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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Bhandari Jayanti closes grand at Soreng; CM announces Nar Bahadur Bhandari Fellowship

BHASA MANYATA DIWAS TO BE HENCEFORTH CELEBRATED WITH PUBLIC HOLIDAY

GYALSHING, 05 OCT [IPR]: The five-day long grand celebration of the 81st Nar Bahadur Bhandari Jayanti concluded at Soreng playground today. Honouring the celebration, Governor Ganga Prasad graced the occasion as chief guest accompanied by Chief Min-

ister Prem Singh Tamang, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, MP (Lok Sabha), Advisors, Chairpersons and Chief Secretary. The programme also had Prof Mahendra P. Lama, renowned dramatist CK Shrestha, BB Gurung, SR Khujum, SD Dhakal, along with all

the Head of Departments and senior officers, as special invitees. Welcoming the guests and the gathered audience, area MLA Aditya Golay, who is also patron of the organizing committee, extended his sincere gratitude to them for accepting the invita-

tion to be part of the celebration. He spoke briefly on the importance of the day while highlighting the contributions made by the Late Mr Bhandari. On behalf of the entire sub-division, he conveyed his gratitude towards the Government

for the decision to up-grade Soreng to a District status. In his short speech, he said that the Government has been carrying out development in every field and he was positive that the local community will play its equal role in helping the Government

build a stronger and more resourceful State. The Chief Minister, in his address, extended his warm greetings and best wishes to everyone on the occasion. He spoke about the celebration being the third since its inception in 2019 and that this

year's celebration was being held on a grander scale to commemorate the Late former Chief Minister's contributions and the struggles he faced in his efforts to bring together a small hill community who otherwise did not have a National Identity.

He fondly remembered the former CM's words about Sikkim, and remarked that the late Mr Bhandari would often liken Sikkim to be a beautiful garden that belonged to everyone and it is for this very reason that "all of us despite belonging

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CM homage on Bhandari's 81st birth anniv

GYALSHING, 05 OCT [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang paid tribute to former Chief Minister, the Late Nar Bahadur Bhandari, on his 81st birth anniversary by lighting a lamp and garlanding his portrait at his birthplace at Malbasey, West Sikkim, today. He warmly wished and welcomed everyone on the auspicious occasion and spoke briefly about the new district formation and how it will benefit the local community. He also informed that a District Administrative Centre will be constructed in the area soon and urged everyone to support the Government in identifying suitable land for the building. The Chief Minister then proceeded towards the celebration venue at Soreng Playground.

Petrol, diesel prices surge to record-high levels

NEW DELHI, OCT 5 (PTI): Petrol and diesel prices on Tuesday surged to all-time high levels as rates were increased again after international oil prices hit the highest mark since 2014. Petrol price was hiked by 25 paise a litre and diesel by 30 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. This sent the petrol price in Delhi to its highest-ever level of Rs 102.64 a litre and to Rs 108.67 in Mumbai. Diesel rates too touched a record high of Rs 91.07 in Delhi and Rs 98.80 in Mumbai. Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes. The sixth increase in fuel rates in a week's time has sent petrol prices above Rs 100 in most major cities of the country. Similarly, the ninth increase in prices in less than two weeks has shot up diesel rates above Rs 100 mark in several cities in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telan-

gana. International oil prices rallied to a near seven-year high following a decision by OPEC+ to maintain its planned gradual increase of supply, despite the market facing an energy crunch. Global benchmark Brent jumped to USD 81.51 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate rose to USD 77.76 a barrel. Being a net importer of oil, India prices petrol and diesel at rates equivalent to international prices. A month back Brent was less than USD 72 per barrel. With international crude oil prices moving in both directions during July and August, no price increase was carried out by oil marketing companies (OMCs) from July 18 to September 23. Instead, petrol price was cut by Rs 0.65 a litre and diesel by Rs 1.25. However, with no respite from surging international prices, OMCs have started to increase the retail selling price of petrol and diesel with effect

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CM inaugurates BAC at Baiguney, rolls out “Sabki Yojna Sabka Vikas”



Gyalshing, 04 Oct [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Monday inaugurated a Block Administrative Centre at Baiguney and rolled out People's Plan Campaign ["Sabki Yojna Sabka Vikas"] to be carried out through Rural Development Department.

Present among others were Minister for Power Department, MN Sherpa, area MLA Sunita Gajmer [Chairperson SIMFED], Political Secretary to the CM Jacob Khaling, Secretary to the CM SD Dhakal, Principal Secretary at Rural Development Department CS Rao, officials, panchayats and public at large.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister congratulated the public of Zoom-Salghari constituency for the new BAC,

which, he highlighted, will hugely assist people in conducting their day-to-day activities. The BAC has been set up by the State Government with the aim of providing convenience to the public with an opportunity to support and strengthen the Panchayats of the locality.

He added that Rural Development Department has been making tremendous progress in implementing various schemes and also cited examples of Jal Jeevan Mission and Swatchh Bharat 2.0.

The Chief Minister commended the work being conducted under Jal Jeevan Mission as the Department has successfully managed to increase functional tap connections for drink-

ing water at most of the GPUs of the State.

He also praised the Department for carrying out work in Swatchh Bharat Mission and added that the Rural Development Department with combined efforts of officials, public and community has resourcefully generated awareness regarding this mission to bring about a behavioural change at grass-root level as embedded in this mission.

Keeping in mind Swatchh Bharat Mission, the Chief Minister informed that a Women's College will be established in the cleanest district of the State. Further, he also encouraged the Department to suitably enforce the schemes and transform Sikkim into a model state.

The Chief Minister

also announced that the State Government will soon start a Women's Welfare initiative named 'Aama Yojna'.

He also added on various developmental works that the State Government has undertaken in Jorethang and its surrounding areas, namely constructing of Nepali Sanskrit Bhawan, Auditorium Hall at Jorethang Senior Secondary School, Cancer Hospital at Karfector and many more other expansions.

Moreover, he updated that foundation of Gymnasium at Jorethang will be virtually laid on 20th October 2021 from Bhairung Stadium as well.

Speaking during the programme, Principal Secretary RDD C.S. Rao briefed about the Block Administrative Centre

(BAC) at Baiguney, which will cater to four different territorial jurisdictions, namely, Gelling Baiguney GPU, Samsing Pipalay GPU, Zoom GPU and Mabong Segeng GPU.

Mr Rao stated that the proposal for establishing of BAC at Baiguney was approached in the year 2019 during a Self Help Group convention for South and West District but due to the pandemic, setting up of Baiguney BAC took longer than usual.

Moreover, he also highlighted on various schemes under Rural Development Department and explained about People's Plan Campaign (PPC) which is an effective strategy for ensuring the preparation of plans in campaign mode. During the campaign, structured Gram Sabha/ Ward Sabha/ Block Sabha/ District Sabha meetings will be held for preparing Gram Panchayat Development Plan, Block Panchayat Development Plan and District Panchayat Development Plan.

He further reiterated the recent announcement made by the Chief Minister, wherein the cleanest Gram Panchayat will receive a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh, second and third cleanest Gram Panchayat will get Rs. 3 lakh and Rs. 2 lakh, respectively and added that there are 185 Gram Panchayat in Sikkim, which can vie for the cleanest award.

Bhandari Jayanti closes...



to different cultures, languages and social values live harmoniously."

The Chief Minister further recounted the Late N.B. Bhandari's relentless efforts in the fight for Nepali language to be included in the Constitution of India.

He added that the Late Mr Bhandari was the first leader of Nepali origin to become Chief Minister of an Indian State.

The Chief Minister enumerated the responsibilities and policies that the Government will be implementing. He announced that each year any student who secures admission for Ph.D. or Doctorate in one of the top-20 universities anywhere around the world, the Government will be providing them financial aid up to Rs 50 Lakh under the Nar Bahadur Bhandari Fellowship Program.

Adding on this, he said that after the successful completion of their studies, the student will be given an opportunity of three years of voluntary service under the Government of Sikkim.

He also informed that all the works and writings of Late Bhandari will be documented and published by the Government. He informed that the books written by or about the former CM have been bought and distributed to educational institutes by the Government.

He took the opportunity to declare that henceforth every year August 20 will be a public holiday in the honour of all those fighters who fought for the recognition of Nepali Language in the Constitution.

He urged everyone to celebrate the day with cultural programmes and activities that will help us stay connected to our roots and traditions. In his concluding remarks, he congratulated the organizing committee for successfully hosting the Celebratory ceremony.

The Chief Guest for the occasion, the Governor then addressed the gathering by warmly welcoming all the attendees. He said that he was glad to be a part of the celebration and spoke about the contribution made by the former CM. He said that the people of Sikkim are fortunate enough to be guided by

such a heroic figure who had dedicated his entire life for the betterment of his people. He reminded everyone that late Bhandari strived for the upliftment of his State and that he still resides in the hearts of all his fellow-citizen even after his death.

The Governor highlighted about the development schemes that are being carried out by the Government and encouraged everyone present to work together in building a strong State that will eventually lead to a stronger Nation. He added that Sikkim can become an exemplary State in the field of health, education and tourism for others to follow but for this, the local community must come forth in guiding and providing necessary support.

With the construction of the upcoming Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Centre of Excellence at Chakung under the New District plan, Soreng will become the new educational hub for students wherein students from around the country can acquire better education, Prasad added. He said that Sikkim being a tourist-friendly State has a huge opportunity for everyone to benefit from.

He finally ended his speech by extending his best wishes to everyone while quoting that personal growth will lead to State Growth which will eventually lead to the Nation's growth.

At the start of the programme, the Chief Guest and all the esteemed invitees were felicitated and offered traditional topi and a Nepali symbolic souvenir, a Khukuri from the Organizing Committee.

On the occasion, officials from the Education Department presented a souvenir and a traditional shawl as a token of appreciation to the Chief Minister.

While continuing the felicitation ceremony, the Department of Labour honoured those Covid warriors, who sincerely performed their assigned responsibilities, especially during the pandemic, with a cash prize of Rs Five Thousand each.

For the last five days, the audiences were entertained and mesmerised by various competitions and tournaments.

Kept in illegal confinement; no FIR shown, not allowed to meet counsel: Priyanka Vadra

NEW DELHI, OCT 5 (PTI): Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday alleged that she was being held illegally at the PAC compound in Sitapur and no notice or FIR has been provided to her even after her 38-hour detention and was not allowed to meet her legal counsel.

In a statement, she said she has not been produced in front of a magistrate or any other judicial officer and neither has she been allowed to meet her legal counsel, who has been standing at the gate of the compound since morning.

"Presently I am not going into the details of the completely illegal physical force used on my colleagues and me at the time of my arrest as this statement serves merely to clarify the continuing illegality of my confinement at the PAC compound in Sitapur, UP," she said.

"I have not been served with any order or notice. Nor have they shown me an FIR. I have not been produced in front of a magistrate or any other judicial officer either. I have also not been allowed to meet my legal counsel who has been standing at the gate since morning," the Congress leader also said.

Gandhi Vadra has been kept in detention since Monday morning after she wanted to meet the families of the victims of the Lakhimpur clashes. She said she has seen a portion of a paper on social media in which the authorities

have named 11 people, including eight who were not even present at the time she was arrested.

In fact they have even named the two persons "who brought my clothes from Lucknow on the afternoon of October 4", she said.

Vadra said she has been placed under arrest as verbally informed to her by the arresting officer DSP Piyush Kumar Singh, CO City, Sitapur, under Section 151 at 4.30 am on October 4.

"At the time I was arrested I was travelling within the district of Sitapur, approximately 20 km from the border of district Lakhimpur Kheri which was under section 144. However to my knowledge section 144 was not imposed in Sitapur," she said.

She said she was travelling in a single vehicle with four other persons, two local Congress workers, Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Hooda and Sandeep Singh and no security car or Congress workers other than the four persons were accompanying her.

"I was then driven to the PAC compound, Sitapur accompanied by two female and two male constables. Having been brought to the PAC compound, no further communication regarding the circumstances or the reasons, or the sections under which I have been charged have been communicated to me by the UP Police or administration until now-38 hours later at 6.30 pm on October 5, 2021," she said.

East DLAC takes stock of 'Eat Right' campaign



GANGTOK, 04 OCT [IPR]: The 3rd District Level Advisory Committee (DLAC) meeting under the Health and Family Welfare Department was held at the District Magistrate's office, District Administrative Centre, Gangtok, today.

The meeting was chaired by District Magistrate (East) and Chairman of District Level Advisory Committee (DLAC), Ragul K.

Under the banner of the Eat Right campaign, the officials discussed the progress of action taken till now, and put forward their agendas to work for further improvements.

In the meeting, a brief report on the progress of Eat Right Challenge Campaign was shared by Pratima Ghimirey, Food Safety Officer.

Activities like Registration and licensing, Inspection using phosphorous, Surveillance Sample Collection, Special Camps, Digital Media Outreach, Providing Eat Right in public places, Food Safety Training &

Certification, (FoSTaC), Eat Right Campus, Eat Right Schools, Repurposed Oils for cooking initiates which is being started recently etc was put before the chair and the representatives of all the allied departments.

He also informed that the Committee had recently started the Hygiene Ratings for which they require a third-party auditor from the Central Government Agency and till now they had conducted fifty audits of food business operator in GMC area and Gangtok comprising of twenty-five meat shops and twenty-five sweets shops.

Ragul K, District Magistrate East took stock of the various programmes implemented by the DLAC and suggested areas of improvement for food safety.

During the briefing session, Chairman Ragul K. stressed on the need to raise awareness regularly about these initiatives of the Government of India and Food Safety and Standards Authority

of India (FSSAI) to make individuals, food producers and marketers aware about the most basic thing that eating and serving healthy foods.

He highlighted that the awareness campaign should reach out through social media platforms too and asked officials to create a pool of information under Eat Right Campaign in the form of an online site where every information and guideline can be laid out.

He further asked the officials to prepare an action plan to cover all the GMC areas in cooperation with the other departments in the coming few months to achieve the target.

The meeting was attended by Additional Director cum Nodal Officer for Food Safety Standard Cell, Dr. Yudok Bhutia, officials from Agriculture Department, Social Justice & Welfare Department, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Education Department, and Eat Right Campaign Cell officials.

Petrol, diesel prices...

from September 28 and September 24 respectively.

Since then, rates have gone up by Rs 2.45 paise per litre and petrol price has increased by Rs 1.50.

Prior to the July/August price cuts, the petrol price was increased by Rs 11.44 a litre between May 4 and July 17. Diesel rate had gone up by Rs 9.14 during this period.

The relentless increase in fuel prices has been criticised by opposition par-

ties who have demanded that the government cut record excise duty on the two fuels to give relief to consumers.

The government has so far not agreed to the demand.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday refused to even comment on the high fuel prices.

Asked about the fuel prices at his ministry's event in the national capital on Saturday, Puri said, "chodo (please leave it)" before walking away.

SSB CALLS WALK-IN-INTERVIEW FOR SPECIALISTS AND GDMOs ON CONTRACTUAL BASIS

Shashtra Seema Bal has released a notification for recruitment to the post of Specialists and General Duty Medical Officers for various locations/formations throughout the country. Interested candidates can apply to the posts through the prescribed format and appear for the walk-in-interview from 21 October 2021 onwards. The schedule for the interview is given below.

Walk-In-Interview: 21 to 26 October 2021

1) Specialist at CH Gorakhpur/ CH Bathnaha / CH Tezpur - 21 & 22 October 2021

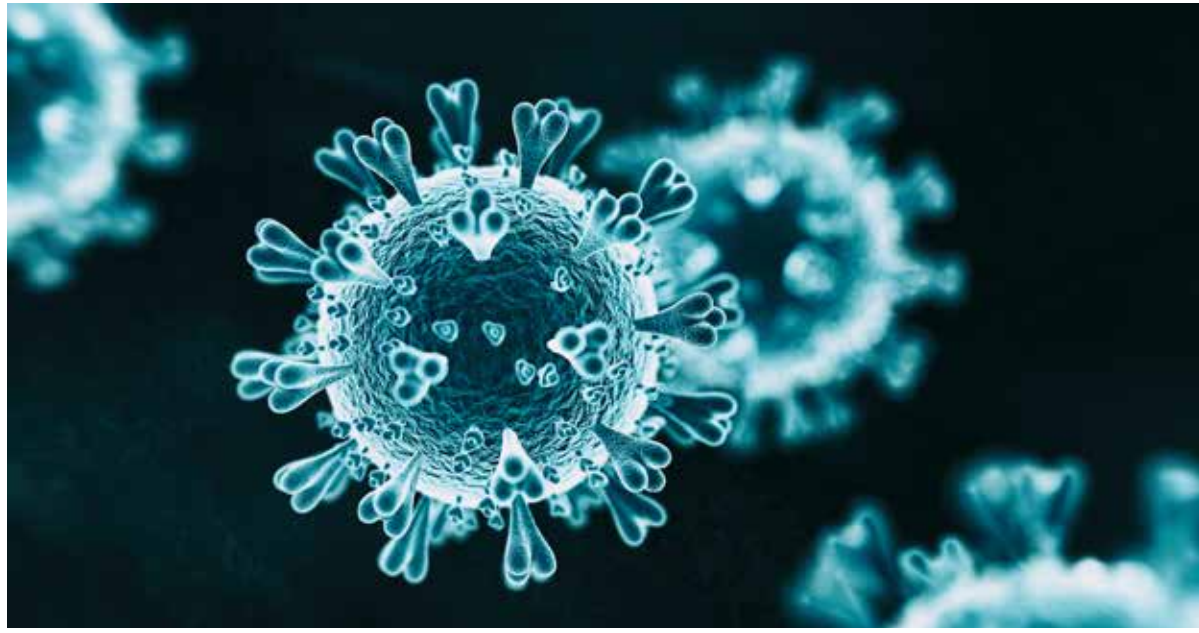
2) GDMO at FTR Lucknow /FTR Patna/FTR Guwahati - 25 & 26 October 2021

SL/ No.	Posts	Vacancy	Monthly Remuneration
A. Specialists:			
1	Radiologists	02	Rs. 85,000/-
2	Medicine	02	
3	Obs & Gyne	02	
4	Anesthetist	01	
B.General Duty Medical Officer		44	Rs. 75,000/-

For eligibility ,terms & conditions and venue/date of walk-in-interview, interested candidates may download detailed advertisement for above post from SSB recruitment website www.ssbrectt.gov.in.

(Govind Kumar Thakur)
Deputy Commandant (ADM)
SHQ SSB Gangtok

Active Covid cases slide further in Sikkim



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 05 OCT:

Sikkim's count of active Covid cases slid to 421 on Tuesday with 53 new recoveries against only 24 new cases in the

past 24 hours. The number of recovered Covid cases here has further improved to 30,436 and the current recovery rate stands at 97.4%.

In the meantime, the

state's daily test positivity rate also came in low at 5.1% on Tuesday with the 24 new cases being picked up from the testing of 469 samples on Monday. Sikkim's tally of

confirmed cases of COVID-19 stands at 31,561.

As per the daily COVID-19 report released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Depart-

ment, while 17 new cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 215 samples, six persons tested positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 248 samples and one more case was found in CB-NAAT of six samples.

Of the 24 new cases, 18 were registered in East District, 04 in West District and 02 in South District.

On the other hand, the state's COVID-19 death toll continued to hold at 388 for the three straight day.

Eight new COVID patients were hospitalized in the State in the past 24 hours and there are six currently admitted in ICU facilities at STNM hospital and Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

ICFAI Univ-Sikkim ties up with Udaan for international internships and overseas placement for its students

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 05 OCT:

ICFAI University, Sikkim, has signed an MoU with Udaan Management Academy of Kolkata to provide international internships and overseas placements to its students from travel, tourism and hotel management department.

The University is confident that this collabora-

tion will see its students intern at star category properties located in various tourism hubs around the world.

The MoU signing was held at the ICFAI University campus in the presence of Vice Chancellor Dr. Jagannath Patnaik and Aditya Udani, Director, Udaan Management Academy, a press release informs.

SDF's labour front resolves to speak up for workers at private companies

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 05 OCT:

A coordination meeting of the labour front of Sikkim Democratic Front was held here at SDF headquarters on Tuesday chaired by party vice-president [labour front], JB Darnal.

The meeting resolved to speak up in the interest of workers employed at different private companies in all four districts and discussed how the

Labour Front can unite all workers and secure justice for them, an SDF press release informs.

The release adds that the meeting also discussed strengthening the labour front by involving the youth and women cells and constituency-level committees.

The release states that the labour front vice-president spoke about the future programmes of the organisation.

Kylian Mbapp reveals he told PSG in July to wanted to leave



PARIS, OCT 4 (AP): Kylian Mbappé confirmed he told Paris Saint-Germain he wanted to leave the club in July in an interview released Monday by French broadcaster RMC.

Mbappé was subject to reported bids from Real Madrid approaching 200 million euros (USD 230 million) in August as he entered the last season of a five-year contract with PSG.

"I asked to leave," the 22-year-old star said, explaining once he decided not to renew his deal "I wanted the club to have a transfer fee to have a quality replacement."

Mbappé can sign a pre-contact agreement with another club in January and join after the season

with PSG getting no fee.

He asked to go in July and hoped to leave with a good deal and respect on all sides. Reports that his request was in the last week of August made him sound like a thief, Mbappé said.

"I said, If you don't want me to go, I will stay," Mbappé told his interviewer, former France and PSG player Jérôme Rothen.

"It's a club that that's given me a lot and I've always been happy."

PSG rejected Madrid's interest then signed free agent Lionel Messi in August to form a superstar attack with Mbappé and Neymar as the club pursues a first Champions League title.

Kho Kho assoc convenes executive meet, discusses expansion



SUMMIT REPROT GANGTOK, 05 OCT:

Sikkim Kho Kho Association [SKKA] convened its executive body meeting, chaired by its president, BK Roka, on Sunday.

The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss various issues related to forming the district bodies of the association for West and South districts, informs an SKKA press release.

The release informs that the SKKA president informed that the asso-

ciation was gearing up to organise the State Junior Kho Kho Tournament in March or April next year at Pelling Ground in West District and State Senior Kho Kho Tournament in August or September next year.

The meeting further resolved that SKKA members Dr RB Biswakarma and Biswajeet Gupta will coordinate efforts to form district bodies for East and North Districts by the end of November this year.

Likewise, SKKA vice-president, Jasral Pradhan, assured his commitment for the further promotion and development of Kho Kho in the State.

An executive member, Namgyal Bhutia, gave a brief report on the performance of Kho Kho players from West District. He stressed upon the need to promote Kho Kho mainly in schools and to create awareness on the importance of sports among parents.

Sam Curran ruled out of T20 World Cup after suffering back injury during IPL game



LONDON, OCT 5 (PTI): All-rounder Sam Curran has been ruled out of the ICC T20 World Cup with a lower back injury, which he sustained during an Indian Premier League game for Chennai Super Kings, the England & Wales Cricket Board said on Tuesday.

He will fly back to the UK in the next couple of days and will have further scans and a full review later this week by the ECB's medical team.

"Curran complained of back pain after Chennai Super Kings Indian Premier League fixture on Saturday against Rajasthan Royals. Results of the scan revealed the injury," the ECB stated.

Curran's brother, Tom, has been drafted into England's squad for the World Cup. In addition, Surrey's left-arm seamer Reece Topley has

been added as a travelling reserve. Topley will join the England party in due course.

The 23-year-old Curran had a forgettable IPL, scoring only 56 runs from nine games and picking up nine wickets at an expensive economy rate of 9.93.

"Unfortunately I have received a gutting news that I will unfortunately be missing the remainder of the IPL season and the World Cup. Extremely gutted...absolutely loved my time with Chennai this season," Sam Curran told CSK.

"It hasn't really sunk in yet but I'm leaving the team in a fantastic space. The boys are playing really good cricket. I want to be supporting them from where I am in the next few days.

"Once it's all sunk in, I'll definitely be support-

ing the team and I'm sure they can go all the way and lift the trophy." Curran, 23, has played 24 Tests, 11 ODIs and 16 T20Is for England. He was a part of the England Test squad that played India in England prior to the IPL.

"Just want to say a massive thank you to all the Chennai Super Kings fans, I've absolutely loved all your support in the last two seasons I've been playing. It won't be long until I'm back running, bowling and batting in front of all you guys.

"I'll be back stronger, until then stay safe. Cheers guys," the all-rounder added.

The England players and their support staff arrived at their Muscat base earlier on Tuesday and will remain in Oman until October 16 before moving to Dubai for the start of the tournament.

Minister attends summit on National Mission on Edible Oils

GUWAHATI, 05 OCT [IPR]: Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture, AH & VS Departments, Lok Nath Sharma, attended a day-long National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm Business Summit for North Eastern States organised by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, Government of India at Guwahati.

The programme had the special presence of Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar, along with Minister of DoNER, G Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, Kailash Choudhary, Minister of State for Agriculture & Family Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje.



Director, Agriculture Department, Sikkim, Tilak Gazmer, and Additional Director Rajendra Thapa were also present on the occasion.

During the summit, the Union Minister along with Minister Lok Nath Sharma and other Ministers participated in wa-

tering edible oils plants and presented certificates to the FPOs of Assam.

Minister Lok Nath Sharma expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for choosing the North East region for the Summit.

Orientation on '21-types of disabilities' in West Sikkim

GYALSHING, 04 OCT [IPR]: An orientation programme on "21 types of Disabilities, Evaluation and Procedure for Certification of Various Disabilities" was held at the Conference Hall of District Hospital Gyalshing, on Monday. The programme was organized by the Social Welfare Division of Social Justice and Welfare Department.

Resource Persons for the programme were Joint Secretary-cum-Nodal Officer for Persons with Disabilities, Social Welfare Division, Abinash Rai, Joint Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (Technical), Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Dr MB Chettri, and Unique Disability Identity (UDID), State Coordinator, Sameer Pradhan.

At the outset, the handouts of RPwD ACT 2016 and the Guidelines for Assessment were produced to the participants to make it comprehensible.

Addressing the house, Mr Rai focused on "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) ACT, 2016".

He then highlighted the few challenges faced by the differently-abled persons recently. Further, he spoke on barriers being faced by the persons with disabilities and urged everyone to use their complete potential to eliminate barriers and should be disabled friendly, he added.

He highlighted the development of infrastructure for all Persons with Disabilities in all government buildings and public places.



In addition, he informed that a person with Benchmark Disabilities is the one with not less than forty percent of a specified disability as certified by the certifying authority. He also informed that no person having a disability percentage less than forty percent should be denied a disability certificate by the Medical Authority. He then suggested to be subtle while issuing Disabilities Certificates. He stressed upon the need to expand the correct dissemination of information to general public.

Furthermore, he emphasized on the penalties one has to face if a person with disability is denied basic rights as mentioned in the RPwD ACT 2016.

Dr. Chettri, in his address, listed out all the 21 types of disabilities that have been identified under the RPwD Act 2016 of India to make people familiar in detail with the help of PowerPoint presentation. The following are the 21 types of disabilities; Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured persons, Hearing Impairment, Locomotor Disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness,

Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language disability, Thalassemia, Hemophilia, Sickle cell disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness, Acid Attack victims, and Parkinson's disease.

In conclusion, he informed in detail about the Guidelines for assessment of all 21 types of disabilities and how the Medical Authority/Medical Board should be given the percentage as per the guidelines specified in the RPwD ACT 2016.

Following the address, the present participants got an opportunity to interact with the Resource Persons and clarified their confusion.

The programme was attended by Chief Medical Officer/West, Orthopedic Surgeon/DHG, Consultant Paediatrician/DHG, Ophthalmologist/DHG, Psychiatrist/DHG, Paediatrician/DHG, ENT/DHG, Health Education Officer/DHG, Physiotherapist/DHG, Medical Officer from different PHCs & CHC and ASHA Facilitators.

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Meet the Others

Insularity is unfortunately a national malaise. Address it

Identity, as in the perceptions of the outside, is a touchy issue among the marginalized communities. The ill-informed clichés, the pedantic, and almost always offensive generalizations remain sore points for the offended communities, and we live in a region that has lived with such broad-brush impoliteness for ever since we started interacting with the plains. And the brush paints both ways, one may add here.

While it is easy to take affront and fine to draft fresh introductions to correct the offending perceptions, it is definitely not okay to allow the chip on the shoulder to burden any heavier than is healthy. The more this perceived slight is allowed to fester, the more it diverts energy from pursuits that take communities forward. One refers to a “perceived slight” here because the clichés that hurt are products of ignorance and one should not really allow ignorance of others to justify withdrawals into cocoons by the othered. And defensive shells are not the best habitations from which to plan ahead because they keep thoughts and ideas rooted in a past that has lost its relevance for everyone except those who swoon in its fermented confusion. Also, while so enclosed, one fails to recognize changes elsewhere.

That said, it is important that the ignorance which has degenerated into disdain, mutual suspicion and distasteful stereotyping is lifted. One could argue that perceived slights are by nature pointless obsessions since they are born out of, well, perceptions which cannot really be tackled because, well again, they rest in perceptions and those are more difficult to address than actual instances of discrimination. They do, however, become worries when the perceptions start manifesting as actual attacks, like ones which triggered the exodus of NE people from the metros or the lynching which occurred in Nagaland a few years ago. And then there is the continuing parochialism everywhere else in the country and the reprehensible attempts at justifying such targeted attacks born out of Hate seeded in prejudices and stereotypes. These will repeat unless this country makes some earnest efforts at celebrating its much-vaunted diversity. 70 years as one nation and the citizens still don’t behave as One People! This obviously needs to change, and the Supreme Court recently cracked the whip with its slew of directions, including the setting up of a three-member panel to “enhance the sense of security and inclusion of the people from the north-eastern states who faced violence and hate crimes”. The SC directive is the first step, an acceptance of sorts of a problem that exists. For it to be of any real consequence, wider, more collaborative initiatives will need to be taken.

The students provide the best opportunity to build the bridges which can span the chasms of mutual ignorance which feeds insularity among us. A simple and easily achieved course would be for the community/ state representative organisations of the students to become mediums which link communities, not strive to make them self-ensconced unit of self conscious groups. Take the freshers’ welcome parties for instance. Instead of each community, each state or region hosting a welcome party for its own kind, they should use the funds to introduce the freshers to ‘others’ in the student community. Host the parties for ‘your own’ but invite guests from all other groups. Make celebrations the medium to proffer more congenial introductions and strike new friendships. Use the organisations to speak more often about the concerns of other groups and engage more earnestly in issues and challenges which face other communities. This openness is possible only with the idealism of youth, but is currently being stifled because student groups remain obsessively insular.

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Environmentalists Must Pressure the Indian Government to Take Action on Climate

Roomana Hukil

theconversation.com

Scorching heat waves, torrential rains and other extreme weather events make India one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Many Indian cities recorded temperatures as high as 48 C, in 2020. And by 2100, an estimated 1.5 million additional people will die each year from climate change.

Several metropolitan cities including Delhi are expected to become unlivable in the next 80 years. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s recent report stated that India is likely to experience more extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts and floods in the next few decades that will lead to irreversible climate impacts.

India pledged to reduce its emissions intensity (emissions per unit of GDP) by 33 to 35 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030, yet the government fails to generate emissions data to monitor these targets and validate claims that it will meet the Paris objectives on time.

Non-governmental organizations play an important role in India because of their ability to provide feedback and act as harbingers of change for economic and social systems to thrive. But instead of pressuring the government, many NGOs are increasingly putting pressure on the public to mitigate climate change. For instance, NGOs promote lower meat consumption, cloth shopping bags, reusable straws, LED lightbulbs and so on.

Actions like these feed the “green me fallacy,” a term coined by American writer and filmmaker Eleanor Goldfield, which is the belief that an individual’s lifestyle choices will be enough to resolve climate problems and restore ecological health. But these solutions cannot work without institutional or policy-level support.

Instead of focusing on symbolic gestures or actions that raise one’s social capital, Indian activists need to pressure the government to establish effective environmental policies and programs. They should protest, picket corporate offices, petition the government and stage sit-ins, hunger strikes and vigils to strengthen climate action and spread awareness about the urgency of the climate crisis in India. As a climate scholar and activist I have participated in environmental campaigns in New Delhi and Bengaluru to understand the objectives of NGOs and how they operate.

ACTING WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY

India is already experiencing the negative effects of climate change. Yet it is the world’s third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide, and its electricity and heating sector produces more than 1.1 billion tonnes of carbon emissions annually. With coal still central to the country’s energy sector — and more coal-fired plants planned — emissions are set to rise with economic growth. Additionally, 22 out of the world’s 30 most polluted cities are in India.

Except for a few NGOs, environmental advo-

CLIMATE GUILT AND SHAME

The capitalist system induces our ideological guilt: If we cannot plant trees in our neighbourhood, buy solar-powered products or make green lifestyle choices, then we are not green enough. It heightens the individual’s sense of responsibility.

Yet changing our lifestyles may not meaningfully impact the environment, because individual lifestyle choices are not the problem, mass production and consumption are.

Even when we act with what we believe to be the best of intentions, our efforts are often at cross purposes with our goals. For example, low energy emitting light bulbs may lead us to keep the lights on more. Planting trees allows deforestation by corporations to continue by claiming reforestation elsewhere will make up for it. No matter what green initiatives we take, there is always encouragement to consume more.

Governments and corporations should not be let off the hook. NGOs must demand action from governments. They should engage in everyday forms of resistance and rights-based activism, campaign against poor and ineffective environmental policies and demand climate justice and action.

Only a handful of Indian environmental NGOs are challenging this mainstream narrative and speaking truth to power. One example is the Pathalgadi movement, which defies private sector advocacy by challenging the government over the management of Adivasi (Indigenous) resources in the state of Jharkhand. Pathalgadi activists emphasize their constitutional rights to landholdings by imposing blockades on outsiders and promoting self-reliance.

NGOs could reach out to other groups in solidarity and collectively pressure the government to restore the environment. Instead of the feel-good token gestures that exacerbate the climate crisis, Indian activists need to frame environmental inequities in ways that pressure governments to institute effective policies and programs. This is only possible by leveraging public opinion and avoiding a system where individual responsibility is seen as having more environmental impact than the state taking ownership of the problem.

[the writer is PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, McMaster University]



cacy groups in India have failed to campaign for the shutdown of coal-fired power plants and other industrial projects. Instead, many NGOs have introduced trivial campaigns such as “Monsoon Wooding” and “Pedh Lagao” (Plant Trees).

These initiatives act as weak solutions to India’s aggrieved environmental condition, at a time when environmental activists need to probe and have clarity on the most effective responses to climate change. These campaigns become problematic when they fail to ground themselves in science and begin to assert that they can resolve imminent threats, such as air pollution and climate change.

When poorly planned, tree planting can have negative consequences on ecosystems and climate change. For instance, planting trees in areas that have never been forested before, such as on grasslands, savannahs and dry lands, reduces carbon sequestration and increases air temperatures.

With the climate crisis at India’s front door, climate activists are being sloppy if they don’t hold industries accountable for their carbon output, and instead look to citizens to reduce their relatively minuscule carbon footprint.

Pandora Papers: ‘it’s time to pursue lawyers and accountants who enable tax evasion’ – offshore tax expert Q&A

RONEN PALAN

theconversation.com

Many of the world’s richest and most powerful people are in the spotlight once more for using secretive tax havens and corporate structures to hide wealth and avoid paying taxes. The Pandora papers is the third in a series of huge leaks of documents to the media following the Panama papers in 2016 and the Paradise papers in 2017 – and little seems to have changed in the interim.

Those included so far in the new revelations include the leaders of the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Jordan and Ukraine, plus members of the ruling family in Azerbaijan and figures close to Vladimir Putin. In all, more than 100 billionaires are reportedly involved in the revelations, with transactions ranging from properties worth millions of pounds to slush funds and superyachts.

We asked Professor Ronen Palan, a specialist in offshore tax havens at City, University of London, about the story so far.

WHAT ARE YOUR INITIAL THOUGHTS?

I’m afraid I’m not surprised by these papers. There’s no evidence to suggest that the volume of transactions taking place through these offshore centres is declining, so the same financial structures that we heard about in the Panama and Paradise papers are still clearly being used.

It’s fascinating that so many of these people in the public eye must have known that eventually their activities would become common knowledge, and yet they opted for offshore secrecy anyway. I suppose

any concerns may be overcome perhaps by greed and the knowledge that they will not be prevented from doing it.

In some cases we are talking about (illegal) tax evasion and in some cases it’s (legal) tax avoidance: the difference comes down to whether the people in question had fully notified the authorities in their home countries about the offshore structures they are using. In instances when I read that they are asked by the media to comment and they decline to respond, it creates the appearance that we are talking about evasion – although this remains unproven.

WHY DOES THE SITUATION NOT APPEAR TO BE IMPROVING?

Over the past 20 or 30 years, international regulation has focused on creating tools that allow tax authorities to ensure that taxpayers are not evading taxation. Systems were introduced that focus on “know your customer” or KYC – requiring people transacting in particular jurisdictions to fully identify themselves so that this information can be shared with other jurisdictions.

This essentially creates transparency so that you know who has money where, so that tax authorities can use this information to make sure that their citizens are not evading taxation. But while that can be effective in countries where the tax authority is operating independently of the government and politics, it’s not going to work in Russia or China or many other developing countries. It’s therefore not surprising to me that many of the revelations are about activities outside of the developed world.

BUT WHY HASN’T TRANSPARENCY FORCED TAX HAVENS TO CHANGE?

It has brought about change, but some jurisdictions comply more than others. So you have got some British jurisdictions such as Jersey or the Cayman Islands that are much more transparent than they used to be. On the face of it, they can claim to be more regulated than, say, Denmark or Sweden.

But the professionals who have the expertise to create structures that enable tax evasion are still often based in these places, and they create structures with different layers that will be partly registered in these jurisdictions but partly in those with looser transparency rules such as the British Virgin Islands or Panama – following the letter but not the spirit of the law. This makes it very difficult to see what is happening and whose money is involved.

HOW DO WE IMPROVE THE CURRENT SITUATION?

The Pandora papers show we are reaching the limits of what can be done with data transparency. Unless we find ways to tighten the net, this won’t be the last leak of its kind. This is recognised at least implicitly by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) and other international bodies in their increasing interest in going after the enablers, rather than just focusing on the tax evaders themselves.

Maybe it’s time to create something similar to what applies in medicine, so that, if enablers contravene certain standards, they can be prosecuted – even in countries who are not directly affected by their activities. If they went to such a country, they

could be arrested on arrival.

SHOULD WE CREATE A NEW INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION DEDICATED TO STAMPING OUT TAX EVASION?

In practical terms, the three places that matter when it comes to creating international regulations are the US, EU and China. Unfortunately they are not agreeing with one another on much right now, so it will be difficult to reach an agreement about such an institution. Even if they did agree, they would be accused of imperialism by smaller countries, or of acting as dictators.

Of course, these three players would still need to agree on an initiative to really go after enablers, so you can make the same criticism of this strategy, but it is at least more modest in its scope and therefore potentially more realistic.

ARE ALL THESE REVELATIONS ACTUALLY HELPFUL?

There’s certainly a danger of media saturation, in which the public knows about these kinds of activities and may be less interested by now. But we need to emphasise that the consequences are not going away: to run a modern state, it’s very expensive. To pay for a good education system, a good health system, properly functioning infrastructure and so forth, somebody has to pay for it.

If the rich are avoiding paying their share, somebody else is picking up the tab, and that’s either the poor or the squeezed middle classes. So if the public are tired of all this scandal, it doesn’t change the fact that they are suffering because of it.

[the writer is Professor of International Politics, City, University of London]

Lakhimpur Kheri violence: Case against Priyanka, Deependra Hooda, Ajay Kumar Lallu in Sitapur

SITAPUR (UP), OCT 5 (PTI): The Uttar Pradesh Police has booked Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and 10 other people under sections related to preventive custody due to apprehension of breach of peace, officials said here Tuesday, as party leaders questioned her detention beyond 24 hours without an FIR.

The case under Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) sections 144,151, 107, 116 (all related to preventive detention due to apprehension of breach of peace) has also been registered against Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu and party leader Deependra Hooda, the officials said.

"These are preventive sections. Once we get as-



surance that there would not be a violation of peace by them, these sections will be removed," Sitapur Sub-divisional Magistrate Pyare Lal Maurya said.

Others who have been named in the case

are Sandeep, Raj Kumar, Deepak Singh, Narendra Shekhawat, Yogendra, Harikant, Dheeraj Gujjar and Amit, the SDM said, without sharing further details about them.

They all are kept in detention in the guest

house of the 2nd battalion of Provincial Armed Constabulary, he said.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other party leaders were detained on Monday when they were going to meet the

victims of the violence that erupted during a farmers' protest in Lakhimpur Kheri a day earlier.

Eight people were killed as violence erupted during a farmers' protest, claiming the lives of both farmers and BJP workers ahead of a visit to Lakhimpur by Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya.

Several Congress leaders including P Chidambaram have questioned Gandhi's detention, describing it as "totally illegal" and "unconstitutional".

In a statement, Chidambaram said Tuesday the facts and circumstances concerning Gandhi's detention in Sitapur conclusively establish that there is no rule of law in UP.

Man held for printing pirated NCERT books



NEW DELHI, OCT 5 (PTI): A 38-year-old man has been arrested for his alleged involvement in printing pirated NCERT books, police said Tuesday.

The accused, Manoj Jain, a resident of Shahdara, was arrested Monday following a raid at his printing unit at Mela Ram Farms in outer Delhi's Mandoli here on September 18, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rajesh Deo said.

According to police, Jain has been into the printing business for over eight years and started the unit in Mandoli in January 2020.

During the Covid-induced lockdown, he suffered heavy losses in his business, they said.

And to cover up the losses, he started printing pirated NCERT books since these books are in large circulation across the country, they added.

The DCP said around 5,000 pirated books and printed material of NCERT valued at approximately Rs 35 lakh was recovered from the unit along with watermark of NCERT and latest offset printing machines.

A case was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Copyright Act fol-

lowing the raid on September 18, police said, adding Jain had been absconding since then.

The raid was conducted along with vigilance officer and production officer of NCERT, New Delhi after a tip off, they said.

These poor quality pirated books were being supplied in the market at cheaper rates, causing huge revenue loss to NCERT. The offset unit was publishing pirated NCERT books of class 6th to 12th of different subjects, the DCP said, adding further investigation is underway.

Arunachal logs 27 new Covid-19 cases, tally at 54,752

ITANAGAR, OCT 5 (PTI): Twenty seven people tested positive for Covid-19 in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday pushing the virus caseload to 54,752 in the state but there was no casualty due to the killer disease in the past 24 hours, a senior health official said here on Tuesday.

As many as 54,061 people have recuperated from the disease so far in the state including the 21 on Monday, the official said.

State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Lobsang Jampa said the recovery rate among Covid-19 patients remained at 98.74 per cent, while the percentage of active cases stood

at 0.76.

Arunachal Pradesh currently has 414 active cases, he said.

Lower Dibang Valley district has the highest number of active cases at 73, followed by Lohit (69), West Kameng (65) Tawang (49) and East Siang at 38 cases.

As many as 11,52,517 samples have been tested for COVID-19 so far, including 2,695 on Monday, Jampa said adding the positivity ratio in the state stands at 3.88 per cent.

According to State Immunisation Officer Dimong Padung, a total of 12,02,335 people have been inoculated so far in the state.

Elaborate security arrangements for comedian Umar Sharif's funeral in Karachi

KARACHI, OCT 5 (PTI): The provincial Sindh government has made elaborate security arrangements for the funeral prayers and burial of celebrated comedian and actor Umar Sharif who passed away in a hospital in Germany.

Thousands of people are expected to attend the funeral of the comedian whose demise on 2nd October was mourned and condoled not only in Pakistan but also in the Indian film and television industry. Sharif was 66.

The comedian, who visited India on a number of occasions for award shows and other assignments, was being taken in an air ambulance from Karachi for his complicated life saving procedure in Washington DC when his condition de-

teriorated and he had to be admitted to a hospital in Germany. His son, Jawad Sharif, said as per his father's last wishes his burial would be in the graveyard at the Abdullah Shah Ghazi shrine in Clifton Karachi.

"His body will be flown from Germany to Karachi tonight and his funeral prayers will be held in a mosque in Clifton followed by his burial at the Mazar," he added.

Sharif's third wife, Zareen, had accompanied him on the air ambulance and will return with the body.

Umer Sharif was one of Pakistan's most celebrated comedian, actor and television personality with his iconic plays such as "Bakra Qiston Pe" and "Budha Ghar Par Hain".

Ladakh reports 3 new Covid cases, 5 discharged

LEH, OCT 5 (PTI): Ladakh on Tuesday reported three fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the tally to 20,825 while the active cases in the Union Territory came down to 50, officials said.

Ladakh has registered 207 Covid-related deaths -- 149 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandem-

ic last year.

Five patients of coronavirus infection were cured and discharged from hospitals, taking the tally of cured patients to 20,658, they said.

Of the three new cases, all were reported in Leh, they said.

There was no death reported due to Covid in Ladakh on Monday.

Special Bathukamma song composed by A R Rahman, released

Hyderabad, Oct 5 (PTI): On the eve of Telangana's traditional 'Bathukamma' (floral festival), TRS MLC K Kavitha and filmmaker Gautham Vasudev Menon here on Tuesday launched a special Bathukamma song 'Allipoolavennela' composed by music maestro A R Rahman.

The song shot in the districts of Telangana and produced by 'Telangana Jagruthi', an organisation formed by Kavitha to work for heralding cultural renaissance in Telangana, has been sung by Uthara Unnikrishnan, penned by Mitapalli Surender and choreographed by National Award winner Brinda, a release from Kavitha's office said.

Bathukamma festival is an integral part of Telangana and it identifies with the cultural identity of the people from the state across the globe. The nine-day long festival is all set to begin and celebrated across Telangana and the world from October 6, it said.

The recent collaboration with Gautham Vasudev Menon, Rahman, Kavitha-led Telangana Jagruthi has added to the festive atmosphere of Telangana and has given especially the women of Telangana, another reason to enjoy colourful and joyous Bathukamma festival, it added.

Rahman tweeted: "A festival of life. A celebration of togetherness. Bringing you a glimpse

of the beauty of Bathukamma through "#Allipoolavennela" along with Telangana Jagruthi."

Kavitha, in response tweeted: "The festival of colours, melody and togetherness Bathukamma is here! Here's sharing a glimpse of the special song for Bathukamma by @arrahman @menongautham and a dream team for all my sisters.

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Taliban killed 13 members of Hazara ethnic group: Report

KABUL, 05 OCT [ALJAZEERA]: The Taliban killed at least 13 members of the Hazara ethnic group, including a 17-year-old girl, in the central province of Daykundi, shortly after they took power in Afghanistan, according to a new report from Amnesty International.

On August 30, a convoy of 300 Taliban fighters entered Khidr district and killed at least 11 former members of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), nine of whom were taken to a nearby river basin where they were executed shortly after having surrendered, the rights group said in its report published on Tuesday.

A teenager, identified by the name of Masuma, was killed in crossfire after the Taliban targeted Afghan forces who were attempting to flee the area. Another civilian, Fayaz, a newly-wed in his 20s, was also among those killed in the crossfire.

The ANSF members who were killed ranged in age from 26 to 46, Amnesty said. All the victims were Hazara, who were persecuted during the Taliban's first stint in power between 1996 and 2001.

It is the second killing of Hazaras documented by Amnesty. At least nine Hazara men were killed by Taliban fighters in Ghazni province in July before the group captured power, Amnesty reported on August 19.

Both the Taliban and their rivals, the Islamic State Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K), an ISIL affiliate, have been accused of targeting the Hazara people, who make up the majority of Afghanistan's Shia population.

By September 1, the Taliban had denied the killings. Saidqullah Abed, the Taliban appointed police chief for Daykundi, would only confirm that one of their fighters had been injured in the crossfire.

Raihana Azad, a former member of Parliament for the province, also verified Amnesty's report to Al Jazeera, say-

ing the events of August 30 amounted to "inhumane mass killings" carried out by the Taliban. She said what transpired in Khidr was in direct violation of the Taliban's claims of a nationwide general amnesty for former security forces and government workers.

"These cold-blooded executions are further proof that the Taliban are committing the same horrific abuses they were notorious for during their previous rule of Afghanistan," said Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International's secretary-general.

During their five-year rule in the 1990s, the Taliban were accused of massacring hundreds of Hazaras in the provinces of Balkh and Bamiyan.

Zaman Sultani, South Asia researcher at Amnesty International, said the killings in Daykundi follow a clear pattern by the Taliban.

He points to a statement that interviewees attributed to a senior Taliban official as proof: "I have killed people for the past 20 years. Killing is easy for me. I can kill again," the official reportedly told Daykundi residents.

Azad, the former MP, said the Taliban's abuses in Daykundi do not end with the killings.

She says that since the Taliban captured the province on August 14, a day before former President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, thousands of families have been forced from their homes in the Gizab and Pato districts of the mountainous province.

A list compiled by residents shows that as many as 20,000 families were forcibly displaced across at least 10 different villages over the last month and a half.

Daykundi residents speaking to Al Jazeera said that when the Taliban came to their homes, the fighters claimed that the families had been illegally occupying the land or that a Taliban shura had decided the land "belongs to the people".

TAIPEI, 05 OCT [AFP]: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen warned of "catastrophic consequences" if the island were to fall to China and vowed to "do whatever it takes" to guard against threats in an article published on Tuesday.

Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by China, which views the self-ruled democratic island as its territory to be re-taken one day, by force if necessary.

President Xi Jinping has described the seizure of Taiwan as "inevitable" and Beijing has ramped up military, diplomatic and economic pressure since Tsai's 2016 election, as she views the island as "already independent" and not part of a "one China".

Nearly 150 Chinese warplanes had breached Taiwan's ADIZ since Friday when Beijing marked its National Day with its then-biggest aerial show of force, buzzing the is-

land with 38 planes.

Tsai warned a failure to defend Taiwan would be "catastrophic" for both the island and the wider region in an article she wrote for Foreign Affairs published on Tuesday.

"They should remember that if Taiwan were to fall, the consequences would be catastrophic for regional peace and the democratic alliance system," Tsai said.

"It would signal that in today's global contest of values, authoritarianism has the upper hand over democracy."

Taiwan hopes for peaceful coexistence with China, she said, but "if its democracy and way of life are threatened, Taiwan will do whatever it takes to defend itself."

Tsai's government on Monday urged Beijing to stop "irresponsible provocative actions" after a record 56 Chinese jets including nuclear-ca-

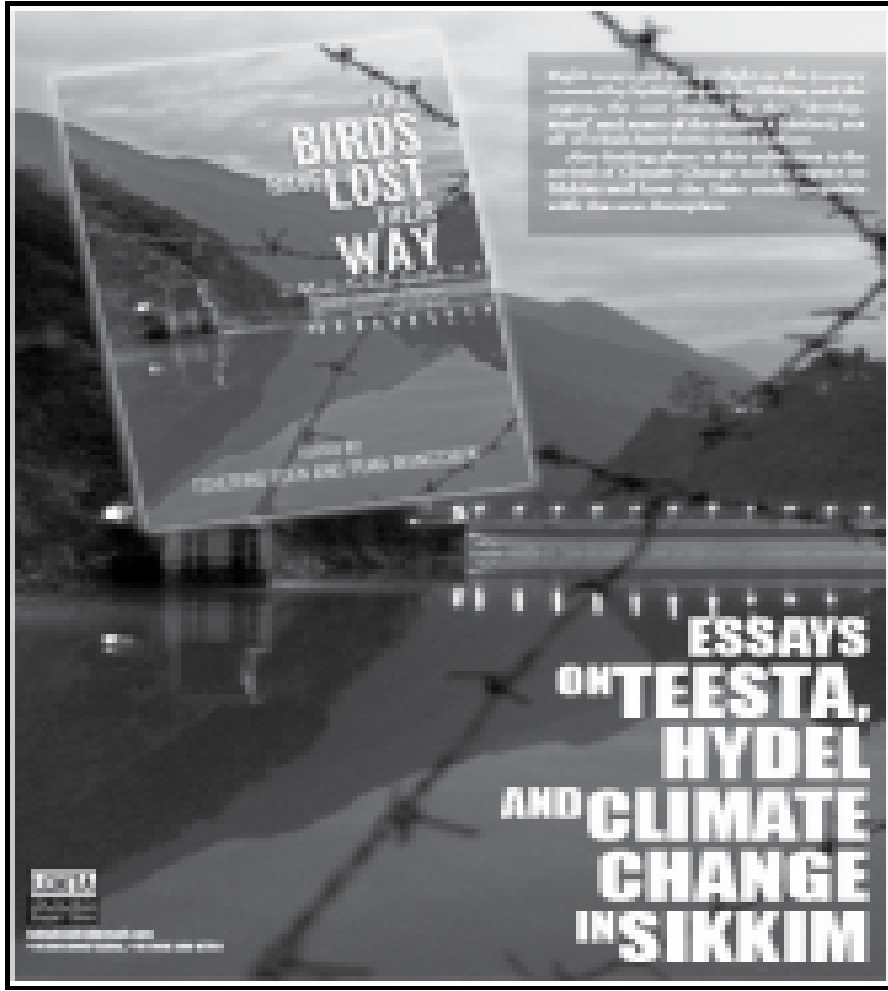
pable bombers crossed into Taiwan's air defence identification zone.

"Amid almost daily intrusions by the People's Liberation Army, our position on cross-strait relations remains constant: Taiwan will not bend to pressure," Tsai added.

The ADIZ is not the same as Taiwan's territorial airspace but includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defence identification zone and even includes some of the mainland.

In the last two years, Beijing has begun sending large sorties into Taiwan's defence zone to signal dissatisfaction at key moments -- and to keep Taipei's ageing fighter fleet regularly stressed.

Last year, a record 380 Chinese military jets made incursions into Taiwan's defence zone. The number as of October this year has already exceeded 600.



England will only play Ashes series if best players in squad

LONDON, OCT 4 (AP): England will only travel to Australia for the Ashes series across December and January if its leading players are in the squad.

That was the message from the England and Wales Cricket Board on Monday, with the governing body saying it will announce this week if the tour will go ahead amid concerns about restrictions in place in Australia due to the pandemic.

An ECB statement said there has been "regular and positive dialogue" with Cricket Australia about arrangements for Ashes series, one of the biggest occasions in cricket.

However England's players are concerned about the conditions they will have to live in after arriving in Australia, such as the quarantine arrangements and whether family members can travel.

The ECB said the priority was to ensure the tour can take place "with conditions for players and management to perform at their best."

"We will continue talking to our players this week to share the latest information and seek feedback," the ECB said.

Tellingly, the governing body added that the squad selected needed to be "befitting a series of this significance."

With the World Twenty20 competition taking place in the United Arab Emirates and Oman from Oct. 17-Nov. 14 and the five-test Ashes series beginning on Dec. 8 until mid-January, plus quarantine either side and before the Ashes, some players could be away from home for more than three months.

Ben Stokes, England's star all-rounder, is currently missing for England because he is taking a break from cricket to protect his mental health.

England captain Joe Root hasn't committed to taking part in the Ashes amid the ongoing talks, and Australia captain Tim Paine said last week "the Ashes are going ahead ... whether Joe is here or not."

The ECB statement suggests this is not the case and that England will not countenance taking a weakened squad to Australia.

England's international schedule has undergone repeated changes during the pandemic.

The team returned home early from tours of Sri Lanka and South Africa in 2020 while the fifth test against India in the countries' recent series in England was abandoned on the morning of the match after the Indians decided not to play due to fears over a COVID outbreak in its touring group.

England also canceled white-ball visits to Bangladesh and Pakistan that were scheduled to take place this month ahead of the World T20.

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The extraordinary talent of Mohamed Salah and how to quantify it

BARNEY RONAY

LONDON, 05 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: There were 76 minutes gone at Anfield as Mohamed Salah took a pass from Curtis Jones near the right touchline. Three blue shirts loomed close by. Salah was facing the crowd. Shortly before Manchester City had levelled the score at 1-1, and could claim, on the metrics, to have dominated the game to that point: more shots, passes, crosses and dribbles, albeit without seeming to have any preferred method of actually putting the ball in the Liverpool goal.

Through all of that there was a familiar sense of one player in red operating under a different gravity. Salah does this. Shane Warne famously damned Monty Panesar with the comment that he hadn't played 33 Test Matches, but the same Test 33 times. The same could be said of Salah, who has effectively played the same game for Liverpool 212 times. Except happily, in Salah's case, it is an astonishingly good game.

Sunday afternoon was already significant in other ways. This week marks the six-year anniversary of Jürgen Klopp's appointment as Liverpool manager. There is an air of familial permanence about Klopp these days. By the turn of the year he will have outlasted every postwar Liverpool manager bar Bob Paisley and Bill Shankly, fitting company for a man who has performed a remarkable twin feat of modernising the present while still tending to the past.

Success, wider attachments, the Covid experience have all created an indissoluble bond. Klopp seems less angsty on his clothesline these days, more weathered, more thickly-bearded, and an agreeably nautical presence in his overalls, steering that seasoned title-winning crew on instinct and ship's biscuits.

Way out on the far side from his manager during that passage on Sunday, Salah's first act was to bounce away from João Cancelo, who came



sniping in to steal the ball early, perhaps already thinking about counterattack. This is an overlooked Salah strength: his strength. Dribblers have to be brave in the Premier League, ready to be bumped and hacked down. Salah is 5ft 9in. He went through last season without being booked but doesn't often lose these collisions.

The contact helped him. Salah was turned now and facing the City goal. At which point he did something wild, rolling his foot over the ball then skipping past Bernardo Silva, one of those moments of rare physical creativity that can seem so carefree in these condensed professional spaces.

There were still four blue shirts between Salah and the City goal, but he was moving now. In the stands the air had begun to crackle with the sense of something about to happen, like the static before a lightning strike.

Salah will be 30 next summer. He has two years left on his Liverpool contract, which is currently under review. He has nine goals and three assists this season. He has 135 goals and 43 assists in 212

Liverpool appearances. He has two Premier League golden boots and the best goals per game ratio of any postwar Liverpool player. He always plays and he nearly always scores.

Salah's representatives are said to be asking for wage parity with City's star midfielders. Kevin De Bruyne earns £380,000 a week, Jack Grealish £300,000. Salah, the razor edge in a title winning team, is on a mere £200,000. Liverpool's top earner, Virgil van Dijk is at £220,000.

The sums may be ludicrous in isolation. But talent has a market. And sportspeople, even mild, likable inside forwards who pant about the pitch like a thirsty spaniel, are insanely driven people.

Liverpool have a choice to make. Either confirm the authority of the business plan, the rigidity of the wage structure. Or keep Salah at the club and take the hit. Lurking over this is the spectre of wage acceleration, of the collapse of Barcelona, the question of Salah's age and presumed decline over the next few years.

But there are other kinds of logic too. Salah is, lest we forget, a phenomenon and an

outlier. More than any other on-field part, he is the basic magic dust in those six years of Klopp. This is in many ways a co-era: the age of Salah.

It is hard to think of other players who have had such an obviously transformative effect. Alex Ferguson had Eric Cantona. Yaya Touré's arrival shifted City from a hopeful project into a culture of relentless success. Salah's first season was Klopp's third at Anfield. Liverpool had improved from eight to fourth in that time. At which point: ignition.

In Salah's first year they scored 135 goals and reached the Champions League final. In his second Liverpool hoovered up 97 points and were champions of Europe. In his third they won the league. In his fourth they collapsed in mid-season. No matter. Salah still scored 31 goals. They ended up safe in third. There has been an urge in the last few days to suggest Salah has been underappreciated through all this, to inject a little tribal grievance into his brilliance. There is no need. Those who watch know how good he is.

That sense of display, of

something celebratory in his basic presence was there as Salah entered the City area, feet battering the turf, crowd already rising to its feet. Aymeric Laporte went to, "show" Salah on to his right side, angling his body that way. Salah feinted left, then took the route offered, springing off his standing foot and leaving Laporte pirouetting unhappily, like a man being spun around in his office swivel chair.

Salah had taken four City defenders out of the game in the space of five seconds, nine touches and 20 yards Anfield grass. Suddenly Ederson was the only remaining obstacle as he approached the angle of the six-yard box the ball falling into his stride as took two quick balancing steps.

What do you do with this kind of talent, with the feelings it generates? How do you quantify it?

Klopp's scouts had nagged him endlessly about Salah before Liverpool signed him. But even in those first few months at Anfield Salah's extra levels came as a surprise. That initial scoring run was treated as a bonus, something that must, naturally, come to an end. It

hasn't. It's still going on.

The shot was hit with such power it simply flew past Ederson, even at grabbable height. Salah had just surged past four players at the tail end of the game, but he still had the flex and twang and torque to hit the ball with unstoppable force on his weaker foot.

Liverpool's contract model has built into it the assumption that footballers will tail off past the age of 30, that you risk being left with a high earner in decline. Why should this rule apply to Salah?

He is in fearsomely good shape. He lives an exemplary athlete's life. Footballers generally are remaining in peak condition for longer. Salah's acceleration is a fine weapon, but his finishing, his technical levels, his shooting, his eye for space are also thrillingly high grade.

For now Salah remains so productive – home, away, league, cup, whatever – you wonder if he might create a referred problem. This Liverpool team is also defined by sweating the asset, by polishing the cracks and letting parts of the squad grow thin. For four years Salah's goals, his basic relentlessness have made these plans work, keeping the ship on course even when you've sailed close to the wind.

This is still is a team in a state of fine balance. Net transfer spend is close to zero since the splurge three years ago. But Liverpool haven't lost since Real Madrid away at the start of April. They have four trophies to play for. This well-seasoned crew can chase that glory without pressure or fear as we enter year seven of the age of Klopp. Salah remains the catalyst. If Liverpool's owners have any sense of this game, of its delicate energies, they will do everything they can to keep a player whose presence has defined not just an era of success, the lifting of a cloud, and a returning happiness; but also the wondrous returns on their own financial investment.

Hardik not bowling is a big blow for MI and also India: Gavaskar

DUBAI, OCT 5 (PTI): The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels that swashbuckling all-rounder Hardik Pandya not bowling in the ongoing IPL is a "big blow" for not just Mumbai Indians but also the T20 World Cup-bound Indian team.

The Indian selectors have named Hardik in the T20 World Cup squad, but the Baroda all-rounder has not been bowling for Mumbai Indians, two years after undergoing a back surgery in the UK.

"Hardik Pandya, not bowling is a big blow, not just for Mumbai Indians, but for India as well, because he was taken in the team as an all-rounder. And if you are in the team, batting at No.6 or No.7, and you're not able to bowl, then it makes it difficult for the captain.

"He doesn't get the flexibility and option that is so required for somebody batting at No.6 or 7 like an all-rounder," said Gavaskar.

The batting great said



the Mumbai Indians duo of Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan "have just relaxed a little bit" in the IPL after getting picked for the Indian team.

Both Suryakumar and Ishan have been horribly out of form in the UAE leg of the lucrative league.

Surya, a prolific right-handed batsman, has been able to make only 222 runs from 12 games this IPL season with an average of 18.50 and 56 as his best score.

"I think it looks to me like Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan have just relaxed a little bit after getting the India cap," Gavaskar said on Star Sports show 'Cricket Connected'.

"They might not have, but some of the shots they are playing it looks like they are trying to play these big shots just because they are India players."

Suryakumar made his international T20 de-

but against England in March earlier this year and played his first ODI against Sri Lanka at Colombo in July.

Ishan, an explosive top-order batsman and a wicketkeeper, has managed just 107 runs from the eight IPL games he has played this season.

According to former India captain Gavaskar, who has 10,122 Test runs, it is important to get the short selection right.

"Sometimes what happens is, you gotta give yourself a little bit of time, and you have got to get your shot selection right.

"I think that is where they have missed this time around, where their shot selection has not been exactly correct, and that's why they've got out cheaply," added Gavaskar while speaking about why Mumbai Indians players might be out of form.

Hockey India withdraws from 2022 Commonwealth Games due to Covid concerns

NEW DELHI, 05 OCT [PTI]: India on Tuesday pulled out of next year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games' hockey competition, citing COVID-19 concerns and UK's discriminatory quarantine rules for travellers from the country. Hockey India President Gyanandro Ningombam communicated the federation's decision to Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Narinder Batra.

Hockey India reasoned that there is only a 32-day window available between Birmingham Games (July 28-August 8) and the Hangzhou Asian Games (September 10-25) and it can't risk sending its players to the UK which has been one of the worst affected countries by the coronavirus pandemic.

"You will appreciate that the Asian games is the Continental qualification event for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and keeping the priority of the Asian Games in mind, Hockey India can not risk any members of the Indian teams contract-

ing COVID-19 during the Commonwealth Games," Ningombam wrote. The UK recently refused to recognise India's COVID-19 vaccination certificates and imposed a 10-day hard quarantine on travellers from the country even if they were fully vaccinated.

HI's move comes a day after England pulled out of the FIH Men's Junior World Cup to be held in Bhubaneswar next month, citing a number of COVID-related concerns and taking "note" of the Indian government's mandatory 10-day quarantine protocol for all UK nationals.

India imposed reciprocal curbs on all British nationals arriving in the country after UK's restrictions.

Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com Under India's new norms, all British nationals arriving here from the UK, irrespective of their vaccination status, will have to produce the result of the RT-PCR test done within 72 hours before travel.

Anxious wait for Afghan girls as opening of high schools stalled

ALI M LATIFI
KABUL, 05 OCT [ALJAZEERA]: Millions of teenage girls across Afghanistan are anxiously waiting to return to the classroom, as high schools continue to remain closed, raising fears about the future of female education under Taliban rule.

The country's new rulers allowed boys in the same age group – seven to 12 – to attend classes last month, but said that “a safe learning environment” was needed before older girls could return to school.

At that time, the Taliban's Deputy Minister of Information and Culture Zabihullah Mujahid said the group was working on a “procedure” to allow teenage girls back into the classroom.

In the Taliban's first news conference after taking over Afghanistan on August 15, Mujahid had pledged to “allow women to work and study,” as it tried to allay fears of its rule between 1996-2001 that was marked by a curb on women's rights.

The continued exclusion of girls from schools has only exacerbated fears among the Afghan people that the Taliban could be returning to their headline rule of the 1990s. Those five years had the distinction of being the only time in modern Afghan history where women and girls were legally barred from education and employment.

In the month and a half since they came to power, the Taliban has told female government workers to stay at home, announced an all-male cabinet, closed down the Ministry of Women's Affairs and faced accusations of harassment



and abuse of female protesters across the nation's cities.

Toorpekai Momand, an education advocate, said the delay, coupled with the Taliban's actions, have led adolescent girls to contend with dangerous questions, “Why do the Taliban have a problem with us? Why is it our rights that are being taken?”

Momand, who has spent 10 years working as a school administrator, is among hundreds of women in Afghanistan and abroad who are trying to ensure that the Taliban live up to their promises to allow girls and women back into schools and offices.

For many of these women, this struggle means dealing with what they see as unpopular, but necessary realities of life in a Taliban-controlled Af-

ghanistan.

Jamila Afghani, another education advocate, said that the Afghan people are left with little but to try and engage with the Taliban, especially as the international community has refused to recognise the group.

“I didn't bring them. You didn't bring them, but they're here now, so we have to keep pushing.”

But both Afghani and Momand and dozens of others have experienced first-hand the difficulty of trying to get answers out of the Taliban. When their colleagues met officials from the Taliban-run Ministry of Education, they were told that the group is working “very hard” to adhere to conservative norms in the education of teenage girls.

Momand said the Taliban

is particularly careful with its wording, “They never just come out and say ‘no,’ they keep saying ‘we're working on it,’ but we have no idea exactly what it is they're working on.”

All of the women Al Jazeera spoke to said that in the 100 years since the Afghan government established official schools for girls, those institutions have always adhered to religious principles. Primary and secondary schools were always gender-segregated and dress codes were always in place.

Momand, in particular, said she has a hard time accepting the Taliban's claims of religious reasoning for the continued wait, saying, “In a girls' school, everyone, down to the cleaning staff, are women.”

The Taliban has also made references to a review of the

curriculum, something Afghani said could further delay the education of school children.

“Redoing a curriculum takes a lot of time and a very detailed understanding of educational models,” Afghani said.

All of the sources Al Jazeera spoke to shared Afghani's scepticism of the Taliban's actual understanding of the complexities of establishing an education system for 9.5 million schoolchildren.

Last month, the group's acting minister of education, Mawlawi Noorullah Monir, caused a social media uproar when he said, “No PhD degree, Master's degree is valuable today. You see that the mul-lahs and Taliban that are in the power, have no PhD, MA or even a high school degree, but are the greatest of all.”

French clergy sexually abused ‘over 200,000 children’ since 1950

Paris, 05 Oct [alJazeera]: About 216,000 children are estimated to have been sexually abused by thousands of French Catholic priests, deacons and other clergy since 1950, an independent inquiry has found, alleging the phenomenon was covered up by a “veil of silence”.

The details made public on Tuesday are the latest to rock the Roman Catholic Church after a series of sexual abuse scandals around the world, often involving children, over the past 20 years.

Jean-Marc Sauve, head of the commission that compiled the report on the investigation, said the abuse in France was “systemic” and had been carried out by some 3,000 priests and other people involved in the church.

About 80 percent of the victims were boys.

Speaking at a public, online presentation of the report, Suave added that the Church had shown “deep, total and even cruel indifference for years”, protecting itself rather than the victims.

The Church not only failed to take necessary preventive measures, he said, but also turned a blind eye to abuse and sometimes knowingly put children in touch with predators.

“The consequences are very serious,” Sauve said. “About 60 percent of men and women who were sexually abused encounter major problems in their sentimental or sexual life.”

Victims voiced their disgust over the findings.

“You are a disgrace to our humanity,” Francois Devaux, who set up victims' association La Parole Liberee, meaning

The Liberated Word, told church representatives at the presentation. “In this hell, there have been abominable mass crimes ... but there has been even worse, betrayal of trust, betrayal of morale, betrayal of children.”

Pope Francis thanked victims for coming forward.

“First of all his thoughts go to the victims, with great sorrow, for their wounds,” a Vatican statement said. “(His thoughts go to) the Church of France, so that, in the awareness of this terrible reality ... it may embark on a path of redemption.”

The 2,500-page document prepared by the independent commission comes as the Catholic Church in France, like in other countries, faces up to shameful secrets that were long covered up.

Speaking after Sauve at the presentation, Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, the archbishop of Reims and head of the Conference of Bishops of France, asked for forgiveness. He called the report a “bombshell” and promised action.

The commission was established by Catholic bishops in France at the end of 2018 to shed light on abuse and restore public confidence in the Church at a time of dwindling congregations.

It worked independently from the Church during its two-and-a-half-year lifetime, listening to victims and witnesses and studying church, court, police and press archives starting from the 1950s.

Sauve said the commission itself had identified approximately 2,700 victims through a call for testimony, and thousands more had been found in archives.

Biden eager to get out of DC, push benefits of spending plan

WASHINGTON, OCT 5 (AP): President Joe Biden is shifting strategy to sell his ambitious social spending plans by travelling outside Washington and courting Democrats who have complained they felt left out of the process.

With his agenda in jeopardy on Capitol Hill, Biden on Tuesday will visit the Michigan district of a moderate Democratic lawmaker who has urged him to promote his proposals more aggressively to the public. Back in Washington, negotiations continue on a pair of bills to boost spending on safety net, health and environmental programs and infrastructure projects.

While there is cautious optimism about recent progress, no deal had been struck to bridge stark divides between moderates and progressives in the Democratic Party on the size and scope of the package. In recent weeks, as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi worked unsuccessfully to secure passage of the bills, Biden stayed in Washington to cajole lawmakers and work phones.

Now, he's trying to put the public focus on popular components of the bills rather than the inside-the-Beltway debate over their price tag.

The president will appear with Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin when he visits a union training center in Howell, Michigan, a reflection of the importance of securing moderates' votes. Next to Biden, the Democrats with the most on the line over the shape and success of his spending plans are House members from swing districts whose reelections are essential if his party is to retain control of Congress.

Democratic legislators have warned that Biden's bold ideas are getting lost in the party's infighting and procedural skirmishes over the legislation.

We must communicate to the country the transformative nature of the initiatives in the legislation, Pelosi said in a letter to lawmakers ahead of Biden's trip.

The visit to Slotkin's district, narrowly carried by Republican Donald Trump in 2020, is part of the sales effort.

Slotkin supports a bipartisan 1 tril-



lion infrastructure bill that has passed the Senate but prefers passing it in the House before negotiating the broader 3.5 trillion package of social programs. She has indicated that she may vote to approve the broader bill sooner if it is fiscally responsible and can make a difference for families, her aides said, but she is not a guaranteed yes which she planned to tell Biden on Tuesday.

To be honest, it was hard for me to understand why leadership decided in the first place to tie the two bills together, Slotkin recently told The Detroit News. That's not how we normally operate. It's not my preference.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that after Biden spent considerable time in recent days deep in the messy negotiations over the bills, “now it's also important to remind people, as the sausage-making has been kind of the dominant storyline for the last few weeks, what this is all about. Why he's fighting so hard for it.

Biden last week postponed a trip to Chicago, where he had planned to promote coronavirus vaccine mandates and work in a pitch for his agenda, in order to stay in Washington and lobby lawmakers. He's rescheduled that trip for Thursday, and more travel is expected in coming days.

The uptick in travel is meant to build public support for a wide range of initiatives packaged under the im-

precise slogan of Build Back Better. A series of crises, from Afghanistan to COVID-19, along with the convoluted legislative process have hampered the White House's ability to promote the massive package or even say definitively what will be in the final version.

Polling suggests that elements in the bill such as expanded child care opportunities and infrastructure projects are popular with large parts of the public. But even some of the White House's closest allies have worried that the West Wing has not done enough to sell it.

Biden, aides said, has been eager to shift the conversation away from the price tag to the benefits of the legislation. In Michigan, he planned to extol its benefits for the middle class and union workers.

Washington was gripped with the drama last week as lawmakers grappled with the massive Democrats-only social spending bill that has been linked with the infrastructure bill. Progressives have balked at paring down the size of 3.5 trillion social package and have refused to vote for the infrastructure bill if the other bill shrinks. Moderate Democrats, meanwhile, are pushing for the bipartisan infrastructure bill to get a House vote first and some are wary about the size of the far larger social spending bill.

That leaves Biden and his Democratic allies in Congress at a crossroads,

trying to move past the tangle of legislating and remind voters what they are trying to accomplish. The president held a virtual meeting with 12 progressive House members on Monday and plans a similar session with moderates later in the week.

With considerable attention focused on winning over two key Democratic senators, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, rank-and-file lawmakers could benefit from the high-profile backup that comes from Biden making the case for his vision to the public.

House members are fanning out to their home districts this week as public views of Biden's agenda are being shaped. Senators remain in Washington but are working on another tangle, the legislation needed to raise the nation's debt limit by midmonth to avert a devastating credit default.

Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and White House officials huddled late Monday in a room off the Senate floor to discuss the next steps for passing Biden's agenda.

Those behind-the-scenes talks are intense as Biden lowers the size and scope of the 3.5 trillion social spending package to win over Manchin, Sinema and a small band of conservative Democrats in the House without alienating progressives, who are fighting to keep their priorities in the bill.



Russian film crew blasts off to make 1st movie in space

A Russian actor and a film director rocketed to space Tuesday on a mission to make the world's first movie in orbit. Actor Yulia Peresild and director Klim Shipenko blasted off for the International Space Station in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft together with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov, a veteran of three space missions. Their Soyuz MS-19 lifted off as scheduled at 1:55 pm from the Russian space launch facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan and successfully reached the designated orbit.

Space officials reported that the crew was feeling fine and all spacecraft systems were functioning normally.

Peresild and Klimenko are to film segments of a new movie titled Challenge, in which a surgeon played by Peresild rushes to the space station to save a crew member who suffers a heart condition. After 12 days on the space outpost, they are set to return to Earth with another Russian cosmonaut.

Speaking at a pre-flight news conference Monday, 37-year-old Peresild acknowledged that it was challenging for her to adapt to the strict discipline and rigorous demands during the training.

It was psychologically, physically and morally hard, she said. But I think that once we achieve the goal, all that will seem not so difficult and we will re-

member it with a smile.

Shipenko, 38, who has made several commercially successful movies, also described their fast-track, four-month

tional Space Station, which is considerably less spacious compared to the U.S. segment. A new Russia lab module, the Nauka, was added in July, but it is yet to



preparation for the flight as tough. Of course, we couldn't make many things at the first try, and sometimes even at a third attempt, but it's normal, he said.

Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos, was a key force behind the project, describing it as a chance to burnish the nation's space glory and rejecting criticism from some Russian media.

Some commentators argued that the film project would distract the Russian crew and could be awkward to film on the Russian segment of the Interna-

be fully integrated into the station.

Once they arrive at the space station just over three hours after the launch, the three newcomers will join Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency, NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei, Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur, Roscosmos cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov and Aki Hoshide of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

Novitskiy, who is set to star as the ailing cosmonaut in the film, will take the captain's seat in a Soyuz capsule to take the crew back to Earth on Oct. 17.

Keira Knightley to lead 20th Century Studios drama 'Boston Strangler'

Actor Keira Knightley is set to headline the upcoming drama movie "Boston Strangler" for 20th Century Studios.

Matt Ruskin of "Crown Heights" fame will write and direct the feature film, which will be produced by veteran filmmaker Ridley Scott along with Kevin Walsh through their Scott Free banner, reported Deadline.

The film is inspired by the infamous Boston Strangler murders that happened between June 1962 and January 1964. 13 women were murdered during that period by a serial killer.

The film will follow the true story of Loretta McLaughlin (Knightley), the first reporter to connect the murders and break the story of the Strangler.

She and fellow reporter Jean Cole challenged the sexism of the early 1960s

to report on the city's most notorious serial killer and worked tirelessly to keep women informed.

Loretta pursued the story at great personal risk and uncovered corruption that cast doubt on the true identity of the Boston Strangler.

"Boston Strangler" will also be produced by Tom Ackerley and Josey McNamara of LuckyChap Entertainment. The film will start production in December.

Knightley is best known for her performances in movies such as "Pride and Prejudice", "Pirate of the Caribbean" series, "Atonement", "Anna Karenina" and "The Imitation Game".

The English star will next be seen in the comedy film "Silent Night" and the animated film "Charlotte", in which she voices the main character.

Damian Lewis exits Showtime series 'Billions'

Emmy winner Damian Lewis will no longer play Bobby Axelrod, aka Axe, on the Showtime series "Billions".

The actor has exited the Wall Street drama, which comes from Brian Koppelman and David Levien, after featuring in five seasons.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the season five finale of "Billions" aired on Sunday night.

The show revolves around Wall Street maverick Bobby Axelrod (Lewis) and US Attorney Chuck Rhoades, played by Paul Giamatti, involved in a cat and mouse game.

Lewis bid adieu to the "Billions" cast and crew in a tweet he shared on Monday morning.

"Thank you @SHO_Billions thank you @briankoppelman @DavidLevien. A pleasure and a privilege to play Axe for 5 seasons with some of the smartest, funniest most talented cast and crew I've worked with. I'll miss the Billions family.

Yep, some jobs are more than just a job. Love," the actor wrote on Twitter.

Actors Giamatti, Corey Stoll and Maggie Siff will return for the sixth season, which will premiere on January 23.

Daniel Breaker, who stars as Scooter, the chief of staff to Michael Prince (Stoll), has been upped to series regular. The network said that the upcoming season will find Axe gone and Prince assuming his place.

Meanwhile, Chuck (Giamatti) must develop a new strategy that is keener and more sophisticated than before. All the players -- Wags (David Costabile), Wendy (Siff), Taylor (Asia Kate Dillon), Sacker (Condola Rashad) and Senior (Jeffrey DeMunn) -- must "sharpen their weapons and look for new alliances in order to survive".

Stoll joined the show as a guest star in season five as a new threat to Axe. Stoll, also known for "House of Cards", was last year promoted to series regular for season six.



BROWN AND MONOCHROMATIC! Actress Paris Jackson hangs in Paris during fashion week in a cute soft jacket and zippers on her pant legs.

Britney Spears thanks #FreeBritney movement after father's removal from conservatorship



Pop star Britney Spears on Tuesday thanked her fans and supporters for helping to remove her father Jamie Spears from her 13-year conservatorship with their #FreeBritney movement. In her first direct to address to her fans, post the suspension of her father as the conservator of her estate, Britney said the "constant resilience" of her supporters played an important role in helping her get back her freedom.

"#FreeBritney movement I have no words because of you guys and your constant resilience in freeing me from my conservatorship my life is now in that direction! I cried

last night for two hours cause my fans are the best and I know it. I feel your hearts and you feel mine that much I know is true," the singer posted on Instagram.

Jamie Spears was removed from the conservatorship by a California judge on September 29. A hearing has been set for November 12 to determine if the conservatorship will be terminated entirely.

The conservatorship was established in 2008 when Britney began to have public mental struggles as hordes of paparazzi aggressively followed her everywhere and she lost custody of her children.

Aries:

The thing about retrogrades is that they can bring up unresolved issues from the past. Pay attention to what's coming resurfacing in order to be healed, Aries. Now is not the time to shy away from having 'the talk'. Yes, the truth will ruffle a few feathers. It will shift the dynamics in your closest relationships too. Remember, it's better to put everything on the table than to suppress your emotions, which will only add to the pain.

Tip: Have 'the talk'.

Taurus:

Uh-oh! We sense trouble in paradise, Taurus. For some of you, the scene of crime could be your place of work. It will be easy for you to go into a non-confrontational space for the sake of maintaining harmony. However, this will only add to the chaos. So, don't be afraid to play the role of the space-holder. To start a dialogue about what's going wrong here and how you can work towards positive change as a collective.

Tip: Start a dialogue about what needs to be fixed here.

Gemini:

Not all love stories lead to a happily-ever-after. Some come into our lives for a reason, and others for a season. Today, without getting too attached to the outcome of what you are creating, bask in the romance that you're being offered at this moment. Let the butterflies at the pit

of your stomach remind you of the magic that is being weaved all around you. Something tells us this is going to be a weekend to remember, Gemini.

Tip: Let the butterflies at the pit of your stomach remind you of the magic that is being weaving all around you.

Cancer:

This is a tricky time in the Cancer HQ. Retrograde season is bringing all kinds of unresolved trauma to the fore. Repressed emotions that you haven't had the chance to look at for a while now. Instead of denying yourself the healing process, lean into it. Sign up for therapy. Get the support you need at this moment. You will get through this as a stronger and more resilient person. Trust that and dedicate yourself to the inner work, beautiful.

Tip: You're being to look closely at all that is unhealed within.

Leo:

There are times we have to do-do-do and dedicate ourselves to the hustle, but now is "not" such a time in your life. You are at a point where you're being asked to hit the pause button and refuel your reserves in preparation for the next chapter of your life. So, don't underestimate the importance of filling your own cup, Leo. Remember to put your big expenses on hold while you're at it. Creating a reserve will serve you well in the future, beautiful.

Tip: Energy conservation mode on!

Virgo:

It's easy to live somebody else's dream, Virgo. There's not much to lose when you trip and fall. Following your true passion, on the other hand, can be a risky choice, because you will have to pour "all" of you into it. But you wouldn't know any other way, would you now? So tap into your inner warrior and take that first step towards re-alignment. You are being propelled in the direction of your higher purpose. Don't shy away from serving in the way that you are being called to serve, beautiful.

Tip: Realign with your path and purpose.

Libra:

The past few months have been a rollercoaster ride, Libra, but not because the Universe was punishing you but because it was preparing you. This is the ultimate metamorphosis. A time of breaking the old cycles and coming into your own. Remember who you are, beautiful. Remember your power and why you chose to experience life here on earth. The more you come into a space of alignment within yourself, the better you will be able to serve the world.

Tip: This is the ultimate metamorphosis, beautiful!

Scorpio:

There comes a point in everybody's life when they can continue to live a mundane existence or follow their true path. Three words, Scorpio: Answer the call. Embody courage. Get ready to dance the dance of life. The butterflies in your

stomach are reminding you that some risks are worth taking. Some of you may feel like you have to let go of all things familiar in order to step into the change, and that's okay too. Letting go is a part of the process, one that will ultimately liberate you from the old cycles.

Tip: Get ready to dance the dance of life.

Sagittarius:

To quote a famous internet meme 'If it doesn't bring you income, inspiration or orgasms, it doesn't belong in your life'. Take charge of your vibe, Sagittarius. Be mindful of who and what you are letting into your sacred space. Enforcing certain boundaries will provide you with the protection you need at this point. As such, confrontation is also coming up as a big theme. Have the talk that you have been avoiding. Get it out of the way. Don't let the fear that you may be perceived differently by those you love keep you from standing up for what you believe.

Tip: Take charge of your vibe.

Capricorn:

What's unfolding right now is the dance of Destiny, Capricorn. Great change has been stirred up. Change that will bring forth many, many blessings. So, open your arms and stay in the energy of receiving. Know that you deserve that many miracles that you are now attracting. For some of you, this may be a time of nurturing your romantic relationship and taking it to the next level. Yes, you will

have the support of your families too, despite how things may have been in the past. So, make yourself vulnerable and ask them to hold space for you in the way that you want them to, beautiful.

Tip: Your tribe is here to support you.

Aquarius:

The trouble is, we've grown up in a Society that has convinced us that we need to do everything on our own and that asking for help is a sign of weakness. Have you been living your life under this illusion too? It's time to shake things up a little. To recognise how you are a part of a Divine Matrix. Call upon your fellow warriors for the support you need at this moment as you show up for them in the manner that you feel called to. We're all in this together, Aquarius, and we'll get through it as one!

Tip: Call upon your tribe to assist you!

Pisces:

Uh-oh! What you're dealing with right now is a case of wonky signals. It's time to admit that you cannot think straight. Instead of fighting this feeling, lean into it. Learning not to resist the flow will prove to be a big gamechanger for you, Pisces. When it comes to decision-making, you're being asked to hit the pause button. It's best to choose the direction you need to move into once clarity prevails.

Tip: Lean into the discomfort, beautiful.