



**DAYTIME EMMYS SALUTE
LATE TV ICONS ALEX
TREBEK, LARRY KING**
PG.08

**FIND THE RIGHT ALLIES TO BAT-
TLE ADDICTION**
pg 04

**GIGI HADID REVEALS THE
FAMILY BEAUTY SECRET
SHE'LL PASS DOWN TO
DAUGHTER KHAI**
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 06 | Issue 161 | Gangtok | Sunday | 27 June 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | RS. 5

Need drug policy reforms, SDUF to Govt

**SUMMIT REPORT
Gangtok, 26 Jun:**

Sikkim Drug Users' Forum [SDUF] has urged the State Government to consider drug policy reforms based on the principles of human rights, evidence, and science to protect the lives of drug-users and to ensure that the therapeutic needs of the drug users' community are met with dignity and respect.

The organization has asserted that the harm caused by draconian colonial era drug laws can no longer be ignored and it is time for scientific, evidence-informed and human rights-based drug laws.

An SDUF press release states that criminalization of drug users for use and possession for personal use has been there for close to

4 decades at the federal level in India and for about 15 years in the state of Sikkim. Thus far, this has done more harm than good as the probation and criminalization has resulted in overdose or unnatural deaths, health crisis, arrest, marginalization, social and economic exclusion and most importantly this has contributed significantly in breaking families apart and limiting access to any kind of support, the release states.

"SDUF wishes to draw the attention on these aspects of the drug laws that are unjust, unfair and deprives our community members of basic human rights enshrined in our constitution," the release mentions.

While COVID-19 has changed the definition of "marginalization", what it



hasn't changed yet is the consequences of stigma

and criminal sanctions very few "marginalized"

community groups face. "It is therefore not a

matter of surprise that the lives of people who use drugs may be most difficult in terms of them being able to access even basic health services, legal and social support or even to be able to exist with dignity in their homes, communities or even prisons where they land up for possessing small amounts for personal use. It shouldn't be hard to guess why they remain most at risk of HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and most recently COVID-19," the release further states.

The baseless narratives of drugs being bad, evil and punitive crackdowns on drug users has made the lives of drug users further more challenging to function in society like a human being, the release adds.

Sikkim's Covid toll crosses 300 mark

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 26 JUN:**

Sikkim's COVID death toll crossed the 300-mark with confirmation arriving this morning of two more Covid patients succumbing to the virus. With this, Sikkim has lost 301 lives to Covid thus far, 165 of these deaths recorded in the past 64 days that the second wave has been here since 22 April, 2021.

While one COVID death was reported from STNM Hospital, the other was at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong, in the past 24 hours.

Although it is of little solace given the brutality with which Covid has coursed through Sikkim in the past two months, the State continues to record more recoveries than new cases.

As per the Daily Report of Covid-19 released by the Integrated Diseases Surveillance Programme of the Health Department this morning, against the 130 new cases reported in the State in the last 24 hours, there have been 213 recoveries. Thus far, Sikkim

has recorded 19,941 confirmed cases of Covid in the State, 64% of these, 12,782, in the past 64 days.

In all, 17,218 of the Covid patients have already recovered while 2,079 of the 2,170 active cases are in home or facility isolation and well on their way to recovery. Currently, there are only 91 Covid patients, 13 of them admitted today, with symptoms severe enough to require hospitalisation and 11 of them are in ICU.

Meanwhile, the 130 new cases were reported from the testing of 1,398 samples on Friday giving Sikkim a daily positivity rate of 09.2%

While 75 positive cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 1,042 samples, 54 were picked up in RT-PCR testing of 352 samples and one more person was found positive in TruNat testing of four samples.

Of the 130 new cases, 62 were registered in East District, 30 in West District, 22 in South District and 16 in North District.

CM chairs meeting with Health Department

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 JUN:**

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang chaired a meeting with the Health Department at Samman Bhawan in the presence of Minister for Health, Dr MK Sharma, ACS Health, DG-cum-Secretary Health, and other senior officials, a press release from the Chief Minister's Office informs.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister inquired about the ground report of the construction and renovation of infrastructures under the department and other matters related to the health sector.

As per the release, the meeting discussed topics like Medical Equipment, Covid dedicated hospital and oth-



ers, CHCs, repair and up gradation of various PHCs and PHSCs, the initiation of Mobile Village Clinic, new construction, renovation/repairing of Hospital buildings, manpower

management, conveyance to the deserving incumbents, management of salary for the new appointees, up-gradation of approach roads, the status of vaccination in the state and procurement of ambulances.

Officials of the Health Department updated the meeting regarding the commencement of the second dose of vaccination for 45 years and above in separate facilities.

Similarly, they informed about an inventory of machines and equipment and the status of works under the department. Proposed plans for establishing a Viral Lab and Dialysis centre at Jorethang and Oxygen filling plant at Rangpo were also thoroughly discussed.

Lockdown eased some more, inter-district movement allowed

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 JUN:**

The State Government today eased the lockdown some more and a Home Department order announces that inter-district movement of people and vehicles are now allowed [on odd-even basis for vehicles]. Restaurants have also

been allowed to now remain open till 10PM subject to 50% capacity. Accordingly, the night curfew will now begin at 10:30PM and remain in place till 6AM. Rest of the lockdown provisions like odd-even regulation for vehicular movement and limitations on office attendance etc will continue.

**CALL Summit TIMES@
9832556698
9832369520**

CM underlines need for database of oral history



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 JUN:**

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang chaired a meeting with the Culture Department at Samman Bhawan today, a press communique from his office informs.

The meeting, which was also attended by Minister Samdup Lepcha and other senior officials, discussed construction projects, renovation/repairing works, manpower

er management, historical monuments, religious monuments, traditional houses etc.

The Chief Minister directed the Department to focus on reviving old traditional practices which, he said, will also help boost the tourism sector, the release adds.

He emphasized the need to have a database of oral history for future generations and adopting traditional aspects at

different levels. He also addressed the topic of grants-in-aid to associations for various programmes.

The officials updated the Chief Minister regarding ongoing works and construction activities.

The Chief Minister also sought details regarding the various projects which were included in the recent budgetary plan.

Similarly, the Chief Minister also held a meeting with the Irrigation & Water Resource Department in the presence of Minister Bhim Hang Limboo and senior officials wherein they discussed irrigation channels, flood management programme, stone water drainage system, Jhora tending work, restoration works, and restoration of the defunct channel.

The department also put forth a demand for extra manpower, it is informed.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to properly scrutinise and only sanction genuine works and assured to look into matters related to damages caused by incessant rain. They also discussed several grievances of the department and the Chief Minister assured to look into them.

Scouting of locations for offices begins in Soreng district

SORENG, 26 JUN (IPR):

With the announcement of Soreng as a new district in Sikkim, the Government has already commenced the initiation of assessing various offices and Government establishments in and around Soreng on a temporary basis.

The Press Advisor to CM, C.P. Sharma, while interacting with the IPR Department today shared the tentative locations in Soreng and vicinity to house various offices of the proposed district.

He said that it was a long pending demand and aspiration of the people of Soreng, Daramdin, Sombaria, Ribdi and



other remote areas to have a district in Soreng. "The Chief Minister himself being a native of the place is well aware of all the hardships & difficulties the people have had to face just to reach Gyalshing for any official work," he added.

He further said that the new district will also give an uplift to local employment and local businesses, wherein entrepreneurs will have more opportunities to start on their own.

"The people here are ecstatic and have

warmly welcomed the Government's decision. They firmly believe that it will bring them financial stability and more empowerment. This will also help in getting better health facilities along with proper connectivity," said the Advisor.

CM releases Homestay Operators' Manual

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 JUN:**

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang chaired a meeting with the Tourism Department at Samman Bhawan today in the presence of Minister, B.S. Panth, ACS Tourism, PCE cum Secretary Tourism and other senior officials. As per a press release from the Tourism Department, the officials updated the CM about the status of the projects under the department and various upcoming projects. The Chief Minister directed the department to focus on the matters like recommencement of tourism in the state, Visit Sikkim 2022 and Mega Homestay projects.

The Chief Minister joined the Minister and officials from the De-

partment to release "The Homestay Operator's Manual, Sikkim-experiencing Homestay Hospitality in Sikkim".

The Government of Sikkim has taken proactive measures for promoting rural tourism with major emphasis on homestays as a means of not only generating revenue for the rural people but also as a tool of preserving the rich culture and tradition of its people. The launch of this book is expected to add one more milestone towards promotion of rural destinations.

The manual is aimed at promoting rural tourism and to enable the tourists and travellers to explore rural destinations and experience rural lifestyles. Homestay

offers a great platform to the rural masses for earning their livelihood as well as for showcasing their fairs, festivals, cuisines, traditional customs, folklores etc.

The manual is prepared with an objective of providing the basic guidelines and principles for management and operation of a homestay. It focuses on the roles and importance of homestay, maintenance of records, cuisines, involvement of local communities, interaction with guests and complaint handling. Further, emphasis has been laid on developing and promoting DIY Culture (Do It Yourself) apart from setting the code of conduct for both the host and the guest.

Homestay operators/owners are expected to benefit by adopting the steps and measures suggested in the manual and this in turn is bound to bring about not only improvement in quality service but also in standardization of services provided by them. This would act as a great guide for the tourist, stakeholders and Department at large in shaping the future policies and programmes related to rural tourism, the release mentions.

In the end, the Chief Minister also discussed the Mega Homestay project being initiated by the State Government for providing assistance for development of homestay in a clustered manner.

Ashamed that Maneka Gandhi MP from my party, says BJP MLA

BHOPAL, 26 JUN [NDTV]:

Caught in a storm over an abusive call she allegedly made to a veterinarian in Uttar Pradesh's Agra this week, BJP MP Maneka Gandhi has now come under attack from a leader of her own party. Former Madhya Pradesh minister and BJP legislator Ajay Vishnoi on Saturday said he was "ashamed" that Ms Gandhi was an MP from his party.

"The words used by BJP MP Maneka Gandhi to talk to veterinary doctor Vikas Sharma don't prove that Veterinary College Jabalpur is bad but instead prove how poor a woman she is. I am ashamed she is a party MP (not a leader)," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Mr Vishnoi's remark came after veterinary doctors and students from the Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur held a protest against Ms Gandhi.

The Indian Veterinary Association also

condemned the language allegedly used by the former union minister against the Agra veterinarian.

A purported audio clip of a telephonic conversation between Ms Gandhi and the veterinary doctor had gone viral on social media this week where the female voice can be heard abusing and threatening the doctor, blaming him for an alleged botched surgery on a dog.

Ms Gandhi is also purportedly heard asking vet NL Gupta to return the money he has taken from a client after performing the surgery and threatening to have his license cancelled.

The former Union Minister has not commented on the controversy yet.

The voice in the audio clip could not be independently confirmed but the vet alleged that he got a call from the Sitapur MP.

During the course of the purported con-



versation, Ms Gandhi is allegedly heard using expletives in Hindi against the doctor who addresses her as "ma'am".

"I got a call from Member of Parliament Maneka Gandhi on June 21 regarding the surgery of the dog. I was shocked when she asked me to pay a compensation of ₹ 70,000 to the owner of the dog or else she would get my license cancelled," Dr Gupta told PTI.

"Besides, she insulted my profession, my father and my eligibility and used abusive language," he alleged.

Dr Gupta said he had informed the dog owner about the post-operative care, but the animal was not looked after properly.

"Due to mismanagement in post-operative care by the owner and improper antibodies treatment, the stitches came undone," he said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary granted extension



AMARAVATI, JUNE 26

(PTI): The Central government on Saturday granted a three-month extension in service to Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das. The 1987 batch IAS officer is due for retirement on June 30 on attaining the age of superannuation.

The State government, however, wrote to the Centre last month requesting that Das services be extended by

three months from July 1 in view of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

The Department of Personnel and Training issued an order today accepting the request and granting the extension to Das.

Accordingly, the Chief Secretary would continue in office till September 30.

Official sources said the State government is seeking to bring back 1985 batch IAS officer Reddy Subrahmanyam to

the State cadre from Central deputation.

Subrahmanyam is now the Secretary in the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Indications are that Subrahmanyam would be made the Chief Secretary to succeed Das.

The Jagan government overlooked Subrahmanyam in December last year while appointing Das, an officer two years junior, as the State Chief Secretary.

DDA to hold webinars on Delhi's draft master plan

NEW DELHI, JUN 26 (PTI): A series of thematic webinars have been lined for July by DDA to seek people's opinion on the Master Plan 2041 draft, officials said on Saturday.

This will facilitate citizens to understand the draft plan better and give more constructive suggestions, a senior official said.

Greener environment with protection norms, vibrant economy, enhanced mobility, promoting cleaner fuels and rejuvenation of heritage fabric of the city are among the key areas encompassed in this vision document prepared by the Delhi Development Authority.

The draft Master

Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2041 was made available early June on the website of the Delhi Development Authority and public suggestions and objections have been invited.

The webinars are open to all citizens and stakeholders with their links available on the DDA website, the official said, adding the sessions are divided into various thematic segments as per the chapters in the draft MPD 2041.

On July 1, six chapters will be covered introduction and vision (chapter 1); environment (2,3); economy (4); and culture, heritage and public spaces (5, 6), the official said.

On July 6, shelter and social infrastruc-

ture (7, 8), transport and mobility (chapters 9 to 12) will be covered. Two more webinars will be held on July 13 and July 20, one on each day.

Suggestions and objections can also be submitted by July 23, the DDA said.

The MPD 2041 is a strategic and enabling framework to guide future growth of the city, built upon the lessons learnt from the implementation of the previous plans," according

to the draft.

Its preparation started in 2017, and remained on track in spite of the lockdown and other restrictions on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

The first MPD was promulgated in 1962 under the Delhi Development Act of 1957, followed by the master plans of 2001 and 2021, each of which is an extensive modification of the respective previous plan document.

BEFORE THE OATH COMMISSIONER, AT GANGTOK, EAST SIKKIM AFFIDAVIT

WHEREAS, IDenjom Lepcha, son of Shri Deni Lepcha, aged about 37 years, by faith Christian, by occupation Army, resident of Dhajia Busty, P.O. Nagri Spur, District Darjeeling, West Bengal 724215, do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and declare as follows:-

1. The Bina Rai Lepcha is my legally wedded wife.
2. That actual and correct name of my wife is Bina Rai Lepcha and same is recorded in all his relevant documents, including her Voter's Identity Card bearing MDM2479103, Aadhar Card bearing no 830108119726 and Pan Card bearing no AWF-PL4145E.
3. The inadvertently in my Service Record of Indian Army bearing Army No. 9424256-H, Rank - NK, name of my wife has been reflected as Bina Lepcha.
4. That this affidavit is sworn on oath to declare that persons known by the names of Bina Rai Lepcha & Bina Lepcha are one and single identical person i.e. my wife.

Sd/-
Deponent.

KUTSE SHEGU



With deep sorrow we would like to inform that Kutse Shegu of Late Tenzing Bhutia who left his Heavenly abode on 15th May 2021 falls on 02nd July 2021 [Friday]. All relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering Prayers for the departed Soul at Deorali, Hotel Chowtara besides But-

terfly Fly Over.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude towards all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement and to thank you all for your kind support and concern.

**Passong Gensapa 8918153622
Kuentse Gensapa 7679217911
Ranjana Chakraborty 9641927953**

India, China agree to maintain dialogue to resolve LAC standoff in Eastern Ladakh

NEW DELHI, 26 JUN [PTI]: India and China on Friday agreed to hold the next round of military talks at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement in remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh amid fresh sparring between the two sides on the prolonged LAC standoff.

At a virtual meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs, the two sides had a "frank exchange" of views and decided to maintain dialogue to reach a mutually acceptable solution for withdrawal of troops in all friction points to enable progress in the overall ties, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

In a statement at the end of the talks, the MEA said both sides agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

The talks took place in the backdrop of a fresh round of sparring between the two sides over the standoff as well as

deadlock in further movement in the disengagement process after the withdrawal of troops by both sides from the north and south banks of Pangong Lake in February.

"Both sides agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh keeping in view the agreement reached between the two foreign ministers in September 2020," the MEA statement said.

"In this regard, the two sides agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through the diplomatic and military mechanisms to reach a mutually acceptable solution for complete disengagement from all friction points so as to ensure full restoration of peace and tranquillity to enable progress in the bilateral relations," it added.

The MEA said both sides also agreed that in the interim, the two sides will continue to ensure stability on the ground and prevent any untoward incident.

"The two sides agreed to hold the next round of the se-

nior commanders meeting at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement from all the friction points along the LAC in the western sector in accordance with the existing bilateral agreements and protocols," it said. India refers to the eastern Ladakh region as the western sector. The previous round of military talks (11th round) was held on April 9.

"The two sides had a frank exchange of views on the situation along the LAC in the western sector of the India-China border areas," the MEA said.

A war of words broke out between India and China on the border standoff this week.

India on Thursday blamed China for the standoff saying its amassing of a large number of troops close to the border and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC last year were responsible for seriously disturbing peace and tranquillity in the region.

India's response came after China said its military deployment in the region is a normal defence arrangement aimed at

"preventing and responding" to alleged "encroachment and threat" on Chinese territory by India.

The WMCC meet was co-chaired by MEA's additional secretary (East Asia) Naveen Srivastava and the director-general of the boundary and oceanic department of China's foreign ministry.

India and China had reached a five-point agreement to resolve the border standoff during talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a meeting in Moscow on September 10 on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conclave.

The pact included measures like quick disengagement of troops, avoiding action that could escalate tensions, adherence to all agreements and protocols on border management, and steps to restore peace along the LAC.

India and China were locked in a military standoff at multiple friction points in eastern Ladakh since early May last year. How-

ever, the two sides completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February following a series of military and diplomatic talks.

The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points.

India has been particularly pressing for the disengagement of troops in Hot Springs, Gogra, and Depsang.

According to military officials, each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the LAC in the sensitive high altitude sector.

There was no visible forward movement in disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points as the Chinese side did not show flexibility in their approach to this issue at the 11th round of military talks.

Last month, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane said there can be no de-escalation without complete disengagement at all friction points in eastern Ladakh and that the Indian Army is prepared for all contingencies in the region.

SAATHI observes Int'l Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking

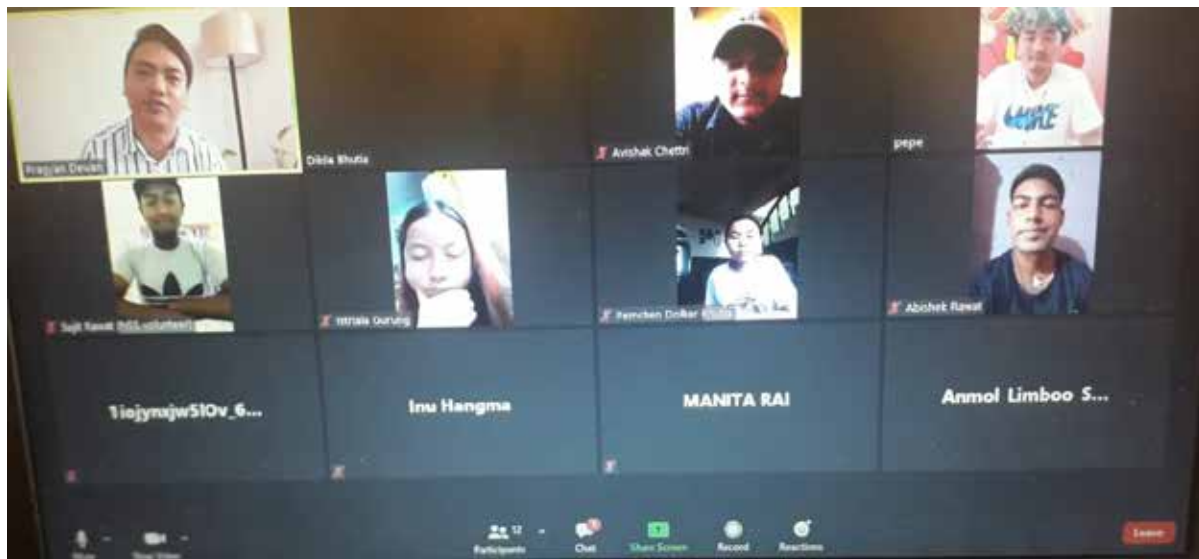
SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUN:

Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India [SAATHI] observed International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 Jun, 2021. The theme of this year is "Share facts on drug, save lives".

As per a press release, SAATHI had organized an interactive session with peer educators through online platform wherein, Counselling Psychologist of La Martiniere School (Kolkata), Prgyan Dewan was the resource person.

The session aimed to discuss various issues on substance abuse especially related to our



children and how we can educate and empower children and youth, so that we can prevent our children and eliminate drug abuse from our society.

Further, SAATHI had also donated face-masks, sanitizers and gloves to Gangtok Municipal Corporation which was handed over to Mayor, Gang-

tok and also to Primary Health Centres of 32 No. and Pakyong, East Sikkim. SAATHI had also organized Mobile Photography competition among school students.

More than five hundred students had participated, wherein top three students will be awarded with cash prize and certificates, the release mentions.

Assam Government Employees' body criticises No Vaccine, No Salary plan

GUWAHATI, 26 JUN [PTI]:

The Assam government has stressed that efforts are being made to ensure that state government employees at the front-line of the fight against Covid get vaccinated and added that those who do not take the shots may face salary cuts.

The state government had on Wednesday asked all its departments to find out the status of Covid vaccination of frontline employees before their salaries are disbursed.

The move had hinted that payments may be held back for those who have taken the jabs yet.

State Health Minister Keshab Mahanta today said deputy commissioners have been asked to make special efforts to vaccinate frontline workers who have not taken the shots yet. He added that refusal to get vaccinated may lead to action such as pay cuts or withholding of salaries.

The state government has also ordered district authorities to withhold



monthly remunerations of Anganwadi workers if they don't get vaccinated.

The move has been strongly criticised by the Sadou Assam Karmachari Parishad, an organisation of state government employees in Assam which has about 4 lakh members.

"We oppose the government's move of

no vaccination, no salary because there are many workers who have heart-related diseases and they have not taken the vaccination. This is injustice to the government employees who are suffering from chronic disease," the organisation said in a statement.

"I believe there is no use connecting vaccina-

tion with salary. Vaccination is a clear-cut approach of the government. We are encouraging each and every employee. Frontline employees need to be vaccinated; police, health department, secretariat sanitation, etc. I think maximum numbers of employees are already

vaccinated. Everyone should be encouraged for vaccination," Parth Hazarika, joint secretary of the organisation, told NDTV.

"This should not have been connected to the salary. Employees want to get vaccinated. But salary and vaccination are two different subjects," he added.

PM holds Covid review, calls for NGOs' help in vaccine outreach

NEW DELHI, 26 JUN

[NDTV]: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting on Saturday to review the situation with the coronavirus pandemic in the country, expressing satisfaction at the rate of vaccination but calling for the outreach to be widened with the help of NGOs, his office said.

"Officials gave a detailed presentation to the PM on the progress of vaccination in the country. PM was briefed about the age-wise vaccination coverage. PM was also briefed about the vaccine coverage among health-care workers, frontline workers and general population in various

states," a statement from his office said.

"Officials apprised the PM about the vaccine supply in the upcoming months and efforts being made to increase production," it said.

The meeting came amid growing concerns about the Delta Plus variant of the coronavirus and an impending third wave, weeks after the second wave of COVID-19 left thousands of dead and unleashed unprecedented suffering.

New variants are a concern in India, where more than half the population is still not vaccinated. Only about 5.6

per cent of India's adult population of 95 crore has received two doses.

The country has reported around 50 cases of Delta Plus, and studies are ongoing to test the effectiveness of existing vaccines against the variant.

"PM was informed that 3.77 crore doses have been administered in the last six days which is more than the entire population of countries like Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Canada," the statement from his office said.

Even though as a percentage of the population, the vaccine coverage remains low, the PM's office pointed out

that so far, 128 districts in the country have vaccinated more than 50 per cent of the 45+ population and 16 districts have vaccinated more than 90 per cent of the 45+ population.

"PM expressed satisfaction at the rising speed of vaccinations in this week and stressed that it is important to carry this momentum forward," the statement said.

"Officers briefed the PM that they are in touch with state governments to explore and implement innovative methods to reach people for vaccination," it said.

"PM spoke about the need to involve NGOs and other organisations in

such efforts," it added.

The Prime Minister asked officers to work with the states to ensure that the pace of testing does not go down, saying that testing remains a very important weapon to track and contain rising infections in any region.

Officers also briefed the PM about the rising interest in the CoWIN platform - the tech backbone of India's vaccination drive - globally.

"The PM said that efforts should be made to help all countries, who have expressed interest, with India's rich tech expertise in the form of CoWIN platform," the statement said.

3rd Covid wave unlikely to mirror devastating 2nd Wave: ICMR

NEW DELHI, 26 JUN

[NDTV]: A potential third wave of Covid infections seems unlikely to be as severe as the second wave, says a modelling study by a team of scientists from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Imperial College London, UK. Rapid scale-up of vaccination efforts, says the study, could play an

important role in mitigating the present and future waves of the disease.

India's first wave of SARS-CoV-2 infection began in late January 2020 with a peak attained in mid-September. This phase was relatively mild compared to the second wave that followed, from mid-February 2021 onwards, exhibiting a more

explosive spread across the country.

A major factor driving this second wave is the emergence of more-infectious variants of SARS-CoV-2, principally B.1.1.7 (Alpha variant) and B.1.617.2 (Delta variant), of which the latter has played a dominant role in recent months.

Third waves have emerged in other coun-

tries - like the UK and the USA - and are driven by a range of factors, says the study.

The results suggest that a third wave, if it should occur, is unlikely to be as severe as the second wave, given the extent of spread that has already taken place in India, it adds.

"Consequently, for a virus to cause a major

third wave in the face of this pre-existing immunity, extreme scenarios for the abrogation of that immunity are required, or for that matter, for the transmission fitness of any novel virus," says the article in the Indian Journal of Medical Research.

AIIMS chief Dr Randeep Guleria said the same thing to NDTV on Saturday.

Police arrest two in possession of drugs

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUN:

Police have arrested two persons for being in possession of contraband substances today in Gangtok. According to police, at around 2 pm today information was received that one person named Yesar Arfat was roaming around Arithang and suspected

to have contraband substances.

He was intercepted near Rai cottage, Arithang and on search around 230 capsules of Spasmodon and 20 tablets of Nitrosun 10 were found in his possession.

Further, he disclosed that the contraband substances were

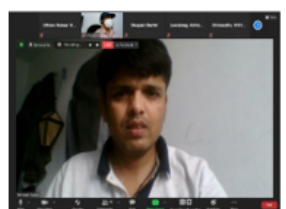
bought from one person who stays at a hotel in MG Marg. On search of the hotel, one person name Durga Gupta @ Golu was found concealing contraband substances in which total 7700 Spasmodon capsules and 2600 Nitrosun tablets were found and seized in the presence of witnesses.

SMU hosts webinar to mark In'tl Day Against Drug Abuse

Photos of National Webinar on The Role of Youth for Sharing Facts on Drugs & Saving Lives on the occasion of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



Chief Guest: Mr. Veerendra Mishra, IAS, Director, National Institute of Social Defence, Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India



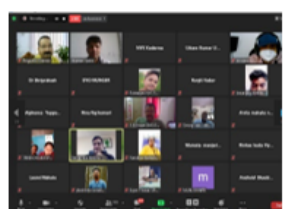
Moderator: Mr Hemant K. Yadav, National Youth Awardee and PhD Scholar, Sikkim University



Special Guest: Mr Nabin Kumar Naik, Regional Director, NYKS Eastern Region, Govt. of India



Special Guest: Dr Shripriakash, Assistant Director, Regional Ayurvedic Research Institute, Gangtok, Sikkim



Participants of National Webinar



Mr. Namgyal Sherpa, Programme & Nodel Officer of South District for the COVID 19

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUN:

The NSS cell of Sikkim Manipal University organised a National Webinar today on the "Role of Youths for Sharing Facts on Drugs and Saving Lives" to mark International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The webinar was a joint collaboration with the NYKS Eastern Region, an official press release informs.

Director, National Institute of Social Defence, Veerendra Mishra, joined the webinar as chief guest accompanied by Nabin Kumar Naik, Regional Director, NYKS Eastern Region,

as special guest.

Dr Shripriakash, Assistant Director, Regional Ayurvedic Research Institute, Gangtok, was the keynote speaker.

120 participants from across the country took part in the webinar which was moderated by Hemant K. Yadav, a national youth awardee.

Kolkata "fake" vaccine drive accused may be charged with attempt to murder

KOLKATA, 26 JUN

[NDTV]: The alleged vaccine fraudster in Kolkata who held at least three vaccination camps may now be charged with attempt to murder. The Kolkata Police will appeal to court today to add Section 307 to the list of charges.

The police say that instead of the Covid vaccine, Debanjan Deb gave people shots of the anti-biotic Amikacin without checking if they were allergic to any particular antibiotic, which could have turned fatal for them.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself is believed to have instructed the commissioner of Kolkata police to add the attempt to murder case.

She has also reportedly told him that no one associated with the fraud should be spared.

The BJP has accused the Trinamool of being involved in the scam.

Dilip Ghosh, BJP state chief, said, "The Trinamool has now started a vaccine syndicate. Who knows where else such fraud is going on. Similar frauds could be happening in other parts of the state as well."

Mr Ghosh's comments came after his party demanded a CBI probe into the fraud. "The fraud couldn't have happened without the involvement of Trinamool leaders," party leader Sayantan Bose said.

He also threatened a protest march to the police headquarters in Lalbazar with a one-lakh

strong crowd.

An advocate at the Calcutta High Court has filed a PIL for a CBI probe in the case.

Meanwhile, actor and Trinamool MP Mimi Chakraborty who had first raised the alarm about the fraud vaccination camp cancelled a virtual press conference today as she was feeling unwell. Her office, quoting doctors, said that initial examination pointed out that the actor-MP may be having a gall bladder problem. Ms Chakraborty was not having any reaction to the fake vaccine that she was administered on Tuesday, they said.

Three more arrests have been arrested in the vaccine fraud case - two people were arrested for forging signatures to open bank accounts and a third for taking an active part in the vaccination camps.

All three arrested will be produced in court today.

Police have also filed three additional cases against the fraudster for cheating people of money amounting to almost one crore rupees.

One private firm gave him about 1.2 lakh to get 172 employees vaccinated, a pharma company gave him ₹ 4 lakh after he promised to get it a tender for hand sanitizers and a contractor was cheated of ₹ 90 lakh, paid for the construction of a stadium.

Debanjan Deb has told police that he started posing as an IAS officer to primarily please his parents. Son of a re-

tired senior excise officer, Debanjan Deb made an unsuccessful attempt in the IAS exams in 2017 but told his parents that he had cleared it, officials said.

Posing as a social worker and documentary filmmaker, he made contacts in the state's Information and Cultural Affairs Department and the Municipal Corporation.

Once the pandemic started, he spent money to buy sanitizers, masks, and PPE and distributed them free to NGOs. He also started seeking sub-contracts from Kolkata Municipal Corporation contractors and became an influence peddler.

"He started getting importance. Flowers were being showered on him at events and so on," said Mr Murlidhar Sharma, joint commissioner (crime) Kolkata Police. "We are of course checking out all claims he is making," Mr Sharma said.

Meanwhile, police have identified 515 people who took the shot at Kasba and 72 at a college where the fraudster held a camp as well. A hunt is on to identify others who may have taken the shot at Kasba. The total number of victims could be as high as 2,000, officials said.

On the chief minister's orders, the victims have to be identified and examined by the municipal corporation, and, once declared fit, they should be given the vaccines.

Find the Right Allies to Battle Addiction

Invite counsellors to nuance Sikkim's anti-drugs campaign

Saturday was International Day Against Drug Abuse. It is an important day for the world at large which continues to grapple with this challenge which has everyone confounded, none more so than the administration in Sikkim which has taken on the battle but refuses to collaborate with the right allies.

Sikkim has a customised anti-drugs law which makes peddling in prescription drugs not covered by the Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act but abused commonly, and dangerously so, in the State, a much more 'criminal' offence. Prescription drugs like Spasmoproxyvon and a range of cough syrups are extensively abused in Sikkim, but did not attract any severe enough penal punishment to deter their peddling. This loophole was addressed by the Sikkim Anti-Drugs Act of 2006 and the rules which were subsequently notified under it. Those who were expecting substance abuse to decrease with SADA have been expectedly let down. Although individuals caught with prescription drugs of abuse can now be tried and sent away for jail-terms, substance abuse has definitely not come down in Sikkim; not just because the law is inadequate in itself, but also because laws, no matter how strong, cannot combat a social challenge in the absence of complementing initiatives. This collaboration is normally expected of the civil society, but since there is none in Sikkim, it is time that the government approached the challenge of substance abuse afresh and catalysed the required involvements and interventions.

Babus, for some reason, resist any attempts at collaborations. They want to be able to talk down to everyone and that is how the on-paper collaborations have been structured. It has now been 15 years since SADA was promulgated and one needs to only look at the addiction graph which has not dipped at all and continues to rise to realise that some adjustments to attitudes and approaches are required.

One needs to bear in mind that SADA was necessitated by the peculiar nature of substance abuse in Sikkim and it is to the then State Government's credit that it recognised the situation and took the first step. A decade and a half later of only many more convictions but no reduction in addiction or increase in recoveries should mandate that the second step towards addressing addiction is taken. SADA, in its present form, is deployed exclusively as a law and order device – by cops carrying out 'drug busts'. In its original draft, the Act was more holistic in its approach and sought to make clear delineation between peddlers and addicts, between punishment and help. To achieve this, its implementation needs to be nuanced with compassion and a wider understanding about addiction and the traumas of the drug-dependent. For this, a wider engagement is required to address the challenge. Peddling can remain a law and order issue, but individual addiction needs more considerate handling [as was also envisaged in the original Act], and this understanding can be gained only if more minds are invited to address the implementation and suggest required course-corrections in Sikkim's efforts to contain addiction. A good place to begin will be in the reconstitution of the Sikkim Anti Drugs Authority Committee [established under the Act] to include, in effective roles, those who are working with addicts and helping rehabilitate all they can reach out to. At present, this Committee gives only government officers any teeth, and most of them land in it ex-officio and cannot be expected to make any substantial contributions because of their ignorance about the issue at hand and the many other responsibilities which compete for their attention. Those who have dedicated their lives to help repair the damage of addiction, if included in such a committee and given effective control of it, will definitely table practical suggestions and effective interventions through SADA to give Sikkim a fighting chance at combating addiction among its young.

Allowing such engagement will not be easy for the bureaucracy to recommend, but is a leap of faith which the policy-makers can make, and when they land, Sikkim will be in a much better place. It will not be out of place here to also recommend a task force which analyses the SAD Act's implementation every quarter and submits a report to the government on what went right and what aspects of the law need some course corrections.

Homo longi: Extinct human species that may replace Neanderthals as our closest relatives found in China

ANTHONY SINCLAIR
THECONVERSATION.COM

In 1933 a mysterious fossil skull was discovered near Harbin City in the Heilongjiang province of north-eastern China. Despite being nearly perfectly preserved – with square eye sockets, thick brow ridges and large teeth – nobody could work out exactly what it was. The skull is much bigger than that of Homo sapiens and other human species – and its brain size is similar to that of our own species. Historical events left it without a secure place of origin or date, until today.

Now a team of Chinese, Australian and British researchers has finally solved the puzzle – the skull represents a previously unknown extinct human species. The research, published as three studies in the journal Innovation, suggests this is our closest relative in the human family tree.

Dubbed Homo longi, which can be translated as “dragon river”, it is named after the province in which it was found. The identification of the skull, thought to have come from a 50-year-old male, was partly based on chemical analysis of sediments trapped inside it.

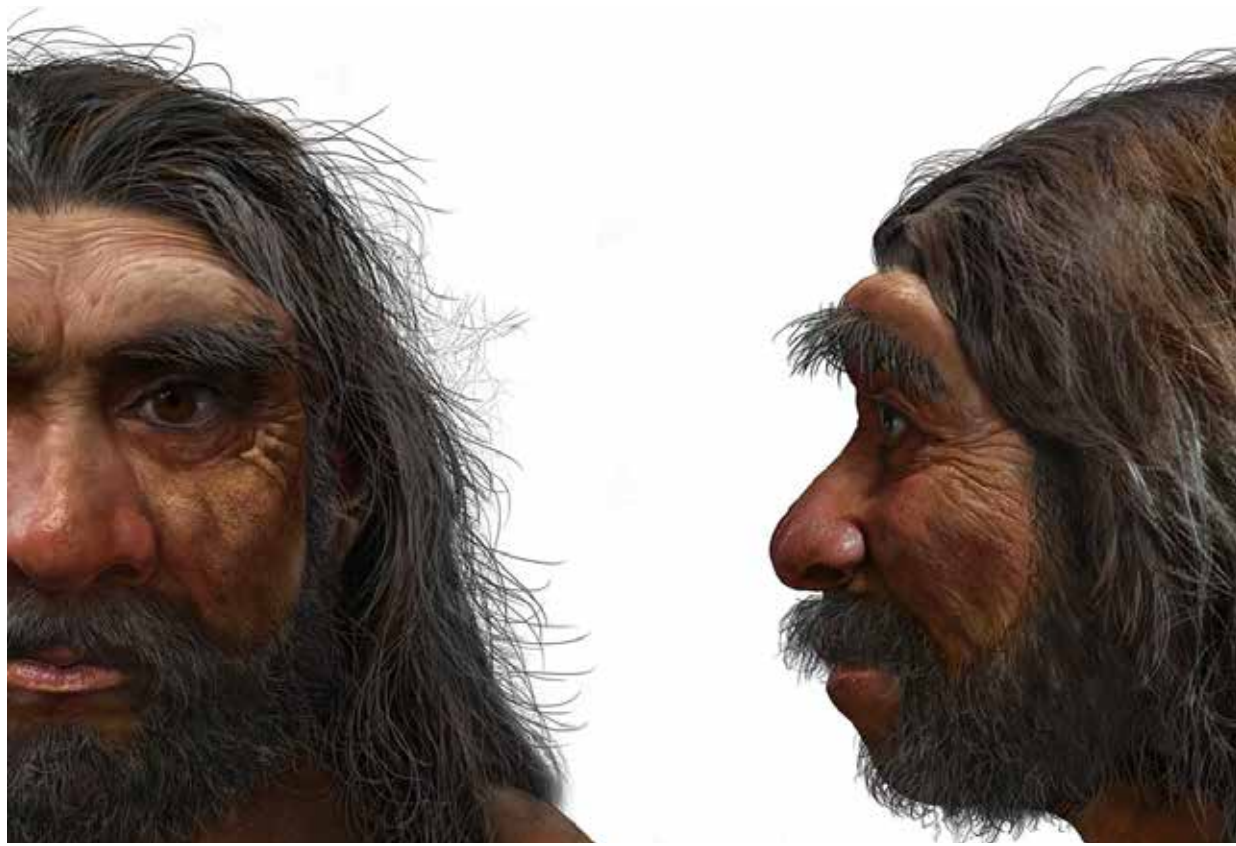
This confirmed it comes from the upper part of the Huangshan rock formation near Harbin City. The formation was reliably dated to the Middle Pleistocene – 125,000 to 800,000 years ago. Uranium series dating, which involves using the known rate of decay of radioactive uranium atoms in a sample to work out its age, showed that the fossil itself is at least 146,000 years old.

Homo longi can now takes its place among an ever increasing number of hominin species across Africa, Europe and Asia.

CONSTRUCTING A FAMILY TREE

Determining the historical relationship between fossil species, however, remains one of the most difficult tasks in the study of human evolution. In recent years, the analysis of ancient DNA has transformed our understanding of the relationship between early populations of modern humans. It has also highlighted how we are different - and similar – to our most immediate relatives, the Neanderthals.

Surviving DNA, however, is very rare for fossil hominins from the Middle Pleistocene, as it tends to degrade over time. Evolutionary relationships must therefore be determined using other evidence. This is usually data on the shape - morphology - of fossils, their age and geographical location.



The Harbin team generated a family tree (“phylogeny”) of human lineages to work out how the species relates to modern humans. This tree is based on morphological data from 95 largely complete fossil specimens of different hominin species living during the Middle Pleistocene, including Homo erectus, Homo neanderthalensis, Homo heidelbergensis and Homo sapiens along with their known ages. The tree also suggests that five previously unidentified fossils from northeastern China are from Homo longi.

It predicts that the common ancestor of Homo longi and Homo sapiens lived approximately 950,000 years ago. Furthermore, it suggests that both species shared a common ancestor with Neanderthals a bit more than 1 million years ago, meaning we may have split from Neanderthals 400,000 earlier than previously thought (we used to think it was 600,000 years ago).

Until now, the Neanderthals were considered our closest relative (according to the study, we split from Homo heidelbergensis some 1.3 million years ago). Debates about the evolution of modern humans and what it is that makes us “human” therefore relied heavily on comparisons to Neanderthals. But the new discovery pushes Neanderthals one step further away from ourselves and makes simple comparisons between two species much less important to understanding what ultimately makes us who we are.

There are, however, still significant points of concern about the dating of this phylogenetic model, as recognised by the authors. The predicted dates for the common ancestors between human lineages do not match the dates of actual discovered fossils, or those predicted by the analysis of DNA.

For example, this study proposes that there was Homo sapiens in Eurasia at about 400,000 years ago. But the oldest fossil for this species known outside Africa is little more than half this age. At the same time, the split between Homo sapiens and Neanderthals predicted here at more than 1 million years old does not match the prediction of nuclear DNA analysis, which suggests it happened much later. However, it can be backed up by doing DNA analysis with genetic material taken from the cell's engine, called the mitochondria.

The older estimates presented by this study may result from the use of new techniques, called Bayesian tip dating, which aren't normally used in evolutionary studies. These can take into account both morphological and molecular data and make predictions about the possible sequence and date of the divergence of species.

WIDER PERSPECTIVE

While the shape of the family tree presented here is likely to stand the test of time, it is still too early to accept these predicted divergence dates as definitive. That said, the research also sheds important light on how human species occurred and

spread through the Middle Pleistocene – into all areas of our planet. Crucially, many of these species may have interbred.

Europe was the origin point for Neanderthals. Meanwhile, the Asian human species Homo erectus was a critical evolutionary step, giving rise to all later hominin species. And now we know that Homo longi evolved in Asia too. It therefore looks like Africa was a destination as well as a point of origin for the spread of human species.

The Harbin cranium also tells another story about human evolution as a science and as an international discipline. Human evolution was originally a European area of interest, focused on evidence from sites in western and central Europe. The discovery of fossils in Africa added great time depth to the origins of the human lineage and led to a common story of the spread of new species out of Africa.

The Harbin cranium reminds us of the vast expanse of Asia, whose fossils and scientists are now coming to the fore. Further insights may come both from the discovery of new species and old figurative art. In the case of the Harbin cranium, it is the application of new techniques of analysis that has brought old specimens back into active use. Asia is now in the driving seat of the study of human evolution.

[the writer is Professor of Archaeological Theory and Method, University of Liverpool]

Amazons and Warrior Princesses on Screen – the Legacy of Xena 20 Years On

AMANDA POTTER
THECONVERSATION.COM

Xena the warrior princess, played by Lucy Lawless, captivated audiences around the world for six series with her high kicks, sword skills and distinctive war cry. The series followed her as she fought her way through armies, monsters and gods, alongside her soul mate and moral compass, Gabrielle (Renee O'Connor).

Xena travelled across space and time, taking us from ancient Greece to Rome, Egypt, Britain, China, India, Scandinavia and finally to Japan, where it all came to an end 20 years ago on June 18 2001.

Starting life as an antagonist of Hercules in three episodes of Hercules: The Legendary Journeys, Xena was so popular as a character that she was given her spin-off series that ran from 1995 to 2001. At the time, Xena: Warrior Princess was considered groundbreaking as it started a strong female action heroine and was the only popular adventure, action, science fiction or fantasy show that featured female leads without male counterparts.

On the 20th anniversary of the final episode, it worth revisiting this great show and exploring why it was loved by a truly broad spectrum of viewers, from young girls drawn in by an active female role model and ancient history buffs to sci-fi fans and the LGBTQ community.

XENA AND THE AMAZONS

A reformed warlord from ancient Greece, Xena was not an Amazon but a friend to the tribes of warrior women. To ancient Greek writers, the Amazons were women who fought and behaved like men and were unnatural barbarians. They have since been adopted as positive

female role models who break with misogynistic stereotypes of womanhood – they live in a self-sufficient, female-dominated society as warriors and intellectuals. The term Amazon feminism is now used to describe a branch of feminism that promotes female physical prowess as a way to achieve gender equality.

Before Xena, the Amazons featured in the 1970s Wonder Woman series. Not quite the feminist icons we expect today, these women wore pastel-coloured negligees as they adopted a peaceful life without men on Paradise Island.

In Xena, while the Amazons may also have been attired in revealing costumes made of furs and skins, their separatist society values martial as well as academic skills. An Amazon tells Gabrielle that the Amazon world is based on “truth and an individual woman's strength”.

The Amazons from Greek mythology lived apart from men, at the edge of the known world, and fought bravely against male heroes such as Hercules, Theseus and Achilles. In Xena, the Amazons also live in a matriarchal society and are skilled fighters who can hold their own against men.

The Amazons in Wonder Woman (2017) can be seen as Xena's big-screen descendants. The costumes and fighting prowess of Penthesilea (Nina Milner) in the BBC drama Troy: Fall of a City (2018) has tinges of Xena. While the leadership ability of the immortal Amazon Andy (Charlize Theron) in the Netflix film The Old Guard, can also be seen as inspired by Xena.

But while Troy: Fall of a City and The Old Guard are aimed at older audiences, Xena was popular across all age groups. For instance, episodes of Xena were broadcast in the UK on Chan-

nel Five's Milkshake! Saturday morning slot in the 90s and early noughties for young viewers. This led many young girls to adopt Xena as their role model.

THE XENA SUBTEXT

Xena was also popular with gay and lesbian viewers. In the 1990s, openly gay relationships were mostly missing from popular US television series. However, Xena's relationship with Gabrielle was interpreted as much as that of hero and sidekick as it was friends and lovers. Series producers began to play with this idea, for example, putting Xena and Gabrielle together in a sexy bath in season two fan-favourite episode A Day in the Life, so that for many, the subtext became the main text.

Although a lot of fans were dismayed that Xena died in the final episode they were treated to a long goodbye kiss between Gabrielle and Xena's ghost. Series producers never openly made Xena and Gabrielle a lesbian couple. But LGBTQ+ fans championed their relationship, which is believed to have paved the way for openly gay relationships we see in television series today.

One of the joys of looking back at Xena 20 years on is its playfulness when compared with dark fantasy sci-fi fantasies like Game of Thrones. It features seriously badass female characters, and at times offers a serious message about female solidarity and feminism, but doesn't take itself too seriously. Some of the special effects may now seem dated, but the storylines still ring true and the characters of Xena and Gabrielle can continue to be inspirational for a new generation of young female viewers.

[the writer is Visiting Research Fellow, The Open University]

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at GANGTOK:

For circulation details Contact: (Sandeep) 9734152451

& for Advertisement booking at 9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp. Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri – 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

Irshad Ali/ Imteeyaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezzine – 2, 2nd floor. Kolkata – 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. 9830547774/ 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/ irshad_ali123@rediffmail.com

President's actions can be subject to judicial review, Nepal's lawyers argue

BINOD GHIMIRE

Kathmandu, 26 Jun [KathmanduPost]: In its written clarification presented to the Supreme Court on June 17, the Office of the President had argued that the actions of the President cannot be subject to judicial review. It said that as the President takes decisions based on the government's recommendations or the role defined by the constitution, it cannot be reviewed by the judiciary.

However, the lawyers pleading on behalf of the writ petitioners challenging the May 21 dissolution of the House of Representatives on Friday argued that the President's actions are very much open to judicial review.

On the third day of the hearing against the House dissolution case, advocate Tika Ram Bhattarai said the Office of the President presented unconstitutional arguments saying the President's moves are above legal purview.

"Except for the issues the constitution clearly says cannot be reviewed, all others fall under the scope of judicial review," said Bhattarai.

Bhattarai even claimed that if the President fails to perform the responsibility assigned

by the constitution s/he can be impeached.

"The President cannot shirk her constitutional responsibilities. By refusing to appoint Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba prime minister, the President failed to perform her constitutional responsibility," he argued. "She cannot say, 'I won't appoint'. It was her responsibility to appoint Deuba who had the support of 149 lawmakers."

Nepali Congress President Deuba on May 21 had presented his claim for the prime minister's post with the signatures of 149 lawmakers of the dissolved House of Representatives. In addition to 61 lawmakers from the Nepali Congress, Deuba was supported by 49 from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre), 26 from the Madhav Nepal faction of CPN-UML, 12 from the Upendra Yadav faction of Janata Samajbadi Party and one from the Rastriya Janamorchha.

As on the first and second days of the hearing, the lawyers of the plaintiffs on Friday focused their arguments on questioning the role of President Bidya Devi Bhandari and interpreting Article 76 (5) of the Constitution of Nepal.

"The constitution

doesn't allow the President to test the authenticity of the claims presented for the prime minister's position," said senior advocate Shree Hari Aryal. "Her role is to appoint a prime minister based on the claims; it's the Parliament where the appointee needs to secure the trust vote."

He claimed that the President had refused to appoint Deuba as prime minister with a mala fide intention to give continuity to KP Sharma Oli as prime minister.

Aryal said that even kings consulted experts and stakeholders before taking decisions on grave issues like House dissolution.

When prime minister Surya Bahadur Thapa had recommended dissolving the House of Representatives in 1998, King Birendra had refused to do so, after consulting the Supreme Court.

"The President could have held a discussion with the prime minister or used a third eye to review the matter. But she didn't deem it necessary," Aryal said. "She endorsed whatever the prime minister recommended."

The advocates on Friday also said the President's interpretation of Article 76 (5) was ex-

tra-constitutional as she gave the decision of the party equal weightage as that of the individual lawmakers.

They argued that as the Article was introduced to give individual lawmakers autonomy to decide on forming a government and the President had had no authority to entertain the claim by the prime minister, who presented the decisions of the CPN-UML and Janata Samajbadi Party.

While Deuba had presented the signatures of 149 members of the 275-member House of Representatives, Oli had staked his claim with his party's decision of the support of its 121 lawmakers and the Janata Samajbadi Party's support of its 32 lawmakers.

Former attorney general Mukti Pradhan, who is also a senior advocate, claimed that Oli didn't have the authority to dissolve the House.

"Only a prime minister appointed as per Article 76 (5) can dissolve the House, after failing to get the trust vote," he said. "However, Oli wasn't the prime minister as per the Article."

Oli on May 10 failed a vote of confidence as only 93 lawmakers of the dissolved House stood

by him. When no other parties could cobble up a coalition government as per Article 76 (2), three days later President Bhandari appointed him prime minister of a minority government as per Article 76 (3) as the leader of the largest party in Parliament.

However, instead of seeking a trust vote in the lower house as mandated by the constitution, on May 20 Oli recommended that the President call for the formation of a new government on the basis of Article 76 (5).

Before the House dissolution, the President had invalidated the claims put forth by both Deuba and Oli saying that they were "insufficient". Soon afterwards, the House was dissolved and midterm polls announced for November 13 and 20.

"The bench [Constitutional Bench] should issue an order to appoint Deuba as prime minister while also reinstating the lower house," said Pradhan.

In its final verdict against the December 20 dissolution, the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court had said the lower house can only be dissolved after exhausting the four options for government formation envisioned by the con-

stitution. Article 76 (1) allows formation of the government by the leader of the party that has a majority in the House, Article 76 (2) allows a coalition government, and Article 76 (3) allows the formation of a minority government by the leader of the largest party in the House. Article 76 (5) allows any lawmaker who can potentially prove a majority to lead a government.

With just a few of the 23 lawyers of the plaintiffs left to make arguments, lawyers advocating on behalf of the defendants will present their arguments starting Sunday.

Both sides presented their legal briefs to the Constitutional Bench along with their arguments on Friday.

The Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Prime Minister Oli and the Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives Agni Sapkota are the defendants.

While Oli in his written clarification on June 17 said that the appointment of prime minister is a political issue and not a matter for the court to decide, the Speaker said that the dissolution was unconstitutional.

49 children among 232 new COVID-19 patients in Mizoram



AIZAWL, JUN 26 (PTI): Mizoram's COVID-19 tally crossed the 19,000-mark on Saturday as 232 more people, including 49 children, tested positive for the infection, a health bulletin said.

The fresh infections have pushed the state's caseload to 19,091, it said.

As many as 238 more people were cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries to 14,554, the bulletin said, adding there are now 4,448 active cases in the northeastern state.

Aizawl district registered the highest number of fresh cases at 135, followed by Kolasib (24) and Lawngtlai (19).

Nine new patients have travel history, while 223 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing, it said.

Seventeen people in every 1,000 population in the second least populated state of the country have been infected so far. As per the 2011 Census, Mizoram has a population of 10.91 lakh.

Eighty-nine people have succumbed to the infection in Mizoram to date, which means eight people in every 1 lakh population have died due to the disease.

The recovery rate among the coronavirus patients in the state stands at 76.23 per cent, while the mortality rate is at 0.46 per cent.

The state has thus far tested over 4.72 lakh samples for COVID-19 so far, including 4,043 in the last 24 hours. The single-day positivity rate stands at 5.75 per cent.

More than 4.59 lakh people have been inoculated to date.

Nagaland reports 130 new COVID-19 cases, two more deaths

KOHIMA, JUN 25 (PTI): Nagaland on Friday reported 130 new COVID-19 cases, which pushed the tally in the state to 24,759, a health department official said.

At least 127 people were cured of the disease during the day, taking the total number of recoveries to 22,072, State Nodal Officer for Integrated Disease Surveillance Project Dr Nyanthung Kikon said in a bulletin.

The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in the state stands at 89.15 per cent, he said.

Two more fatalities due to the infection were reported in Kohima district, raising the death toll to 481, the official said.

Nagaland currently has 1,508 active cases, and 698 COVID-19 patients have migrated to other states so far.

Mon reported the highest number of fresh cases at 37, followed by Dimapur at 31, Paren at 20, Mokokchung at 13 and Kohima at 11.

The state has conducted 2,20,061 sample tests for COVID-19.

State Immunisation Officer Dr Ritu Thurr said 4,48,621 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to 3,91,728 people till Thursday.

Construction workers in Kathmandu step up demand for social security

CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL

KATHMANDU, 26 JUN [KATHMANDUPOST]: Informal sector workers have demanded their enrollment into the Contribution-based Social Security Scheme, which has been only providing coverage to employees from the formal private sector so far.

Informal sector workers, mainly construction workers, have demanded that the government make arrangements for registering them into the social security scheme so that they can also access various benefits promised under the scheme for formal private sector employees.

"Construction workers are the first group of workers who have been demanding social security cover for several years. These are the most vulnerable group of workers," Naranath Luitel, president of the Central Union of Painters, Plumbers, Electro and Construction Workers-Nepal (CUPECC), told the Post. "Now that the government has implemented the scheme by introducing legislation and included only the formal private sector workers, we want inclusion of the construction workers also in the scheme."

According to Luitel, nearly 2.5 million workers are employed in the construction industry. They include people employed in private housing, roads and other infrastructure development projects, brick



kilns, crusher plants, and forest-based enterprises among others.

"Nearly 85 percent of the country's total workforce is employed in the informal sector, but this sector has been left out of the social security scheme. The government must work to include the sector in the scheme, which will provide them financial security during difficult times," said Luitel. "The government needs to make required changes to the existing Act, regulations and working procedures so that informal sector workers also can access the benefits under the scheme."

Under the social security scheme, an amount equivalent to 31 percent of the worker's basic salary—11 percent deducted from the worker's monthly salary and 20 percent contributed by the employer—must be deposited to the social security fund every month.

For their monthly contribution, workers are offered financial security under four categories—medical treatment,

health protection, and maternity plan; accidents and disability plan; dependent family plan; and old-age security plan.

Labour rights activists have long been demanding that the social security scheme, which is in its third year of implementation, should also include the informal sector and self-employed workers.

"First of all, the government should announce that the informal sector, which is the largest employer in Nepal, will also be enrolled under the scheme," said Luitel.

"Then, the government should declare a package for informal sector workers in the annual budget, announcing that the 20 percent amount, which is being paid by employers, will be borne by the government."

Construction worker groups have also demanded that the government should also collect and maintain data on the total number of workers employed in the construction sector in the country.

"There are discrepan-

cies in the number of construction sector workers in the country. Therefore, systematic registration of such workers should be started at the local level, which is not a difficult thing," said Luitel. "Besides, the workers should be provided social security cards."

The Social Security Fund secretariat, which manages the fund and is responsible for the implementation of the scheme, said that the government has already started internal preparations on how the informal sector and self-employed population can be brought under the scheme.

"The Contribution-based Social Security Scheme has envisaged that the entire labour sector, be it informal or formal or government or private, will be brought under the scheme in a phase-wise manner. For now, the scheme has been made mandatory for the formal private-sector workers," Bibek Panthee, a spokesperson with the Social Security Fund Secretariat, told the Post. "Last

two budgets have also talked about bringing the informal sector and self-employed groups under the scheme."

According to Panthee, a committee has been formed and it is already working out plans and guidelines for including informal sector workers and self-employed groups in the scheme.

"The committee headed by a joint secretary of the Law Ministry has been consulting other stakeholders in this regard. Draft guidelines have been shared among other stakeholders for their feedback," said Panthee. "From the next fiscal year, informal sector workers, self-employed groups as well as contract-based temporary workers at government offices can register with the scheme."

In February, the government also made massive changes to the Social Security Scheme Operating Procedures, 2018 to widen the scope of coverage for beneficiaries making it easier to access the benefits available under the scheme.

As of Wednesday, 14,544 employers and 249,277 employees from the formal private sector have registered with the social security scheme which requires monthly contributions from both employers and employees.

According to Luitel, tens of thousands of construction workers will enroll in the scheme if the government makes required arrangements.

**to book
advertisements in SummitTimes, call
03592-208698
9734152541**

**DONATE BOOKS FOR NOBLE CAUSE
TO BUILD LIBRARY**

*If anyone willing to donate books or
support through
Finance, than you are most welcome*

**"GIVING IS NOT JUST
ABOUT
MAKE A DONATION ,
ITS ABOUT MAKING
DIFFERENCE"**

For more Details Contact ; 6294745117,8768809862

Email ; chitishchetri7@gmail.com

SummitTIMES

Djokovic says he spoke to Serena about players’ association

LONDON, JUN 26 (AP): Novak Djokovic said he has been speaking to top female tennis pros, including Serena Williams, about the players’ association that he and Vasek Pospisil founded in the hopes of gaining “more access and more transparency” and a larger cut of the sport’s revenues.

“You start to realize that the players are not represented in the way that they deserve and in the way they should be,” Djokovic said during a video conference to discuss the Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA) on Friday night, three days before the start of Wimbledon, where he will be seeking a 20th Grand Slam title.

“I feel like many players are figuring out,” Djokovic added, “that we need to do something more than just trying to be satisfied with the little information that we are getting.”

Tennis players are not represented by a union the way athletes in North American team sports are; instead, each



player is considered an independent contractor.

“Tennis is far behind, I think. We’re in 2021 and this is just ... a fundamental need for our sport in the world that we live in,” Pospisil said. “There are a lot of very, very, I would say, unhappy players, and players that are struggling, and I don’t think that needs to be the case.”

The No. 1-ranked Djokovic and Pospisil, who won the 2014 Wimbledon men’s doubles title and is currently No. 66 in singles, launched

the PTPA around the time of last year’s U.S. Open in August.

The group announced this week it appointed an executive director, Adam Larry, and an advisory board; it also received public support from the players’ associations for the NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball.

The ATP released a statement Wednesday criticizing the effort to create what it called “a separate player entity,” saying such an effort “provides a clear overlap,

divides the players, and further fragments the sport.”

Djokovic, Pospisil and Larry all spoke Friday about trying to work with the ATP.

“At some point, I think, they’ll realize when we have this many players that it’s important to collaborate with us. And at some point, if we reach a dead end, obviously we’ll have to figure out the next play, the next strategy,” Pospisil said.

“But we’re pretty confident that they’ll be-

gin communicating with us shortly.”

Larry said the group has “hundreds of players” who are members, including more than 70% of the ATP men’s tour, but declined to say how many from the WTA women’s tour already are involved.

Djokovic said he discussed the PTPA with Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam champion, during the French Open, which ended two weeks ago.

“And I’m planning to talk with her again here in London,” along with her husband, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, “a disruptor and very successful entrepreneur who has some ideas that he would like to share with us,” Djokovic said.

Djokovic used to be the president, and Pospisil a member, of the ATP Player Council.

“We have tried ... the conventional way,” Djokovic said, “and we are trying now the unconventional way.

England wants Gareth Southgate to stay as coach beyond 2022



BURTON-ON-TRENT (ENGLAND), JUN 26 (AP): Regardless of how England’s European Championship campaign ends, or even the team’s showing at next year’s World Cup, Gareth Southgate will be staying in the coach’s job for years to come.

If the England team leadership has its way, at least.

Southgate is rated so highly that the Football Association already wants to extend his contract beyond 2022.

“He knows that we think he’s doing a great job,” FA chief executive Mark Bullingham said Friday at England’s St. George’s Park training center.

“We would love him to carry on, for sure, beyond this contract.”

For now, the priority is England’s match against Germany on Tuesday in the round of 16 at Euro 2020. But the expectation is Southgate will still be in charge for Euro 2024.

“Our support is unwavering we are 100%

behind Gareth,” Bullingham said. “We’ll get into that formal (contract) conversation after this tournament. But if you ask me now I’d say yes we’d like him to carry on.”

Southgate has restored the reputation of the England national team from the lows of a humiliating Euro 2016 exit against Iceland in the round of 16 and the ignominy of Sam Allardyce’s brief tenure. Allardyce, whose brashness and unguarded bar talk forced the FA to part company, lasted only one game as Roy Hodgson’s successor.

Southgate, whose only previous first-team coaching experience was three years at Middlesbrough until 2009, was promoted from his job overseeing England’s under-21 team.

By 2018, Southgate had led England’s men to the World Cup semifinals for the first time in 28 years. He impressed with the leadership he shown as a figurehead for the English game.

“He’s such a strong manager both on and off the pitch, it opens up a whole array of different possibilities for him in the future,” Bullingham said. “I think he could do anything in club world or FA world absolutely.”

For now, the FA wants to keep the 50-year-old Southgate in the England dugout, rather than being attracted by a role at a club.

“I think he’s got a brilliant long-term career in football and I know he might have aspirations longer term, Bullingham said.

“We’re in a competitive world, I’m sure his name gets banded around for every job. But as far as I know he’s really committed to the job and I think he’s doing it brilliantly.”

The initial challenge is trying to win England’s first major trophy since 1966, with the semifinals and final of Euro 2020 at Wembley Stadium. Then it’s back to resuming the mission to qualify for next year’s World Cup in Qatar.

Bajrang says ‘I am fine’ after injuring knee; extent of damage to be assessed after 48 hours

NEW DELHI, JUN 26 (PTI): Olympic-bound wrestler BajrangPunia on Saturday assured that he has not suffered a major injury but the extent of damage done to his right knee will be known only by Monday since the inflammation takes at least 48 hours to subside. Bajrang injured his right knee on Friday evening while competing in the semi-finals of the Russian tournament -- Ali Aliyev, against AbulmazhidKudiev, the Under-23 European silver medallist. Kudiev got hold of Bajrang’s right leg and pulled him abruptly in the first period of the bout. The impact had an effect on Bajrang’s right knee and the limping grappler immediately forfeited the bout.

“I am fine. It (getting injured) happens in sport,” Bajrang told PTI from Kaspiysk in a terse message when he was asked if it was a serious injury.

While Bajrang did not elaborate on his injury, sources close the elite wrestler said that it is a



good sign that he could walk without help but it will take at least two days to assess him properly.

“There is an injury. It’s too early to comment right now. We will observe it for next 48 hours and see how it goes. Too early to name structures. Let the inflammation subside a bit,” said the source.

Asked specifically if it could be a ligament tear, the source said only scans can confirm it but

they won’t take risk by initiating that procedure.

“Scans are not done immediately. We generally don’t even test the structure before 48 hours. If there is a tear and we try to test it, we might do more harm. So, we will wait and observe for a while,” added the source.

Experienced Delhi-based sports physiotherapist AnandDubey, who travels with the national tennis teams --

Davis Cup and Bille Jean King Cup -- explains why it was important to wait before scans are done.

“Wrestlers usually suffer sprains. If that’s the case, then he will be fine in a day or two by applying ice packs regularly. In case of a ligament injury, swelling takes some to appear, may be 24 to 36 hours. In a major injury, it appears immediately.

“I have seen the video of his bout. It looks like a minor injury, nothing to

worry about. It was a good decision by Bajrang to forfeit the bout to prevent a major injury,” he added.

Bajrang, one of India’s brightest medal prospects, has been training in Russia since last month.

He skipped the Poland Open, the last Ranking Series event before the Olympics so that he could spar with world’s top wrestlers, who are now training in Russia ahead of the Tokyo Games.

Inaugural WTC champions New Zealand return home with ICC mace

AUCKLAND, JUN 26 (PTI): The triumphant New Zealand cricket team on Saturday returned home after outplaying India in the final of the inaugural World Test Championship in Southampton.

However, the team’s inspirational skipper Kane Williamson and a few others were not part of the group that landed here on Saturday morning.

While Williamson

stayed back to play The Hundred with Birmingham Phoenix starting July 21, Devon Conway (Somerset), Kyle Jamieson (Surrey) and Colin de Grandhomme (Hampshire) remained in England for the Twenty20 Blast.

Eleven cricketers and eight support staff members returned to Auckland via Singapore.

New Zealand were awarded the ICC mace af-

ter they defeated India by eight wickets in Southampton on Wednesday to claim the inaugural World Test Championship crown.

“The boys are ecstatic. There’s been a mixture of emotion and jubilation. Once we get home and through quarantine, we’ll hopefully continue the celebrations,” left-arm pacer Trent Boult was quoted as saying by stuff.co.nz.

The Kiwi players will now serve a two-week quarantine period before they can reunite with their families.

New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White termed the victory over India “a massive achievement, one of our great days. I’m immensely proud of the team, and the whole organisation.”

White said the board plans to honour the players soon in recognition of

their feats but ruled out a parade on the streets.

“We haven’t finalised that yet but we’ll certainly be looking to get them together in some form to celebrate them,” White said.

“I don’t think there will be a parade. The current environment is challenging, but getting everyone together would be great if we could celebrate with our commercial partners and our wider cricket family.

Finch hopes Oz players will soon be allowed to take families on tours



Melbourne, Jun 26 (PTI): Australia’s limited-overs captain Aaron Finch is hopeful that

players’ families will soon be allowed to accompany them on overseas tours to keep them in good mental space inside bio-secure bubbles in these difficult COVID-19 times.

Finch’s statement came after Indian players were allowed to take their families along with them for the ongoing tour of England.

Soon to be dad Finch will be outside Australia on national duty for two months and he knows that a hasty return for the birth of his child, if that happens in between, is next to impossible.

“They’re the risks you take. She wasn’t too keen on me going and if she happens to give birth a bit early, we might be in some trouble...it might be a FaceTime birth, I don’t

know,” Finch was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press.

Finch-led 20-member Australia squad will leave for the Caribbean on Monday, without the likes of David Warner and Pat Cummins, who have opted out of the tour to be with their families.

Australia will play five Twenty20s and three ODIs against the West Indies, and then travel to Bangladesh for a five-match T20 series.

Upon returning, the Australian players will have to spend a fortnight in hotel quarantine.

Finch is set to return on August 25, while the due date for the birth of his first child is September 8.

Asked if the cricketers’ families will soon travel with them on tours, Finch said: “I don’t have the answer for you but it’s something that needs to be looked at.

“I remember speaking to Davey Warner about it during his IPL stint.

“His kids are at an age where they understand how long time is ... when you have kids crying on FaceTime, it doesn’t make it easy,” he added.

Cummins, Warner, Glenn Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Kane Richardson, Daniel Sams and Marcus Stoinis are a host of cricketers who decided to sit out of the tour to be with their families.

Finch, meanwhile, said that the visitors will soon decide whether to take a knee in the West Indies in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

“Over the last 12 months, we’ve educated ourselves quite a bit on Black Lives Matter,” he said.

“We’ll speak to (West Indies veteran) Jason Holder and be really respectful and supportive of anything they wish to do.

German investigators seek motive in fatal knife attack

WUERZBURG, Germany (AP): Investigators were looking Saturday for a motive behind an attack in the German city of Wuerzburg in which a man armed with a long knife killed three people and wounded at least five others, while authorities praised passers-by who tried to stop the assailant.

Police said two of those hospitalized remained in life-threatening condition Saturday.

The suspect, a 24-year-old Somali, was stopped with a shot to the leg by police and arrested after the Friday afternoon attack in the southern city's downtown area. Police said his life was not in danger and he was being in a hospital.

The man had lived in Wuerzburg since 2015, most recently in a shelter for the homeless. He apparently did not know the victims.

Michael Dauber, whose shop is near the scene of the attack, said he saw people running away in panic.

"It was unclear for a long time what was happening, then they all started screaming that somebody is stabbing people," Dauber said. "It was totally crazy."

Videos posted on social media showed people surrounding the attacker and trying to hold him at bay with chairs and sticks.

"I was particularly impressed by the dedication of many people who tried to stop the perpetrator and tried to keep him in check," Bavarian governor Markus Soeder said. "That was really impressive dedication, and my thanks for that."

"Now the circumstances have to be cleared up, the motives," he said in a statement to reporters in Nuremberg.

Bavaria's top security official, Joachim Herrmann, said the suspect had been known to police and had been admitted to a psychiatric unit a few days earlier.

He told news agency dpa late Friday that he couldn't rule out an Islamic extremist motive because one witness had reported hearing the suspect shout "Allahuakbar," Arabic for "God is great." However, federal prosecutors — who in Germany deal with terrorism and national security cases — hadn't taken over the case by Saturday.

People laid flowers and candles at the scene of the attack.

"All of Bavaria is in mourning today," said Soeder, who added that he would order flags flown at half-staff in the state.

Wuerzburg police's use of a shot to the leg to stop the assailant is typical for Germany. Bavaria's rules on use of police weapons state that firearms should only be used to make perpetrators unable to attack or flee, and that a shot which is near-certain to kill is only permitted if it is the only way to prevent danger to the life of others.

The rules call for officers to aim at the legs where possible.

Condo search grows dire with 159 still unaccounted for

SURFSIDE, FLA. (AP): The torturous wait for word of nearly 160 people unaccounted for after an oceanfront condominium building collapsed near Miami, killing at least four, is taking a toll on relatives who can do little but pray and hope their loved ones will somehow be found alive in an increasingly dire hunt for survivors. As scores of rescuers used big machines, small buckets, drones, microphones and their own hands on Friday to pick through the mountain of debris that had been the 12-story Champlain Towers South, Rachel Spiegel was anxious for any update on her missing mother, 66-year-old Judy Spiegel, who lived on the sixth floor.

"I'm just praying for a miracle," Spiegel said. "We're heartbroken that she was even in the building."

Jeanne Ugarte was coming to grips with what she feared was a tragic end for longtime friends Juan and Ana Mora and their son Juan Jr., who was visiting his parents in their condo at the tower.

"I know they're not going to find them (alive)," Ugarte said. "It's been too long."

Hopes rested on how quickly crews could complete their grim, yet delicate task in Surfside, just a few miles north of



Miami's South Beach. "Any time that we hear a sound, we concentrate in that area," Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raidejadallah said. "It could be just steel twisting, it could be debris raining down, but not specifically sounds of tapping or sounds of a human voice."

Buffeted by gusty winds and pelted by intermittent rain, two heavy cranes removed debris from the pile using large claws Friday, creating a din of crashing glass and metal as they picked up material and dumped it to the side. A smoky haze rose from the site.

Once the machines paused, firefighters wearing protective masks and carrying red buckets climbed atop the pile to remove smaller pieces by hand in hope of finding spots where peo-

ple might be trapped. In a parking garage, rescuers in knee-deep water used power tools to cut into the building from below.

Surfside Mayor Charles Burkett said crews were doing everything possible to save as many people as they could.

"We do not have a resource problem, we have a luck problem," he said.

Officials said they still don't know exactly how many residents or visitors were in the building when it fell, but they were trying to locate 159 people who were considered unaccounted for and may or may not have been there.

Flowers left in tribute decorated a fence near the tower, and people awaiting news about the search watched from a distance, hands

through the rubble.

"Debris is falling on them as they do their work," she said. "We have structural engineers on-site to ensure that they will not be injured, but they are proceeding because they are so motivated."

Teenager Jonah Handler was rescued from the rubble hours after the collapse, but his mother, Stacie Fang, died. Relatives issued a statement expressing thanks "for the outpouring of sympathy, compassion and support we have received."

"There are no words to describe the tragic loss of our beloved Stacie," it said.

While officials said no cause for the collapse early Thursday has been determined, Gov. Ron DeSantis said a "definitive answer" was needed in a timely manner. Video showed the center of the building appearing to tumble down first, followed by a section nearer to the beach.

The missing included people from around the world.

Israeli media said the country's consul general in Miami believed that 20 of its citizens were missing. Another 22 people were unaccounted for from Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and Paraguay, including relatives of Paraguayan first lady Silvana de Abdo Benítez.

3D video replaces huge sets in Verona as full operas resume

VERONA, ITALY (AP): The Verona Arena amphitheater in northern Italy has returned to staging full operas for the first time since the pandemic — but with one big difference.

The monumental sets that normally fill the vast amphitheater stage have been replaced by dynamic, 3D images broadcast on huge LED screens, recreating a Sicilian village or a Fellini-esque film backlot.

Distancing rules meant that stagehands moving sets had to be limited in the cramped backstage in the open-air Roman-era amphitheater, setting in motion a reimagining of the 98th Verona Arena Opera Festival.

For this season, technology is standing in for the sets for which the Arena is famous, ones big enough to fill the vast stage and engage even audience members sitting far away in the uppermost seats.

"We understood already last year in November that we needed to have another plan, in the eventuality that we couldn't use the big sets," said the Arena's general manager, Cecilia Gasdia. "After all, the Verona Arena is used to doing huge shows, a little pharaonic, with great artistic quality."

Deputy creative director Stefano Trespidi tapped technical wizards at DWOK, an Italian company specializing in advanced video design that

helped create La Scala's all-virtual 2020 season premier and designed virtual sets for a production of "Aida" at the Sydney opera.

"They are artists and technicians at the same time, and that is not easy," Trespidi said. "This is a great innovation; innovations need time to take hold. The process that we started today we don't know where it will take us. Certainly, it will take us forward."

Friday's season-opening premiere was a double-bill of Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria rusticana" and Ruggiero Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci," a production planned for the 2020 season that was never staged due to restrictions that limited performances to concerts. In fact, wooden sets for last year's "Cavalleria" remain unfinished at the Arena's cavernous workshop at the edge of the city, set aside for perhaps a future edition.

Instead, a Sicilian village was created on 400 square meters of LED screens, with projections of a hillside, a church façade and craggy buildings, all with three-dimensional depth. Moving clouds gave the scene dynamism, while singers and actors moved up and down a physical staircase and through a foreground filled with tables and chairs to create a central piazza.

While "Cavalleria rusticana" was nostalgically staged in black, white and gray, the "Pagliacci" cast was dressed in

bright technicolor costumes, against a more spare backdrop inspired by a Fellini film set, and underlining the collision of real life and theater in the opera.

The video component also includes cameo imagery from Italian museums in each of the five new operas, including also "Aida," "Nabucco" and "La Traviata." The collaborations, including with the Vatican Museum, the Uffizi and Turin's Egyptian Museum, are meant as a gesture of solidarity with another cultural branch that also suffered from restrictions during the pandemic.

"They found this wonderful solution that works very well," said tenor Yusif Eyvazov, who is singing the role of Canio/Pagliaccio. "It is really so beautiful to see, that you don't see it is not a real set. And the audience can see a real show, and not just a concert."

Eyvazov said the screens had an added benefit: "It is very comfortable for the voice. It is a wall, that gives also acoustic support, and this is very important in the Arena, because we sing outdoors."

Ongoing virus restrictions mean that the Arena, for now, can seat a maximum of 6,000 guests, instead of the pre-pandemic 13,500. Orchestra musicians are separated by two-meter distances, the chorus is spread stage left in the amphitheater seating like a Greek choir, and non-singing cast

members wear masks when the stage grows crowded.

For many in the crowd, just seeing live theater was a treat, and the new technology a new element to absorb.

"Even being used to

the big sets of the Arena, it is still very beautiful," said Guia Veronese, a regular at the Arena whose 8-year-old son was singing in the Pagliacci boys' choir. "It almost seems real at a certain point."

As virus surges in Uganda, hospitals accused of profiteering

KAMPALA, UGANDA (AP): As he struggled to breathe earlier this month, Dr. Nathan Tumubone was tormented by thoughts of hospitalization as a COVID-19 patient. Thinking of the costs involved, he knew he wanted to stay home.

He and his wife "steamed" up to five times a day, inhaling what they felt was the relieving vapor rising from a boiling concoction of herbs.

"The truth is I didn't want to go to hospital," said the general practitioner. "We've seen the costs are really high, and one wouldn't want to get in there."

As virus cases surge in Uganda, making scarce hospital beds even more expensive, concern is growing over the alleged exploitation of patients by private hospitals accused of demanding payment up front and hiking fees.

Uganda is among African countries seeing a dramatic rise in the number of infections amid a severe vaccine shortage. The pandemic is resurging in 12 of Africa's 54 countries, the World Health Organization reported Thursday, saying the current wave is "picking up speed, spreading faster, hitting harder."

Africa's top public health official, John Nkengasong of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Thursday that Africa's third wave is "very devastating" as the delta variant drives infections in many countries.

Just 1% of people across Africa have been fully vaccinated, and Uganda has vaccinated under 1% of its 44 million people. It has confirmed 75,537 infections, including 781 deaths. The actual totals are believed to be much higher because only a few thousand samples

are tested daily.

Hospitals in cities including the capital, Kampala, report difficulties in finding bottled oxygen, and some are running out of space for COVID-19 patients. Intensive care units are in high demand.

Although the practice of requiring deposits from patients has long been seen as acceptable in this East African country where few have health insurance, it is raising anger among some who cite attempts to profiteer from the pandemic.

Without a national health insurance scheme, COVID-19 has highlighted that health care in Uganda is "commoditized, available to the highest bidder," said Daniel Kalinaki, a columnist with the Daily Monitor newspaper. "The lingering question is how did we go from a place where you paid what you could and made sure to clear your dues on your next visit, to one where patients will not be touched until the whiny-voiced bean counter in the accounts office confirms that their deposit has cleared?"

Many Ugandans don't trust government hospitals, citing the decay they find there as well as the occasional lack of basic supplies. Top government officials routinely seek treatment abroad. Most people attend private facilities that have mushroomed across the country in the years since the health sector was opened up to private investors.

Some hospital bills shared by families of COVID-19 patients emerging from intensive care show sums of up to \$15,000, a small fortune in a country where annual per capita income is less than \$1,000.

Private hospital directors who spoke to the local press defended their fees policy, saying looking after COVID-19 patients is risky and not cheap.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

Facebook.com/SummitTimesOnline

SummitTIMES

Sikkim SCAN | CapitalTIMES | Neighbourhood WATCH | Sports & Specials | ElseWhere | EtcETERA

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

BANISTON:
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749897695, +91-9647702692
For Advertisement booking at +91-9933427905 or at office no 03592-208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGUR:
Mr. Mani Rai, H/o. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor, Opp. Banga Hotel, Hill Cart Road, Siliguri - 735002, Ph. 0353-2212434/ fax 0353-2212433/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-983700397, E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irshad_al123@gmail.com

KOLKATA OFFICE:
Irshad Ali/ Imteyaz Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072, Ph. 033-22124340/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-983700397, E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irshad_al123@gmail.com

Phone:
03592-208698
+91-9832556698
+91-9832080753

www.summittimes.com

news@summittimes.com
summittimes@gmail.com
advertise@summittimes.com

Address:
Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road
Near Diesel Power House (DPH)
Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

Daytime Emmys salute late TV icons Alex Trebek, Larry King

LOS ANGELES (AP):The Daytime Emmys turned into a love letter to Alex Trebek, honoring the beloved “Jeopardy!” host and the show seven months after his death. Trebek won as game show host and “Jeopardy!” earned game show honors on Friday night.

ABC’s “General Hospital” claimed four trophies, including best drama. Maurice Benard took lead actor honors for the third time as Sonny Corinthos.

Jacqueline MacInnes Wood of CBS’ “The Bold and the Beautiful” won as lead actress, adding to her trophy from two years ago for her role as Steffy Forrester.

It was a family affair, with the children of Trebek and Larry King accepting on their late fathers’ behalf.

Trebek’s son, Matt, and daughter, Emily, stood behind the host’s podium on the quiz show’s set. Trebek died of pancreatic cancer in November at age 80.

“For as long as we can remember, he was always so proud to be a part of ‘Jeopardy!’, to work on a show that was based on knowledge, risk and the challenge — people had to think,” Trebek’s son said. “He loved every bit of it.”

Emily added, “He was always excited

to go to work, even during his battle with cancer. He was so fortunate that he was able to do what he loved, and we know that he not once took it for granted.”

It was Trebek’s third straight victory and sixth overall in the category. He was nominated a record 32 times during his career.

Executive producer Mike Richards dedicated the best game show trophy to Trebek, who hosted for 37 years.

“He was more than just a game show host, he was a legend, a towering figure,” Richards said in pre-taped remarks. “He believed that ‘Jeopardy!’ was more than just a game show. He loved it because it stood for facts, competition, and the celebration of intelligence.”

Kelly Clarkson’s eponymous talk show earned two trophies. The singer was honored as host, beating out daytime newcomer Drew Barrymore, among others, and the show won in the entertainment talk category.

Trebek was remembered in a special tribute segment, along with Regis Philbin and King. Philbin died last July at age 88. Among those honoring Trebek in taped comments were U.S. first lady Jill



Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

“I got to talk with him a few years ago, and he expressed to me how proud he was to be a Canadian,” Trudeau said. “I had to tell him that all Canadians are incredibly proud that he’s one of us as well.”

King, who died in January at age 87, won as informative talk show host for his eponymous show on Ora TV. His sons, Chance and Cannon, accepted.

“This last season was a testament to his love for broadcasting,” Chance King said. “As much as he is gone, he is with us

in our hearts forever.”

Marla Adams and Max Gail won supporting actor trophies.

Adams plays Dina Mergeron on CBS’ “The Young and the Restless.” The 82-year-old actor accepted at home with the Emmy statue on a table behind her. “Y&R” also won the best writing category.

Gail appeared on stage while socially distanced because of the coronavirus pandemic to accept for his role as Mike Corbin on “General Hospital.” It was the 78-year-old actor’s second trophy in the supporting category, having won in 2019. “GH” also won directing honors.

“Red Table Talk,” featuring Jada Pinkett Smith, her daughter, Willow, and her mother, Adrienne Banfield-Norris, won for informative talk show.

Sheryl Underwood of “The Talk” hosted.

Gigi Hadid Reveals the Family Beauty Secret She’ll Pass Down to Daughter Khai

Gigi Hadid shares the beauty tip her mother, Yolanda Hadid, taught her, which she “for sure” plans to pass on to her and Zayn Malik’s daughter Khai.

Gigi Hadid has a lot to offer her and Zayn Malik’s daughter Khai.

The 26-year-old model has a wealth of experience and knowledge, which she has gained from walking the runways and traveling the globe over the years. And as she savors the new chapter in her life, the mom is already thinking about the lessons she’ll teach her baby girl, like her family’s belief that less is more.

“I think I’ll teach Khai to keep it simple when it comes to makeup, like my mom [Yolanda Hadid] taught me,” Gigi tells Harper’s Bazaar, adding “there’s a few” more tips she will “for sure” pass on to her little one.

Gigi shares that her mod-



el mother was relatively hands off when it came to her beauty routine, explaining, “My mom never really gave me advice on, like, what to do with my skincare or makeup, but I definitely watched her enough to learn.”

“She had a very simple, natural take on skincare. She didn’t overdo it with product, and I feel like I’ve taken that on, where I think less is

more,” the star says. “Doing too much for my skin or beauty routine can make it more complicated, and sometimes my skin can’t handle it.”

But simplicity doesn’t equate to monotony. The model, who appears in a commercial for Ralph Lauren’s new fragrance Ralph’s Club, says she changes her beauty and fragrance routine based on her mood, saying,

“I have certain ones that I always go back to, but I’m definitely open to try new ones. But also during the day, I tend to wear lighter fragrances or mix. Then at night is when I like to bring out the stronger, deeper, more complex scents.”

When Gigi is on “mom duty full-time,” she says she keeps her routine to “the necessities,” which includes face wash, moisturizer, lotion and a spritz of perfume.

She admits motherhood is different from what she’s used to, but it’s entirely worth it. “It’s all my favorite, even if it gets hard at times. You have so much patience and unconditional love that comes with motherhood,” Gigi shares. “It’s just fun to watch her grow and learn every day. And she makes me so proud. It’s funny how even the smallest things are exciting.”

Liam Neeson Reveals “Dear, Departed Wife” Natasha Richardson’s Ultimatum About James Bond Role

Parent Trap actress Natasha Richardson said Liam Neeson couldn’t play the role of James Bond, so this is how the actor repaid his late wife.

Taken actor Liam Neeson could’ve been James Bond, if his late wife Natasha Richardson didn’t have a say in it.

“I know they were looking at various actors and I apparently was among them,” Liam revealed on The Late Late Show with James

Corden on Thursday, June 23. “However, my dear, departed wife did say to me... ‘Darling, if you’re offered James Bond and you’re going to play it, you’re not going to marry me.’”

Liam and Natasha first met in 1993 when they co-starred on Broadway’s Anna Christie. Both actors were nominated for the Best Actor and Best Actress Tony Awards for their work. The duo ended up getting mar-

ried one year later, and had two children together: Micheál, 26, and Daniel, 24.

Natasha tragically died in 2009 after a skiing accident, and Micheál has had a difficult time with his grief.

“I think the pain was a little too overwhelming,” he told Vanity Fair in July 2020. “I think the mind is very powerful, and subconsciously, or unconsciously, it can protect you. That’s what it did when she passed. I just pushed it

aside and didn’t want to deal with it.”

“I don’t, even still, think that I’ve fully comprehended it, and that seems to be a similar journey to a lot of people I’ve spoken to,” he recalled. “Fifty-year-olds who lost their parents when they were 12, 13... One day they’re out gardening, and something comes over them and they just break down.”

Micheál greatly looked up to his mother.



BACK IN THE GAME! Selling Sunset’s Christine Quinn showed off her post-baby body in a Burberry mini skirt and matching top when arriving at the Luxe Hotel in LA.

ARIES:

Your flexible nature may get you in trouble today, Aries. Personalities may clash when no one is willing to lead. Be aggressive without being manipulative. Keep it light. Don’t try to pin anyone down. Your nature is open and expansive. Give other people the freedom they want. Unexpected events may dramatically change the course of the day, so don’t be upset if things don’t go as planned.

TAURUS:

Things will flow smoothly for you, Taurus. There’s barely a reason for you to lift a finger. You have the good fortune of enjoying this day with very little effort on your part. Keep in mind that if you decide to get something done, you will be extremely successful and able to accomplish quite a bit. You’re in sync with today’s energy.

GEMINI:

People aren’t going to want to be quite as intense as you require today, Gemini. Things are light and airy. You may find that no one is in the mood to delve as deeply as you want to go. Use the day to relax and release control for a while. Take deep breaths and long walks. Go for a bike ride or short road trip. Crazy, unexpected events may crop up throughout the day. Be prepared for surprises.

CANCER:

Things probably aren’t going to go exactly as you planned today, Leo. Realize that people may act in erratic, powerful bursts, especially when it comes to emotional issues. Your feelings may be a bit distant, and you may find it hard to get in touch with what’s really going on inside you. Do your best to maintain a positive attitude. That’s all anyone can ask.

LEO:

Don’t get sad if no one is laughing at your jokes today, Virgo. It doesn’t mean you aren’t funny. It just means that people may not be in the mood to laugh. Ridiculous as it seems, today is simply a better day to cry. Let out all your pent-up emotions. Talk things over with others. Your heart communicates well through you today.

VIRGO:

Today is an excellent day for you, Virgo. Events will flow quite smoothly. The only thing to be aware of is that your emotions may seem rather erratic and unwieldy. There’s a great deal of power behind your words and people are sure to listen. They would be smart to do so. What you have to say will be right on target with today’s energy.

LIBRA:

You may be indecisive today, Libra. You may not be

able to find solutions you can live with. You don’t need to finalize anything now. Use this day to lay low and gather data. People may seem rather insensitive and erratic. Go with the flow. You have a great deal of warmth and passion to share. You may find that a strong, unpredictable force is affecting your emotions.

SCORPIO:

There is plenty of air to fuel your fire today, Scorpio. You’re able to get quite a bit done. Multitasking is key to accomplishing what you want to do. An element of the unexpected is likely to add a surprising dimension to the day. You’re able to communicate freely, and you will likely be on the same page with the people you meet.

SAGITTARIUS:

You may need to make some slight adjustments in order to get through to people today, Sagittarius. The pace may be a bit faster than you’d like. Remember that people aren’t mind readers. They won’t be sensitive enough to pick up on your subtle messages. If you want to get something across, state it clearly and succinctly. Feel free to explore the unconventional and bizarre.

CAPRICORN:

Today is an excellent day for you, Capricorn. You will receive some bursts of unexpected energy that help you accomplish whatever it is you wish to do. You should enjoy a favorable mood and good relations with others all day. Enjoy yourself and feel free to indulge in things that make you happy. Spend time with your family and let them share in your positive energy flow.

AQUARIUS:

Things may be moving a bit too quickly today for you to grab hold of anything, Aquarius. There’s an element of the unexpected entering into the equation. Be prepared. The mood of the day is especially light and perhaps a bit superficial. People may not be entirely reliable. If there’s something you absolutely need to do, consider doing it by yourself.

PISCES:

Enjoy the day today, Pisces. Take control of the situation and make the most of whatever comes your way. Do it with a smile. There’s a great deal of fun-loving, excited energy ready for you to draw upon. Get your ideas out to others. Communicate your thoughts. Attend a party or two. You’re the epitome of the social butterfly. Make sure to wear your best attire.