister Tshering Wangdi Lepcha, accompanied by District Collector (North), Karma

R Bonpo, Chairperson, SNT, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, District Forest Officer, along with North District Administrative officials planted different species of trees at the district court complex in Mangan, North Sikkim.

The Minister later addressed students at Mangan Senior Secondary School and

informed them about the Ten Minutes to Earth initiative and how this was a unique initiative of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

Around 220 saplings were planted at Mangan District Court and Mangan SSS premises today.

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Singtam Hospital gets Sikkim's first HbA1C diabetes testing machine

contd from pg01

Rs 14 lakh in Phase I and Rs 45 lakh in Phase II. The third phase for vertical extension of the centre is likely to commence at the earliest at the cost of Rs 30 lakh. Out of total estimated cost of Rs 89 lakh, an amount of Rs 50 lakh has been funded under Member of Parliament Local Area Development Programme.

The two storied building will facilitate the requirements of male wards and rooms for doctor, counsellor, psychologist, storage, waiting hall, MDR Card, pharmacy, recreation & multipurpose hall, canteen along with kitchen for OPD patients.

Mr Ghatani, in his address, said that the State Government is working tirelessly in the field of mental health under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

The Minister expressed his happiness over establishment of the centre and assured to provide qualitative medical services to the patients and urged the concerned authority to ensure security of health staff in the institution. He urged the concerned officials to maintain the newly inaugurated centre with full sense of responsibility.

He also appealed for collaborative efforts to work together to curb the

menace of substance abuse in the State.

Mr Ghatani also sensitized the public on HPV vaccine that is to be launched in Sikkim for females between 09-14 years of age.

In the context of the newly installed machines at District Hospital in Singtam, Mr Ghatani said that the installation and inauguration of CB-NAAT machine for the detection of TB/ MDR TB and HbA1C for diagnosis of diabetes is another notable achievement to provide advanced medical services. He informed that the State Government is providing financial assistance of Rs 3000 to TB patients

for nutritional support on monthly basis.

He also urged the concerned health officials to accelerate the CATCH programme so that silent killer diseases can be detected at an early stage.

Member of Parliament, Mr Rai, expressed satisfaction on the establishment of the de-addiction centre and marked the asset as necessary infrastructure to combat issues of mental health in the State.

He further placed suggestions for adoption of holistic approach of scientific and social aspects together to root out substance abuse and addiction from the State.

He expressed gratitude to the CM for his initiatives to address issues of mental health.

MLA, Mr Baraily, thanked the Department of Health for the establishment of Centre for Addiction Medicine at Chuwatar.

The Minister, MP and Area MLA also inspected ongoing construction of ANM Training School-cum-Hostel and Drug Testing Laboratory at Chuwatar.

Earlier, the programme began with plantation drive to observe Ten Minutes to Earth at the CAM premises wherein Mr Ghatani and other officials planted saplings of Areca nut species.

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**Gangtok on
Tuesday,
26 June**

Temp: 25°C/17°C
Forecast: Not as
war; periods of rain
and a thunderstorm
in the a.m., then a
shower or thun-
derstorm around.
Sunrise: 04:42 AM
Sunset: 6:34 PM

Heads of 11 state- run banks to appear before par panel

NEW DELHI, JUN 24 (PTI): Top officials of 11 state-owned banks will appear before a parliamentary committee tomorrow to apprise its members of the bad loan issues and rising fraud cases in the banks, sources said.

These officials will be appearing before the Standing Committee on Finance headed by Congress leader M Veerappa Moily. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is also a member of the panel.

The committee is looking into the issues and challenges being faced by the banking sector.

Top officials of IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Dena Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Bank of Maharashtra, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank and Allahabad Bank will make presentations before the panel and respond to its queries on June 26, said sources.

The banking sector is grappling with rising non-performing assets (NPAs), which touched Rs 8.99 lakh crore or 10.11 per cent of total advances at December-end 2017.

Of the total gross NPAs, the public sector banks accounted for Rs 7.77 lakh crore.

The rising number of frauds has become a serious cause of concern.

The number of frauds reported by banks increased from 4,693 in fiscal 2015-16 to 5,904 in 2017-18. The fraud amount at end-March 2018 was Rs 32,361.27 crore, up from Rs 18,698.8 crore at the end of 2015-16.

Earlier this month, RBI Governor Urjit Patel had replied to a host of questions asked by the committee members.

Patel, sources had said, was asked about bad loans, bank frauds, cash crunch and other issues.

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Foundation training for SCS probationers starts off at ATI

GANGTOK, 25 JUN [IPR]: Three-month foundation training course for Sikkim State Civil Service probationers commenced today at Administrative Training Institute [ATI] in Gangtok. The training is being organized by ATI, Department of Personnel, Administrative Reforms and Training [DoPART] for 12 probationers of 2017 batch.

Officer on Special Duty, DoPART, Kapil Basnet, attended the inaugural session as chief guest

along with guest faculty of Indraprastha Institute of Information & Technology, Professor KM Pathi, as resource person.

While congratulating young probationers, Mr Sharma urged the State Civil Service probationers to keep public interest foremost in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities and to work hard in their long career. He motivated the young probationers to be good human beings which will be the best guide for them in their

career.

He further added that conditions prevailing today are much more different than before so he urged the young officers to take the foundation training seriously and use it to make their foundation solid and resourceful.

"Civil service officers should ensure people friendly initiatives and make sure that the government's initiatives and policies reach the people," said Mr Sharma. Earlier, while

delivering the welcome address, Director of ATI, Pravakar Rai, highlighted the necessity and importance of the training for civil service probationers.

It is informed that the training will include field visits across the State and residential training at State Institute for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj [SIRD&PR] in Karfector, Jorethang and Sikkim State Cooperative Union [SICUN] in Assam Lingzey, East Sikkim.



SBS celebrates 50th anniversary in Namchi

NAMCHI, 25 JUN [IPR]: State Bank of Sikkim observed its Golden Jubilee Year Celebration at Community Hall in Namchi, South Sikkim today in the presence of Speaker, SLA, KN Rai, as chief guest accompanied by Managing Director, SBS, Hem Kumar Chettri, Chief General Manager, Phurba Wangdi Bhutia, District Administration officials, Advisors, Chairpersons, SBS staff members, school heads and students of various schools under South district.

Speaker, SLA, Mr Rai, extended congratulations to the staff of SBS for achieving a huge milestone in banking. He spoke about how banking began with the first prototype banks where the merchants made grain loans to farmers and traders who carried goods between cities. He then went on to speak about the banking history of our country which originated in the last decades of the 18th century where the Bank of Hindustan were the first banks which was established in 1770 and liquidated in 1829-32.

The Speaker also urged the public to choose SBS for their banking needs and highlighted that SBS has opened in every nook and corner of the State equipped with well trained and experienced staff.

The programme was also addressed by SBS MD, Mr Chettri, wherein he stated that SBS was constituted and established in the year 1968 under the State Bank of Sikkim Proclamation, 1968. Further, he spoke about how SBS, an autonomous body under Government of Sikkim, operates within the jurisdiction of the State of Sikkim.

Mr Chettri also informed the gathering about the varied facilities and features of SBS among which the Core Banking Solution [CBS] as a facility was established in April 2017 across most SBS branches.

During the programme, felicitations were also accorded to Senior Technical Director [NIC, New Delhi], IPS Sethi, Technical Director [NIC, New Delhi], Sanjay Kumar Sinha, State Informatics Officer [NIC, Sikkim], Birendra

Chettri, Senior Technical Director [NIC, Sikkim], LP Sharma, and SBS Golden Jubilee Logo Designer, Mimanshya Pradhan.

Speaker, Mr Rai, along with the officials of South District Administration and former officers of SBS were also felicitated for their unwavering support towards the development of SBS.

The SBS also handed over awards and certificates to winners of Essay Competition held on the topic "State Bank of Sikkim and its impact in the Banking Service in Sikkim" namely Yapchunga Bhutia of Namchi Senior Secondary School, Remikala Rai of VGGL Government Secondary School and Persis Chettri of Namchi Government Girls SSS.

The event was also marked by presentation of a sum of Rs 10,000 as School Development Grant to 10 schools under South district.

Earlier, a plantation drive as a part of the environmental initiative, 10 minutes to Earth, was held at Rhododendron Enclave in Chardham, Namchi.

Farmers ID Cards distributed in Namrang & Namli



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

International Panaacea Limited [IPL] organized distribution programme of Farmers ID Card at Namrang Ward of Tumin GPU, East Sikkim on 24 Jun. Field functionary of IPL, Moti Ram Adhikari, ex-Panchayat member, YP Sapkota, and

Mohan Pokhrel of Nava Jyoti Sangh distributed the Farmers ID Cards to the participants and briefed about the current status of organic farming and certification status of the area. Likewise, IPL also distributed Farmers ID Cards to farmers of Namli Ward, East Sikkim, a press release informs.



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Date: 18/06/2018

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Online Applications are invited from the eligible local candidates for filling up of 01(one) post of Assistant Engineer (Agriculture) in PB-2 of Rs.9300-34800 plus Grade Pay of Rs.5000/-under Sikkim State Agriculture Engineering Service through Direct Recruitment.

The candidates are advised to visit the Sikkim Public Service Commission website for details Advertisement, eligibility conditions, and Scheme of Examination etc. from official Website i.e. www.spsc-skm.gov.in.

Sd/-

(BIMLA RAI. SMT)

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R.O. No. 148/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19 dt. 19.6.2018



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SOCIAL JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT
AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT
SAMAJ KALYAN BHAWAN, 5TH MILE, LUMSAY, TADONG.
GANGTOK – 737101 (SIKKIM)**

Dated: 23/6/18

NOTICE

The Department has released the pensions for the months of April'18 and May'18 of all beneficiaries drawing pensions/ allowances under the following schemes in the respective accounts in the Nationalised Banks/ State Bank of Sikkim and Post Office

1. **INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OLD AGE PENSION**
2. **INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL DISABILITY PENSION.**
3. **INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL WIDOW PENSION**
4. **UNMARRIED WOMEN PENSION**
5. **SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE.**

The beneficiaries are advised to collect their pension / allowances from their respective accounts from the Nationalised Banks / State Bank of Sikkim/ Post Office duly producing the Pension Passbook in original issued by the Department along with the Bank/ Post Office Passbook. In case, the Pensioner(s) are differently abled and old aged, their legal heir may draw the pension from the Bank / Post Office by submitting the Authorization letter from the Pensioner duly certified by the Ward Panchayat and authenticated by the Sub-divisional Magistrate or the Gram Vikash Adhikari/ Block Development Officer as the case may be.

The Beneficiaries who have not yet enrolled for Aadhaar Number may be requested to do so at their nearest Aadhaar Enrolment Centre and submit their Aadhaar Number and Aadhaar Consent Form to the Department at the earliest duly linked with their bank accounts.

Further, all the Panchayat Members in the Rural Areas and Ward Councillors' in Urban Areas including Aganwadi Workers and Aganwadi Helpers are requested to report the death of beneficiaries along with their death certificates, if any under their respective Units/ Wards to the Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department on monthly basis to enable us to update the database.

Sd/-

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R.O. No. 156/ipr/pub/classi./18-19DT. 25.6.2018

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Adventurous Future

Schools in Sikkim could experiment with one more subject

Curriculums in schools have not seen much change since modern education as we know it was introduced. Yes, the syllabus changes for such ill-informed reasons as a change in government or dominance of a particular political ideology, but the subjects have remained more or less the same. And even when the rare change or introduction is introduced, it flows more from what catches the fancy of the policy-makers and less from an understanding of what students could benefit from or learn. An idea left largely unexplored, but one for which an argument can be made is the introduction of adventure sports in schools. Yes, there are the Scouts & Guides and NCC and even NSS which touch on this concept, but they have now become so traditional that their efficacy relies more on the teachers than the module itself.

Think about it, one of the more interesting enterprises of the skill development programme of the State Government was the adventure course the Sports & Youth Affairs Department took to different corners of the State and then handpicked some candidates for onwards advanced training. The products of that initiative one gets to occasionally see bobbing across the Gangtok horizon on their paragliding runs. The original initiative was interesting since even youth in places still not on the tourism map were trained in adventure sports. And it was interesting not just for the skills imparted and the potential self-employment opportunities but also for the healthy adrenaline rush that the course introduced the young to. The skill development initiative appears to be dulling, and one has not really heard of future engagements on this line, but it would be worthwhile for the Human Resource Development Department to pick up from where the Sports & Youth Affairs Department left off – seriously consider introducing adventure sports as part of the regular curriculum of schools in Sikkim.

For one, such an experiment will not only involve the already trained youth gainfully, but could also contribute more to the future generations than half-baked computer classes or poorly defined environment sciences. The youth already trained in adventure sports should be invited to form clubs which could then open memberships to schools, essentially rural schools. They can charge a nominal membership fees and the students who sign up can be taken through the ropes of adventure options every fortnight. On longer breaks and vacations, these clubs could take students on proper treks or adventure sports excursions. Sounds simple enough and all it requires is for the HRDD to allow the trained youth to enter schools. It would have been wonderful if they also could be employed, but just access should do for now.

How does this help?

To begin with, the students get to do something exciting in school for once. That's a fine achievement in itself. The more important contribution would be the boost that confidence levels can receive with adventure sports. It is now an established fact and even management courses advise adventure sports to increase the confidence levels of trainees. The other advantage would be involvement. The students, when they trek through forests or climb rock faces or white water down the Teesta (wherever hydel projects still allow the river such a rush any more) will receive an intimate introduction to what Sikkim is. They will then learn to appreciate the environment more, care for it more, become more responsible towards it. Few textbooks can deliver these enhancements; it just might be worthwhile to make adventure sports an optional activity in schools here.

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

Society reaps the benefits when women enjoy better health care

MARLEEN TEMMERMAN
theconversation.com

Weak political commitment, inadequate resources and persistent discrimination against women and girls: these are just some reasons that many countries still don't openly and comprehensively address sexual and reproductive health and rights.

This is borne out by figures. Each year in developing countries, including those in Africa, more than 30 million women don't give birth at a health facility. More than 45 million have inadequate or no antenatal care. And over 200 million women want to avoid pregnancy but don't have access to modern contraceptive methods.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals -- introduced in 2015 -- were created to address many of these problems. The goals recognise that sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental to people's health and survival, to gender equality and to the well-being of humanity.

But many countries on the continent still have a long way to go before they make any headway with these goals.

In a bid to boost these fundamental rights, the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights was convened in 2016.

I was one of the experts from across the world who served on the commission to try and find new ways to achieve universal sexual and reproductive health. Our main finding -- released this year -- is that sexual and reproductive health services are fragmented, often duplicated and inefficient.

As part of the findings we've developed a set of evidence based interventions that's rooted in human rights. These are a direct response to the gaps identified by the commission. It's hoped that by plugging these gaps, we can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. After all, advancing sexual and reproductive health rights -- particularly among women -- will help address the gender based disparities in health and other sectors.

OUR FINDINGS

The commission's findings address commonly recognised components of sexual and reproductive health like contraceptive services, maternal and newborn care, and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

But it also addresses components that are often neglected or are addressed in isolation. These areas are critical if people are to make autonomous decisions about their health and lives, and include:



- comprehensive sexuality education;
- safe abortions;
- the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections other than HIV;
- counselling and care for sexual health and well-being; and
- preventing, detecting and managing gender-based violence, infertility and reproductive cancers.

The interventions come in different forms. One example involves incorporating information on how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, contraception and sexual well-being into adolescent health programming. This upholds young people's right to self-determination about their sexuality and results in improved health outcomes.

Another intervention is offering contraceptive counselling as part of postpartum and post-abortion care. Each year in developing regions, more than 200 million women want to avoid pregnancy but don't use modern contraception methods. Giving them this access allows them to access contraceptives easily and reduces the risk of unintended pregnancy.

This intervention could reduce unintended pregnancies by 75% from 89 million in 2017 to 22 million. And it would only come at a cost of USD\$ 9 per person per year. This is a modest cost, considering that half of this is already being spent to cover the costs of current levels of care.

Other interventions may have to involve amending a country's laws or policies. For instance, in 2010 the Kenyan government passed laws that allow abortions to happen under certain circumstances. But eight years later health professionals are still reluctant to perform the procedure as they fear legal consequences. Why?

Because the penal code hasn't yet been revised and so they might still be held guilty of a crime.

The result of this gap between law and paperwork is that there were close to half a million unsafe abortions in Kenya in 2012. At least 100 000 of those women needed to be treated in hospital and roughly a quarter died due to complications.

All of this shows that while achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is ambitious it's also achievable and affordable.

A WAY FORWARD

There are several steps that governments need to take to tackle these issues. The first is that governments, multilateral organisations and advocates should embrace the commission's recommended package of essential sexual and reproductive health interventions and push for its inclusion in national and international planning.

It's also crucial for health ministries and service providers to consider how and where to introduce these interventions into the health care system. They must also work out how best to integrate sexual and reproductive health interventions into other health care services.

Many developing countries are not currently equipped to provide the full spectrum of interventions. But that does not preclude them from committing to achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and to making continual and steady progress, regardless of their starting point.

[The writer is Director of the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health and Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OB/GYN), The Aga Khan University]

How eye disorders may have influenced the work of famous painters

ANDREW ANDERSON
theconversation.com

Vision is an important tool when creating a painted artwork. Vision is used to survey a scene, guide the artist's movements over the canvas and provide feedback on the colour and form of the work. However, it's possible for disease and disorders to alter an artist's visual perception.

There is a long history of scientists and clinicians arguing particular artists were affected by vision disorders, based on signs in their works. Some argued the leaders of the Impressionist movement were short-sighted, for instance, and that their blurry distance vision when not using spectacles may explain their broad, impetuous style.

Supporting evidence of such disorders and their influence on artworks is often speculative, and hampered by a lack of clinical records to support the diagnosis. A particular challenge to verifying these speculations is that artists are, of course, free to represent the world in whatever fashion they like.

So, is a particular style the result of impoverished vision, or rather a conscious artistic choice made by the artist? Here are three artists who it has been claimed suffered vision impairments.

EL GRECO

Architect, painter and sculptor of the Spanish Renaissance, El Greco (1541-1614) is known for vertically elongating certain figures in his paintings. In 1913, ophthalmologist Germán Beritens argued this elongation was due to astigmatism.

Astigmatism typically results when the cornea -- the front surface of the eye and the principal light-focusing element -- is not spherical, but shaped more like a watermelon.

This means the light bends in different amounts, depending on the direction in which it's passing through the eye. Lines and contours in an image



It's been argued the Impressionists were short sighted.

that are of a particular orientation will be less in focus than others.

Beritens would demonstrate his astigmatism theory to house guests using a special lens that produced El Greco-like vertical elongations.

But there are several problems with Beritens's theory. A common objection is that any vertical stretching should have affected El Greco's view of both the subject being painted and the canvas being painted on. This would mean the astigmatism effects should largely cancel out. Possibly more problematic is that uncorrected astigmatism mainly causes blurry vision, rather than a change in image size.

Plus, other evidence suggests El Greco's use of vertical elongation was a deliberate artistic choice. For example, in his 1610 painting, St Jerome as Scholar (above), the horizontally oriented hand of the saint is also elongated, just like the figure. If El Greco's elongated figures were due to a

simple vertical stretching in his visual perception, we would expect the hand to look comparatively stubby.

CLAUDE MONET

Elsewhere, the influence of eye anomalies in artworks is more compelling. Cataracts are a progressive cloudiness of the lens inside the eye, producing blurred and dulled vision that can't be corrected with spectacles.

Cataracts are often brown, which filter the light passing through them, impairing colour discrimination. In severe cases, blue light is almost completely blocked.

Claude Monet was diagnosed with cataracts in 1912, and recommended to undergo surgery. He refused. Over the subsequent decade, his ability to see critical detail reduced, as is documented in his medical records.

Importantly, his colour vision also suffered. In 1914, he noted how reds appeared dull and muddy, and by 1918 he was reduced to selecting colours from the label on the paint tube.

The visual impact of his cataracts is demonstrated in two paintings of the same scene: the Japanese footbridge over his garden's lily pond. The first, painted ten years prior to his cataract diagnosis, is full of detail and subtle use of colour.

In contrast, the second -- painted the year prior to his eventually relenting to surgery -- shows colours to be dark and murky, with a near absence of blue, and a dramatic reduction in the level of painted detail.

There is good evidence such changes were not a conscious artistic choice. In a 1922 letter to author Marc Elder, Monet confided he recognised his visual impairment was causing him to spoil paintings, and that his blindness was forcing him to abandon work despite his otherwise good health.

One of Monet's fears was that surgery would

SMIMS holds workshop on good clinical practices



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

Research unit of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences [SMIMS], Gangtok organized two-day workshop on Good Clinical Practices at SMIMS on 22-23 Jun, a press release issued by Sikkim Manipal University informs.

Dr Chinmay Shah and Dr Manish Barvaliya from Bhavnagar Government Medical College, Gujarat, attended the event as resource persons.

Four members from Institution

Ethics Committee [IEC] of STNM Hospital, Gangtok participated in the training along with IEC members and PhD supervisors of SMIMS.

Vice Chancellor, SMU, Lieutenant General Dr MD Venkatesh, in his address, said that SMU strives for excellence in research which is possible only when researchers are aware of good clinical practices.

Organizing secretary, Dr Bidita Khandelwal, who is also the Associate Dean of Research,

SMIMS informed that good clinical practices provides assurance that the research results are credible and accurate, and that the rights, integrity and confidentiality of trial subjects are respected and protected.

Dean, SMIMS, Air Marshal Dr GS Joneja, assured that SMIMS will keep arranging such trainings to allow percolation of ethical research from experienced researchers to post graduate and undergraduate level students.



Ong Dorjee runs to spread awareness on receding glaciers

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 25 JUN:

Solo runner, Ong Dorjee Lachungpa, 32, has completed his run from Lachung to Gangtok this afternoon. He reached Vajra at around 3.30 p.m. covering a distance of around 120 kms.

Ong Dorjee Lachungpa, who works in Sikkim Armed Police, had started the run from Lachung in the morning of 24 Jun.

Speaking to media at Vajra, Mr Lachungpa said that he made the run to spread awareness on decrease in snowfall at higher altitudes.

"When we were small, we used to see snow right before our house. It is not the same these days. Snowfall is less in the mountains. To spread awareness on this, I wanted to do something and made the solo run," he added.

Ong Dorjee's solo

marathon was organized by social worker from Lachung, Thupden Lachungpa, and ISL footballer, Kunzang Lachungpa.

"We visited Gora La glacier near Lachung recently and we could see the glacier receding. We realized the need to spread awareness on the same. Ong Dorjee came forward and decided to make the solo run for the cause," said Thupden.

He further informed that the marathon initiative was supported by Rajya Sabha MP, District Collector North, Superintendent of Police, North, Forest Minister, local authorities, NGOs and the general public.

After kick starting his run from Lachung, Ong Dorjee had halted at Tingchim on 24 Jun. He then completed his run to Gangtok from Tingchim this morning.

School-dropouts turn wildlife conservationists in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, JUN 25 (PTI):

Two school-dropouts have started a crusade to save the highly endangered Western Hoolock Gibbons, their habitats, and birds in the forests of the remote East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

Armed with a loaned camera, the two are also taking pictures of birds found in the forests for documentation of the winged species in the Hima Malaisohmat area. Hima Malaisohmat, bordering Bangladesh, has five villages and the forest there is home to the endangered Hoolock Gibbons, the only ape found in Indian subcontinent.

"These apes are a favourite target for hunters. A family of three gibbons was killed by an unidentified hunter last month," said Banshim Wanniang, 22, one of the two crusaders.

Wanniang took upon himself the task of

protecting the wildlife in his Phlangwanbroi village, and his friend, Wallam Kharlyngdoh hailing from nearby Mawkasain village, joined him.

"It is very sad to see that the Hoolock Gibbons are disappearing at a very rapid rate from our forests. And so are our birds," said Wanniang.

With very little education, children of the villages are taught to hunt from an early age, and with no government intervention and rapid deforestation, the Hoolock habitats are disappearing at a fast rate, said Kharlyngdoh.

Wanniang and Kharlyngdoh told PTI

that work is on to create awareness at the community level to conserve the wildlife and to provide alternative livelihoods to people so that they stop hunting.

The two dropped out of school when they were in class 11 and now work in betel nut firms located inside the forest.



Dhaka Weaving Centre inaugurated in Kalimpong

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 25 JUN:

Mani Trust, a social organization of Kalimpong, in collaboration with West Bengal Khadi and Village Industry Board has started a Dhaka Weaving Training Centre in Kalimpong today.

A total of 40 teachers, who have past experience in weaving, will be given special theory and weaving classes by an expert from Nepal.

The inaugural function today was attended by Chairperson, Kalimpong Municipality, Ravi Pradhan, as chief guest accompanied by Chairperson, Mani Trust, Subash M Singh, Advisor, Sonam T Bhutia, and Durga Prasad Chamlagai from Nepal.

"Dhaka is our tradition. We have been buying printed clothes which are not at all suitable. We have a great

demand here in the Hills of Darjeeling, Sikkim and Doars. This Dhaka weaving centre will not only help in empowering women but it will also preserve the identity and culture of Indian Gorkhas," said Mani Trust Chairperson, Mr Singh.

Likewise, Mr Chamalagai from Nepal said that Nepal had witnessed the demand of Dhaka clothes during the agitation period here in Darjeeling.

"The demand was so high that we had to send printed clothes here. A number of trainers will be born from this Dhaka weaving center. People here will no longer have to depend on Nepal for Dhaka clothes," he added.

Chairperson, Kalimpong Municipality, Mr Pradhan, lauded the work of the trust and its initiative towards restoring the art of handicrafts of Kalimpong.

How eye disorders may have influenced the work of famous painters

contd from pg04

after his colour perception, and indeed after surgery he complained of the world appearing too yellow or sometimes too blue. It was two years before he felt his colour vision had returned to normal.

Experimental work has confirmed colour perception is measurably altered for months after cataract surgery, as the eye and brain adapt to the increased blue light previously blocked by the cataract.

CLIFTON PUGH

In addition to eye disease, colour vision can be altered by inherited deficiencies. Around 8% of men and 0.5% of women are born with abnormal colour vision – sometimes erroneously called "colour blindness".

In one of its most common severe forms, people see colours purely in terms of various levels of blue and yellow. They can't distinguish colours that vary only in their redness or greenness, and so have trouble distinguishing ripe from unripe fruit, for example.

It has been argued no major artist is known to have abnormal colour

vision. But subsequent research argues against this.

Australian artist Clifton Pugh can readily lay claim to the title of "major artist": he was three-times winner of the Archibald Prize for Portraiture, is highly represented in national galleries, and even won a bronze medal for painting at the Olympics (back when such things were possible).

His abnormal colour vision is well documented in biographical information. Owing to the inherited nature of colour vision deficiencies, researchers were able to test the colour vision of surviving family members to support their case that Pugh almost certainly had a severe red-green colour deficiency.

But an analysis of the colours used in Pugh's paintings failed to reveal any signatures that would suggest a colour vision deficiency. This is consistent with previous work, demonstrating it was not possible to reliably diagnose a colour vision deficiency based on an artist's work.

[the writer is Associate Professor, Department of Optometry & Vision Sciences, University of Melbourne]





Sources:
Salah
considering
retiring
from
national
team

VOLGOGRAD (RUSSIA), JUN 25 (AP): Mohamed Salah told Egypt team officials and teammates that he is considering retiring from international play because he is angry about being used as a political symbol while the World Cup squad was based in Chechnya, two people close to the player told The Associated Press.

Salah said he was particularly annoyed with a team banquet hosted by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who used the dinner to grant Salah "honorary citizenship," according to the two people, both of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Kadyrov has been accused of human rights violations. Egypt soccer federation spokesman Osama Ismail said that Salah has not complained to the federation.

"Only what Salah writes on his Twitter account should be counted on.

Saketh jumps 85 places in ATP rankings after Fergana show

NEW DELHI, JUN 25 (PTI): Saketh Myneni made a massive 85-place jump to touch 362 in the latest ATP singles rankings following his exploits at the Fergana Challenger where he reached the semifinals.

Myneni had lost half of the 2017 season due to a foot injury but has made a strong comeback this year. He had recently won a ITF Futures singles title in Uzbekistan.

He was ranked as high 137 and was among country's top three singles players but injuries halted his progress.

"It (Fergana) was a good tournament for me and I got a lot of quality matches in these conditions. I had to go through qualifying which had very good players. I will need to slowly crawl my way back to high intensity tennis and hopefully this is a start for it," Myneni told PTI.



SFA'S 'B' DIVISION S-LEAGUE KICKS OFF AT PALJOR STADIUM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUN: Sikkim Football Association's 'B' Division S-League 2018 kicked off today at Paljor Stadium in Gangtok in the presence of SFA president, Menla Ethenpa, as chief guest, an SFA press release informs. In the inaugural match played today, Renzong FC defeated Kumar Sporting Club 1-0. The next match will be played between Sikkim Police FC and Howlers FC on 26 Jun. Mr Ethenpa also distributed two sets of football to the participating clubs as a goodwill gesture. Five qualified clubs namely Sikkim Police FC, D'zongri FC, Howlers FC, Renzong FC and Kumar Sporting Club will be participating in the tournament.

Archery: Deepika Kumari wins gold at World Cup stage event

SALT LAKE CITY (USA), JUN 25 (PTI): Ace Indian archer Deepika Kumar shrugged off her poor run of form by clinching gold medal in the women's recurve event at the World Cup (Stage III) after a gap of six years beating Germany's Michelle Kroppen 7-3 to qualify for the circuit Final, later this year.

Deepika, a four-time World Cup final silver medallist (2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015), automatically qualified for the Archery World Cup Final in Samsun, Turkey, which will be her seventh appearance at the season-ending event.

Finally! That's what I said when I won this gold medal, said Deepika, who's last victory at a World Cup stage event came six years ago, in Antalya back in 2012.

The Indian archer opened the match with 29 out of a possible 30 points to take a 2-0 lead, before splitting the points with Kroppen in the second.

The German archer,



making her individual debut in the finals arena, won the third set and tied the match at 3-3. Deepika then took the fourth and fifth sets with a 29 and a 27, over Michelle's pair of 26s, to win the match, 7-3.

I was repeating to

myself, just do it the best, this is your time; just enjoy your game and forget about winning or losing and have fun', Deepika told the official website of World Archery federation.

Do I feel relieved to qualify? Yes and no. I'm

not expecting anything, at the moment I'm just enjoying my game, I want to enjoy my game, said Deepika, who has often failed to live up to expectations at the biggest stage like the Olympics.

Tan Ya-Ting of Chinese

Taipei beat Gabriela Bayardo of the Netherlands in four sets, 7-1, to the recurve women's bronze medal.

In the medal standings, India finished fourth behind USA, Colombia and Chinese Taipei with a gold, silver and bronze each in the penultimate stage of the World Cup.

Deepika however returned empty-handed in the recurve mixed pair section alongside Atanu Das, where they lost to Chinese Taipei pair of Tang Chih-Chun and Tan Ya-Ting 4-5 in the shoot-off.

Locked 37-all after set four, the pair of Deepika and Atanu Das shot an identical 8s, while their opponents sealed the issue with a nine and eight.

India's Asian Games-bound archery squad will now head off to Berlin for the fourth World Cup from July 16-22 ahead of the Indonesia Asian Games in August-September.



Iranian fans attempt to disrupt Portugal's sleep at hotel

SARANSK, JUN 25 (AP): Hundreds of Iranian fans spent several overnight hours surrounding the hotel where Portugal's national team is based, making loud noises in an attempt to disrupt their opponents' sleep before a decisive World Cup match later today.

Superstar Cristiano Ronaldo was filmed by Portuguese TV RTP late at night by the window using gestures to ask the Iranian fans to be silent, but this morning there were still a few dozen of them playing loud music near the hotel in the Saransk city center.

Iran can only advance to the next stage of the World Cup if it beats the European champions. Portugal only needs a draw, but also aims to take the top position in Group B ahead of Spain.

Saransk police said they received their first calls about the noise about 11 p.m. Sunday, when a first wave of Iran fans arrived and started singing outside the hotel. That forced Ronaldo to show up, which convinced supporters to leave.

Then a second wave came and did not stop making noise for several hours. Police then blocked roads nearby, but the main avenue across the hotel was still open, which allowed Iran fans to keep their effort in smaller numbers.

Iran fan and IT consultant Mehdi Fayeze arrived Monday morning after reading messages from supporters saying they needed to trouble Portugal to stand a better chance of winning the match.

"I love Ronaldo, I love Portugal, but this is a big game. We have to do all it takes," a still joyful Fayeze said, as he held an Iranian flag on the back of his head.

Montreh Fayoud, one of the several Iranian women that are attending their first World Cup, disagreed.

"We were coming back from dinner and saw all these Iranians here. When I found the reason, I decided to leave," she said.

At about noon on Monday Portugal players had a quick walk around the hotel, but it is uncertain whether they will walk around the city as they did before other matches in Russia.

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Top athletes vie for Asian Games spots in National Interstate C'ships, Luka unlikely

GUWAHATI, JUN 25 (PTI): The absence of a some exempted stars such as Neeraj Chopra and Seema Punia is a bit of a dampener but with Asian Games selection on the line, the 58th National Inter-state Senior Athletics Championships is expected to be a fiercely-contested event, starting tomorrow.

The four-day meet, which will feature more than 700 athletes from 32 states and union territories, is a selection trial for the Jakarta and Palembang Asian Games to be held from August 18 to September 2.

The Athletics Federation of India has made it clear that those who skip the championships without prior permission will not be considered for the Games.

The exempted include star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, who won a gold in the Commonwealth Games,

and reigning Asian Games champion discus thrower Seema Punia.

Also missing from the meet, to be held at the Indira Gandhi Athletics Stadium, would be national record holder high jumper Tejaswin Shankar, who opted out citing a stiff neck.

India's top half miler Tintu Luka, a bronze-winner in the 2014 Asian Games, has entered her name but her participation seems unlikely due to a nagging injury.

Just like in the 2014 Asian Games where athletics had contributed 13 of the country's 57 medals, including two gold, the discipline is expected to dominate the country's medal count this time too.

The meet also assumes importance since the selectors would pick the team for the 4x400m mixed relay, to be held for the first time at the Asian Games this time.

India has a decent chance to win a gold in this event.

Most of the athletes have come back from training-cum-competition tours abroad and they are in fine touch. The qualifying guidelines are equivalent to top-4 or top-5 performance of the last Asian Games in almost all the events.

The Indian Olympic Association has made it clear that a minimum top-6 performance of the last Asian Games will be the criteria for selection in individual events for sending teams in Jakarta.

Among the top draws will be quartermiler Muhammed

Anas, who broke the national record during the Gold Coast CWG with an effort of 45.31 seconds. Anas will also be competing in the 200m and he is expected to be in the men's 4x400m relay team for the Asian Games.

The 21-year-old Gavitt Murli Kumar, the second fastest Indian in 10,000m with a 28:43.34 sec effort at the Gouden Spike Meet earlier this month, would want to show that his impressive display was no fluke.

Murli, who is also competing in the 5000m race, will get a tough fight in 10,000m as the likes of G Lakshmanan and T Gopi will be in the fray.

Triple jumper Arpinder Singh, shot putter Tejinder Pal Singh Toor and high hurdler Siddhanth Thingalaya would be among the other top male athletes in action.

Among the women athletes, the young Hima Das from Assam, is expected to dominate the track in the 200m and 400m.

The 18-year-old has improved by leaps and bounds in recent months. She clocked a personal best of 23.22 seconds in Poland earlier this month while she

ran 51.32 seconds in 400m during the Gold Coast CWG.

Das will, however, have tough competition in both her events. In 200m, she will compete against the likes of Dutee Chand, Srabani Nanda and Nirmala Sheoran who suddenly re-surfaced after being untraceable since the 2017 World Championships in London.

In 400m, Das had run a personal best of 51.32 seconds during the Gold Coast CWG but she will be up against reigning Asian champion Sheoran (personal best 51.28 during Fed Cup last year) and the likes of veteran MR Poovamma, Jisna Mathew and Jauna Murmu.

The women's 4x400m relay race, which will be held on the second day on Wednesday, will be keenly watched as India has been the traditional power in Asia in this event. The country won a

gold in this event in the 2014 Asian Games and is aiming to defend the title this time again.

In other women's events, Navjeet Kaur Dhillon (women's discus), 2014 Asian Games bronze medallist Annu Rani (women's javelin), Sureka Renjith (women's pole vault) are expected to dominate their respective events while Nayana James and Neena Varakil Pinto will fight it out in the women's long jump.

Lalita Babar, who won a bronze in women's 3000m steeplechase in 2014 Asian Games, returns to the track after a long lay-off following her marriage.

Seven gold medals will be decided on the opening day tomorrow -- in women's hammer throw, women's discus throw, women's high jump, men's and women's 400m hurdles and men's and women's 5000m race.



Libya's coastguard has rescued nearly 1,000 migrants who were on boats in distress in the Mediterranean on their way to Europe, the navy said on Monday. Three separate operations took place on Sunday with the coastguard bringing ashore in Libya a total of 948 migrants, navy spokesman Ayoub Kacem said. The migrants were on inflatable dinghies which were facing difficulties in the Mediterranean off the coast of Garabulli east of the capital Tripoli, navy officer Rami Ghommeidh said. A first group of 97 migrants were rescued, while a second operation brought 361 migrants -- including 88 women and 44 children -- ashore and late in the evening a final group of 490 migrants were rescued, said Kacem. In all a total of 2,000 migrants trying to make the perilous journey to Europe, often on unseaworthy boats, were either intercepted or assisted by the Libyan navy since Wednesday. Libya is a key departure point for thousands of migrants hoping to reach Europe, although hundreds drown each year attempting the crossing.



Kamala Harris not ruling out 2020 White House ambition: Report

WASHINGTON, JUN 25 (PTI): Indian-origin American Senator Kamala Harris has not ruled out the prospects of running for the US President in 2020, according to a media report.

Harris, 53, the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India, is viewed as a rising star in Democratic politics. Her likely presidential ambitions are the subject of wide speculation, and she's often included on the not-so-short lists of potential Democratic 2020 hopefuls.

Pressed on whether she was ruling out a 2020 bid, Harris told MSNBC: "I'm not ruling it out, no."

According to the media outlet, it is her most direct comments yet about her political future.

At the same time Harris, the first Indian-origin US Senator, said presently she was focused on "a lot of other things as a higher priority" than running for the president.

Harris, a former prosecutor, was California's attorney general before she was elected to the Senate in 2016.

She has started to carve out a reputation as a defender of immigrants in the Trump era, a move that could give her an edge with those voters in 2020, the outlet said.

Earlier this year, she bucked her party's leadership to vote against an immigration compromise that she said made too many compromises with Republicans, angering some of her colleagues.

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Trump for quick deportation of illegal immigrants; says current immigration system "unfair"

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, JUN 25 (PTI): President Donald Trump has called for the quick deportation of illegal immigrants who "invade" the US, lamenting that the current immigration system is "unfair" to those who came legally to America.

Indian-Americans, most of whom are highly skilled and came to the US mainly on H-1B work visas, are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of green cards or permanent legal residency.

As a result, the current wait period for Indian skilled immigrants, as per some unofficial estimates, can be as long as 70 years.

"Our immigration policy, laughed at all over the world, is very unfair to all of those people who have gone through the system legally and are waiting on line for years! Immigration must be based on merit - we need people who will help to 'Make America Great Again,'" Trump said in a tweet.

"We cannot allow all of these people to invade our Country. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no Judges or Court Cases, bring them back from where they



came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law and Order. Most children come without parents..." Trump said in another tweet.

The focus on immigration came after the president last week signed an executive order, keeping some families together after his administration was urged to stop separating children from parents.

Trump's tweets could be seen as support to thousands of Indians waiting in line for their green card, an overwhelming majority of whom are highly educated professionals.

But because of the country-limit, Indians in many cases have to wait for more than a decade to get legal permanent residency.

Despite steps by lawmakers from both the Republican and Democratic parties, the Congress has been unable to lift the country-limit.

President Trump has been calling for a merit-based immigration system, a move that would benefit the Indian professionals.

In a series of tweets, Trump blamed the opposition Democrats for the broken

immigration system.

"Democrats, fix the laws. Don't RESIST. We are doing a far better job than (George W) Bush and (Barack) Obama, but we need strength and security at the Border! Cannot accept all of the people trying to break into our Country. Strong Borders, No Crime!

In the past also, Trump has favoured a merit-based immigration system which, according to him, would attract the best and the brightest from across the world to the US.

Indian students to benefit from relaxed Canadian visa procedures



TORONTO, JUN 25 (PTI): Students from India and three other countries will get faster visas to study in Canada as it has introduced major changes in visa procedures to reduce the processing time, according to Canadian immigration authority.

According to official figures, over 100,000 Indian students study in Canada and education is a key area of collaboration between the two countries.

The Canadian move comes at a time when the UK's government has decided to exclude Indian students from easier visa norms.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) said it is making great strides in promoting Canada as a destination of choice for international students seeking a quality education by finding efficient ways to process applications.

To support the growth in study permit applications, the IRCC announced the Student Direct Stream (SDS) under which students from China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines will benefit.

"Students from those countries who demonstrate upfront that they have the financial resources and language skills to succeed academically in Canada will benefit from faster processing times," the

IRCC said in a statement.

"Similar programmes have been in place in these 4 countries for a few years. We are aligning them together into one programme to ensure consistency," it said.

To qualify for the SDS, applicants need to meet additional requirements, in particular language levels that are stricter than regular study permit requirements.

Students who do not have all of the additional information required for the SDS can apply through the regular study permit application process, either online or at a Visa Application Centre.

"The SDS complements the Express Entry system as these students will be well placed to continue on the path to permanent residence and Canadian citizenship after completing their studies in Canada, if they wish to," the IRCC said.

According to reports, the new program will cut down the processing time for study permits (which are student visas) to within 45 days from within 60 days.

An MOU between India and Canada signed in June 2010 covers areas like student and faculty exchange, research and curriculum development and facilitate mutual recognition of educational qualifications.

Nigeria: 86 killed in fresh herder-farmer violence

JOS (NIGERIA), JUN 25 (AFP): Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has called for calm after 86 people were killed in an attack by suspected nomadic herders against farming communities in the restive centre of the country.

The grim discovery in the Barikin Ladi area of Plateau state came after days of violence apparently sparked by an attack by ethnic Berom farmers on Fulani herders on Thursday.

State police commissioner Undie Adie said a search of Berom villages in the area following clashes on Saturday found "86 persons altogether were killed".

Adie told reporters six people were also injured and 50 houses were razed.

Bodies of those who died have been released to their families, he added.

The deaths are the latest in a long-running battle for land and resources that is putting President Muhammadu Buhari under pressure as elections approach next year.

The violence fuelled by ethnic, religious and political allegiances has killed thousands over several decades.

Analysts believe it could become Nigeria's biggest security concern, eclipsing Boko Haram's Islamist insurgency that has left at least



20,000 dead since 2009.

Buhari's office said he "appeals for calm and assures that no efforts will be spared" to bring those responsible to justice and prevent further attacks.

"The grievous loss of lives and property arising from the killings in Plateau today is painful and regrettable," he added.

The Plateau state government said it had imposed restrictions on movements in the Riyom, Barikin Ladi and Jos South areas "to avert a breakdown of law and order".

"The curfew takes effect

immediately... and movement is restricted from 6:00 pm (1700 GMT) to 6:00 am, except (for) those on essential duties," spokesman Rufus Bature said.

On Sunday, ethnic Berom youths set up barricades on the Jos-Abuja highway and attacked motorists who looked "Fulani and Muslim", according to those who escaped the violence.

Plateau state police spokesman Tyopev Terna and Major Adam Umar, from the military taskforce in the state capital, Jos, confirmed the blockade and vandalism to several

cars.

There were no official reports of deaths but Baba Bala, who escaped the violence on the road, said at least six people were killed.

"I escaped with a smashed windscreen and dents on my car. I saw six dead bodies and several damaged cars," he added.

Plateau state governor Simon Lalong promised that "operational plans are currently being put in place to secure the affected communities and fish out perpetrators of these crimes.

"While we pray for God's guidance through this difficult time, we will do everything humanly possible to secure our state immediately." But the violence in Plateau followed a pattern that has become familiar in the state and elsewhere and which the authorities appear unable to stop.

On Thursday, Berom farmers attacked five ethnic Fulani herders travelling with their cattle in a truck at Heipang, in Barikin Ladi.

On Friday, two Berom children were killed in Arangai and Mangu Halle villages in what appeared to be reprisal attacks.

Police spokesman Terna said there were more reprisals on Berom villages in the Gashish area of Barikin Ladi which were "believed

to have been carried out by Fulani herdsman".

"This led to today's violence," he added.

Lamwakers earlier this month demanded that Buhari address worsening security across the country, accusing police of failing to prevent the violence.

On Sunday, Senate leader Bukola Saraki said the killings gave the impression that Nigeria was "not safe".

It was "important for Nigerians to start having the assurances that the government is decisively responding to the current threat to lives and property", he said.

Separately, clashes erupted on Friday between Fulani herders and ethnic Bachama farmers in Dowayan village, in the Demsa area of Adamawa state, in northeast Nigeria.

Adamawa police spokesman Othman Abubakar told AFP: "Six people were killed and seven others injured.

"The violence started when Bachama farmers prevented Fulani herdsman from grazing in a field outside the village. Clashes erupted as a result.

"The Bachama mobilised and burnt some Fulani settlements and the Fulani went into Dowayan and burnt houses." Demsa and the nearby Numan area of Adamawa were the scene of deadly clashes between herders and farmers that left scores dead last December.



DO IT LIKE DUA! DUA LIPA, 22, PUTS ON A LEGGY DISPLAY IN THIGH-HIGH COWBOY BOOTS AND HOTPANTS AS SHE FLASHES HER BRA ON NYC OUTING.

Donald Trump tells Jimmy Fallon to 'be a man'

Donald Trump told Jimmy Fallon to man up and stop "whimpering" about how the popular host faced heat after he infamously tousled the US president's hair on his talk show.

In a recent podcast with The Hollywood Reporter, Fallon said he "made a mistake" on the September 15, 2016 episode, which saw Trump, the then-Republican presidential candidate as a guest.

The presenter said he received a lot of flak for messing up Trump's hair and that he did not indulge in the act to "normalize" him or to say I believe in his political beliefs.



To which the POTUS hit back on Twitter, saying @jimmyfallon is now whimpering to all that he did the famous 'hair show' with me (where he seriously messed up my hair), and that he would have now done it differently because it is said to have 'humanized' me - he is taking heat. He called and said 'monster ratings'. Be a man Jimmy!

Fallon responded to Trump highlighting the plight of young immigrants caught up in administration policies.

"In honor of the President's tweet I'll be making a donation to RAICES in his name," he tweeted, referring to a nonprofit organisation that provides free and low-cost legal services to immigrant children, families and refugees in Texas.

During the show in 2016, Fallon asked for and was granted permission to mess up Trump's hair, which has been the subject of mockery and curiosity over the years.

3 IDIOTS' MEXICAN REMAKE 3 IDIOTAS TO OPEN JAGRAN FILM FESTIVAL

3 Idiots, the Mexican remake of blockbuster Indian film 3 Idiots, will be screened in India for the first time when it opens the ninth edition of the Jagran Film Festival (JFF) here. The movie released in Mexico last year and became one of the top grossers.

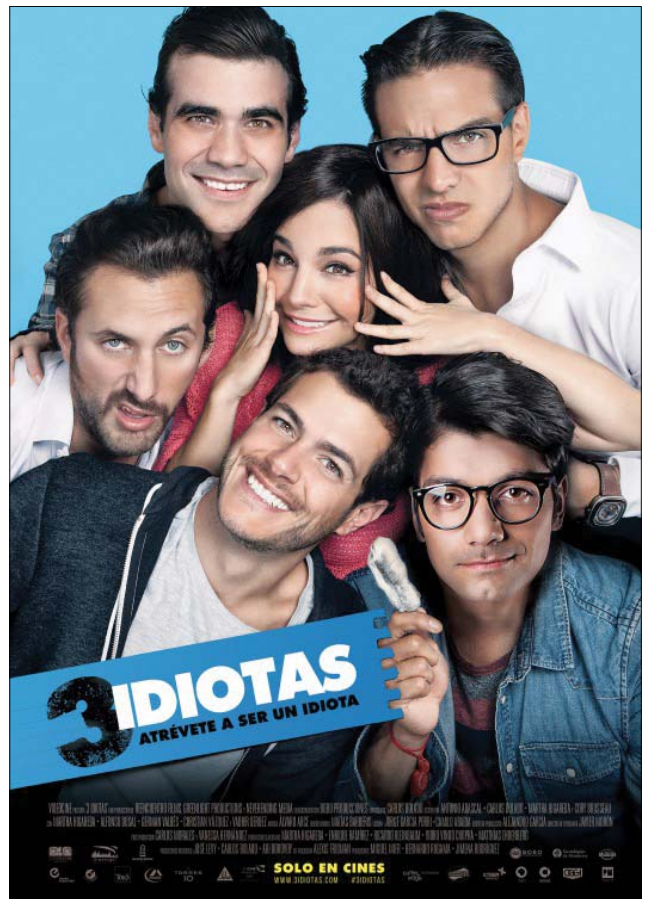
Mexican actors Alfonso Dosal, Christian Vazquez, German Valdez and Martha Higuera play the roles originally essayed by Bollywood actors Aamir Khan, Sharman Joshi, R. Madhavan and Kareena Kapoor Khan respectively from the Indian version.

Basant Rathore, Senior Vice President, Strategy and Brand Development, Jagran Prakashan Ltd, said: "We think it's amazing that Carlos Bolado (director) loved the original film so much that he decided to remake it with 3 Idiots. True art and entertainment knows no borders; interpreting a piece of cinema, making it your own and sharing it with a larger audience is the essence of the Jagran Film Festival. It's all about seeking inspiration from different cultures, languages, emotions and telling your own story."

The plot, much like "3 Idiots", is a coming-of-age story revolving around a group of close friends who go on a humorous and memorable adventure in search of their close college friend that went missing five years ago, just a day before their graduation ceremony.

It showcases the ups and downs in a friendship and the bond they forge while searching for their beloved friend.

This year, JFF will showcase over 200 films and will travel to 18 cities. The competition segment will include international and Indian features, shorts, Indian documentaries and student Films. The non-competitive segment will include thematic specials, a



retrospective, tributes, India Showcase, World Panorama and Hot Shorts.

In the capital, it begins of June 29 and will end on July 3.

Jamie Foxx pays tribute to late rapper XXXTentacion at BET Awards

Jamie Foxx paid tribute to late rapper XXXTentacion while hosting the BET Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday.

The musician, 50, made sure to address the crowd at the Microsoft Theater about the Changes artist - who was shot dead at the age of 20 in Florida last week.

Taking to the stage, Jamie made a heartfelt plea to not become too used to 'senseless' violence and called for change in the way people react to gun deaths.

During an in memoriam segment of the award show, a photo of XXXTentacion centered on the large screen behind Jamie.

The clearly emotional star said he wanted to take a moment to 'acknowledge' the young rapper and encouraged the star-studded audience to make a change.

In the moving speech, Jamie explained: "I want to take a moment to acknowledge this young man, this brother who was killed earlier this week. No matter where you start, you have the opportunity to change.



I think that needs to happen, and at the risk of sounding old, we can't get used to these types of things. I think we're too used to young people being killed, we don't even trip anymore."

Pleading with the crowd to use their music to incite positive change, Jamie asked everyone to pay attention to those who have lost loved ones, and recalled his connection to the murders of iconic 90s rappers Tupac and The Notorious B.I.G.

Jamie continued: "We've got to adjust our satellite a little bit, we all have to figure out a way to not become too used to what's going on right now, and that's the truth.

I was actually in Las Vegas when

Tupac was killed. I was in LA when Biggie [Smalls] was killed. It seems senseless, I'm not saying that we can stop everything, but we've got to figure something out."

Jamie's dedication comes after TMZ reported that XXXTentacion died knowing that he was going to be a father.

The rapper - who was fatally shot in what police believe was a 'possible robbery' - knew weeks ago that his girlfriend - an unidentified woman - was pregnant.

According to the publication, the Instagram of an ultrasound shared by the late rapper's mother Cleopatra Bernard is 'definitely' his girlfriend's.

On Thursday, the mom took to Instagram to share the image as she hinted that the rapper 'left... a final gift' for the world.

The post came as Florida man Dedrick Devonshay William was arrested for the SAD artist's murder.

Rapper Meek Mill also paid his respects to XXXTentacion after wearing a hoodie emblazoned with the artist's face on during his intense performance at the BET Awards.

ARIES: Too many projects to complete might have you feeling just a little bit pressured, Aries. However, your innate determination is likely to drive you on to try to get it all done even if it seems impossible. Don't try to do it all yourself. Don't be afraid to ask for a little help. This might accomplish your ends without putting undue burdens on yourself.

TAURUS: You've been doing well, Taurus, but today you might be feeling more focused than ever. The path ahead seems clear and well defined. You're looking forward to the future with motivation and anticipation. You might be considering a long trip abroad or perhaps going back to school for an advanced degree. Today is a good day to start doing some research and finalizing your plans. Go to it.

GEMINI: The astral energy indicates

positive financial news. A settlement, grant, or bonus of some kind that you've anticipated for a long time may finally manifest. You might want to celebrate, Gemini. A chance to attend a large gathering might come your way. Have fun. Tonight, don't be surprised if you have vivid dreams - some great, some sad. Keep paper and pen handy so you can write them down.

CANCER: Today you'll put a lot of energy into business, personal, or romantic partnerships. They're likely to be especially beneficial now, Cancer. So even if you prefer to work alone, this is the time to explore the possibility of joining with those who share your ambitions. Romantic partnerships formed or advanced today are likely to prove stable and enduring. Don't let fear stand in your way. Move ahead.

LEO: Too much work and the resulting

pressure over the past few days could have you feeling too tired to do anything more, Leo, although your optimism and enthusiasm are still intact. Don't be too hard on yourself if you're dragging a little toward the end of the day. You'll be able to recharge your batteries before tomorrow. In the evening, relax at home with a good book.

VIRGO: Romance blossoms for you tonight, Virgo, perhaps after a long period of standing still. A new sense of stability and security may settle on love relationships and close friendships. Children could also be a source of warmth and pleasure. You might want to channel some of this positive energy into creative activity of some kind, which will increase your sense of contentment and well-being.

LIBRA: Tonight you might host a social event in your home, perhaps

for business associates. You could be nervous at first, Libra, wondering if all will go as well as you hope, but your efforts should produce the results you want. You might be introduced to new contacts, leading to increased opportunities. Take a walk after everyone has gone. Your mind will be churning and you'll want to clear your head.

SCORPIO: Paperwork, perhaps contracts or other legal documents of some kind, might need attention so you can move ahead with some of your projects. These projects could involve writing or speaking. Your mind is in just the right space to participate in anything involving communication, Scorpio, and doors of opportunity may open up for you in this field. Gird your loins and get to it. You'll be glad you did.

SAGITTARIUS: The financial picture

continues to improve, Sagittarius. At some point during the day, you might have the feeling that you aren't working hard enough to keep the forward motion going, and you might feel panic rise. This could prove a good motivating factor, but you don't need to push yourself harder than you're going now. You're on a roll and it's likely to continue. Just pace yourself. **CAPRICORN:** Even though all continues to go well for you, Capricorn, your mood may go up and down today. In spite of all the great things in your life, you might find yourself feeling a little blue sometime during the day. Don't read too much into it. It's probably just the result of low biorhythms. Try to distract yourself with work. This evening get out with some friends and have a good time.

AQUARIUS: Trying to get too much

work done in the course of one day might prove self-defeating today, Aquarius. Your energy isn't what it usually is, and you're probably operating on nervous energy. Consider the situation and list your tasks in order of urgency. The world won't come to an end if you don't get them all done today. In the evening, rent a pile of videos, order a pizza, and relax.

PISCES: A depressed friend may need cheering up. Your ability to nurture and listen sympathetically will prove beneficial, Pisces. Take care not to absorb any of this person's dejection. Your own life should continue to go well, with business and career successes leading to new friendships and goals. Hang onto your own enthusiasm and optimism while extending a compassionate ear to others.