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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SP Sharma ends protest hungerstrike after Raju Bista's announcement that Tripartite meet will be held soon

SMRITA KHAWAS DARJEELING, 06 AUG:
Today, six days into his fast-unto-death, the Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (Bharati Faction) general secretary, SP Sharma, ended his fast following the Darjeeling MP, Raju Bista's announcement that a tripartite meeting with the Central Government will be held by the first week of September to discuss a permanent political solution for the Darjeeling Hills.

Ending his fast, Mr Sharma highlighted that this was for the first time in the history of Darjeeling that an MP informed that the Central Government will be officially communicating the convening of a meeting to discuss the Darjeeling issue.

"In the past, such meetings used to be called over phone calls, but this time, information will be released through the Press Information Bureau, and because of this achievement we ended the Fast Unto Death," he said.

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9 consecutive days with Covid deaths and second with more recoveries than new cases in Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 AUG:

Covid claimed one more life in Sikkim in the 24 hours ending 8AM Friday, taking Sikkim's COVID toll to 352. The State has now reported a Covid death every day for the past nine days. The last time that no deaths were reported in the preceding 24 hours was 29 July. In the nine days since, Sikkim has seen 16 Covid deaths. The latest Covid death was reported from Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

Meanwhile, on a more reassuring note, Sikkim recorded more recoveries than new cases for the second consecutive day today. While 215

people had made full recoveries against the 184 new cases reported yesterday, the Daily Report of Covid-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department this morning informs that another 245 people have since made full recoveries compared to the 126 new cases detected in the last 24 hours.

Sikkim's count of recovered cases of Covid-19 has now reached 23,772.

The 126 new cases reported today were picked up from the testing of 1,593 samples on Thursday giving Sikkim a daily test positivity rate of 7.9%, a figure considerably lower than the positivity rate

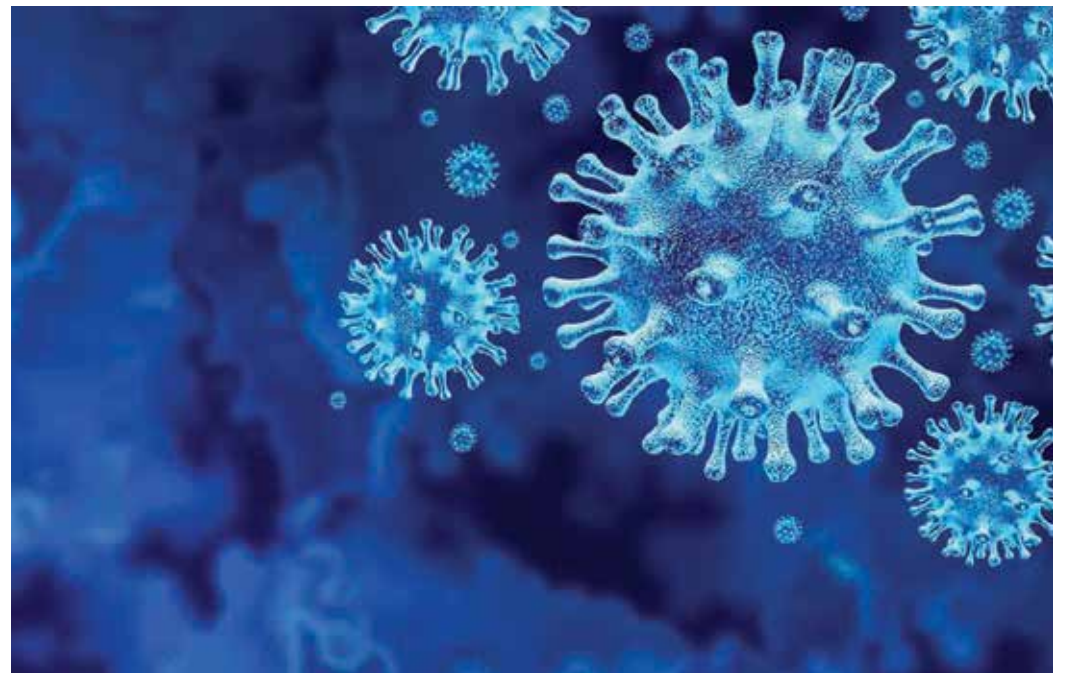
being reported of late.

Of the new cases, 48 were registered in East District, 39 in West District, 37 in South District and 02 in North District.

Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has now reached 27,652.

There are currently 3,250 active Covid cases in Sikkim, only 109 of whom have symptoms severe enough to require hospitalization while the rest are recovering either in home or facility isolation.

Among those in hospital, six were admitted in the last 24 hours while nine are admitted in the intensive care units at STNM Hospital and CRH.



CM visits site for Sikkim House coming up in Mumbai



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 AUG:

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang visited the site for the upcoming Sikkim House at Khargar, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra on 05 Aug, a press release informs.

During his visit, the Executive engineer (Khargar-1) and his team briefed the Chief Minister regarding the

site and the forthcoming facility. Further, he also explained the technical features and the proximity of the area to relevant amenities.

The plot is located at a strategic spot and is close to major health facilities including, Tata Memorial Centre (Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer, ACTREC) and Apollo Hos-

pital, Belapur to name a few. The Chief Minister stated that the forthcoming Sikkim House will significantly assist the Sikkimese people visiting the state for medical purposes.

The Chief Minister also met the MLA, Belapur, Manda Vijay Mhatre and the Vice Chairman/Managing Director of City and Industrial Develop-

ment Corporation (CIDCO) and expressed his gratitude on the occasion.

Minister (Tourism), BS Pant, Secretary to CM, Secretary (Tourism) Principal Chief Engineer (Tourism), Director (Chief Minister's Office) and Director (Sikkim State Lotteries) and officials from CIDCO were also present during the visit.

IT Deptt advisor reaches Rayong with promise of establishing reliable internet connectivity within 90 days

AARON RAI

GANGTOK, 06 AUG:

Tenzin Lamtha, advisor to the Information Technology Department, arrived at the hamlet of Rayong near Rabongla on Friday with the promise of reaching internet connectivity to the village within 90 days.

Mr Lamtha explained that he was at Rayong on the directions of Chief Minister PS Tamang who wants the connectivity issues there to be addressed at the earliest.

Students living in Rayong have been especially disadvantaged by the lack of internet coverage in the area and have had to walk long distances to be able to at-

tend online classes.

Today, Mr Lamtha, accompanied by senior officials from the Forest and IT Departments, conferred with the villagers to take stock of the situation.

Following the meeting, Forest officials agreed to allot a suitable site to install a mobile telecom tower to establish proper connectivity for the village.

"Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang is giving top priority to the IT sector so that people can benefit from opportunities provided by online and digital services. We came here to Rayong because people and students here are facing various problems because

internet connectivity is weak in the area. After discussions, the Forest department has decided to allot a suitable site in the nearby forest area where a Jio tower will be installed to boost internet coverage," Mr Lamtha informs.

The entire process – from allotment of site to construction of a telecom tower – will take 90 days at the most, he added.

Mr Lamtha was accompanied to the visit by the Forest Department secretary, ML Srivastav, and senior officials from the IT Department along with Zilla Adhakshya South, Tshering Dem Bhutia, SKM party functionaries and Jio representatives.

SOA & SABA felicitate two pugilists and a mountaineer



SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 06 AUG:

Sikkim Olympic Association [SOA] and Sikkim Amateur Boxing Association [SABA] have jointly felicitated two pugilists and a mountaineer from Sikkim in recognition of their outstanding performance and contributions in their respective fields.

In a felicitation programme held here on Friday, national boxing coach, Sandhya Gurung, Everest Manita Pradhan and a national pugilist, Prava Gajmer were honoured for their achievements and contributions.

The felicitation programme was chaired by Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling as the chief guest and Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Raju Basnet was present as the guest of honour.

Sandhya Gurung is the coach of Olympic medal winning boxer, Lovlina Borgohain, who won a bronze medal for the country in the 69 kg weight category in Tokyo Olympics 2020, while Manita Pradhan successfully summited the highest peak of the world Mt Everest on 01 June this year.

Likewise, a young promising pugilist, Prava Gajmer won a bronze medal for Sikkim in the recently concluded 4th Women Junior National Boxing Championship held at Sonapat, Haryana, after a long gap.

On the occasion, the chief guest appreciated the initiative of both associations to honour and recognize women achievers from Sikkim in their respective fields. He also congratulated all three personalities for their achievements and contributions and further

turn to pg02

MLA convenes coordination meet to discuss Soreng's water storage and distribution problems

SORENG, 06 AUG [IPR]: A co-ordination meeting to discuss the overall water distribution and storage problems within rural and urban areas of Soreng Sub-Division was held at the conference hall of Sub-Division Administrative Centre, today.

The meeting was chaired by area MLA Aditya Golay and attended by ADC (Development), Gayas Pega, SDM- Soreng, Ranjan Rai, SDPO- Soreng, Mahendra Pradhan, BDO Sabina Limbu, RO/AD, BB Rai along with engineers and other concerned officials.

The meeting commenced with a welcome speech by Ranjan Rai wherein he extended his warm greetings to all the individual dignitaries and the participants. A scheduled power point presentation was made by the Engineering cell Officers for their respective departments.

Assistant Engineer, BSE, Rakesh Sharma firstly started



his presentation by giving a brief introduction on current water distribution, it's conservation, source of water during water shortage and emergencies and the prime water reservoir in and around Soreng Block. He said that the existing water schemes of the Government for both urban and rural areas will be implemented and that the sanctioned budget for the same will be utilized under the Jal Je-

van Mission (JJM).

The main objective of today's meeting was to discuss whether or not there will be any water scarcity problem in near future for areas under the Soreng- Chakung Constituency. The officials from PHE gave an in-depth presentation regarding the current water demand, usage and its distribution and also emphasized the fact that there is a steady growth on water con-

sumption along with the rise in population. They also assured that the current water supply is sufficient for the increasing number of households within the vicinity of the water source.

A short discussion between the participants took place wherein the concerned department cleared some queries from the audience such as water shortage and insufficiency during winter season. The Hon'ble MLA suggested that the department can regulate the water flow and distribution especially during seasons where the problem of water shortage is inevitable.

Then, Devendra Sharma, H.O.D, Civil Engineering Department, CCCT, Chisopani presented his thorough research on water capacity, it's discharge and distribution network mapping along with water requirement zonation map. He also made

turn to pg02

Know all about e-RUPI, the new digital payment instrument

(Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 02 August launched digital payment solution e-RUPI, a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment. Prime Minister said that the eRUPI voucher is going to play a huge role in making Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) more effective in digital transactions in the country and will give a new dimension to digital governance. He said e-RUPI is a symbol of how India is progressing by connecting people's lives with technology.)

What is e-RUPI and how it works?

e-RUPI is basically a digital voucher which a beneficiary gets on his phone in the form of an SMS or QR code. It is a prepaid voucher, which he/she can go and redeem it at any centre that accepts its.

For example, if the Government wants to cover a particular treatment of an employee in a specified hospital, it can issue an e-RUPI voucher for the determined amount through a partner bank. The employee will receive an SMS or a QR Code on his feature phone / smart phone. He/she can go to the specified hospital, avail of the services and pay through the e-RUPI voucher received on his phone.

Thus e-RUPI is a onetime contactless, cashless voucher-based mode of payment that helps users redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app, or internet banking access.

e-RUPI should not be con-



fused with Digital Currency which the Reserve Bank of India is contemplating. Instead e-RUPI is a person specific, even purpose specific digital voucher.

How is e-RUPI advantageous to the Consumer?

e-RUPI does not require the beneficiary to have a bank account, a major distinguishing feature as compared to other digital payment forms. It ensures an easy, contactless two-step redemption process that does not require sharing of personal details either.

Another advantage is that e-RUPI is operable on basic phones also, and hence it can

be used by persons who do not own smart-phones or in places that lack internet connection.

What are the benefits of e-RUPI for the sponsors?

e-RUPI is expected to play a major role in strengthening Direct-Benefit Transfer and making it more transparent. Since, there is no need for physical issuance of vouchers, it will also lead to some cost savings as well.

What benefits accrue to the Service Providers?

Being a prepaid voucher, e-RUPI would assure real time payments to the service provider.

Who has developed the e-RUPI?

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which oversees the digital payments ecosystem in India, has launched e-RUPI, a voucher-based payments system to promote cashless transactions.

It has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and National Health Authority.

Which Banks issue e-RUPI?

NPCI has partnered with 11 banks for e-RUPI transactions. They are Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Union Bank of India.

The acquiring Apps are Bharat Pe, BHIM Baroda Merchant Pay, Pine Labs, PNB Merchant Pay and YoNo SBI Merchant Pay.

More banks and acquiring Apps are expected to join the e-RUPI initiative soon.

Where can e-RUPI be used now?

To begin with NPCI has tied up with more than 1,600 hospitals where e-RUPI can be redeemed.

Experts say, in the days to come the user base of e-RUPI is expected to widen, with even private sector using it to deliver employee benefits and MSMEs adopting it for Business To Business (B2B) transactions. [PIB]

Apollo Hospitals leads the way in Non-Surgical Cardiac Valve Repairs

CHENNAI, 04 AUG: Apollo Hospitals, Asia's foremost and most trusted healthcare group, today announced a successful MitraClip implant on a 41-year-old male farmer who had waited for over three months in different hospitals for a heart transplant. The patient was back on his feet within a few days after the procedure, and might not even need a heart transplant.

Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Dr Sai Satish, Apollo Hospitals said, "The MitraClip is a small metal clip with a polyester fabric that is inserted in place to fix the leaky mitral valve thereby ensuring that the blood flow is in the right direction.

It is a globally accepted procedure for patients with heart failure. Patients with moderate to severe or severe primary and secondary mitral regurgitation who are not improving on medical treatment can opt for this minimally invasive solution that offers them a vastly improved quality of life and health.

For three years now we have been performing this procedure on patients we think are suitable candidates and we have seen incredible results in the quality of life they are able to return to, post procedure.

Our experience in this domain has enabled us to achieve many milestones including back-to-back MitraClip implants in four very sick patients in just one day earlier this year, at the height of the second wave of the pandemic. Today, we are at pole position; 70% of all MitraClips in India to date have been performed at Apollo Hospitals and we are only looking at bigger and more remarkable milestones in the journey ahead."

MitraClip implants give a new lease of life for frail and elderly patients who cannot go in for conventional open-heart surgery. The minimally invasive MitraClip procedure is effective in both functional and degenerative mitral regurgitation. The procedure is performed percutaneously in a cath lab and the device is removable and repositionable. These important attributes contribute to the safety of this procedure. Diligent patient selection is an important element to ensure success.

Data from 119 patients in the International MitraBridge Registry on critically ill patients on a transplant list showed procedural success was achieved in 87.5% of cases, and 30-day survival was 100%

Repeat hospitalisations are avoided after the MitraClip procedure as compared to conventional surgery, making it economical in the long run and patients are able to recover and resume life in a very short span of time."

Executive Vice Chairperson, Preetha Reddy, Apollo Hospitals Group said, "As one of the few hospitals in India ac-



credited to perform the MitraClip procedure, being able to save the life of a patient waiting for a heart transplant gives us the ability to offer hope to many others.

Patients with severe/end-stage heart failure comprise up to 10% of patients suffering from heart disease.

Research has shown that using MitraClip as a bridge to heart transplantation is safe and may even lead to functional improvements that permit patients to be removed from the transplant list.

We are proud to have demonstrated this at Apollo Hospitals through the case of a 41 year old male patient who was waiting for a heart transplant for over three months. The success of this case has renewed our commitment to taking this cutting edge and revolutionary medical innovation to the people who need it the most.

Also a vast majority of these cases were performed during the worst months of the second wave and this was possible only because of the stringent infection control protocol and the iron curtain that separates COVID and non COVID patients in the hospital."

MitraClip was introduced in India just three years ago. The first MitraClip was implanted in 2003 in a patient in the US. It was a game-changing procedure and was made commercially available in Europe in 2008 and in the US in 2013. Today over 100,000 patients in more than 50 countries have undergone the MitraClip procedure.

India's first two scientific papers on MitraClip have both been published from Apollo Hospitals, one on the first case and the second paper on the first seven cases with a year's follow-up showing excellent outcomes. Dr Sai Satish of Apollo Hospitals is the only Indian author involved in the authorship of the APAC guidelines for MitraClip implants. Asia's first MitraClip training programme that included theory and four cases over two days was also conducted at Apollo Hospitals, cementing its position as a Centre of Excellence in Interventional Cardiology.

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SOA & SABA felicitate...

encouraged them to continue with their efforts and hard work to achieve new heights.

He also urged youngsters to take inspiration from these personalities to work hard with commitment and dedication in their fields.

Mr Khaling expressed that Sikkim has promising and talented sportspersons in all areas despite being a small State and they just need support and encouragement to reach higher levels. He mentioned that the state government has been working for sports on a priority basis to bring out national and international athletes from Sikkim.

Although the government has not been able to conduct tournaments and competition due to the pandemic, the government has been working hard in developing international level infrastructures and facilities in sports for local sportspersons, he stated.

Similarly, Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department congratulated Sandhya Gurung for producing an Olympian from the country with her hard work and dedication. He also congratulated Prava Gajmer for winning

a medal for the State from the junior nationals after a long gap and further encouraged her to continue with her dedication to reach international and Olympics in the future. Mr Basnet stated that the state government is ready to support and push sportspersons from the state.

SOA president Kuber Bhandari thanked the State government for providing required facilities, infrastructures, cash incentives and support in sports and urged local sportspersons to take full advantage of these facilities and opportunities.

He also mentioned that the state government has been supporting different sports associations and clubs to promote club culture in the state. He mentioned that the upcoming Khelo India Centre of Excellence in boxing, archery and athletics in the State would definitely help in producing quality athletes from Sikkim.

On the occasion, Sandhya Gurung and Manita Pradhan shared their journey, challenges and experience. They also thanked SOA and SABA for honoring and recognizing their achievements.

South prepares for Independence Day celebrations

NAMCHI, 06 Aug (IPR):

A preparatory meeting with regard to the celebration of 75th Independence Day, 2021 was held at District Administrative Centre, Namchi, today.

The meeting was chaired by DC (South), M Bharani Kumar and had the presence of SDM (HQ), Chiran Rizal, ASP (South), Rinzing C Rai, SDPO (South), Kessang D Bhutia alongside other officials.

Addressing, the meeting DC highlighted that in view of the corona virus pandemic, the District Administration shall organize this year's Independence Day in a low-key manner at its DAC's complex to avoid large congregation in the ceremony. The Administration will be following the sets of guidelines issued

by the State Government to observe the celebration of 75th Independence Day. Moreover, DC Mr Bharani also urged the officials to work in coordination with the line departments to ensure and avoid setback in the celebration.

The meeting had the overview of roles and arrangements of the respective departments for the celebration. It also discussed on the planning of rehearsal for the ceremony which is to be held on 13 August.

The administration will also felicitate the COVID-19 warriors of police, health and other frontline workers for their active roles in the pandemic hours during the ceremony. Additionally, meritorious employees from various departments will also be awarded.

North Sikkim coordination meet discusses environment and border area development plans



Mangan, 06 Jul (IPR): A coordination meeting took place in the DAC Conference Hall, Mangan, North Sikkim, today.

The meeting was chaired by District Collector (North), Tenzing T Kaleon, ADM (North), SDPO (Mangan), CMO (North) and various heads of departments as well as engineers and officials of line departments were present at the meeting.

The meeting was called to discuss three main agendas:

- 1) District Environment Plan (DEP)
- 2) Border Area Development Programme (BADP)
- 3) 75th Independence Day celebrations.

ADM (North) provided the introductory note while DC (North) laid out the details and instructions for the Independence Day celebrations to be held on 15 August. He assigned various responsibilities to different departments and asked everyone to be present for the event and also to be mindful and to follow the COVID 19 protocols.

He also asked the officials and departments concerned to work towards clearing and cleaning the approach road that leads to the District Administrative Complex.

JE (Education Department) gave a power point presentation and provided details of the projects under BADP, catering to schools and educational institutes all over North District, particularly in Lachen, Gangyap, Chatten, Sarchok and Mangshila. DC (North) suggested that the works department function in synchronization with the administration so as to provide effective results. He particularly asked the engineer-

ing team to look into proper supply of water and electricity while working on these projects.

He emphasized on the importance of BADP programme and stated that creating infrastructure alone does not lead to development of a region but the sustainability of the asset created, results in progress and also reduces migration from rural to urban areas, thereby creating opportunities and security in the rural areas itself. He reiterated on the importance of the balance between the administration and the technical team and asked them to create a system that leads to smooth functioning and a holistic development of the district.

Officials from Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Health, Labour and Roads & Bridges stated their grievances and also updated on the work done so far under BADP. DE (Roads & Bridges) informed that the construction work of Kayum Bridge over Kanaka River is in progress and will be completed soon.

JE (BAC Passingdong) presented a detailed PPT on District Environment Plan. He explained about factors like vegetation, altitude, temperature that constitute the district profile of a region. He provided data of forests covered regions in the district and explained how geography and the demography of a region play an important part. He also spoke about waste management including hazardous waste management as well as air and water quality management.

DC (North) thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked the officials to perform their duties diligently. He reminded everyone to follow the guidelines and to take every precaution against Covid-19.

South DAC organizes online photography contest

NAMCHI, 05 Aug (IPR):

The office of South District Magistrate had organized an online photography contest on the theme landscape of south district from 01 to 20 July and was limited to District Magistrate's Instagram social media

profile which saw a total of 101 participants. This contest was organized mainly to recognize photography skills amongst the public at large.

The winners of this contest were decided based on the most number of likes on their pic-

tures. The first position was grabbed by Monica Karen Yonzon with 1770 likes followed by Sagar Rai and Deepti Pradhan in second and third position with 1647 and 510 likes, respectively. They were given gifts on behalf of the South District Magistrate.

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MLA convenes coordination...

some proposals that can be useful for better water management system. He suggested that a month-wise research on water reservation and distribution during peak and lean season can be done in order to administer the water system properly.

The ADC (Development), Gayas Pega resumed the meeting by thanking the Hon'ble MLA for his active participation and relentless support in respect to the overall development of Soreng Sub-Division. He said that the department has proposed solutions regarding the growing concerns of water management like water theft and mismanagement of water distribution. He emphasized on the importance of the Dhara Vikas Scheme which focuses on ideas that are useful for excessive water storage. Problem of water shortage in urban area can be solved once the water distribution system is officially handed over to the PHE Department from RMDD, he added.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by SDM Ranjan Rai.

Voting booth at MG Marg to boost Bkey Agarwal's chances of becoming Nepal's "Comedy Champion"

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 AUG:

Bkey Agarwal from Sikkim has made it to the top 5 of Nepal's popular reality show, Comedy Champion Season 2. Parents and a support forum for Bkey Agarwal have appealed to the people of Sikkim and neighbouring hills to support Bkey with more votes so that he can bring the champion's trophy to Sikkim.

A standup comedian, Bkey Agarwal was born to Kalu Ram Agarwal and Durga Mangar of Singhik, Mangan, North District and is in the top 5 of Comedy Champion Season 2 which is telecast every Friday and Saturday at 9 PM on Kantipur TV and also on OSR Reality on YouTube.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, Bkey's father, Kalu Ram Agarwal expressed his gratitude to every individual for supporting his son on the show. He appealed to the



people to extend more support and help his son bring the champion's trophy of the show to Sikkim.

Filmmaker Angel Tshering said that although Bkey Agarwal is a talented artist and performer, votes are an important factor for winning the show.

She informed that a booth would be set up for a week at MG Marg

from Monday where the people can support him by contributing money which will be used to vote for him. She mentioned that the support forum will also reach out to other parts of the State.

Saroj Kharel from Ha-sais Katle Comedy stated that Bkey is a talented performer and also very popular among the judges of the show

but still requires votes to make it to the top 3 of the show. He further added that for digital voting a person needs to download Prabhu Pay App and then register with an email-id.

It is informed that after registration, a person has to go to voting section in Prabhu Pay and select Comedy Champion to vote for Bkey Agarwal. He mentioned that

one person can give one free vote every week but if anyone wants to vote more than once then the person needs to pay.

However, Mr Kharel mentioned that there was some complication for international transactions so people can donate money and the support forum and parents of Bkey would instead make arrangements for voting.

Yuksam thanks Power Dept for uninterrupted power supply

PRITAM LAMA
YUKSAM, 05 AUG:

Yuksam residents have thanked the Power & Energy department for ensuring uninterrupted power supply.

The Department's Junior Engineer, Zikdal Bhutia and his team deployed at Yuksam Sub-division in West District have been working tirelessly to ensure uninterrupted power supply to private and Government offices.

The JE and his team worked till midnight on 04 Aug at a power sub-station located at Tingting village in Yuksam, where a transformer had got damaged. After hours of work, the team was successful in repairing the transformer.

Subi Hang Limboo, an entrepreneur who runs a



poultry farm said, "We got to see a drastic improvement in the power supply in our area after Zikdal Bhutia took charge as JE in Yuksam Sub-division."

PhuTshering Bhutia, who works at Yuksam SDM office, also said there has been huge improvement in the power supply because of which he has been able to serve people from far-flung vil-

lages without any delay.

Yok Kumar Thulung from Yuksam branch of State Bank of Sikkim said, "If there is no electricity we cannot provide banking services to the people. Being the only bank in the area, SBS Yuksam branch always sees huge rush of people. An hour of power outage can cause a lot of problems for the people."

MLA Golay inspects monastery construction at Singling

SORENG, 06 AUG [IPR]:
Soreng MLA Aditya Golay today inspected progress of the Ugen Lhendupche Gumpa construction at Singling.

The inspection team led by the MLA included Chief Engineer Tourism Department Neeraj Pradhan, SDM Soreng, Ranjan Rai, SDPO Soreng, Mahendra Pradhan, R.O/ A.D Soreng, B.B. Rai, and officials of Tourism Department along with the President of the Gumpa Committee, Smt. Sharda Tamang and members of the Committee.

After a thorough inspection, a brief meeting was conducted wherein the committee members and the department put forth their concerns and ideas regarding the completions of the Gumpa.

There was an active interaction between the Department Officials, the Committee members and the MLA.

The Assistant Engineer, Tourism informed that a sum of Rs. One



Crore has been sanctioned by the Government and that it will be used for further construction. The Chief Engineer, Tourism Department expressed his views with regard to the importance of equal participation and support from the local committee members for smooth and quicker completion of the project.

Experienced Lhari-pa (Wooden Sculptors) must be deployed for better quality of work, he added. He reiterated that if local people are interested then they

may be taken in as trainees but experienced and skilled craftsmen are a must for better result.

The MLA then gave his views and suggestions regarding the extension and upgradation of not just the Gumpa but also the vacant surrounding area. He said that the concerned department may work out a plan wherein the Gumpa can also cater as a tourist attraction spot. Landscaping and renovation can be done keeping in mind the tourism aspect in West district, he added.

Covid awareness for Mangan taxi drivers



WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 06 AUG:

Awareness on containment of Covid-19 was carried out in Mangan under the supervision of Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO), Tempa R Bhutia, Motor Vehicle Inspector, Milan Sharma and staff.

The awareness program was held for all local taxi drivers of Mangan Bazaar taxi stand towards proper sanitization of all vehicles as per COVID-19 protocol. The taxi drivers were informed that all vehicles need to carry adequate stock of sanitizer for the passengers.

The drivers of all such vehicles shall ensure that all passengers wear their face masks properly during the entire period of their journey and all RTOs shall deploy sufficient enforcement teams for checking.

Taxi drivers have assured to follow the Motor Vehicle department Rules.

Wrestling: Bajrang moves to quarterfinal, SeemaBisla loses 50kg opener to Hamdi

Chiba (Japan), Aug 6 (PTI):BajrangPunia, the last medal hope for India in wrestling at the ongoing Olympics, moved to the men's free-style 65kg quarterfinals after just about managing to go past Kyrgyzstan's ErnazarAkmataliev in his opening bout, here on Friday.

A timely take-down move just before the end of the first period put the Indian ahead 3-1 but Akmataliev ran Bajrang close in the second period, getting two push-out points to level the scores.

Since Bajrang had the high scoring move, a two-pointer take down, he was declared winner on criteria. It was not the most clean and fluent victories that he is known for, but was just enough for Bajrang, who came into the Games after suffering a minor knee injury during a local Russian tournament.

The Indian will next face Iran's MortezaChek-

aGhiasi. Earlier, Debutant Indian wrestler SeemaBisla could not find a way to get out of the defensive trap of Tunisia's SarraHamdi and lost her 50kg opening round 1-3.

The 27-year-old could not make her moves as Hamdi applied the body lock to great effect, never allowing Seema to initiate a strong attack.

There hardly any moves in the bout with Hamdi getting two of her three points on push out and one on Seema's passivity. Seema got on board when she too pushed her rival out after being put on activity clock for a second time.

She now needs the Tunisian to make the final for return to competition through the repechage route.

The Rohtak grappler had not even won a national event till 2017 but went on to secure her berth for the Games by winning the World Olympic Qualifier, held in Sofia in May.

Minister tours Pechrek and Upper Bermiok

GYALSHING, 06 AUG [IPR]: Minister Lok Nath Sharma, who is also the concerned area MLA, visited Pechrek and upper Bermiok on the second day of his constituency visit today.


He interacted with the people from different walks of life and ad-

ressed their grievances and also visited landslide-affected areas and assured to undertake pro-active measures to mitigate the situation.


The Minister also enquired after progress of ongoing construction of houses under Sikkim Garib Aawas Yojana and

further assured to include the deserving left out beneficiaries in future.

He also informed farmers about financial incentives in dairy farming and about the recently-implemented Mukhya Mantri Krishi Atmanirbhar Yojana.

 <p>INDIAN MARITIME UNIVERSITY (IMU) (A Central University under Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India) Established by an Act of the Parliament in 2008</p>	
The following programmes are offered at IMU for the Academic Year 2021-22	
Under-Graduate	Post-Graduate
B.Tech (Marine Engineering)	MBA (Port & Shipping Management)
B.Tech (Naval Architecture & Ocean Engineering)	MBA (International Transportation & Logistics Management)
B.Sc (Nautical Science)	M.Tech (Naval Architecture & Ocean Engineering)
BBA (Logistics, Retailing and E-Commerce)	M.Tech(Dredging & Harbour Engineering)
DNS (Diploma in Nautical Science)	M.Tech(Marine Engineering & Management)
PG Diploma	
Post Graduate Diploma in Marine Engineering	
For more details, please visit IMU Website www.imu.edu.in	

 <p>Government of India, Ministry of Textiles INDIAN INSTITUTE OF HANDLOOM TECHNOLOGY (Approved by AICTE and Affiliated to Anna University) Foules Compound, Thillai Nagar, SALEM-636 001 (Phone:0427-2294943, FAX:2295254, e-mail: iiht@iiht.ac.in)</p>	
Applications are invited by Indian Institute of Handloom Technology, Salem from eligible candidates from the Indian States/Union Territories (Other than Tamilnadu) for admission into First Year and Lateral Entry (direct 2nd Year) B.Tech. Handloom and Textile Technology Programme for the academic year 2021-22.	
FIRST YEAR ADMISSION FOR B.TECH. (HANDLOOM & TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY)	
Qualifying examination and eligibility	A pass in the HSC (Academic) or its equivalent. A minimum of 45% average marks in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry put together. When the candidates produce grade certificate, they have to produce the actual marks also otherwise only the minimum marks applicable to the grades in the eligible subjects (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry) will be taken into account. For minimum eligibility, rounding of marks and normalized marks will also not be considered. Improvement marks will also not be considered. Candidate should have a valid score of marks obtained in JEE main 2021 examination.
Admission Criteria	The admission will be based on the merit of rank obtained by the candidates in JEE Main 2021.
LATERAL ENTRY ADMISSION (DIRECT 2 nd YEAR) FOR B.TECH. (HANDLOOM & TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY)	
Qualifying examination and eligibility	Candidates who have passed Diploma in Handloom Technology / Handloom & Textile Technology / Textile Technology / B.Sc. with ancillary subject of Mathematics at B.Sc. level or studied Mathematics at +2 level or any equivalent Diploma as prescribed by Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Tamilnadu are eligible to apply. Candidates who have secured a minimum of 45% aggregate marks in Diploma/B.Sc. Degree are eligible to apply.
Applications:	For downloading application, last date for receipt of application and other details/updates, please visit Web: www.iihtsalem.edu.in . No separate corrigendum shall be released. Applications received after the due date are liable for rejection without notice.
DIRECTOR, IIHT SALEM	
CORRIGENDUM	
With reference to the Advertisement released by IIHT Varanasi, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India on 20/07/2021 regarding notice on commencement of 4 year B.Tech (Handloom & Textile Technology) programme, the website given therein may be read as www.iihtvaranasi.edu.in instead of iihtvns.edu.in .	
DIRECTOR, IIHT VARANASI	
davn 41102/11/0005/2122	



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

The Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is new strain of Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. Notorious for mutating quickly and acquiring new qualities, it is a rising epidemic that was previously not identified in humans.

Symptoms of nCoV



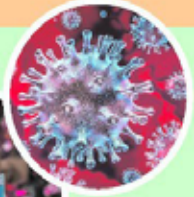
- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- Wash your hands often with soap.
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Observe good personal hygiene.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.
- Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.
- Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.

Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.
- No vaccinations available as of now.
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.

If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

Drug Related

*The battle cannot be won top-down,
wider collaborations required*

Drug busts form a staple of the diet of news consumers in Sikkim. A substantial drug haul on a chance routine inspection at the check-posts is a routine occurrence, and increasingly, bigger caches are being traced based on some investigative attention.

Prescription drugs continue to be the preferred substances of abuse even though more hardcore “drugs” are also obviously being peddled. The former is in much higher circulation and continues to remain the more pressing concern for Sikkim due to its easy availability and deep percolation among the youth. In fact, because the peddling of these prescription drugs was not covered under the then laws against “drugs”, like the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance Act, the Sikkim Government framed the Sikkim Anti-Drugs Act in the year 2006.

SADA was envisioned as a law to strengthen the hands of the law enforcement agencies in their effort to curtail the supply and peddling of these substances. Until SADA came about, a peddler could not even be kept locked up overnight since the pre-SADA laws, even on conviction, delivered only a minor fine as punishment... not even a slap on the wrists. All that the confiscation of big hauls at the check-posts succeeded in achieving was pushing up the street price of the prescription drugs of abuse because the peddlers would try to make up for profits lost to seized consignments. When SADA arrived, peddlers faced a jail-term and stiff punishments. In its original form, SADA tried to make a clear differentiation between peddlers and addicts and also took on a social responsibility by working in rehabilitation of addicts into sections of the law. In the ten years that SADA has been around, however, more people than anyone could have imagined to be peddlers have been convicted and it will not come as a surprise if some addicts have also become history-sheeters as peddlers.

The nature of addiction, however, is such that there is a very fine line dividing peddlers from addicts and it is not rare for the latter to sometimes crossover to the peddling business to finance their addictions. The original draft of SADA appeared to understand these nuances. Unfortunately, in the past slightly over a decade, it has become only a policing tool and has lost all its more humane aspects. It would however be wrong to blame the police for this Frankenstein. Like the State’s drug problem, even SADA becoming so much lesser than what it had potential for, is because the society continues to fail its young. It is worrying that the only agency involved in the battle against drugs is the Police. Cops are responsible for law & order and invariably treat the people who come to them or whom they chase down, as victims or criminals. Substance abuse, unfortunately, is not as black & white as the police is trained to see cases. It is for the grey areas to be addressed with empathy and long-term impact that one needs the society at large to step up. Social organizations need to have a more involved presence in the efforts against addiction. One should read more about counseling and awareness sessions than drug-busts and arrests.

No, the cops should not stop what they are doing, but that cannot be the only thing Sikkim is doing to address the problem of substance abuse. Addiction cannot be solved by locking up all the peddlers and addicts. Sikkim should have understood that by now because ten years since a specialist law was brought in to address a Sikkim-specific drug problems, there has not been any dip in either addiction levels or peddling or the cost that addiction extracts from families, homes and the State.

And all this failure because the social engagement, the wider collaborations and the community feeling required to build more resolute defences against substances of abuse have not been created.

WRITE US:

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



Sexism and Sport: Why Body-Baring Team Uniforms Are Bad For Girls and Women

SARAH ZIPP & SASHA SUTHERLAND
theconversation.com

Team outfits and fashion were not supposed to be a big talking point at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. But protests over skimpy uniforms by two women’s teams in the months before the games have brought bikinis and high-cut leotards into the spotlight. Now these high-profile campaigns are leaving Olympians, fans and aspiring young athletes wondering: why are women expected to bare their bodies while men cover up?

In April, the German women’s gymnastics team ditched the traditional, high-cut leg-baring leotards for ankle-length unitards, protesting the “sexualisation” of their bodies. This dissent was intended to highlight and prevent sexual abuse in the sport, following recent high-profile cases in the US and UK. They continued their protest at the Tokyo Olympics.

In a similar move, the Norwegian women’s beach handball team were fined for defying the uniform rules at the European championships in July. In Tokyo, they too continued their protest by wearing fitted shorts. The team claimed bikini bottoms made them feel uncomfortable, made it difficult when managing their periods, and turned young athletes off their sport. For many, the last point is key to understanding the impact of sexist uniform policies.

Uniform rules in sport are designed for an idealised western femininity. These standards fail to understand that girls quit sport over body-baring uniforms, overlook different hair and skin types, ignore curvy and muscular body shapes and wilfully ignore the realities of periods. What these policies suggest is that women’s bodies are expected to be perfectly thin, perfectly hairless, able-bodied and period-free.

British runner Jessica Ennis-Hill wrote a heartfelt essay about her fear of exposing herself and how “skimpy kit” can traumatise young athletes. From body shaming to sexualisation, her experience exposes the unseen struggles of girls and women in sport and echoes research on girls in sport.

OVERLOOKED AND UNDER-DRESSED

These campaigns reject sexist norms prevalent in sports and object to women’s uniforms being designed for the “male gaze”, leading to women being judged for their aesthetic appeal alongside their

athletic talent.

Undoubtedly, these women are taking a brave and laudable stance. Yet their voices carry an influence that women of colour and advocates for athletes in non-western countries are often denied. With much less fanfare and media attention, they have been lobbying for changes to kit for decades, often on behalf of Muslim athletes and/or people of colour.

In table tennis, a rule change for full-length sportswear and head coverings – as opposed to shorts and T-shirts which leave arms and legs bare – was successfully lobbied to increase participation by Muslim athletes. This victory went largely unnoticed in the west, despite the fact that table tennis is a mainstay of the Olympics. Campaigns led by Muslim athletes led to similar rule changes in basketball and judo, where women were finally allowed to wear head coverings and long-sleeved tops underneath, as their faith required.

In contrast, swimming has rejected proposals to adapt uniforms for Muslim and black athletes, including a ban on “burkinis” and prohibiting use of the “soul cap” swim hat designed for natural black hair.

Athletes with disabilities also face different standards, which was made clear recently when a British Paralympian was criticised by an official who called her outfit too “revealing”. It was the standard runner’s brief worn by most women.

WHO MAKES THE RULES?

Modern sport was designed for and by white men. Globally, men are still making most of the rules, including those which police girls’ and women’s bodies. Regulations about uniforms vary by international federation, which is why the Norwegian team faced fines but the Germans did not.

Although the International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not directly control uniform policies, it has advocated fairer rules in its 2018 Gender Equality Review to “ensure competition uniforms reflect the technical requirements of the sport and do not have any unjustifiable differences”. This statement raises the question: what is the justifiable reason for requiring women to wear skimpy uniforms while men can cover up?

What does this mean for athletes and young girls with Olympic dreams? Beyond the general sexualisation of women athletes, there are six identifiable consequences that potentially harm girls and women in sport:

1. Girls drop out of sport – adolescent girls feel too uncomfortable because of unflattering/exposing uniforms.

2. Embarrassment – cameras can catch athletes accidentally exposing underwear, body hair and more. Mocking and body shaming on social media poses a real concern.

3. Period panic – fear of leaking menstrual blood or exposing period products in skimpy or white clothing is common.

4. Excluding athletes from non-western cultures – skin-exposing uniforms make it impossible for girls and women from Islamic and other religious communities to compete.

5. Promoting racial prejudice – uniform standards often make assumptions about body types and hair built around white physical stereotypes.

6. Battles over body hair – women and girls are pressured into waxing/shaving bikini lines, legs and any “unfeminine” body hair or risk ridicule and body shaming on social media.

WE NEED MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

These uniform policies put women under added pressure to conform to western feminine ideals when they should be concentrating on their athleticism. This constricting paradox leaves little room for agency among athletes to challenge traditional, negative conceptions about muscular femininity.

International federations need to adjust technical rules to allow for athletes to choose clothing that suits their performance, personal comfort and cultural preferences. These choices can motivate adolescent girls to remain in sport, support athletes of colour and encourage participation from more conservative cultures.

Recruiting more women from diverse backgrounds to leadership positions in sport is a key step. Broadcasters and marketers should take note – in the same way athletes feel uncomfortable, many women viewers do not enjoy watching sports with objectified bikini-clad players.

Generations of athletes and advocates have struggled to make these changes. More recently, the movement has gathered strength to band together across cultures and sports. The Olympics should be a place for inclusion, cultural exchange and equality. Let’s start dressing the part.

[Sarah Zipp is Lecturer, Faculty of Health Science and Sport, University of Stirling; Sasha Sutherland is Lecturer in Sport and Event Management, The University of the West Indies, Barbados]

Narcissists: There’s More Than One Type – and Our Research Reveals What Makes Each Tick

NIKHILA MAHADEVAN
theconversation.com

Chances are you’ve met a narcissist. Someone who thinks they’re better than everyone else, dominates the conversation and loves the lime-light. But scientists are increasingly realising that not all narcissists are the same – some are, in fact, extremely insecure.

In our new paper, published in Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, we describe the distinct types – and what motivates them.

In classical Greek mythology, the hunter Narcissus was the son of the river god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope. He was known for his exceptional beauty and physique. One day when Narcissus was walking in the forest, the beautiful nymph Echo saw him and fell in love with him. However, he rejected her affections, leaving her heartbroken.

As a punishment, Nemesis, the goddess of revenge, lured him to a pool of water where he encountered his own reflection for the first time. Narcissus fell in love with his reflection, and, eventually realising that his love could not be reciprocated, pined away to his death.

The myth of Narcissus warns us of the dangers of excessive self-love, self-absorption and lack of empathy for others. It has had a profound influence on western culture, art and literature.

Narcissism is also a popular topic

in psychology. The English physician Havelock Ellis first identified narcissism as a mental disorder in the late 19th century. Sigmund Freud considered narcissism to be a normal part of a child’s development, but argued that it could become a disorder if it persisted after puberty into adulthood.

In modern psychology, narcissism is usually conceptualised as a personality trait, which lies on a spectrum. Some people are more narcissistic, others less so. Narcissism typically involves an inflated view of oneself, a sense of superiority and entitlement and a lack of concern for others. The above portrait of a narcissist is a familiar one. But it isn’t the only one.

GRANDIOSE VERSUS VULNERABLE

In our research, we investigated two types of previously identified narcissism: grandiose and vulnerable. Grandiose narcissists are arrogant, dominant and extroverted. They tend to have high self-esteem, be bold and assertive and feel happy and confident about their lives.

Vulnerable narcissists, on the other hand, are withdrawn, neurotic and insecure. They tend to have low self-esteem, be hypersensitive and feel anxious and depressed. However, these two types of narcissists also have something in common. Both are selfish, feel entitled to special treatment and privileges and relate to others in antagonistic ways.

You might be able to recognise the two types of narcissists by how they behave in social situations. Grandiose narcissists are socially competent. They are likely to be dominant and charming. Vulnerable narcissists, on the other hand, are less socially skilled. They are likely to be shy and anxious in social situations. What’s more, while grandiose narcissists are forthright and assertive in pursuing their goals, seeking to maximise success, vulnerable narcissists are timid and defensive, seeking to minimise failure.

In our research, we examined the social motives and perceptions of both grandiose and vulnerable narcissists. In particular, we investigated their desires to attain social status and social inclusion. We also looked at whether they felt they had been successful in attaining social status and social inclusion.

Social status refers to being respected and admired by others. It involves standing out and being seen as an important person in the social hierarchy. In contrast, social inclusion refers to being liked and accepted by others. It involves fitting in well with others as part of the social community.

Any given person may have or desire both status and inclusion, only one of the two, or neither. For example, in the TV show The Simpsons, the character of Mr Burns has high status but is not particularly liked and

accepted, whereas the character of Homer Simpson is well liked and accepted but does not have high status.

We conducted two studies, recruiting 676 adults based in the United States. We assessed their levels of both grandiose and vulnerable narcissism. We also assessed the extent to which they desired status and inclusion as well as the extent to which they felt they had attained their goals.

We found that both grandiose and vulnerable narcissists strongly desired social status. Interestingly, whereas grandiose narcissists felt they were successful in attaining this status, vulnerable narcissists felt they did not get the status they deserved.

What’s more, grandiose narcissists did not feel they had attained social inclusion but did not particularly desire it either. In contrast, vulnerable narcissists also did not feel they had attained social inclusion but strongly desired it. Grandiose narcissists therefore felt they had met their social goals, but vulnerable narcissists did not.

Both types of narcissists crave the respect and admiration of others. But while grandiose narcissists may be stars on the interpersonal stage, triumphantly capturing the spotlight, their vulnerable counterpart may be a bit player lurking on the sidelines, resentfully seeking, but failing to obtain, the applause they crave.

[the writer is Lecturer in Psychology, University of Essex]

Calcutta HC orders deportation of Bangladeshi woman

KOLKATA, AUG 6 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court has ordered the deportation of a Bangladeshi woman by air to her country on her request as she is languishing in a correctional home well after the completion of her detention period for staying in India beyond the visa period.

Justice Debangshu Basak directed the superintendent of the correctional home at which the woman is lodged to take appropriate measures for the purpose of her deportation forthwith.

The court on Thursday directed that the superintendent of the correctional home will, if necessary, depute police personnel to accompany the Bangladeshi woman to the airport as she claimed that she wanted to travel to her country by air, till such time the petitioner is cleared by security for boarding.

The woman, who worked at a dance bar in Mumbai, came to India with a valid passport



and visa, but could not go back in time owing to Covid restrictions, her lawyer Soumyajit Das Mahapatra said.

She was apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) while trying to go back to Bangladesh illegally earlier this year and was handed over to Swarupnagar police station in North 24 Parganas district.

On pleading guilty, a district court sentenced the woman to imprisonment for 66 days and the detention period was completed on June 19.

However, owing to lengthy administrative issues in the procedure of sending her back to her native country, the woman has been languishing in the correctional home despite having

completed her sentence causing her to move the high court for redressal, Mahapatra said.

The court noted that a special secretary to the West Bengal government had on July 13 requested the central government for immediate deportation of the petitioner by air.

"Petitioner will purchase the air ticket for

her flight and produce the same before the Superintendent of the Correctional Home at which she is presently lodged," Justice Basak directed in the order on Thursday.

He directed the superintendent of police to take expeditious steps for the purpose of ensuring that the petitioner is able to avail of such flight.

3.2 Magnitude Earthquake Hits Assam's Morigaon District

According to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS), the earthquake came around 12.46 pm.

Morigaon: A low-intensity earthquake of magnitude 3.2 on the Richter scale was reported in Morigaon district of Assam on Friday, said the National Centre for Seis-

mology (NCS).

According to the NCS, the earthquake occurred at 12:46 pm.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 3.2, Occurred on 06-08-2021, 12:46:48 IST, Lat: 26.44 & Long: 92.42, Depth: 10 Km, Region: Morigaon, Assam, India," it said in a tweet.

Encounter breaks out in J-K's Rajouri district

JAMMU, AUG 6 (PTI): An encounter broke out between security forces and militants in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Friday, officials said.

Acting on a tip off, police and security forces personnel launched a cordon and search operation in the Thanamandi forest belt in the district, they said.

The security forces

zeroed-in on the position of the militants following which the encounter broke out, the officials said

The operation was going on when reports last came in from the area, they said.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajouri Sheema Nabi Qasba, who is supervising the operation, confirmed that there was exchange of fire.

J&K LG launches new film policy

SRINAGAR, AUG 6 (PTI): Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday launched a new film policy at a star-studded event here in the presence of actor Amir Khan and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani.

"Historic day for J&K. Launched the much-awaited Jammu & Kashmir's New Film Policy-2021 in a star-studded evening with renowned actor Amir Khan and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, among others," the LG said on Twitter.

The launch event was held at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) overlooking the famous Dal Lake.

Among one of the best in the country, the film policy will transform Jammu Kashmir into the most preferred destination for the entertainment industry, reviving its halcyon days of being

a cinematographer's delight and bringing back the golden era of film shooting in the region, Sinha said.

"The government has set up single-window clearance mechanism; prepared equipment, location and talent directories besides offering fiscal incentives for filmmakers coming to the UT," he said.

The new policy aims at maximizing the potential of promising local talent and creating livelihood opportunities for many," he added. Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir is regaining its proud legacy of association with the world of cinema.

"I invite filmmakers from across the world to come to Jammu and Kashmir and capture its pristine beauty through their lens. And, also avail the host of fiscal incentives, world-class facilities offered by the Jammu and Kashmir government," he said.

Assam, Meghalaya To Set Up Committees To Resolve Border Disputes

Members of both the panels will visit the sites, interact with civil society members and complete discussions within 30 days.

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad K Sangma on Friday said the two states will set up committees to resolve the inter-state border disputes.

Two panels to be headed by cabinet ministers of each state will be set up, they said.

The committees will aim at resolving the border disputes in a phased

manner in six of the 12 disputed sites initially, the chief ministers said at a joint press conference.

Each panel will have five members, including a cabinet minister of each state besides bureaucrats, Mr Sarma said, adding that local representatives may be part of a committee.

Members of both the panels will visit the sites, interact with civil society members and complete discussions within 30 days. Five aspects, which are to be considered to resolve the disputes, are historical evidence, eth-

nicity, administrative convenience, mood and sentiments of the people concerned and contiguity of land, Mr Sangma said. "In principle, we will try to find a solution within the framework of these five aspects", he said.

The six disputed sites taken up in the first phase are Tarabari, Gijang, Phalia, Baklapara, Pilingkata and Khanapara.

These areas fall in Cachar, Kamrup Metro and Kamrup Rural districts in Assam and West Khasi Hills, Ribhoi and East Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya.

Bangladeshi Woman To Be Deported After Completion Of Detention: High Court

The woman, who worked at a dance bar in Mumbai, came to India with a valid passport and visa, but could not go back in time owing to Covid restrictions, her lawyer said.

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court has ordered the deportation of a Bangladeshi woman by air to her country on her request as she is languishing in a correctional home well after the completion of her detention period for staying in India beyond the visa period.

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On pleading guilty, a district court sentenced the woman to imprisonment for 66 days and the detention period was completed on June 19.

However, owing to lengthy administrative issues in the procedure of sending her back to her native country, the woman has been languishing in the correctional home despite having

Pandemic hugely affected Nagaland's economy: CM

KOHIMA, AUG 6 (PTI): Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Thursday said that the COVID-19 pandemic has been highly disruptive and challenging and it pulled down the state's economy to the tune of Rs 1013.11 crore during 2020-21.

He said this while making the concluding remarks in the state assembly on the discussion on urgent public importance pertaining to post COVID-19 economic recovery of the state initiated by Minister for Planning & Coordination, Land Revenue and Parliamentary Affairs, NeibaKronu.

COVID-19 pandemic has been highly disrup-

tive and challenging, and has impacted us in many ways but we have to look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, to a future with high rates of sustained economic growth and better income levels for our citizens, he said.

The chief minister stressed the need for keeping a focus on saving livelihoods as well as lives during difficult times.

Lockdowns and restrictions have led to a sharp impact on economic activities at the global and national level and the state has also not been spared, he said.

From 7.43 per cent growth during 2019-20, the state's economy is anticipated to register a negative growth of -5.59

per cent (Advanced Estimate) during 2020-21. In absolute terms, the contraction in the state economy is anticipated to the tune of Rs 1013.11 crore during 2020-21, Rio said.

The CM said that in 2021, the State Plan size was Rs 639 crore on which a pro-rata cut of 15 per cent was applied, reducing the plan size to Rs 572 crore.

However, keeping in view the need to give a boost to developmental activities, the state plan size for the current financial year has been enhanced to Rs 700 crore which represents an increase of over 22 per cent over the revised State Plan outlay of last year, Rio said.

Thousands more flee fires outside Athens amid heat wave



ATHENS, AUG 6 (AP): Thousands of residents fled to safety from a wildfire that burned for a fourth day north of Athens early Friday, during an overnight battle to stop the flames reaching populated areas, electricity installations and historic sites.

In heat wave conditions, the blaze tore through forest areas 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) north of the capital, destroying more homes. Ground crews of several hundred firefighters dug fire breaks and hosed the flames.

Traffic was halted on the country's main highway connecting Athens to northern Greece, as crews tried to use the road as a barrier to stop

the flames advancing before water-dropping planes could resume at first light. But sparks and burning pine cones carried the fire across the highway at several points.

Several firefighters and volunteers were hospitalized with burns, health officials said.

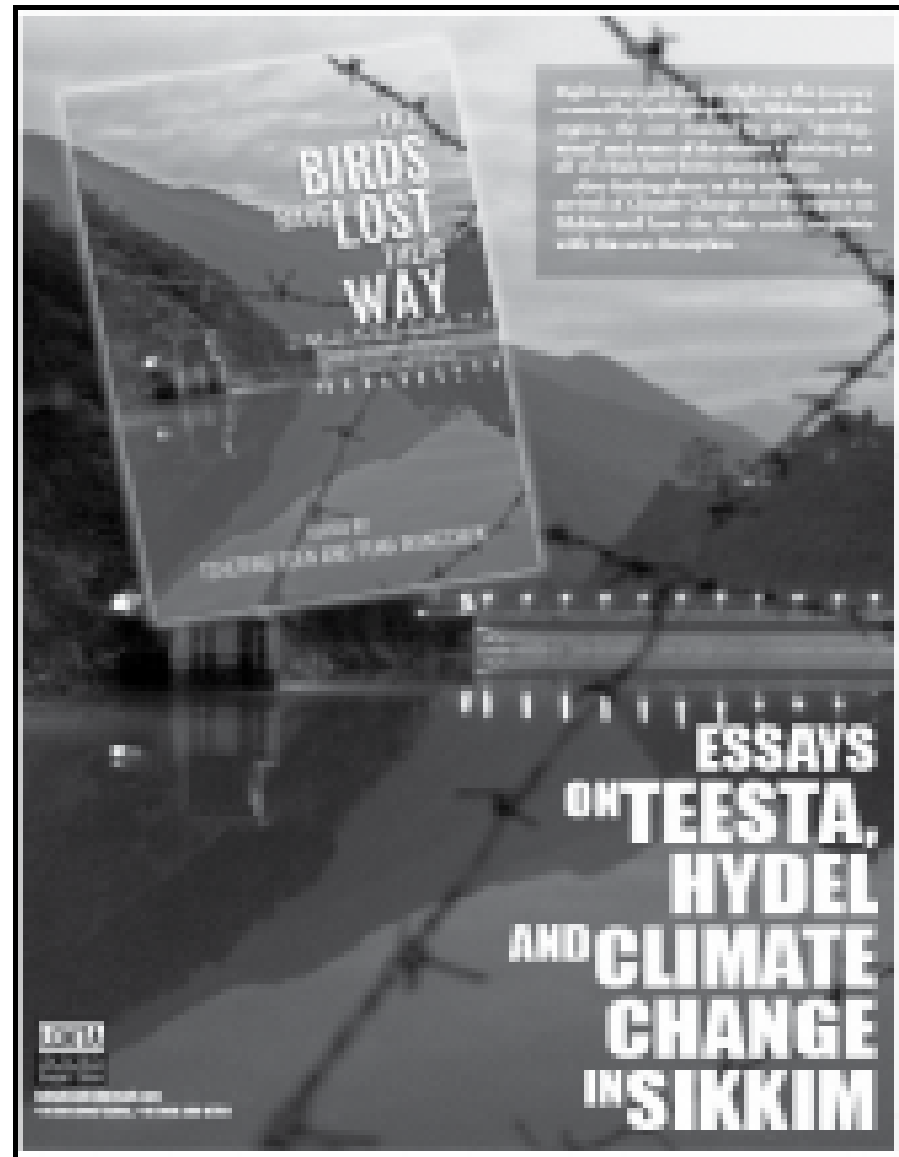
We are going through the 10th day of a major heat wave affecting our entire country, the worst heat wave in terms of intensity and duration of the last 30 years, Fire Service Brig. Gen. Aristotelis Papadopoulos said.

Nearly 60 villages and settlements were evacuated Thursday and early Friday across southern Greece, with weather conditions expected to

worsen. Fires were raging on the island of Evia, northeast of Athens, and at multiple locations in the southern Peloponnese region where a blaze was stopped before reaching monuments at Olympia, birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games.

A summer palace outside Athens once used by the former Greek royal family was also spared.

Fire crews and water-dropping planes and helicopters from five European countries were due to arrive Friday and through the weekend as the European Union stepped up support to fire-hit countries in southeast Europe. The heat wave also has fuelled deadly fires in Turkey and across the region.



2 coaches removed from Tokyo Olympics in Belarus case

TOKYO (AP): Two Belarus team coaches have been removed from the Olympics, four days after they were involved in trying to send sprinter Krystsina Tsimanouskaya back to their country.

The International Olympic Committee said Friday it has canceled and removed the credentials of Artur Shimak and Yury Maisevich.

"The two coaches were requested to leave the Olympic Village immediately and have done so," the IOC said.

It was done as an interim measure during a formal investigation "in the interest of the well-being of the athletes," the Olympic body said.

Shimak and Maisevich continued to have contact with Belarusian athletes since Sunday after the IOC linked them to taking Tsimanouskaya in a car to the airport to put her on a plane to Belarus.

Tsimanouskaya had criticized team coaches on social media and is now in Poland with a humanitarian visa.

The IOC said Shimak and Maisevich "will be offered an opportunity to be heard" by its disciplinary commission investigating the case.

It was unclear if the men have stayed in Japan or will leave for Belarus, an authoritarian former Soviet republic that relentlessly pursues its critics.

Belarus has been in turmoil for a year since Aleksander Lukashenko claimed a sixth presidential term after a state election widely viewed as rigged in his favor.

Lukashenko also led the Belarusian Olympic committee since the 1990s until this year. His son, Viktor, was elected to replace him.

The IOC banned both Lukashenkos in December from attending the Tokyo Olympics after investigating complaints from athletes they faced reprisals and intimidation in a security crackdown after the election.

Still, the IOC's slate of sanctions against Belarus was criticized by activists there and international groups representing athletes who urged a full suspension of the national Olympic committee.

That would have let Tsimanouskaya and the rest of the 103-member Belarus team compete as independents under the Olympic flag.

Asked Friday about how Olympic officials had handled Belarus, IOC President Thomas Bach said it was "not in a position to change the political system in a country."

"What our responsibility and our remit is is to protect the athletes as much and as far as we can," Bach said, describing the incident in Tokyo as a "deplorable case."

Alexander Lukashenko was unable to attend the 2012 London Olympics because of a European Union visa ban imposed during a previous crackdown that followed a disputed election.

Bronze lost but hearts won: Indian women's hockey team signs off 4th at Olympics after narrow loss

TOKYO, Aug 6 (PTI): The history-making Indian women's hockey team's dream of securing its maiden Olympic medal remained unfulfilled as it lost 3-4 to Great Britain in a hard-fought bronze play-off but the stout-hearted side managed to record its best ever finish at the Games here on Friday.

The team had already created history and surpassed all expectations by entering the semifinals of the Games for the first time.

But the maiden Olympic medal remained out of bounds as world no.4 Great Britain, who were gold-winners in the 2016 Rio Games, came out on top in the pulsating encounter.

India's best performance in the Olympics before this was a fourth-place finish in the 1980 Moscow Games but there were no semifinals in that edition as only six teams competed in a round-robin format and the top two featured in the final.

The heartbreak came a day after the Indian men's team ended a 41-year-old medal drought by clinching bronze with a 5-4 win over Germany.

The Indians played their hearts out and overcame a two-goal deficit to lead 3-2 at half time. But a desperate Great Britain gave their everything in the second half and scored two goals to snatch the match from India's hands.

India scored three goals in a span of five minutes through Gurjit Kaur (25th, 26th minutes) and Vandana Katariya (29th) to stun Great Britain.

But the Britishers found the net four times through



Elena Rayer (16th), Sarah Robertson (24th), skipper Hollie Pearne-Webb (35th) and Grace Baldson (48th) to emerge winners.

As expected, Great Britain started strongly and had the lion's share of ball possession and chances in the first quarter.

The Indians made some circle penetrations but failed to create any clear cut chances and were also guilty of losing possession at the midfield.

India goalkeeper Savita Punia stood out in the first

quarter, denying Great Britain on at least three occasions.

She first made a fine save from Great Britain's first penalty corner in the second minute and then pulled off a double save in the 12th minute to keep India in the hunt.

In between Great Britain also wasted another penalty corner.

Britain began the second quarter on the same pace and took the lead when Elena Rayer's push went into the net after getting a deflection of Deep Grace Ekka's stick.

Minutes later, the former gold-medallists secured their third penalty corner which yielded no result.

Lalremsiami came close to equalising for India only to be denied by the experienced Maddie Hinch, who brilliantly kept away the Indian striker's reverse hit.

India got their first penalty corner soon but wasted it.

Great Britain doubled their lead in the 24th minute when Robertson scored with a powerful reverse hit from top of the circle.

A minute later, India got two back-to-back penalty corners and Gurjit converted the second chance to reduce the margin.

Two minutes later, Salima Tete's brilliant run from the left flank earned India another penalty corner and Gurjit was once bang on target to draw parity.

The momentum shifted completely in India's favour as they started to attack with numbers and threatened the Great Britain goal frequently thereafter in the second quar-

ter.

After Sharmila Devi hit wide from a one-on-one situation, the Indians stunned Great Britain when Vandana tapped in an open ball inside the circle to go into half time with a 3-2 lead.

Down by a goal, Great Britain were expected to come out hard after resumption and they did exactly that forcing the pace of the game, securing a penalty corner two minutes into the third quarter but India defended well.

But a minute later, Great Britain drew level through skipper Hollie Pearne-Webb.

The Indians then secured two more penalty corners but couldn't utilise them.

Savita stood like a wall in front of the Indian goal and pulled off some brilliant saves to deny Great Britain.

A second from the end of third quarter, India secured the seventh penalty corner but to no effect.

The fourth quarter completely belonged to Great Britain as they pressed hard on the Indian defence in search of goals.

The play worked as the Indian backline wilted under pressure and conceded four quick penalty corners, three of them in succession and Baldson scored from the last one with a flick that went through Savita's legs.

India had one more chance in the form of a penalty corner in the last eight minutes but Great Britain defended stoutly to deny Gurjit a hat-trick.

Thereafter, Great Britain did just enough to keep India at bay and to ensure a finish on the podium.

Americans win beach gold medal, and Ross completes the set



TOKYO, Aug 6 (AP): April Ross now has the complete set of Olympic beach volleyball medals: silver in London, bronze in Rio de Janeiro and a gold she won with Alix Klineman at the Tokyo Games on Friday with a victory over Australia.

The Americans beat Mariafe Artacho del Solar and Taliqua Clancy of Australia 21-15, 21-16 under a blazing sun in a match that was mercifully quick for the biggest crowd yet at Shiokaze Park about 60 people in the temporary stadium that seats 9,600.

Playing in 92-degree Fahrenheit (33 Celsius) temperatures under the hot Tokyo sun, the Americans finished off the Aussies in 43 minutes. In the bronze medal match earlier Friday, Joana Heidrich and Anouk Verge-Depre of Switzerland cruised to a straight-set victory over Latvia.

The silver for Australia was its first beach volleyball medal since Natalie Cook and Kerri Pottharst took gold on

Bondi Beach in 2000. But they were never really close against the Americans, who tied for the top spot in the Olympic qualification points race and lost just one set in seven matches in Tokyo.

With side changes every seven points and technical timeouts every 14, the players retreated to benches, where an awning was rolled up over their heads for shade. A towel covered the seat so they wouldn't stick to the hot cushion; support staff put icepacks on their heads, or wrapped them in wet towels.

And then there was hydration. So much hydration.

Klineman, a first-time Olympian, and Ross, who has three medals in as many trips to the Summer Games, needed just 20 minutes to claim the first set. They fell behind 2-0 in the second before scoring 10 straight points to pull away.

That silenced the chants of Aussie! Aussie! Aussie! Oi! Oi! Oi! from the Australians in their bright yellow shirts and

brought out the cheers of U-S-A! from those in the red, white and blue. Australia survived three championship points before Artachodel Solar served into the net to seal the U.S. victory.

After a long hug, Klineman went to the bench to douse herself in water, then the pair went over to the stands and posed with an American flag.

The Swiss cruised to a straight-set victory over Latvia to claim the first Olympic medal ever for their country's women on the beach. They edged Tina Graudina and Anastasiya Kravchenoka 21-19 in the first set before opening a 5-1 lead in the second and pulling away to win 21-15.

Graudina was the first person to make the Olympics after coming up through an NCAA beach volleyball program that started in 2012. She played at Southern California, where she was the 2019 national player of the year and led the Trojans to the 2021 national championship.

Good day on beach and courts for US women in Tokyo

TOKYO (AP): American women had a good day at the beach and on the courts in Tokyo on Friday, with one Olympic gold medal won and a couple more set up for the taking.

The United States beach volleyball team of April Ross and Alix Klineman won gold in beach volleyball and the American women's basketball and volleyball teams won to advance to the gold medal finals in both sports.

For Ross, the gold medals she and Klineman draped around each other's necks completes a full set. She won silver in London in 2012 and bronze in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Klineman won gold in her first Olympics. "That was a product of COVID, but it actually feels really special when you're up there. I was like, 'We get to award the medals to each other' and in my head I was like, 'Thank you Alix,'" Ross said of the medal ceremony.

"It's kind of a fairytale story like, 'Oh, you know I'm going at 39 to try and get my gold medal,' and the fact that it actually happened feels so special and surreal," Ross said.

The U.S. pair was dominant throughout the Olympic tournament. They lost just one set in seven matches and swept Australia 21-15, 21-16 in 43 minutes in the final.

The U.S. women's volleyball team avenged a gold-medal match loss to Serbia in 2016 with a 25-19, 25-15, 25-23 victory that sends them back



into the final. The Americans have made three previous gold medal finals, but have never won.

"It wasn't like, 'Oh we have to get redemption of this or that,'" U.S. star Foluke Akinradewo Gunderson said. "It was we just want to win a gold medal and whatever that's going to take, we're going to do that."

The U.S. has been one of the top teams in the world for much of the past two decades, but has been unable to attain the ultimate prize, losing to Brazil in the gold medal match in both 2008 and '12. The U.S. also lost the gold medal game to China in 1984.

The U.S. women's basketball team will play for its seventh consecutive gold medal after rolling over Serbia 79-59 behind 15 points and 12 rebounds from Brittney Griner. If the Americans win the final, they would match the seven consecutive Olympic titles

won by the U.S. men from 1936-68.

And for Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi, it would be five career gold medals, the most ever by a basketball player in the Olympics. "I think everybody here wants to win gold for them, for us, for everybody that's started this streak that got us here," Griner said.

GOLF
American Nelly Korda finished with 12 straight pars for a 2-under 69 to maintain her overall lead in pursuit of the gold medal in women's golf at Kasumigaseki Country Club. She had a three-shot lead over Aditi Ashok of India, who had a 68. And for now, there will be a final round. Olympic golf officials plan to start play as early as possible Saturday and take advantage of a window they hope is big enough to squeeze in 72 holes before a forecasted tropical storm.

BOXING
Heavyweight Julio

César La Cruz won Cuba's third gold medal in boxing in a final 5:0 victory over Russian athlete Muslim Gadzhimagomedov. La Cruz won the eighth heavyweight gold medal for the vaunted Cuban team, but the first since Odlanier Solis claimed the glamour division's title in 2004.

LAST TANGO IN TOKYO?

Dawid Tomala of Poland won what might be the last 50-kilometer race walk at the Olympics. Tomala won in 3 hours, 50 minutes and 8 seconds in Sapporo for the gold medal. He won only the second 50-kilometer race he had ever completed.

The 50-kilometer walk has been dropped from the schedule for the next Olympics in Paris in 2024 and may not return. It was first introduced at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics and has been held at every Games since with the exception of Montreal in 1976.

Data raises concerns as Brazil's forest fire season begins

RIO DE JANEIRO, AUG 6 (AP): Severe drought and early data are raising concerns that this forest fire season in Brazil will see the same high levels of destruction recorded in the past two years, despite efforts to tamp down the blazes.

With Brazil's forest fire season underway, the government space agency that uses satellites to monitor fires reported more area burned in the month of July than in any July since 2016, according to data released Thursday. The same was true for June.

Most Brazilian blazes are manmade, often started illegally by land-grabbers clearing forest for cattle or crops. Fires tend to begin increasing in June and peak in September, according to historical data. They can easily get out of control during the dry season, burning large swaths of forest to the ground.

Brazil is home to the world's largest rainforest and tropical wetlands the Amazon and Pantanal which saw dramatic fires in 2019 and 2020, respectively, that caused the greatest annual forest loss since 2015. That drew global criticism of the response from the administration of President Jair Bolsonaro, who has repeatedly called for development of the region.

This year, it's the Cerrado savanna stretching across Brazil's center-west region that is suffering more than usual. An area almost as big as Connecticut and New Jersey burned there in the first seven months of 2021.

AneAlencar, science director at the Amazon Environmental Research Institute, said in a July 27 online panel that there have been fewer Amazon fires this year due to cool weather, which limits fire's potential to spread. But deforestation remains on par with the last two years, so much



dry material remains on the ground waiting to be burned, she added.

I am afraid about the coming months, said Alencar, who is also coordinator of Map-BiomasFogo, which compiles data on deforestation and fires across the region.

When this cold front goes away, the vegetation will be drier and then we will have warmer temperatures. ... I'm not sure that the people who cut down the forest will not light it.

Citing heightened hazard due to Brazil's worst drought in nine decades, the Justice and Environment ministries on July 22 announced a task force to prevent and investigate fires in 11 states of the Amazon, Pantanal and Cerrado biomes. Some 6,000 people, including federal and state police and firefighters, as well as state public security and environmental officials will participate in the effort, according to a statement.

On June 29, Bolsonaro decreed redeployment of sol-

diers to the Amazon to combat fires and deforestation, and also issued a 120-day ban on unauthorized outdoor fires.

Similar measures in previous years didn't prevent illegal fires, however. More than 90% of the Pantanal hot spots detected in 2020 came after a similar presidential ban, according to VinciusSilgueiro, coordinator of territorial intelligence at the Center of Life Institute in MatoGrosso state.

The sense of impunity is very high. Enforcement is well below what is necessary, Silgueiro said.

In MatoGrosso state, half of whose territory is in the Amazon, the federal and state governments last year began coordinating actions to put an end to overlap that frequently left other areas unmanned and vulnerable, according to MaurenLazzaretti, the state's environment secretary.

The state is also purchasing a helicopter and plans to deploy dozens of planes loaned by Pantanal farmers and busi-

nesses to drop fire retardant onto blazes.

Last year, over 4 million hectares (about 15,000 square miles) of the Pantanal went up in flames, or about 27% its area by far the most since official record-keeping began in 2003. While the biome regenerates quickly, unlike rainforest, fires often kill local wildlife, such as jaguars, caimans and giant otters.

The size of the fires last year drew society's attention to the component of individual responsibility, Lazzaretti said. The engagement of cities, farmers and even traditional and Indigenous communities is much greater this year.

The year before, fires in the Amazon roused global concern, and several European governments openly criticized Bolsonaro's administration. Bolsonaro countered that fires nationwide and in the Amazon, while up from 2018, were roughly in line with the average of the preceding several years and were down sharply

from 15 years earlier. He called on European leaders to mind their own backyards.

Earlier studies showed the Amazon absorbs about 2 billion of the 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide the world emits into the atmosphere each year, making it an important part of the global effort to curb climate change. But a study led by the Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, published in Nature on July 14 spanning 10 years and involving nearly 600 flyovers found the dry season's intensification and increased deforestation had caused more fires and higher carbon emissions. The southeastern part of the Amazon, particularly ravaged by logging, has become a net source of carbon.

Paulo Artaxo, professor of environmental physics at the University of Sao Paulo and a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said other recent studies have shown even the more preserved western Amazon region is now carbon neutral in terms of emissions, while a few years ago, it was a carbon sink.

Carlos Nobre, a prominent climatologist, says Brazil's Amazon is nearing a tipping point," after which the thick jungle will cease to generate enough moisture to sustain its current form and will begin transforming into tropical savanna.

Nobre said Bolsonaro's government has yet to demonstrate any encouraging change in approach to help save the rainforest.

The federal government continues incentivizing organized crime in the Amazon that is responsible for the theft of timber, illegal deforestation and fires, he said. Those who practice these crimes haven't given any sign of worry that enforcement will become rigorous. They continue to feel rather empowered.

Thousands jam Philippine vaccination sites over false news

MANILA, AUG 6 (AP): Thousands of people jammed coronavirus vaccination centers in the Philippine capital, defying social distancing restrictions, after false news spread that unvaccinated residents would be deprived of cash aid or barred from leaving home during a two-week lockdown that started Friday.

Officials placed Metropolitan Manila backed under lockdown until Aug. 20, as a new spike in COVID-19 infections that health officials say could be due to the highly contagious delta variant threatens to overwhelm hospitals. Three other regions, including nearby Laguna province, were also placed under lockdown until Aug. 15.

Only authorized workers for essential businesses and residents on medical emergencies or food-buying errands can venture out. An eight-hour curfew was imposed in the capital region starting at 8 p.m. and police checkpoints were set up in city boundaries.

A day before the lockdown, false news spread on social media that unvaccinated residents would either be prohibited from leaving their homes to go to work or deprived of 1,000 pesos (20) aid. It sent large crowds heading for vaccination centers in the cities of Manila, Las Pinas and Antipolo even without prior registrations.

Thousands lined up for several blocks in designated government centers and shopping malls to get the jabs, at times sparking arguments and complaints and snarling traffic.

In Manila alone, up to 22,000 people showed up outside vaccination centers before dawn. People descended in groups and arrived in vans from nearby provinces, some rowdily removing barricades, city officials said, citing police reports. Many were not registered under Manila's immunization program.

Police were forced to stop vaccinations in at least one of the shopping malls and asked the crowds to return home.

Critics partly blamed President Rodrigo Duterte for the confusion. The brash-speaking leader warned Filipinos last week that those who refuse to get vaccinated will not be allowed to leave their homes as a safeguard against the spread of the delta variant. He acknowledged that there was no specific law for such a restriction.

For people who refuse to receive COVID-19 vaccine, Duterte said, well, for all I care, you can die anytime. We cannot allow our national immunization program to become superspreader events, especially given the threat posed by the delta variant, the Department of Health said in a statement following the chaotic scenes. Officials later stressed that even unvaccinated residents could venture out in case of medical emergency. They can also obtain village permission to buy food, medicine or other essential items. They cautioned the public not to fall for fake news on social media and urged them to follow official government announcements.

HEZBOLLAH SAYS IT FIRED ROCKETS AFTER ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES

BEIRUT (AP): The militant Hezbollah group said it fired a barrage of rockets near Israeli positions close to the Lebanese border on Friday, calling it retaliation for Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon a day earlier.

Israel said it was firing back after 19 rockets were launched from Lebanon, and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett swiftly convened a meeting with the country's top defense officials.

"We do not wish to escalate to a full war, yet of course we are very prepared for that," said Lt. Col. AmnonShefler, spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces. It was the second straight day of rocket fire from Lebanon. But where Hezbollah took responsibility for Friday's shelling, it was unclear who was responsible for the attacks early Thursday, Shefler said.

Friday's exchanges were a significant escalation between Israel's new government and Iran-backed Hezbollah, and comes amid rising tensions between Israel and Iran that has played out in the Persian Gulf.

Israel's defense minister warned Thursday that his country is prepared to strike Iran, issuing the threat against the Islamic Republic after a fatal drone strike on a oil tanker at sea that his country blamed on Tehran.

The U.N. peacekeeping force deployed along the Lebanese-Israeli border said it has detected rocket launches from Lebanon on Friday, and return artillery fire by Israel.

"This is a very serious situation and we urge all parties to cease fire," the force known as UNIFIL said. Force commander Gen. Stefano Del Col, said the force was coordinating with the Lebanese army to strengthen security measures in the area and called on the parties to cease fire immediately.

Sirens blared across the Golan Heights and Upper Galilee near the Lebanon border Friday morning. Hezbollah said in a statement that it hit "open fields" near Israeli positions in the disputed Shebaa farms area, with "dozens" of rockets. No casualties were reported. The group said it fired 10 rockets, calling



it retaliation for Israeli airstrikes the day before. Those strikes were in retaliation to rocket fire from south Lebanon, which was not claimed by any group.

Shebaa Farms is an enclave where the borders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria meet. Israel says it is part of the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in 1967. Lebanon and Syria say Shebaa Farms belong to Lebanon, while the United Nations says the area is part of Syria and that Damascus and Israel should negotiate its fate.

The escalation comes at a sensitive time in Lebanon, which is mired in multiple crises including a devastating economic and financial meltdown and political deadlock that has left the country without a functional government for a full year. Hezbollah's response, rocketing open fields in a disputed area rather than Israel proper, appeared calibrated to limit any response.

Shefler told reporters Friday that 19 rockets had been fired into Israel, of which three fell within Lebanese ter-

ritory. Ten of the remaining 16 rockets were intercepted by the defense system known as the Iron Dome.

It is also a politically sensitive time in Israel. Israel's new eight-party governing coalition is trying to keep peace under a fragile cease-fire that ended an 11-day war with Hamas' militant rulers in Gaza in May.

Israel has long considered Hezbollah its most serious and immediate military threat. It estimates the group possesses over 130,000 rockets and missiles capable of striking anywhere in Israel. In recent years, it also has expressed concerns that the group is trying to import or develop an arsenal of precision-guided missiles.

The attack sparked tensions between locals and Hezbollah. Videos circulated on social media after the rocket attack showing two vehicles, including a mobile rocket launcher, being stopped by villagers in the southeastern village of Shwaya in Hasbaya region near the border with the Golan Heights. Some

angry villagers, who belong to the Druze sect, could be heard saying: "Hezbollah is firing rockets from between homes so that Israel hits us back."

Hezbollah later issued a statement saying that the rockets were fired from remote areas, adding that the fighters were stopped in Shwaya on their way back. "The Islamic Resistance was and will always be most keen about the safety of its people and avoiding any harm to them through its acts of resistance," the statement said.

Hezbollah, which in recent years has been fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad in the neighboring country's civil war, named Friday's operation after two of its fighters who were killed by Israeli fire.

Ali Mohsen was killed in July last year in an Israeli airstrike near the Syrian capital Damascus. Mohammed Tahhan was shot dead by Israeli troops along the Lebanon-Israeli border in May during a protest in support of Gaza during this year's Israel-Hamas war.



Nicki Minaj Disputes Jessie J's Claim About How She Joined Their Song "Bang Bang"

After Jessie J shared her version of how Nicki Minaj ended up on the 2014 hit "Bang Bang," the rapper took to Twitter to make it clear this wasn't how she remembered things.

Nicki Minaj is weighing in about her involvement with a certain hit song, and she also has some words about her, uh, price tag.

After singer Jessie J implied in a Glamour interview published on Thursday, Aug. 5 that Nicki asked to contribute to their 2014 single "Bang Bang," the rapper took to social media to offer her own version of how she ended up on the track. "Bang Bang," which also includes vocals from Ariana Grande, was a single from Jessie J's album Sweet Talker and a single from the deluxe edition of Ariana's album My Everything.

"Babe @JessieJ I didn't hear the song & ask 2get on it," Nicki wrote. "The label asked me2get on it & paid me. How would I have heard the song? [weary face emoji] chiiille what am I the damn song monitor? Snoopin around for songs chile? [tears of joy emoji] This was said by another artist recently as well. Yallgotta stop [balloon emoji] LoveU [blowing kiss emoji]."

After a fan agreed with Nicki's recollection of the song's origin, the 38-year-old "Super Bass" performer appeared to make it clear she didn't harbor ill will toward Jessie J. In fact, Nicki tweeted that she wished she could have been

part of the English singer's 2011 tune "Do It Like a Dude," which counts Nicki's friend Parker Ighile as a writer and producer.

"Chi [tears of joy emojis] but the worst part about this is no1EVER asked me2get on 'like a dude' & I have been obsessed w/that song since the min I heard

"Max Martin wrote 'Bang Bang,' and Ariana had been played it, I'd been played it, and we both loved it," Jessie J recalled. "We just said, 'Why don't we both do it?' So Ariana stayed on the second verse, I recorded the first verse, and then Nicki was played it in the studio and was like, 'I've got to jump on this.'



it," Nicki wrote. "I was doing promo in the UK & heard it on the radio. My artist Parker co wrote it. I would've gotten on that 1 for some pickle juice [pleading face]."

Jessie J has yet to respond publicly to Nicki's remarks about the song.

During the Glamour interview, Jessie J said that producer Max Martin had written "Bang Bang," and that after she and Ariana both liked it, Nicki also heard the song and asked to contribute to it.

We didn't go to her and ask; she wanted to do it."

The 33-year-old "Price Tag" vocalist continued by sharing her excitement upon first hearing Nicki's bars for the song. "I'll never forget: I was in my bedroom in my flat in London, and I got sent the version with Nicki on it," she said. "I just sat at the end of my bed holding my phone, staring at the floor, going, 'How the f--k did I land this?' I literally felt like I'd won a competition."

Illinois sees record pot sales, with boost from Lollapalooza



CHICAGO (AP): Illinois dispensaries sold a record \$127.8 million in recreational marijuana in July, with a big boost coming from out-of-state fans who converged on Chicago for the Lollapalooza music festival.

The month's sales were 10% higher than May's record of \$116.4 million, which were slightly higher than June's \$115.6 million, according to a monthly report by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Business boomed at Chicago-area cannabis dispensaries during the four-day Lollapalooza festival, which ended Sunday and which returned after last year's event was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Because recreational marijuana was legalized in Illinois in January 2020, pot was legal in the state during Lollapalooza for the first time in the festival's 30-year history. Although it's illegal to smoke or otherwise consume the drug in public or around anyone younger than 21 years old, the large crowds at Grant Park boosted sales by as much as 50% at nearby dispensaries in River North and the West Loop, operators told the Chicago Tribune.

"We saw thousands of festivalgoers over the weekend at our River North store, making it our biggest weekend to date," said Jason Erkes, spokesman for Chicago-based Cresco Labs, whose Sunnyside Dispensary in River North was the closest to the festivities.

In July, Illinois' 110 dispensaries sold a record 2.8 million recreational weed products. State residents spent about \$85 million, while sales to out-of-state customers topped \$42 million, up 16% from June, according to the state.

"Summer tourism and the Lollapalooza attendees were strong contributors to July's out-of-state sales," Erkes said.

Illinois is one of 18 states that have legalized recreational marijuana use, which is still illegal under federal law. Through July, the state has generated \$753 million in recreational cannabis sales, which is more than all of last year.

Total sales reached \$1.03 billion last year, including \$669 million in recreational weed and more than \$366 million in medical marijuana sales.

Illinois has not yet released its medical marijuana sales figures for July.

Arrest in hit-and-run death of 'Gone Girl' actor

Lisa Banes

NEW YORK (AP): An arrest was announced early Friday in the hit-and-run death of "Gone Girl" actor Lisa Banes, who died almost two months ago.

Brian Boyd, 26, was arrested Thursday and charged with leaving the scene of an accident resulting in death and failure to yield to a pedestrian, New York City police said in a news release.

Banes was hit by a scooter or motorcycle in early June while she was crossing a street on the way to her alma mater, the Julliard School. She was taken to a hospital where she died on July 14 at age 65.

Banes appeared in numerous television shows and movies, including "Gone Girl" in 2014 and "Cocktail" with Tom Cruise in 1988. On television, she had roles on "Nashville," "Madam Secretary," "Masters of Sex" and "NCIS."

Few details on the arrest were immediately announced. Police did not say whether Boyd had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.



SHE MEANS BUSINESS! Actress Rachel Weisz filmed her upcoming Amazon show Dead Ringers in NYC.

CNN fires three employees for coming to work unvaccinated



NEW YORK (AP): CNN has fired three employees who violated company policy by coming to work unvaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

CNN chief Jeff Zucker told staff members of the firing in a memo sent Thursday that reminded them that vaccines were mandatory if they report to the office or out in the field where they come into contact with other employees.

"Let me be clear — we have a zero tolerance policy on this," wrote Zucker, chairman of news and sports for WarnerMedia.

The memo was obtained by The Associated Press after its contents were first tweeted by CNN media reporter Oliver Darcy. CNN offered no details on the firings, or where the employees were based.

Most of CNN's offices are already open on a voluntary basis, and Zucker said more than

a third of news staff members have returned. Proof of vaccination has been left to the honor system, he said, but that may change in coming weeks.

The CNN leader said that masks will be required in Atlanta, Washington and Los Angeles offices when people aren't eating, drinking or in an enclosed private space. Even in offices where mask-wearing is not mandated, people should do what feels comfortable to them "without any fear of retaliation or judgment from co-workers," he said.

The CNN memo also said a planned Sept. 7 company-wide return to the office will be delayed until at least early to mid-October. Other media companies have been making similar decisions because of the rise in COVID cases; the AP told employees on Thursday that an expected Sept. 13 return has also been delayed.

Aries: You have so much going on for you right now, Aries, and the biggest blessing of them all is the dream team that's working overtime so you can arrive at the final destination in style. It's time to acknowledge their contribution, individually and as a collective. What the cards want you to remember is that the power of your kind words is immeasurable.

Tip: Acknowledge the effort of each one of your team members.

Taurus: Ready, set, go! It's time to put the given plan into action. Stepping into the unknown is always daunting. Think of the butterflies in your stomach as a sign that you are on the right track. What your spirit guides want you to remember: your life will never look the same. Given that WFH is now a lifestyle, some of you could be thinking about relocating too, if only for a while. When in doubt, opt for a place that's close to nature and know that Mother Gaia will nurse you back to life.

Tip: It's an action-packed time.

Gemini: You've been saying 'yes' to everything like a sport, Gemini. But, is it really serving you and your higher purpose in any way? Something to think about when you find yourself being crushed under the weight of your own

responsibilities. So, step back. Reassess. Ask for help where help is needed. As you do, learn the art of saying 'no' without any hesitation.

Tip: Be mindful of how much you are taking on.

Cancer:

It wasn't easy when you first started off on this journey. Issues related to money were a constant, making you question your sanity. You found a way to power through the challenges nonetheless. Look where you are today, moon child! What the cards want you to know: your efforts are finally paying off. What you are being granted right now is the promise of a better future.

Tip: Your efforts are finally paying off.

Leo:

What's on the cards for you is that one-of-a-kind romance, Leo. The kind that only a fortunate few are granted in this lifetime. So, allow yourself to be swept off your feet, and know that you don't have to be anybody but your most authentic self to be loved like that. Lions who are in the early stages of their relationship are being reminded of the power of intimacy. When you let down your walls, there is no reason they won't do the same.

Tip: Come as you are, beautiful.

Virgo:

Truth tea, Virgo: you are 100 per cent responsible for where you are. If you're stuck in a rut, it's because of you.

If you are experiencing progression, that too is because of your own efforts. Fate has little to do with what is (or isn't) happening right now. So, think of this as a reminder of your own ability to orchestrate miracles. You are the co-creator of your reality, and it's time to tap into that power wisely, beautiful.

Tip: You are the co-creator of your reality.

Libra:

If money was a non-issue, what would you do for the rest of your life, Libra? Would you garden until the end of time or make lotions and potions that heal and uplift your tribe? Something tells us your purpose is much bigger than what you think it is, and you're beginning to have glimpses of how you are meant to serve the collective whilst you're here. So, pay attention to the stirrings of your heart. Pay attention to how you're being called to show up for what you love. Spirit has a plan for you, beautiful. Trust that both your wants and your needs will be taken care of no matter what.

Tip: This is your chance to create a life that is both creatively satisfying and financially abundant.

Scorpio:

It's sunny side up in the Scorpio HQ. One cannot say that everything is picture-perfect in your world. What one can confirm, however, is the fact that you're choosing to look

at the good and only the good in your life, which in turn is bringing about a magnificent shift in your reality. Like everything else, laughter is better when shared with others. So, play the role of the jester (somewhat ironically) and give others a reason to join the revelry.

Tip: Laughter is medicine, wild one.

Sagittarius:

We all have an idea of the life we want to create, and what we need in order to achieve the desired goal. However, when things don't work our way, we are quick to adopt the failure narrative. Today, the cards are urging you to perceive your reality from a different perspective. To make a conscious effort to replace 'rejection' with 'redirection'. This will help you look beyond the illusion of chaos and understand that everything is unfolding in accordance with the divine plan.

Tip: It's all in divine order, despite what your physical reality is showing you at this moment.

Capricorn:

What if we're all just living in a simulation? What if the things we give so much importance to are not the things that will matter in the end? So, drop your weapons, beautiful. As you do, breathe out the anger and the hatred too. Stepping into the role of the observer will help you remember the Polish proverb, "Not my circus, not my monkeys" and get you through the chaos unharmed.

Tip: Sometimes, you just have to step back and watch the show.

Aquarius:

The dark moon is a time of surrender and release. It's a time of coming face-to-face with our shadows, and transmuting them so we may rise. Pay attention to the patterns that are no longer serving you. The limited beliefs that are keeping you from realizing your highest potential. The upcoming full moon (a blue one at that) in your sign is bringing the promise of massive transformation within and without. The real question: Will you choose to loosen the grip wherever necessary, beautiful?

Tip: Make space for transformation.

Pisces:

There's always going to be something to hate, something to despise in every situation. But, the law of duality states that there will also be something to celebrate in the darkest of moments. It all comes down to the choices we make and what we focus on when things refuse to go our way. Find a way to gaze at the blessed and the beautiful. Find a way to appreciate the beauty in everything and everybody around you. What the cards want you to remember: the seeds you plant today will bear a magnificent harvest tomorrow.

Tip: Can you choose to focus on the blessed and the beautiful?