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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM's greetings on Children's Day

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

Chief Minister PS Tamang has extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Children's Day.

In his message, the CM has said, "We need to follow in his footsteps and imbibe good values among the children and guide them to become responsible citizens and harness their potential to give birth to individuals who can excel in any field of their choice. They are the leaders of tomorrow, and we have to secure their future and lead them on the right path.

I urge the children to march forward with dedication and determination and I assure them that our government will provide every possible support for their progress. Also, I appeal to everyone to draw inspiration from Pandit Nehru and work tirelessly towards nurturing our children, and I believe that our educational institutions will motivate and usher our students towards achieving their targets.

On this occasion, I pray to the Almighty to provide our children with the capability to take our state and nation forward on the path of progress and prosperity by being the best version of themselves and also extend my best wishes and blessings to them for a very happy, healthy, and a bright future."

Sikkim goes 6 days without any Covid deaths

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

With no Covid deaths reported in the State in the past 24 hours as well, Sikkim has now gone six days without losing any lives to the virus. This is the longest the State has gone without a Covid fatality during the second wave. The last Covid death, the 400th, was reported on 07 November.

Meanwhile, with nearly the entire adult population of the state,

88.44%, fully vaccinated against Covid, daily test positivity also continues to remain low and came in at 1.60% on Saturday, with only five of the 296 samples screened yesterday returning positive.

Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has now reached 32,096. Of the five new cases, 04 were registered in East District and 01 in West District.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by the

Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of Health Department, while three cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 135 samples, two people were found positive in rapid antigen testing of 160 samples.

In the meantime, the number of active cases of Covid in Sikkim has slightly dipped to 121 with 13 new recoveries reported in the past 24 hours. With this, the state's count of recovered cases inched up to

31,241 and the current recovery rate stands at 98.4%.

As per the IDSP report, 22 of the 121 active cases are with symptoms severe enough to require hospitalization and only two of these 22 are in ICU.

On the vaccination front, Sikkim administered 1,534 doses of Covishield on Friday. While 94 people received their first jab of the vaccine, 1,440 completed their vaccination

schedule with the second dose.

Of the 5,17,000 people in Sikkim eligible for vaccination, 4,57,272 [88.44%] have already been fully vaccinated.

As for those who have received at least the first dose in Sikkim, the number - 5,23,453 - is even higher than the adult population since the State has offered the vaccine to everyone residing in Sikkim, including those who do not have valid IDs.

15-member Sikkim powerlifting team leaves for National C'ship

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

A 15-member team of Sikkim Powerlifting Association is all set to represent Sikkim in the 30th National Men & Women Equipped & Classic Bench Press Championship 2021 to be held from 16 to 20 Nov in Goa. The team accompanied by Devendra Basnet as the team coach, Sonam Karthak as assistant coach and Sandhya Sundas as team manager will leave for the championship on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference here today, SPA president, Dr GN Namchangcorpa mentioned that the association has been working to promote powerlifting in the state to produce powerlifters in the national and international level. He mentioned that the association has also been working to create awareness in fitness and health especially among the youth



through powerlifting. He expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for supporting the association in sending the state team to the championship.

Team coach, Devendra Basnet, who is also the general secretary of SPA, mentioned that these 15 members of the state team were shortlisted in a selection trial held on 26 Sept in Gangtok, which

was participated by 22 powerlifters.

He mentioned that the team members have undergone rigorous training and are in their peak form. However, he added that the competition will be very tough this time among 1600 athletes from different states in the championship.

This national championship is also a selection trial for the upcoming

Asian Championship to be held in Dec at Istanbul, he informed.

Team manager, Sandhya Sundas, who is also treasurer of SPA, expressed her hope that the team will return home with medals. She thanked the CM and Minister, Arun Upreti and other individuals and organisations for supporting the association since its inception.

She urged everyone to support the association in promoting health and fitness in the State.

The state team has Avinash Rai, Prakash Tamang, Karma T Phuntsok, Raj Kumar Subba, Mohit Rai, Joseph Sharma, Sukmit Lepcha, Treeza Pradhan, Bhim Raj Gurung, Seema Pradhan, Tshering Sherpa, Tara Pradhan, Bijay Tiwari, Dhan Chan Rai and Devendra Basnet.

Dzo-Tyuim Harvest Festival at Lingthem



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

Dzo-Tyuim Harvest Festival 2021, organised as a grand cultural tourism event this year, got underway at Lingthem in Dzongu on Friday. The inaugural day featured a series of traditional games, story-telling sessions and cultural folk performances by local artists.

Today, on the second day of the festival, 'Dzo Tyuim' dance was performed by locals showcasing the harvesting process.

On Sunday, an unplugged session by popular Lepcha band, Sofiyum, and other artists of Dzongu is expected to draw large crowds.

The festival is an initiative of a group of Dzongu youth supported by the Forest Department and the Homestay Association of Sikkim [HAS]. Lingthem is a 40-minute drive from Mangan and around three hours from Gangtok.

India records 11,850 new cases, 555 deaths

NEW DELHI, 13 Nov [PTI]: A total of 11,850 new coronavirus infections were reported in a span of 24 hours, taking the country's infection tally to 3,44, 26,036, while the active cases declined to 1,36,308, the lowest since March 2020, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Saturday.

The number of deaths has climbed to 4,63,245 with 555 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been below 20,000 for 36 straight days and less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported for 139 consecutive days now.

The active cases have declined to 1,36,308, comprising 0.40 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, while the national



COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.26 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the health ministry said.

A decrease of 1,108 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.94 per cent. It has been less than 2 per cent for last 40 days. Weekly positivity rate was also recorded at 1.05 per cent.

It has been below 2 per cent for the last 50 days, according to the health ministry. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,38,26, 483, while the case fatality rate has increased to 1.35 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 111.40 crore.

Colonel, his wife and son among 7 dead in ambush by terrorists in Manipur



GUWAHATI: An Assam Rifles Colonel, his wife and eight-year-old son, and four soldiers were killed in an ambush by terrorists near the border with Myanmar in Manipur. The terror attack - one of the deadliest in the region in recent times - took place at 11 am in Manipur's Churachandpur district.

The Commanding Officer of 46 Assam Rifles, Colonel Viplav Tripathi, had gone to a forward camp on Saturday and was returning when his convoy was ambushed.

"Five soldiers including Colonel Viplav Tripathi, Commanding Officer of 46 Assam Rifles, have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. The family of the Commanding Officer - wife and child - also lost their lives. DG and all ranks of Assam Rifles offer condolences to the brave soldiers and families," the Assam Rifles said in a statement.

Manipur-based terrorist group People's Liberation Army, or PLA, is believed to be behind the attack, though no group has claimed responsibility yet, police sources have said.

Manipur Police sources said they suspect at least four insurgent groups active in the area carried out the ambush. There was an improvised explosive device, or IED, blast before heavy firing from both sides of the road started, the sources said.

This is the first time that civilians have died in an ambush in this remote area of the district. The location is an extremely remote village around 50 km from Churachandpur.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted his condolences and condemned the attack on the Assam Rifles convoy. "Strongly condemn the attack

on the Assam Rifles convoy in Manipur. I pay homage to those soldiers and family members who have been martyred today. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten. My thoughts are with the bereaved families in this hour of sadness," PM Modi tweeted.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh condemned the attack and gave his condolences. "The cowardly attack on an Assam Rifles convoy in Churachandpur, Manipur is extremely painful and condemnable. The nation has lost 5 brave soldiers including CO 46 AR and two family members. My condolences to the bereaved families. The perpetrators will be brought to justice soon," Mr Singh tweeted.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh tweeted that a counter-operation has been launched to track down the terrorists. Manipur, like many of the north-eastern states, is home to several armed groups fighting for either greater autonomy or secession. For decades, the Army has been deployed to the area that has borders with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

In 2015, 20 soldiers were killed in an attack by terrorists in Manipur, after which the Army launched a surgical strike on their camp.

The Assam Rifles is a paramilitary force that operates under the Army's control and is used mainly for counter-insurgency operations in the north-east, though it comes under the Home Ministry for administrative purposes. It acts as an interventionist force of the central government for internal security when the situation goes beyond the control of central paramilitary operations.

Longest partial lunar eclipse in 580 years on Nov 19

KOLKATA, 13 Nov [PTI]:

The longest partial lunar eclipse in 580 years will occur on November 19 and will be visible from parts of Northeast India, an astrophysicist said on Saturday. The rare phenomenon will be visible from a few areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, Director of Research and Academic at MP Birla Planetarium Debiprosad Duari told PTI. The partial eclipse will start at 12.48 pm and end at 4.17 pm, he said.

The duration of the

eclipse will be 3 hours 28 minutes and 24 seconds, making it the longest in 580 years, Mr Duari said.

"A few areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam will experience the last fleeting moments of the partial eclipse just after the moonrise, very close to the eastern horizon," he explained.

The last time a partial lunar eclipse of such length occurred was on February 18, 1440, and the next time a similar phenomenon can be witnessed will be on

February 8, 2669, he said.

The maximum partial eclipse will be visible at 2.34 pm as 97 per cent of the moon will be covered by the Earth's shadow.

The moon is likely to appear blood-red in colour, which happens when the red beams of the sunlight pass through the Earth's atmosphere and get least deflected and fall on the moon.

The partial Lunar eclipse will be visible from North America, South America, eastern Asia, Australia and the Pacific region.

Participatory Rural Appraisal exercise held in Lower Rabikhola



BIKASH CHETTRI

NAMTHANG, 13 NOV:

Ongoing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise under Tangzi Bikmat GPU has reached Lower Rabikhola Ward.

A team led by Panchayat President of Tangzi Bikmat GPU cum ward panchayat Lower Rabikhola, Arjun Kumar Rai and comprising all the Panchayats of the GPU con-

ducted the PRA exercise for GPDP 22-23.

They were briefed by Panchayat Development Assistant (PDA), Milan Chettri and GRS, Bal Krishna Rai. The public of the ward fi-

nalised the resource map of the GPU.

The PRA exercise of Tangzi Bikmat GPU started from Suiram Ward on 11 Nov, informed by Panchayat Member of Suiram Ward, Dikbir Gurung.

Sikkim Gyan Manch meets in Rangpo

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 NOV:

The fifth meeting of Sikkim Gyan Manch was held at Rangpo Panchayat Bhawan today, a press release informs.

Under the presidency of President Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, Sanjeev Kumar Khati, the meeting was conducted by the general secretary of the Manch, Adeep KC, and president, DB Chhetri gave detailed information about Sikkim Gyan



Manch which will start from 28 Nov.

According to Mr Ch-

hetri, this competition is about sharing knowledge and will have upto 15

episodes which will be broadcast through social media.

“Azamgarh should be renamed...”: Yogi Adityanath on Akhilesh Yadav’s turf

AZAMGARH, 13 NOV

[NDTV]: Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today addressed a rally in Azamgarh - rival Akhilesh Yadav’s turf - where they launched a relentless attack on the Samajwadi Party chief. The Chief Minister, who has been criticised in the past over the spree to re-name places in the state, today went on to suggest a name change for the Lok Sabha constituency - “Aryamgarh”.

Hitting out at Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav and his son, Yogi Adityanath stepped up the attack: “Azamgarh may have given two former Chief Ministers or sent them to the Lok Sabha but because of them, the identity of Azamgarh has always been lowered. Before 2014, a person from Azamgarh had problems in even getting a hotel room anywhere in the country... such was the identity crisis.”

“There has been a demand to rename Azamgarh to Aryamgarh,” the Chief Minister added. Several places across the state have been renamed since Yogi Adityanath took charge in 2017, bringing him under attack from the rivals. While Allahabad was renamed Prayagraj, Faizabad was renamed Ayodhya. Earlier this year, a gram panchayat or a local body in Unnao proposed changing the name of a block in the district from ‘Miyanganj’ to ‘Mayaganj’



- the latest in the series.

“The new state university will ensure Azamgarh will definitely become Aryamgarh,” the Chief Minister said today. Amit Shah was in the constituency to lay the foundation stone for the university.

Continuing his tirade against Akhilesh Yadav, Yogi Adityanath asked the crowd, “I want to ask the people of Azamgarh... did your Lok Sabha MP even come to you to find out how you were doing?”

When he got a resounding “no” as a response, he said: “Now that elections are approaching, they will come and misguide you.” He also slammed the former governments for what he described as “poor law and order”, referring to a 2004 shootout incident at a college.

The rally also saw Amit Shah endorsing Yogi Adityanath as the BJP’s Chief Minister candidate ahead of the state elections next year.

“I have said earlier that we never get enough Vidhan Sabha seats in Azamgarh ... but ab bahut ho gaya (that’s enough). I

am asking you to give all Vidhan Sabha seats here to the BJP so that Yogi Adityanath can be made the Chief Minister again,” the Home Minister said. The BJP is eyeing a second straight term in the state.

Amit Shah’s endorsement comes after the BJP huddles earlier this year over the UP election strategy as Yogi Adityanath faced tremendous criticism over the handling of Covid.

Today, as the poll pitch was raised, Amit Shah also referred to Akhilesh Yadav’s “Jinnah” remark last month that had triggered a huge political row. “Jinnah holds a special relevance for Akhilesh,” he said.

“(PM) Modi ji has a “JEM” idea for India and UP - “J” for Jan Dhan bank accounts, “A” - Aadhar Card and “M” for mobile phones for everyone. When I said this in Gujarat, the Samajwadi Party said they have a gem too. I asked a journalist what the SP’s “gem” means, and he said their “jem” means “J” for Jinnah, “A” for Azam Khan and “M” for Mukhtar. Now you tell me

do you want our “JEM” or the Samajwadi Party’s?” Amit Shah asked the crowd.

“As the election approaches, Akhilesh Yadav has started seeing greatness in Jinnah. People from the minority community are sitting here. Does anyone feel Jinnah is great? No one. It’s only Akhilesh Yadav who feels this,” he added.

Akhilesh Yadav’s October 31 remark had led to a war of words. The comment was - “Sardar Patel, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah studied at the same institute and became barristers. They became barristers and they fought for India’s freedom. They never backed away from any struggle.”

In the face of criticism, he later justified using the name of Pakistan’s founder. “Why should I give the context. I would say read the books again,” he had said.

Interestingly, Akhilesh Yadav, who is in Gorakhpur, Yogi Adityanath’s stronghold, also targeted the ruling party at a public gathering. “The people of Gorakhpur were expecting a change and development but they have been disappointed and betrayed. I’ve come here to appeal to them to support the Samajwadi Party. The BJP should not be worried about the 2024 polls, but more concerned about answering questions of their wrongdoings today: fuel price hike, inflation, unemployment...”

Legal Awareness Camp held at Upper Borong



SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 13 NOV:

District Legal Services Authority (South) and Taluk Legal Services Committee (South) Sikkim organized a Legal Services Camp (Mega Camp) including National Legal Services Day/Week and pan India Awareness and Outreach Campaign on the occasion of NALSA - Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at Upper Borong village, South Sikkim, today, a press release informs.

The release mentions that the purpose of the programme was to spread awareness about welfare legislations, various schemes and to strengthen the community’s access to schemes being implemented by the legal services authority and other departments of the Government.

The programme aimed at identifying and connecting people to welfare schemes to ensure that fruits of the welfare schemes are passed on to the eligible people. The programme also looked upon under-

standing the legal needs of the people by addressing their legal problems and giving appropriate legal advice. The programme was launched by District & Sessions Judge, South-cum-Chairman, DLSA (South), Jiwan Kumar Kharka.

Chairman, DLSA (South) Mr. Kharka, informed the local public about the Legal Services Schemes, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, MACT Act, Free Legal Aid services provided by SSLSA & DLSAs/

TLSCs

The public visited the various department stalls and interacted with the representatives of the departments to address their problems and to procure appropriate advice and guidance.

Free Health Check-up (Health Camp) was also provided to the gathering. There were around 103 people who attended the programme.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks by Panchayat President, Rupa Gurung.

RDD Minister inaugurates SGAY houses in Upper Sukrabarey



NAMCHI, 13 NOV (IPR):

Minister Rural Development, Sonam Lama inaugurated a newly constructed houses under Sikkim Garib Awas Yojana (SGAY) at Upper Sukrabarey, Sadam Suntaley, today.

He was accompanied by Area MLA, Farwanti Tamang, Advisor to CM, Rohit Raj Maharaj, Principal Secretary (RDD), C.S.Rao, Additional Po-

litical Secretary to CM (South), Anjita Rajalim, ADC Development (Namchi), C.P. Rai, SKM Area In-charge, Tilak Basnet, SKM CLC president, Dil Kr. Chettri, SKM C.E.C. Member, Arun Pradhan, B.D.O Sumbuk, Kiran Thatal, Panchayats and public.

At the outset, the Minister inaugurated the first SGAY house of Damber Kr. Pradhan, the beneficiary for the

new single storey RCC structure, which consists of a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen, toilet, along with T.V. & furniture comprising of 1 sofa set, 1 centre table, 2 almira, 2 single beds and 1 double bed. He also handed over six house keys to individuals whose SGAY houses from the surrounding area have been completed.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister con-

gratulated the six beneficiaries of the SGAY housing scheme and applauded the efforts and dedication of the RDD department for timely completion of houses under the SGAY.

Sikkim Garib Awas Yojana is a flagship programme of the state government to facilitate housing for poor and to improve the quality of living by providing basic amenities.

Rs.2 lakh for every protester arrested in Delhi Tractor Rally: Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 13 NOV

[NDTV]: The Punjab government has announced financial help for 83 people arrested in Delhi after violence broke out during a farmers’ tractor rally on Republic Day this January. The move is likely to spark a controversy and set up Punjab’s Congress government and the centre for a new battle.

Farmers especially from Punjab and Haryana have been camping around Delhi for a year in protest against three new farm laws that they say will give control in private hands. The centre has denied this allegation and even agreed to amend the laws. But the farmers want nothing short

of withdrawing the laws.

On January 26 this year, a tractor rally by farmers was allowed on certain routes after talks between the Delhi Police and farmer leaders. However, the situation soon fell into chaos after groups reached the Red Fort and overran the police. The police have said the protesters did not follow the prearranged route and broke barricades to enter Delhi. They also entered the Red Fort and unfurled flags from its ramparts.

Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi in a tweet today confirmed his government would pay compensation to the people who were arrested by Delhi Police.

“Reiterating my government’s stand to support the ongoing farmers’ protest against three black farm laws, we have decided to give ₹ 2 lakh compensation to 83 people arrested by Delhi Police for carrying out a tractor rally in the national capital on January 26, 2021,” the Chief Minister tweeted.

That day the national capital saw unprecedented scenes of chaos and violence as groups of farmers clashed with police and security forces. In visuals, around a dozen police and paramilitary personnel were seen forced to scramble and jump over a 15-foot wall at the Red Fort complex to escape a mob of

lathi-wielding attackers.

The Punjab government has been backing the farmers. The state feels the three laws are not useful for their farmers, and has went ahead with resolutions in the state assembly, which may be made into a state law that would negate the effects of the central laws.

Punjab alleges that agricultural produce marketing committees or mandis will become private mandis and lead to financial loss to the state government, which would in turn harm rural development. The centre has, however, said the new laws are good for farmers since they cut out middlemen.

Hamro Varta to mark anniv with Sikkim Sahitya Utsav



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

A literary festival Sikkim Sahitya Utsav 2021 will be hosting various literary activities and competitions on 26 Nov here at Manan Kendra. The event is being organized to mark the second anniversary of local media house, Hamro Varta Television. This literary festival will feature eminent litterateurs from Sikkim, neighbouring hills and Nepal.

An organizing committee has been constituted for the festival which is led by MP Lok Sabha, Indra Hang Subba as the chief patron and Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling and MLA Aditya Golay as patrons.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday afternoon, Sikkim Sahitya Utsav 2021 chief convener, Krishna Lep-

cha mentioned that the event seeks to provide a platform for hidden talents in different corners of the State. He added that the event is an attempt to create a knowledgeable society in the State. The Chief Minister has consented to be the chief guest of the main function of the festival, he mentioned.

Speaking about various activities of the festival, Sikkim Sahitya Utsav 2021 president, RK Waling mentioned that the festival will have literary competitions for school, colleges and university students of the state.

The fest has poetry writing and recitation competition in Nepali and English languages, elocution competition, and painting competition for school and college students.

Mr Waling mentioned that the preliminary

rounds of these competitions would be held virtually and then the top 10 would be called for the final round to be held in Gangtok following which the top three would be awarded with cash prizes. The last date for sending entries is 18 Nov.

He added that there would be talks in Nepali and English on experts on issues related to Nepali and English literatures. He mentioned that the main event would have a celebrity poet, Nawaraj Parajuli from Nepal along with litterateurs from Sikkim and neighbouring hills. He mentioned that the event would also felicitate eminent literary figures from Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

Another highlight of the literary fest is book review competitions in Nepali and English for college and university students upto master's

level. The participant needs to write the book review in 600 words and send in PDF form by 6 PM on 18 Nov.

Suchan Pradhan, who is in charge of the book review in Nepali, mentioned that five books have been shortlisted for the book review in Nepali, which includes Kiraya Ko Kokh by SD Dhakal, Chichimeera by Yuva Baral, Samay Stroke by Ravi Rodan, Activist Aakshar by Adarsh Milan Pradhan and Black and White Sikkimma Sanjeet Bhitrakharu by Anita Niraula.

Likewise, Asish Lepcha, who is in charge of book review in English, stated that three books have been shortlisted in English category; The King's Harvest' by Chetan Raj Shrestha, The Land Where I Flee by Prajwal Parajuly and Legends of the Lepchas, Folk Tales of Sikkim, by Yishey Doma.

Inner Wheel Club celebrates Children's Day at Sudunglakha School

SANDEEP PRASAD GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

The Inner Wheel Club of Gangtok ORCHID celebrated Children's Day at the Sudunglakha Government Secondary School Rhenock, East Sikkim, today.

Since 14 November is a holiday, the day was observed today in the presence of school headmaster and teachers.

Under their project "Upahaar", the club gifted notebooks with important information on sanitation, alphabets and numbers to students



from class I to V. Students were also given a pouch containing pencil, eraser, sharpener and choco-

lates.

The club also organised online open "Portfolio Photo and Paragraph

writing" contest and the results will be posted on social media on Children's Day.

"Civil Society new frontier of war": NSA Ajit Doval

HYDERABAD, 13 Nov: Underlining the importance of internal security, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval on Friday pointed out that the new frontiers of war is the civil society that can be manipulated to hurt the interests of a nation.

NSA Doval made the remarks while addressing the passing out parade of the 73rd batch of IPS probationers at Sardar Vallabhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad.

Addressing the ceremony, NSA Doval said, "The new frontiers of war, what you call the fourth generation warfare, is the civil society. Wars have ceased to become an effective instrument for achieving political or military objectives. They are too

expensive or unaffordable and, at the same time, there is uncertainty about their outcome. But it is the civil society that can be subverted, suborned, divided, manipulated to hurt the interests of a nation. You are there to see they stand fully protected."

Congratulating the 132 officer trainees of the IPS batch and 17 foreign police officers from Maldives, Bhutan and Nepal, NSA Doval exhorted the young probationers to develop a national perspective to efficiently contribute their might to the nation's service. "You are for India and India is for you. Every other identity gets subsumed to this Indian identity," he said.

He emphasised that the young probationers' responsibility includes

not only the safety and security of the people but also the 32 lakh square kilometres of land area across the country. He urged them to be trained and prepared for border management as well as challenges of highly specialised investigations in agencies such as the National Investigation Agency (NIA) or Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He also highlighted the importance of technology as a frontier that officers need to excel in. "Without your success, the nation cannot succeed. If internal security fails, no country can be great. If the people are not safe and secure, they cannot rise to their potential, and probably, the country can never grow," he added.

NSA Doval further said that the offi-

cer trainees are at the threshold of a challenging career.

Academy Director Atul Karwal pointed out that the academy, apart from trying to impart skills and knowledge, has built upon values of courage, integrity, compassion, teamwork and humility. He expressed confidence that the young trainees will prove to be officers of high standards of professionalism and sterling personal qualities.

NSA Doval, who graduated from the National Police Academy 52 years ago, also handed over the trophies for outstanding performances. Darpan Ahluwalia of Punjab cadre, the topper of Phase-1 training and the Parade Commander for the day, was handed over the KS Vyas Trophy for Internal Security and Public Order and Field Crafts and Tactics.

First Sikkim Inter Bank Futsal Tournament kicks off

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 Nov:

The first Sikkim Inter Bank Futsal Tournament 2021 began here at the indoor sports arena in GMC complex on Saturday. Thirteen teams are participating in this two-day long tournament, which is being organized by State Bank of India SC, ST & OBC Employees' Council, Sikkim Unit [Bengal Circle].

Managing Director State Bank of Sikkim, Phurba Wangdi Bhutia

was present as the chief guest on the inaugural day of the tournament.

In his address, the chief guest expressed that the work of bankers is so demanding that they have to work under lots of pressure on a daily basis so such sporting events would provide a good break. He congratulated organisers for taking an initiative in the interest of bankers and expressed his best wishes to all participating teams in the tournament.

ment.

State Bank of India SC, ST & OBC Employees' Council, Sikkim Unit [Bengal Circle] circle vice president, Sonam Dorjee Bhutia stated that this inter-bank futsal tournament is the first of its kind in the State. He said that the main objective of the tournament is to bring all banks under the same roof to promote brotherhood and to have a strong bond.

He further expressed that this sporting event

has also aimed to give a break to bankers from their busy schedule. While expressing his best wishes to the participating teams, he thanked them for supporting the event with their participation.

Nine matches were played on the first day of the tournament. The final match will be played on Sunday. The tournament carries cash prize of Rs 50,000 for the winners and Rs 25,000 for the runners-up team.

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**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
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LUMSAY, TADONG, EAST SIKKIM**

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PROCUREMENT OF IT PERIPHERAL

Sealed quotations are invited from the registered firm/ dealer having valid trade license for supply of IT peripheral on FOR basis:

Sl.No.	Item	Specification
1	Processor	Intel® Core™ i3 – 10100
2	Graphics	Integrated
3.	RAM	4GBDDR4-2666 MHz RAM (1x4 GB)
4.	HDD	1 TB
5.	Audio	Realtek AL C305 Codee, 2W internal speaker universal audio jack, combo microphone / headphone jack.
6.	Monitor	18.5" LCD
7.	Operating System	Windows 10 Home single language 64-HP
8	Warranty	3 years.

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Politics Demands Commitment

...but slack accountability makes casual flirtations too easy

Politics is an exciting engagement, one that evokes passionate stands and distracts very easily. Where Sikkim is concerned, its political milieu has been traditionally populated rather extensively by teachers and midlevel government servants; these being those who get into active, electoral politics. That said, it is only expected in a democracy for everyone to be politically clued in and have a political stand and leaning. Nothing wrong with having political leanings, in fact that, as mentioned a sentence, would be a healthy engagement in a democracy, but everyone knows that involvement here tends to extend much beyond that. It is also difficult in a State as small as Sikkim for anyone of any significance to remain genuinely apolitical. And as mentioned earlier, unless politics is really “dirty”, there is nothing wrong in having a political position even if your job description requires you to stay detached. What is important though is for the people concerned to keep their responsibilities (as government servants or “social workers”) and interests and (political) beliefs in separate silos. Unfortunately, government servants, given the astoundingly slack concepts of accountability enforced on them, are easily tempted to flirt with politics. In systems where accountability is casually fixed and job-responsibilities poorly defined, it is easy to start dispensing favours and bending rules; and before one knows it, the administrators become rather deft political players themselves, starting as foot-soldiers doing their master’s bidding and then developing ambitions of power for themselves. Engagement with actual party-level politics follows and then come political mechanizations to explore new careers.

What blurs the line even more is the confusion with which politics is mixed up with administration and government mistaken for a party. Also, in a political environment thick with parties and slim on ideological differentiators, the decision to take the plunge comes easy because options never dry out and crossovers rarely need to be explained with any conviction. Not just government servants, but this situation makes it easy for everyone to ‘try out’ politics, move around political parties, sample all options and if nothing works out, step back into a supposedly “apolitical” lives only to resurrect whenever occasion demands or opportunity arises. It is the ease with which this last option [the one of turning apolitical whenever it suits one] can be acquired that makes irresponsible dabbling in party politics so easy for most wannabes here.

Let us agree first that while ideological political positions are absolutely acceptable, and even welcome, it is the tendency to engage in ‘active’ politics, the one involving planning and negotiating, that vitiates work cultures and political engagements. This latter involvement diverts attention from the tasks they draw salaries for [in the case of government servants], and should they be aligning with factions opposed to the ruling party, could also lead to willful compromising of policy implementation. In the case of private people involved in “social work”, simultaneous political and social pursuits come at the cost of sabotaging their responsibilities towards society. And this cannot be dismissed as inconsequential even if they are volunteering their time and energies and not being paid for it, because when one occupies a public space, one is required to remain earnest and not allow their priorities to get colored by political exigencies.

Politicians rarely suffer the fallout of such situations and the loss, in the long run, is burdened on the people whom the politicians, the government employees and the social workers are expected to serve. Politics does not compromise governance or administration; it is the ambitious politicking that robs people of deserved delivery. For that reason alone, it is advisable to maintain a healthy interest in politics and also hold opinions, but leave the politicking to politicians; and if one is to engage actively, then doing so with full commitment.

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Why politicians have little incentive to prepare for future climate change disasters

LIAM F. BEISER-MCGRATH
THECONVERSATION.COM

The impact of climate change and how to respond to it is the defining political debate of our era. There are two forms this response can take – reacting to environmental disasters by providing financial and technical assistance to affected areas, or adapting to the effects of global heating by preparing for future disasters.

Adaptation efforts – building flood protections, early warning systems and investing in resilient infrastructure – are increasingly recognised as important tools in limiting the consequences of climate change. This was a key focus of the UK’s COP26 presidency goals at the UN climate summit, which highlighted closing the “adaptation gap” and building resilience to climate change globally.

Despite this, there are more political rewards for devoting attention and resources to disaster relief, rather than disaster preparedness. This means politicians have little incentive to introduce large-scale investment in climate change adaptation.

Research finds that the public is more supportive of policies that react to adverse climate events, rather than those that proactively minimise the potential for damage (like flood defences). Reacting to a disaster is clearer and more visible to voters than investing in disaster preparedness.

These political incentives are clearly demonstrated in US presidential elections. Research examining elections from 1988-2004 found that incumbent politicians received higher vote shares when they prioritised disaster relief spending while in office, compared to equivalent spending on disaster preparedness.

Research published this year found that the key to breaking this cycle is helping the public better understand the economic benefits of disaster preparedness. While voters who have experienced disas-



ters are not more willing to invest in preparedness, communicating information about the long-term benefits of this investment can increase public support.

THE GLOBAL STAGE

Action on climate adaptation also has a chequered history at the international level. It has long been considered a taboo due to concerns it would distract from efforts to mitigate climate change. Adaptation has only recently started to receive significant attention and pledges from developed countries.

These nations have the economic and technical resources to fund the scale of adaptation required in developing countries. But this investment has been limited by the problem of defining what exactly constitutes adaptation.

There is often a lack of clarity for international bodies in knowing whether projects actually offer protection from climate disasters, or are instead broadly focused on economic development.

The UN’s Green Climate Fund recently chose not to submit for ap-

proval a project focusing on building resilience to hydro-meteorological hazards in Timor-Leste over these exact concerns.

Global investment in adaptation does not have the same immediacy as disaster relief. This is compounded by the fact that those most responsible for global adaptation funding -- the advanced economies -- are less affected by the immediate consequences of climate change.

CORRUPTION v CLIMATE

The current approach to adaptation projects also draws attention to corruption in developing countries. Often referred to as the “C-word”, discussion of corruption has been avoided by policymakers and non-governmental organisations in order to avoid weakening political support for assistance.

A 2010 study by the UK government found that 57% of the British public considered it pointless to donate aid to poorer countries, due to government corruption in recipient countries. As a result, financing climate adaptation is

likely hampered by public distrust in projects without clear immediate outcomes, compared to the highly visible response to disaster events.

Governments of wealthier donor countries must more clearly identify both the economic and humanitarian benefits of investing in adaptation for developing countries. This will likely increase support for these investments. This has limitations, as citizens in developed countries may be wary of efforts to boost growth abroad at the expense of domestic growth.

At the international level, interpersonal connections and experience have been shown to increase humanitarian aid flows.

Sadly, the increasing number of climate-related disasters such as flooding and wildfires in economically developed countries may be the key to support for necessary adaptation efforts across borders.

[the writer is Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Politics and Director of the PECC Lab, Royal Holloway University of London]

It’s not stress that’s killing us, it’s hate: Maybe mindfulness can help

IGOR GROSSMANN & ELLEN CHOI
THECONVERSATION.COM

There is no shortage of divisive social issues today, all competing in an increasingly crowded outrage marketplace for our attention. With algorithms curating increasingly hateful content under the guise of “everyday news,” the ability to be curious and open to others’ perspectives has never been more critical.

As famed philosopher Michel Foucault once argued, only through tolerating dissent and understanding resistance can society change and evolve. But if tolerance rather than outrage is the metric, it feels like we are growing weaker.

WHAT DOES MINDFULNESS REALLY MEAN?

Mindfulness has two components: Present-moment oriented awareness of what’s happening within and around us; and acceptance of what’s happening in our awareness. Experts believe that mindfulness offers a solution to intolerance because it promotes acceptance and subverts our knee-jerk reactions to defend our ingrained beliefs.

The increasing popularity of mindfulness has been driven by expectations that it will reduce stress. Yet, beyond quelling nerves, mindfulness equips us with the ability to embrace the distress and resentment required to examine ideas we have become comfortable dismissing — a process that requires engaging with discomfort.

Over the course of the pandemic, many of us have dipped a toe into mindfulness practices, perhaps guided by apps, self-help books or even brainwave-sensing vibrating pillows. But do most people understand that mindfulness is about engaging with uncomfortable experiences? Or is it seen as just another fad that once again puts the self at the centre of self-discovery and self-help, as some critics have suggested?

HOW DO PEOPLE UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE MINDFULNESS?

As researchers of mindfulness and wisdom, we decided to look into this issue to examine whether the popular understanding of

mindfulness may support the dismantling of intolerance.

In a new report published in Clinical Psychology Review, we first determined common terms associated with mindfulness across some of the largest English language databases available today and found that public understanding of mindfulness in books, spoken and written text and websites and blogs focuses on engagement and acceptance, rather than mere stress relief. We found most people appear to understand what mindfulness means. Next, we examined whether they apply these insights in practice.

To address this question, we performed a meta-analysis, combining results from 150 studies with more than 40,000 people that investigated how people report experiencing mindfulness. Additionally, we conducted novel empirical research to test how reported mindfulness is associated with markers of engaged thought.

In theory, both the awareness and acceptance elements of mindfulness would be used together to help a person work through their challenges and daily experiences by engaging with challenging experiences in their mind. Surprisingly, that’s not what we found.

While experts claim we use both awareness and acceptance together, our meta-analysis showed that occasional mindfulness users treat awareness and acceptance as independent processes or even as opposites: people who reported greater awareness reported lower acceptance and vice versa.

And that’s not all. In a series of empirical studies we conducted, participants reporting greater acceptance were in fact reporting less engagement with their difficult issues! Instead of engaging with challenging topics by wisely reflecting on them — considering limits of their knowledge, others’ perspectives and the context of their experience — these people were either avoiding or suppressing difficult experiences.

Study after study, we saw that people scoring higher on established mindfulness measures reported lower engagement with

their experiences. In practice, most people conflated acceptance with passivity or avoidance.

THE UNFULFILLED PROMISE OF MINDFULNESS

This is a problem. When mindfulness is understood in word but not in practice, it ceases to pave a path to wise judgment, co-operation or compassion.

Just as the ability to choose where we place our attention and how long we focus improves through awareness training, the ability to be accepting of dissenting opinions requires practice in order to create understanding instead of further marginalizing those we disagree with.

Acceptance doesn’t mean that we have to passively accept whatever cards we are dealt. It means confronting our discomfort long enough to explore what needs to be changed and being malleable enough to consider vantage points we typically ignore. Reducing stress by avoiding difficult conversations is a short-term solution that only further polarizes perspectives.

THE PURPOSE OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness might not provide an easy answer to the divisiveness that surrounds us, but an accurate understanding that includes the practice of acceptance may help encourage sincere discussion, generous compassion and authentic connection.

To strengthen our ability to see the present moment through multiple interpretations and from many perspectives, we may have to discover how to practice mindfulness — by applying awareness and acceptance together.

Are we willing to endure the pains of growing together or will outrage remain the more desirable status quo?

[Igor Grossmann is Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Waterloo; Ellen Choi is Assistant Professor, HR Management & Organizational Behaviour, Ryerson University]

U'khand to have disaster research centre soon: Dhami

PITHORAGARH, Nov 13 (PTI): Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Saturday said the state will soon have a disaster research centre equipped with facilities that can send early signals in case of natural disasters in the hilly areas, making it easier to take precautionary measures and save lives.

"The project is in the last stages of being sanctioned by the Centre. Once it is sanctioned, we will start our search for a suitable location for it," Dhami told PTI.

After the disaster research centre with advanced equipment is established, it will be easy to take precautions in case of natural disasters like earthquakes, landslides, heavy rains and flashfloods, and save

lives, the chief minister said during a visit to his home district Pithoragarh.

All disaster-prone regions are being geologically surveyed and high priority is being accorded to resettlement of villages situated in such areas, he said.

"Besides, we have also taken note of the changing weather pattern in the Himalayan region and initiated studies to know the effects of climate change on traditional crop seasons," Dhami said.

Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, of which Pithoragarh is a part, suffered heavy damage in the incessant rains that lashed the state from October 17-19 accounting for highest fatalities, house collapse incidents and landslides.



Development schemes worth Rs 300 crore have so far been inaugurated in the district by Dhami. He has also inaugurated a seven-day autumn festival and 100 feet high tricolour at the district headquarters.

Accusing the Congress government led by Harish Rawat of announcing development projects, which never saw the light of day, Dhami said all schemes announced by the BJP government will be implemented before the model code of conduct comes into force.

"Prior sanction of the finance department is taken for all the developmental schemes announced by our government. It will ensure that they do not get stuck due to paucity of funds," he said.

The chief minister expressed confidence that the BJP will register an even bigger win this time than in the 2017 assembly polls when it won 57 out of the 70 assembly seats in the state to wrest power from the hands of the Congress.

Dhami will take part in a family prayer at his ancestral village Hadkhola on Saturday, besides attending the Didihat festival.

He will fly to Sitarganj on November 14 after inaugurating Jauljibi fair close to the Indo-Nepal border.

Mizoram logs 669 new COVID cases, two more fatalities



AIZAWL, Nov 13 (PTI): The daily COVID-19 count in Mizoram maintained an upward trend for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday as the state reported 669 fresh cases, 38 more than the previous day, with the tally rising to 1,28,217, a bulletin said.

The northeastern state recorded 525 new infections on Wednesday and 531 on Thursday.

The death toll rose to 458 as two more persons from Aizawl district succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, the bulletin issued by the state

information and public relations department said.

At least 151 children are among the new patients, it said.

The single-day positivity rate was at 14 per cent as the fresh cases were detected from 4,757 samples tests.

All the patients were found to have contracted the disease locally, the bulletin said.

Aizawl district registered the highest number of fresh cases at 307, followed by Lunglei at 102 and Champhai at 80.

Mizoram now has

5,654 active cases, while 851 people were cured of the disease on Friday, taking the total number of recoveries to 1,22,105.

The recovery rate among coronavirus patients currently stands at 95.23 per cent.

The state has so far conducted more than 13.69 lakh sample tests for COVID-19.

More than 7 lakh people have been inoculated till Friday, with 5.35 lakh of them having received both doses of the vaccines, state immunisation officer Dr Lalzawmi said.

UP man gets death sentence for killing three daughters

LALITPUR (UP), Nov 13 (PTI): A special court here has sentenced a 35-year-old man to death for killing his three daughters three years ago and also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

Assistant government counsel Rakesh

Tiwari on Saturday said Special Judge Nirbhay Prakash sentenced Chhidami alias Chhidu to death in connection with the murder of his daughters Anjani (11), Raddo (7) and Putto (4) at their residence in Veer village under Ban-

pur police station limits on the night of November 13, 2018.

The court on Friday also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on Chhidami.

Tiwari said on the fateful night, Chhidami returned to his house in an inebriated state

and hit his daughters, who were sleeping, with a hammer. Later, he set his house afire using LPG and the girls sustained burn injuries.

The villagers took the girls to a hospital where the doctors declared them dead.

A case was registered in this regard on the basis of a complaint lodged by Pooran Singh, a local. At the time of the incident, Chhidami's wife was at her parents' house, according to Tiwari.

Chhidami has been in jail since the incident.

Pondy reports 32 new COVID-19 cases

PUDUCHERRY, Nov 13 (PTI): Puducherry clocked 32 fresh coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours ending 10 a.m. on Saturday, taking the overall tally to 1,28,401.

The new cases identified at the end of examination of 2,506 samples were spread over Puducherry 19, Karaikal 9, Yanam two and Mahe two.

The active cases were 275 and they comprised 95 in hospitals and remaining 180 in home isolation.

Director of the De-



partment of Health G Sriramulu said no fresh fatality was reported from any of the four

regions of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam during the last twenty-four hours and

toll remained 1,863.

He said 28 patients recovered and were discharged today and the

overall recoveries so far were 1,26,263.

The department of Health has tested so far 19.44 lakh samples and found 16.46 lakh out of them to be negative.

The test positivity rate today was 1.28 percent while fatality and recovery rates were 1.45 percent and 98.33 percent, respectively.

The Department of Health has administered so far 11,50,754 doses which comprised 7,31,359 first doses and the remaining 4,19,395 were second doses.

Odisha logs 247 new COVID-19 cases, 2 more fatalities

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 13 (PTI): A 15-year-old girl was among the two more patients who died of COVID-19 in Odisha, taking its toll to 8,375, while 247 fresh infections cases pushed the tally to 10,45,209, a health department official said on Saturday.

The coastal state has reported 6,490 COVID-19 deaths during the second wave as against 1,876 in the first. The single-day fresh infections did not cross the 300-mark for the third consecutive day on Saturday.

Thirty-seven of the 247 new patients are children in the age group of 0-18 years.

The rate of infection among children and adolescents now stands at 14.97 per cent.

At least 144 new cases were recorded in quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported 115 cases followed by 22 in Cuttack. Ten districts did not report any new case in

the last 24 hours, the official said. Odisha currently has 2,790 active cases while 10,33,991 patients, including 339 on Friday, have recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The state has thus far conducted over 2.27 crore sample tests, 60,988 of them on Friday.

The positivity rate stands at 4.58 per cent, the official said.

As many as 1,33,60,655 people have been inoculated with COVID-19 vaccines so far, he added.

Four new cases take Arunachal's COVID tally to 55,212

ITANAGAR, Nov 13 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday reported four new COVID-19 cases, two less than the previous day, with the tally rising to 55,212, a health department official said.

The death toll remained at 280 as no fresh fatality due to the infection was registered in the last 24 hours, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

Four more people recuperated from the disease during the period, taking the total number of recoveries to 54,888.

The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in the state stood at 99.41 per cent.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 44 active cases, the SSO said.



West Kameng district has the highest number of active cases at nine, followed by Tawang at eight and the Capital Complex Region at seven.

The state has so far conducted over 11.92 lakh sample tests for COVID-19, including 717 on Friday, Jampa said, adding that the positivity rate

stood at 0.55 per cent.

State Immunisation Officer Dr Dimong Padung said 13,53,505 people have been inoculated so far.

37 new Covid cases in Ladakh; nine more patients recover

LEH, Nov 13 (PTI): Thirty-seven more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Ladakh, pushing the overall virus tally in the Union Territory to 21,135 and active cases to 158, officials said on Saturday.

They said a total of 1,955 people were tested for COVID-19 in the twin districts of Leh and Kargil on Fri-

day. Of these, 37 returned positive in Leh, which has witnessed a spurt in the positive cases since the beginning of this month. No fresh case was recorded in Kargil.

Ladakh has so far registered 209 Covid-related deaths -- 151 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic

last year.

Leh has seen one Covid-related death and 173 cases in the past fortnight, taking the infection tally in the district to 17,515. Kargil, on the other hand, has recorded a total of 3,620 cases till date.

The officials said nine more COVID-19 patients were dis-

charged from a hospital in Leh, thereby taking the number of recoveries in Ladakh to 20,768 which accounts to 98.3 per cent of the virus caseload.

The active cases in Ladakh have now risen to 158 -- 154 in Leh and four in Kargil -- the officials said, adding that no Covid-related death was reported on Friday.

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Pulisic sparks US over Mexico 2-0 in World Cup qualifying

CINCINNATI (AP): Christian Pulisic sent a message — with his head and his undershirt. Take that, Mexico. Pulisic and the Americans are back atop the region.

Pulisic scored on his very first touch in the 74th minute, Weston McKennie added a goal in the 85th and the United States beat Mexico 2-0 Friday night in a World Cup qualifier — the “Dos a Cero” scoreline that became traditional early in the 21st century.

When Pulisic scored on his first touch five minutes after entering, he ran to the end-line and pulled up his jersey to show the red-white-and-blue clad fans.

“Man in the mirror,” was scribbled in dark ink.

Earlier in the week, El Tri goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa was quoted as saying: “Mexico is the mirror in which the United States wants to see itself.”

A night that began with smoke — from fireworks during “The Star-Spangled Banner” as LED lights flashed through the stands — ended with Michael Jackson’s “Man in the Mirror” played on the public address system.

U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter said Thursday that Ochoa’s remarks showed “that we have a long way to go to get the respect of Mexico.”

Fans in the crowd of 26,000 at new TLQ Stadium booed Ochoa with every touch.

“I think you guys know the message. I don’t need to like speak on it too much,” Pulisic said. “It’s just an idea that came in the head.”

Tim Weah said he and defender DeAndre Yedlin inspired Pulisic’s shirt.

“Just to send a message,” Weah said. “Before the game, Mexico was talking a lot of smack. To shut them up, we



have to continue to win games, continue to beat them. That’s the only way we’re going to earn their respect and get the world’s respect.”

The win was the third this year for the 13th-ranked Americans over No. 9 Mexico following a 3-2 victory in the Nations League final in June and a 1-0 victory in the CONCACAF Gold final in August.

“To win three in a row is obviously amazing,” Pulisic said, “but that doesn’t mean that it’s time to be complacent or time to think oh, we’re the best around.”

Heated matches between Mexico and the U.S. are the norm, and this one ended with the U.S. a man short after Miles Robinson — who scored the Gold Cup goal — got a pair of yellow cards.

“We fiercely dislike Mexico’s soccer team, right, and we’re fierce competitors and we want to win every time on the field,” Berhalter said, making a point to distinguish Mexico’s team from its people. “Afterwards, you shake hands and

you move on. We have a lot of respect for them.”

The U.S. and Mexico have 14 points each, followed by Canada with 13, Panama 11, Costa Rica, Jamaica and El Salvador six each and Honduras three.

Three nations from North and Central America and the Caribbean qualify for next year’s tournament in Qatar and the fourth-place nation advances to a playoff.

The U.S. won four straight home qualifiers against Mexico by 2-0, all at Columbus, Ohio, before falling 2-1 in November 2016 at Crew Stadium. That led to the Americans missing the 2018 World Cup.

Pulisic, one of the few holdovers, entered in place of Brenden Aaronson in the 69th minute. Since a high left ankle sprain on Sept. 8 at Honduras, Pulisic had been limited to a pair of late-match appearances for Chelsea.

“I never had an injury like that,” he said. “It was just dealing with pain in different

spots of my ankle. And it was just about making sure it was right and now I feel like it’s in a good spot.”

Zack Steffen, in his second straight qualifier in goal, kept the game 0-0 when he dived to get his left hand on a shot by a streaking Hirving Lozano in the 18th. The Americans out-shot Mexico 18-8 but couldn’t break through.

Yunus Musah, an 18-year-old emerging as a key American midfielder, passed to the 21-year-old Weah on the right flank to set up the first goal. Weah, the son of Liberia president and former FIFA Player of the Year George Weah, crossed and Pulisic got in front of Johan Johan Vásquez and headed the ball past Ochoa for his 17th international goal.

McKennie, dropped from the roster for two matches in September for violating team COVID-19 protocols, scored with an 8-foot right-footed shot after exchanging passes with Jesús Ferreira. The return pass deflected off McKennie’s boot, hit Vásquez and bounced

into the path of McKennie, who ran onto the ball for his eighth international goal.

Rain fell for much of a match that began in a 42-degree chill, the coldest for a U.S. qualifier since the Snow Classico of March 2013, a 1-0 win over Costa Rica played in 29-degree temperature at Commerce City, Colorado.

Play, however, was hot.

McKennie is suspended for Tuesday’s qualifier at Jamaica after getting his second yellow card of the competition, assessed in the 68th for arguing with and running into the back of Salvadoran referee Ivan Barton after Aaronson was clawed in the right eye by Luis Rodríguez with no call.

Robinson got a yellow card in the 59th for elbowing Rodríguez on the chin and a second in the 90th for tumbling over Lozano, causing the U.S. to finish a man short.

“Confidence is through the roof,” Weah said, “but the most important thing is to stay modest and stay humble because CONCACAF is hard.”

NOTES: Panama rallied for a 3-2 win at last-place Honduras on goals by Cecilio Waterman in the 77th, César Yanis in the 81st and Eric Davis in the 85th. The Catrachos, in their first match since Hernán Darío Gómez was hired as coach, got goals from Alberth Elis in the 30th and Brayan Moya in the 59th. ... Canada won 1-0 against El Salvador on Jonathan David’s 57th-minute goal ... El Salvador gained a 1-1 draw against visiting Jamaica on a 90th-minute goal from Alex Roldán — a brother of the Americans’ Cristian Roldan — after Michail Antonio put the Reggae Boyz ahead in the 82nd.

No. 2 UCLA rallies to beat No. 4 Villanova 86-77

LOS ANGELES (AP): Two highly ranked teams and a raucous crowd packed into historic Pauley Pavilion sure made it seem like it was already March Madness.

It’s not just yet, although No. 2 UCLA backed up its Final Four run last spring with an 86-77 overtime victory against fourth-ranked Villanova on Friday night.

“We love these games,” said Johnny Juzang, the NCAA Tournament star who scored 25 points. “This is where we have the most fun. It’s a blast.”

The Bruins overcame a 10-point, second-half deficit before taking control in overtime.

“They gutted it out and we didn’t,” Villanova coach Jay Wright said.

Jules Bernard banked in a jumper that tied it at 67 with 30 seconds to go to force overtime, when over 13,000 cheering, chanting fans remained on their feet until the final buzzer.

“We were relentless but their efforts were relentless, too,” Bruins coach Mick Cronin said. “Nobody should have lost this game.”

The Bruins looked they were going to when they fell behind by 10. But they rallied over the final 5 1/2 minutes of regulation while holding the Wildcats at 67.

After getting to the line just seven times in regulation, the Bruins made all 12 of their free throws in the five-minute extra session, when they outscored the Wildcats 19-10.

Caleb Daniels missed two 3-pointer attempts and Collin Gillespie missed a layup before Jermaine Samuels hit a 3 in the closing seconds.

“They just made a lot of great plays towards the end,” Samuels said. “Those are the plays that you’ve got to get and they got them.”

Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 21 points and 13 rebounds and Bernard finished with 16 points for UCLA (2-0).

Samuels scored 20 points and Gillespie scored 18 points to lead Villanova (1-1).

The Wildcats, 2018 national champions, had their share of supporters under UCLA’s record 11 national championship banners. “It was a great game,” Wright said. “Great atmosphere. This place is awesome.”

Cronin added, “I told Jay, ‘Let’s just do it again tomorrow.’ Doesn’t get much better than that.”

Neither team gave an inch until midway through the second half.

Leading by one, the Wildcats outscored the Bruins 11-2 to take the game’s first double-digit lead, 60-50. Four different players scored in the

spurt, with Eric Dixon’s three-point play getting it going. Samuels dunked and Justin Moore and Gillespie made consecutive 3-pointers.

Three times the Bruins got within two over the final four minutes — the last when Juzang made a pair of free throws to trail 67-65. Moore missed a layup with 0.2 seconds left that forced overtime.

The game was the earliest matchup by date between AP top-five teams at a campus site in the history of the poll that began in 1948-49, according to ESPN Stats & Info. It also was the first nonconference matchup between two top-five teams in Pauley Pavilion since March 1, 1992, when then-No. 4 UCLA lost to top-ranked Duke. The Wildcats settled down after an early deficit and outscored the Bruins 24-15, including 10 straight points, to end the half. They took their first lead of the game on a 3-pointer by Gillespie, the first of three treys in a row during the spurt.

BIG PICTURE
Villanova: The Wildcats face tough opponents in the next several weeks, and all of the games are on the road. Next up is No. 18 Tennessee, followed by either No. 7 Purdue or No. 19 North Carolina — all in the Hall of Fame Classic. No. 8 Baylor hosts the Wildcats in early December.

With Giannis scratched, Celtics beat Bucks 122-113 in OT

BOSTON (AP): When the Milwaukee Bucks scratched Giannis Antetokounmpo 90 minutes before the tipoff, Boston coach Ime Udoka worried that his team would expect an easy night against the rest of the defending NBA champions.

It took the Celtics a while to snap out of it.

“There’s always a natural letdown. That was the message before the game,” Udoka said after Boston beat Milwaukee 122-113 in overtime Friday night. “The other guys are going to play hard and come in with a ‘nothing to lose’ attitude, and they did.”

Dennis Schröder scored a season-high 38 points — eight in overtime — as the Celtics took advantage of the reigning NBA Finals MVP’s absence to pull away. Jayson Tatum scored 27 with 11 rebounds for Boston, which has won four of five since opening the season 2-5.

Tatum said that hearing Antetokounmpo was out, joining Khris Middleton, made him “locked in even more.”

“Guys played more free when they know they’re going to get an opportunity,” he said.

Jrue Holiday had 17 points and 13 assists, and Bobby Portis scored 22 for the Bucks. Grayson Allen scored 21, hitting a pair of 3-pointers in the final 73 seconds of regulation to send the game into overtime.

But Schröder took over from there, scoring six straight points to turn a one-point lead into a runaway.

“He got hot late, and we kind of rode his hand there,” Udoka said. “He had a great night tonight, which we needed.”

After Antetokounmpo was scratched with a right ankle sprain, Arlington, Massachusetts, native Pat Connaughton started in his place and scored 15 points. The Bucks lost for the sixth time in their last nine games.

The game featured 22 lead changes — and eight ties — in the first 30 minutes before Boston went on a 13-2 run to turn a one-point deficit into a double-digit lead.

Robert Williams III had 12 points and 10 rebounds and Marcus Smart scored 12 of his 19 points in the third quarter, when the Celtics erased a four-point deficit and went up by seven.

It was 106-100 with 73 seconds left in regulation when Allen hit a 3-pointer, then Tatum turned the ball over. George Hill made a putback of Holiday’s missed 3 to cut the deficit to one point.

After Schröder sank a floater, Allen hit a step-back 3-pointer to tie it 108-all with 14 seconds left in the fourth. Tatum’s short jumper at the end of regulation bounced off the front of the rim and the Celtics were headed for

their sixth overtime period in 12 games.

“I tried to make it at the end,” Tatum said. “End the stress of all these overtimes.”

Boston led 112-111 midway through overtime when Schröder made a pair of baskets, then hit a pair of free throws as the crowd chanted “M-V-P!”

“That’s just great,” he said. “But for me, that doesn’t count. I need a win, and that’s what we got.”

Smart scored 12 consecutive Celtics points over a 4:24 span in the third quarter before Tatum hit a 3-pointer that sparked a 13-2 run and gave Boston its first double-digit lead of the game.

TIP-INS

In addition to Antetokounmpo, the Bucks were also without Middleton (COVID-19 protocols), Brook Lopez (back) and Donte DiVincenzo (foot). The Celtics were without Jaylen Brown (leg). ... The Celtics did not shoot a free throw in the first half. A cording to Celtics broadcaster Sean Grande, the last time the Bucks came to Boston as the defending NBA champions, on Feb. 13, 1972, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar scored 51 points with 17 rebounds. JoJo White had 31 for Boston.

UP NEXT

Bucks: At Atlanta on Saturday.

Celtics: At Cleveland on Saturday and Monday.

Stephen Curry scores 40 points as Warriors beat Bulls 119-93

SAN FRANCISCO (AP): Stephen Curry put on quite a show for his old college coach from Davidson.

The reigning NBA scoring champion piled up 40 points with nine 3-pointers, Draymond Green delivered another all-around effort and the Golden State Warriors beat the Chicago Bulls 119-93 on Friday night for their seventh straight win.

“It’s special,” Curry said of performing for Davidson coach Bob McKillop, whose team plays San Francisco at Chase Center on Saturday. “The schedule gods worked out somewhat in terms of they got to come to the game. Obviously, we’re going to Charlotte tomorrow so I’ll miss the Davidson-USF game, but to have Coach in the building ... it always gets me going reminding me of the journey to get here and all that went into making me the player and person I am now.”

Green added nine points, nine rebounds and seven assists after coming into the game questionable with a bruised left thigh he injured in Wednesday’s victory against the Timberwolves. Kevon Looney notched double-digit rebounds in back-to-back games for the third time in his career, grabbing 10 following a career-high 17 two nights earlier.

Golden State went 7-1 on its homestand and improved to 11-1 overall.

“We always used to have one of the best home-court advantages in the league and we want to establish that again,” Looney said. “We’ve got full capacity now and just want to give the crowd a good show.”

Andrewiggins added 15 points and seven rebounds and Jordan Poole had 14 points as Golden State wrapped up an eight-game homestand that matched a franchise record. The Warriors’ lone loss came in overtime to Memphis on Oct. 28.

“In general, the high point is establishing our home floor, that this is going to be a tough place to come win a game. And a lot of that is the way we’re playing, a lot of that is our fans, the energy in the building, there’s a really good vibe about the team, the fans feel it,” coach Steve Kerr said. “Great way to start the year but now we’ve got to go out on the road and it’s going to get a lot tougher. We obviously are very happy to be where we are.”

Curry crossed over and blew right by Lonzo Ball for a short jumper in the second quarter and shot 15 for 24 in his 52nd career 40-point game. He is now the NBA’s career leader for 3-pointers in both regular season and playoffs with 3,366, passing Ray Allen (3,358).

Zach LaVine scored 23 points and DeMar DeRozan had 18 to lead the Bulls, who missed star Nikola Vucevic during his absence with COVID-19.

“So it’s snowing in

Chicago on November 12th, interesting,” the veteran center posted on Twitter from home.

“It’s really our first adversity and that’s where adversity builds a lot of character,” DeRozan said.

Golden State beat the Bulls for the ninth straight time and seventh in a row at home.

“We played the best team in the NBA,” DeRozan said.

HELLO, OLD FRIEND
McKillop got to lead his team through a practice at the Warriors’ facility ahead of Saturday’s game.

That gave McKillop a chance to share his gratitude for all Curry and the Warriors do to help people. The biggest thing McKillop learned from the two-time MVP: “grace.”

“I couldn’t be more blessed to have him as a son in a different sense,” McKillop said. “He’s constantly in a quest to do things for people.”

Curry’s positive influence on Davidson College is still felt immensely.

“You cannot believe how many people in our town stay up and watch West Coast games because Stephen Curry’s playing in the game,” McKillop said. “And they’re up ‘til 1 in the morning. You see people in the post office the next day, you see them in the coffee shop the next day and their eyes are droopy because, ‘Oh, I was up last night watching Steph play.’ What an affirmation and validation of the impact he has had on our community that people of all ages are doing that to this day.”

TIP-INS

Bulls: Chicago made nine of its initial 16 shots and led by as many as 10 in the first while forcing the Warriors into seven turnovers in the opening period. ... Chicago hadn’t won on the Warriors’ home floor since a 113-111 overtime win on Jan. 27, 2015. ... This marked the Bulls’ first road game against the Western Conference after beginning 3-1 away from home.

Warriors: Otto Porter Jr. limped to the locker room in the second with a bruised right quadriceps muscle but returned. ... Golden State has made 10 or more steals in six straight games. ... Dameron Lee missed a second straight game with soreness in his left hip. “I don’t think it’s too serious, but not anything we want to mess around and get behind,” Kerr said. “Just trying to stay in front of it.”

UP NEXT

Bulls: At the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday having lost the last five meetings on the road. Chicago began a five-game road stretch out West.

Warriors: Begin a four-game East Coast swing playing at Curry’s former hometown of Charlotte on Sunday night. The Warriors beat the Hornets 114-92 on Nov. 3 at Chase Center but have lost the last two in Charlotte.

Climate talks resume, cautious coal phaseout still on table

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND (AP): Negotiators at the this year's U.N. climate talks pored over fresh proposals Saturday aimed at sealing a deal that could credibly be said to boost the world's efforts to tackle global warming.

British officials chairing the talks in Glasgow, Scotland, released new draft agreements a day after the official deadline passed.

A proposal for the overarching decision retains contentious language calling on countries to accelerate "efforts towards the phase-out of unabated coal power and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies."

But in a new addition, the text says nations will recognize "the need for support towards a just transition" — a reference to calls from those working in the fossil fuel industry for financial support as they wind down jobs and businesses.

Alok Sharma, the British official chairing the talks, said he hoped countries would clinch an ambitious agreement in Glasgow.

"I hope the colleagues will rise to the occasion," Sharma told The Associated Press as he walked into the conference venue.

Some campaign groups said the current proposals were not strong enough.

"Here in Glasgow, the world's poorest countries are in danger of being lost from view, but the next few hours can and must change the course we are on," said Tracy Carty of Oxfam. "What's on the table is still not good enough."

In another proposal, countries are "encouraged" to submit new targets for emissions reduction for 2035 by 2025, and for 2040 by 2030, establishing a five-year cycle. Previously, developing countries were expected to do so only every 10 years.

The proposed agreement states that in order to achieve the 2015 Paris accord's ambitious goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) by the end of the century compared with pre-industrial times, countries will need to make "rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 relative to the 2010 level and to net zero around mid-century, as well as deep reductions in other greenhouse gases."

Scientists say the world is not on track to meet that goal yet, but various pledges made before and during the two-week talks, which are now in overtime, have brought them closer.

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Africa's 'Great Green Wall' shifts focus to hold off desert

KEBEMER, SENEGAL (AP): The idea was striking in its ambition: African countries aimed to plant trees in a nearly 5,000-mile line spanning the entire continent, creating a natural barrier to hold back the Sahara Desert as climate change swept the sands south.

The project called the Great Green Wall began in 2007 with a vision for the trees to extend like a belt across the vast Sahel region, from Senegal in the west to Djibouti in the east, by 2030. But as temperatures rose and rainfall diminished, millions of the planted trees died.

Efforts to rein in the desert continue in Senegal on a smaller scale. On the western end of the planned wall, Ibrahim Fall walks under the cool shade of dozens of lime trees, watering them with a hose as yellow chicks scurry around his feet. Just beyond the green orchard and a village is a desolate, arid landscape.

The citrus crop provides a haven from the heat and sand that surround it. Outside the low village walls, winds whip sand into the air, inviting desertification, a process that wrings the life out of fertile soil and changes it into desert, often because of drought or deforestation.

Only 4% of the Great Green Wall's original goal has been met, and an estimated \$43 billion would be needed to achieve the rest. With prospects for completing the barrier on time dim, organizers have shifted their focus from planting a wall of trees to trying a mosaic of smaller, more durable projects to stop desertification, including community-based efforts designed to improve lives and help the most



vulnerable agriculture.

"The project that doesn't involve the community is doomed to failure," says Diegane Ndiaye, who is part of a group known as SOS Sahel, which has helped with planting programs in Senegal and other countries across the Sahel, a broad geographic zone between the Sahara in the north and the more temperate African savanna to the south.

The programs focus on restoring the environment and reviving economic activity in Sahel villages, Ndiaye said.

With the loss of rainfall and the advance of the desert, "this strip of the Sahel is a very vulnerable area to climate change," he said. "So we should have projects that are likely to rebuild the environment ... fix the dunes and also help protect the vegetable-growing area."

On Senegal's Atlantic Coast, filao trees stretch in a band from Dakar up to the northern city of St. Louis, forming a curtain that protects the beginning of Green Wall region, which also grows more than 80% of Senegal's vegetables. The sky-reaching branches

tame the winds tearing in from the ocean.

This reforestation project started in the 1970s, but many trees were cut down for wood, and work to replant them has been more recent. More trees are also planted in front of dunes near the water in an effort to protect the dunes and keep them from moving.

"We have had a lot of reforestation programs that today have not yielded much because it is often done with great fanfare" and not with good planning, Ndiaye said.

Fall, the 75-year-old chief of his village, planted the citrus orchard in 2016, putting the trees near a water source on his land. His is one of 800 small orchards in six communes of a town called Kebemer.

"We once planted peanuts and that wasn't enough," he said in the local Wolof language. "This orchard brings income that allows me to take care of my family." He said he can produce 20 to 40 kilos of limes per week during peak season.

Enriched by the trees, the soil has also grown tomatoes and onions.

The village has used profits from the orchard to replace straw homes with cement brick structures and to buy more sheep, goats and chickens. It also added a solar panel to help pump water from a communal well, sparing villagers from having to pay more for water in the desert.

African Development Bank President Akinwumi A. Adesina spoke about the importance of stopping desertification in the Sahel during the United Nations' COP26 global climate conference. He announced a commitment from the bank to mobilize \$6.5 billion toward the Great Green Wall by 2025.

The newest projects in Senegal are circular gardens known in the Wolof language as "toulou keur." They feature a variety of trees that are planted strategically so that the larger ones protect the more vulnerable.

The gardens' curving rows hold moringa, sage, papaya and mango trees that are resistant to dry climates. They are planted so their roots grow inward to improve water retention in the

plot.

Senegal has 20 total circular gardens, each one adapted to the soil, culture and needs of individual communities so they can grow much of what they need. Early indications are that they are thriving in the Great Green Wall region. Solar energy helps provide electricity for irrigation.

Jonathan Pershing, deputy special envoy for climate at the U.S. State Department, visited Senegal as part of an Africa trip last month, saying the U.S. wants to partner with African nations to fight climate change.

"The desert is encroaching. You see it really moving south," Pershing said.

In terms of the Great Green Wall project, he said, "I don't think that very many people thought it was going to go very far," including himself. But there are indications of progress, as seen in the community projects.

"It has a global benefit, and people are prepared to make those kinds of long-term investments through their children and their families, which I think is a hallmark of what we need to do in other climate arenas."

Polish police find body of young Syrian near Belarus border



WARSAW, POLAND (AP): Polish police said Saturday that the body of a young Syrian man was found in the woods near the border with Belarus, the latest victim in a political standoff at the European Union's eastern border.

The regime in Minsk has for months been encouraging illegal migration across the border into the EU nations of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. All three countries are reinforcing their borders, seeking to block the newly opened migration route, and the situation is growing more dangerous as winter approaches.

Police said the body was found a day earlier near the village of Wólka Terechowska. They said the exact cause of death could not be determined.

It brings the death toll now to at least nine reported victims in the migration encouraged by Belarus' longtime

President Alexander Lukashenko.

Many of the migrants are from Syria, Iraq, or elsewhere in the Middle East, people seeking to flee conflict and hopelessness for the prospect of better lives in Europe.

After the large migration into Europe in 2015, Europe has been reinforcing its borders to discourage the new arrivals. Still, every year, tens of thousands try to get in, embarking on dangerous and sometimes deadly journeys by sea and land.

Since the summer, thousands have been lured by what appeared to be a new and easier way to slip into Europe, through Belarus.

The EU accuses Lukashenko of creating the artificial route in order to retaliate for sanctions against his regime imposed after an election in 2020 widely viewed as flawed and a harsh crackdown on internal dissent that followed.

Gang allows fuel to flow in Haiti -- but just for a week



PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI (AP): A powerful Haitian gang leader said Friday he is easing a chokehold on fuel deliveries that has caused a growing crisis for hospitals, gas stations and even water supplies across the nation's capital.

G9 gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier held a news conference to announce a seven-day reprieve for hospitals, schools and gas stations to send trucks to the refueling station at the port.

But he said the relaxation is only temporary, and he repeated calls for the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, whom he accuses of involvement in the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Chérizier said he will shut the port down again in a week and will keep it that way until Henry steps down.

Shortly after Chérizier's announcement, The Associated Press saw two tanker trucks arrive at the port, take on fuel and leave without incident.

The capital and much of the country has been at a standstill since last month, when the G9 sealed entry into the port where fuel is stored and distributed.

Government police

and troops have seemed helpless to confront G9 and other gangs even as the closing of gas stations stifled much of the already precarious economy.

Hospitals reported turning away patients due to a lack of generators, many buses stopped running and banks, government offices and schools were closed for lack of transportation. Lack of fuel threatened water pumping stations.

Anger over lack of fuel caused protests and rioting by frustrated truck, bus and taxi drivers.

The G9 group is among many gangs that have terrorized the country's capital, prompting thousands to flee from criminal-controlled neighborhoods.

One of those groups has been holding 17 members of a missionary group from Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries since Oct. 16, demanding millions of dollars in ransom.

The U.S. government this week urged U.S. citizens to leave Haiti because of the country's deepening insecurity and the severe lack of fuel. Canada announced Friday it was pulling all but essential personnel from its embassy

Hong Kong authorities deny visa to Economist journalist

HONG KONG (AP): Hong Kong authorities declined to renew a visa for a foreign journalist working for The Economist without any explanation, the magazine said.

Sue-Lin Wong, who is Australian, was based in Hong Kong and covered China and the southern semi-autonomous city.

"We regret their decision. ... We urge the government of Hong Kong to maintain access for the foreign press, which is vital to the territory's standing as an international city," Zanny Minton Beddoes, The Economist's editor-in-chief,



said in a statement Friday.

Immigration authorities did not immediately respond to an email request for comment. Phone calls to the information office outside of business hours went unanswered.

Many have worried about the erosion of press freedom in a city that was once a bastion for it.

Last week, a survey by the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club found nearly half

its members were considering leaving the city. They said they were concerned about a decline in press freedoms under a sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing following massive anti-government protests in 2019.

"Very sad I won't be able to continue reporting from Hong Kong. I loved getting to know the city and its people. I will miss you all," Wong said in a message posted on Twitter.

Wong previously worked for the Financial Times and Reuters in

China.

In August last year, Hong Kong immigration authorities denied a visa to Aaron Mc Nicholas, an incoming editor for Hong Kong Free Press, an independent news outlet, without giving a reason.

In June, Apple Daily, the Chinese-language tabloid backed by pro-democracy billionaire Jimmy Lai, was forced to shut down after police froze \$2.3 million of its assets, searched its office and arrested five top editors and executives. Police also accused the individuals of foreign collusion to endanger national security.

Israeli couple arrested in Turkey on espionage charges

ISTANBUL (AP): An Israeli married couple were arrested for espionage late Friday after taking photographs of the Turkish president's residence in Istanbul, Turkey's official news agency said.

Anadolu Agency said a Turkish national was also arrested. Police detained them after a tip off from an employee working in the Camlica radio and television tower on the Asian side of Istanbul. The

claimed they were taking photographs of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's nearby home from the tower's restaurant earlier this week.

They were formally arrested pending trial for "political and military espionage" by an Istanbul court.

In a statement issued late Friday, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid denied the couple work for an "Israeli agency." He said his department has been in regular contact with the pair and is



trying to organize their release.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz identified the couple as Natalie and

Mordi Oknin. Citing their lawyer, it said they were taking photographs of the Ottoman-era Dolmabahce Palace while

taking a ferry. Parts of Dolmabahce, located on the city's European side, are used as a presidential working office.

Britney Spears got all to agree she needed to be freed

LOS ANGELES (AP): There were no more of the heated arguments or dueling court filings of the past few months, no more tearful testimony or angry accusations. For one day at least, everyone surrounding Britney Spears agreed. She needed to be freed.

Most important among them was Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny, who at a hearing Friday terminated the conservatorship that controlled the pop singer's life and money for nearly 14 years.

Spears did not attend the 30-minute hearing that was almost anti-climactic after the courtroom drama of recent proceedings, in which Spears demanded first the ouster of her father from power over her, then the removal of the legal shackles on her life.

It felt almost like a formality. The celebration that followed was plenty dramatic, though.

"Best day ever ... praise the Lord ... can I get an Amen???" Spears said on Twitter and Instagram minutes after the ruling.

Jubilant erupted outside the courthouse, with fans cheering and shouting after the decision was announced. The crowd chanted "Britney! Britney! Britney!" and fans sang and danced to Spears' song "Stronger."

"Good God I love my fans so much it's crazy!!!" Spears said in her posts. "I think I'm gonna cry the rest of the day!!!!"

The decision capped a stunning odyssey that saw Spears publicly demand the end of the conservatorship, hire her own attorney, have her father removed from power and finally win the freedom to make her own medical, financial and personal decisions for the first time since 2008.

Those surrounding Spears said she is equipped to make those decisions.

"We have a safety net in place for Britney both on the personal side and on the financial side," her attorney Mathew Rosengart said outside the courthouse. "But Britney, as of today, is a free woman and she's an independent woman. And the rest, with her support system, will be up to Britney."

Jodi Montgomery, the court-appointed conservator who oversaw the singer's life and medical decisions starting in 2019, developed a care plan with her therapists and doctors to guide Spears into the aftermath.

"There is no reason Ms. Spears can't lead a safe, happy, fulfilling life after this conservatorship," Montgomery's attorney,

Lauriann Wright, said at the hearing.

Penny's decision came with remarkably few caveats.

She gave no orders that Spears should undergo mental evaluations first, something legal experts had assumed would be part of the conservatorship's endgame. The judge said California law did not require her to order further evaluation of Spears if no one requested it.

The judge kept a small part of the conservatorship temporarily in place so that the singer's money can be moved around in the coming months as financial power is transferred back to her.

As recently as last spring, it appeared that the conservatorship could continue for years. Then it unraveled with surprising speed.

Key to the unraveling was a speech Spears made at a hearing in June when she passionately described the restrictions and scrutiny as "abusive" and said "I just want my life back," a line her lawyer repeated in court Friday.

The consensus on display Friday is unlikely to last.

Rosengart has further vowed to pursue an investigation of James Spears' role in the 13 years he oversaw the conservatorship. He said he and his team have found

mismanagement of Britney Spears' finances, suggesting she could pursue further legal action. Court records put her net worth at about \$60 million.

He also said law enforcement should investigate revelations in a New York Times documentary about a listening device placed in her bedroom.

James Spears' attorneys said Rosengart's allegations ranged from unsubstantiated to impossible, and that he only ever acted in his daughter's best interest.

The post-conservatorship fight has in some ways already begun. James Spears has parted ways with the attorneys who helped him operate it, and he has hired Alex Weingarten, a lawyer specializing in the kind of litigation that may be coming.

In court filings last week, Britney Spears' former business managers, Tri Star Sports and Entertainment Group, pushed back against Rosengart's demands for documents about the firm's involvement in the conservatorship from 2008 to 2018. The group also denied any role in or knowledge of any surveillance of the superstar.

Britney Spears was a 26-year-old new mother at the height of her career when her father established the conservator-

ship, at first on a temporary basis, in February 2008 after a series of public mental health struggles.

It ends a few weeks before her 40th birthday, with her sons in their mid-teens and her career on indefinite hold, as she is engaged to be married a second time.

A turning point came early in 2019, when she canceled a planned concert residency in Las Vegas. Her career has been on hold ever since.

Convinced she was put in a mental hospital against her will, fans began coalescing and demanding that the court #FreeBritney. At first, they were dismissed as conspiracy theorists, but the singer herself gave them validation in 2020 in a series of court filings that said they were correct to demand greater transparency and scrutiny of her legal situation.

Those filings proved to be the first indication from Spears, who had remained silent on the conservatorship for years, that she would seek major changes.

Britney Spears has indicated that she'll focus on family and her newfound freedom for now. She may or may not resume making music.

"Whether Britney performs again will be up to Britney, at the right time," Rosengart said.



A-LISTERS ONLY! American socialite, Kim Kardashian stopped at a convenience store after celebrating old friend Paris Hilton's wedding in Los Angeles.

Anushka Sharma reveals she was "worried" about "hating" her body after pregnancy

"I am so much more comfortable in my skin today than I was before, even when I had that perfect body," said Anushka Sharma

New Delhi: Actor-producer Anushka Sharma, in a recent interview with Grazia, opened up about embracing body positivity and the notions of beauty standards for women. Anushka Sharma, who welcomed daughter Vamika in January, told Grazia, "Only a week ago, I was telling a friend how afraid I was because of this pressure that's thrust upon women to look a certain way, even before they become mothers, before they get pregnant, and definitely after they've had a baby. Despite being somebody who is fairly self-aware, I was worried. I kept thinking - am I going to hate my body?"

The actress added that she is more "comfortable" in her skin than she was ever before. "I've realised that it's a state of mind, it has nothing to do with how you look," she said. The actress added, "My body's not as it used to be; it's not as toned as it was. And I'm working towards it because I like to be fit. Having said that, I am so much more comfortable in my skin today than I was before, even when I had that perfect body."

The actress added that she has come



a long way, in the sense that she has stopped "obsessively scrutinising" the way she looks. Anushka told Grazia, "I don't do that anymore. I click a picture and I post it without obsessively scrutinising how I look. You have to be accepting of the body that's done something so profound and miraculous for you. I'd never want my daughter to grow up with that sense of lacking that we're always made to feel as women. Ultimately, it's all about perspective. The girl who has the 'perfect' body can still not feel great while the girl who doesn't have a body that aligns with societal beauty standards can still, be immensely confident."

Actor-producer Anushka Sharma and her cricketer husband Virat Kohli welcomed their first child, a baby girl on

January 11, this year and the star couple named her Vamika. The couple met during the shoot of a shampoo commercial and they got married in an intimate ceremony in the presence of a few family members in Tuscany, Italy in 2017.

Anushka Sharma, star of films like Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi, PK, Band Baaja Baaraat, Sultan and Ae Dil Hai Mushki, was last seen in the 2018 film Zero, co-starring Shah Rukh Khan and Katrina Kaif. Her last project as a producer was the Netflix film Bulbul and it was a massive success. She also produced Amazon Prime Video's smash hit web-series Paatal Lok last year. Earlier this year, the actress announced her next project as a producer - a Netflix original series titled Mai.

Farah Khan reveals what Raveena Tandon said about Katrina Kaif in Tip Tip 2.0

"I also don't think anyone could have done justice to Tip Tip, other than Katrina," said Farah Khan

New Delhi: The remix of Tip Tip Barsa Paani from the recently-released film Sooryavanshi, has been trending big time. Some love it, others not so much. This, however, is the story of what Raveena Tandon thought of the song, Raveena featured in the iconic Tip Tip Barsa Paani from the 1994 film Mohra,

also featuring Akshay Kumar. In an interview with India Today, Farah Khan, who has choreographed the remix, said, "Raveena was the first one to call me and say that the song is looking fab and Katrina is looking so good. Even Manish (Malhotra) was of the thought that we go away from the visuals of the original song and he's made Katrina look like a million bucks. I also don't think anyone could have done justice to Tip Tip, other than Katrina."

Farah Khan, who has previously choreographed Katrina Kaif in Sheila Ki Jawani, said, "It was an absolute delight. Katrina is in her best shape and looking stunning, so to work with her on Tip Tip was just perfect." Akshay Kumar also featured in the original rendition of Tip Tip. Just like the original, the remake has also been sung Udit Narayan and Alka Yagnik. The music is by Tanishk

Bagchi.

In Sooryavanshi, Akshay played the lead role of Veer Suryavanshi, a character that was introduced as an Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) officer in a cameo role in the 2018 film Simmba, which also starred Sara Ali Khan. Katrina Kaif starred as a doctor and Akshay Kumar's wife in the film. The film has been produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions.

ARIES:

Hello, and welcome to the eclipse season! Things are going to get chaotic from here - that is a given. Word for the wise: keep your feet firmly planted on the ground. Think things through before you act. Exercising a certain degree of caution will serve you well. Those who are in the process of signing certain documents are being asked to study the terms and conditions carefully.

TAURUS:

Here's a cup of piping hot truth tea: nobody's perfect, and that includes you. It's time to bring the gift of love and acceptance to the table, Taurus. Loving people as they are is a spell that will transform the most complex of relationships. For single Venusians, this is a time of exploring their sensual side with a suitor who possesses the uncanny ability to ignite the dormant fire within. The only way to partake in the pleasures is by shedding your inhibitions.

GEMINI:

Love and romance is a big theme in the Gemini HQ. You want to let your partner know just how special they are to you. Turn to both gifts and words of affirmation to express what's in your heart as you allow yourself to receive the blessings that

are in store for you. Single Twins are being asked to keep their eyes open. A secret admirer may reveal their affection towards you.

CANCER:

The cards are indicating the completion of a significant cycle, which in turn is making space for another. Take a bow, Cancer! You have earned your moment in the sun. That said, charging forward at this point may not be the best idea. Pause. Reboot.

LEO:

Intoxicants will only numb the pain, not free you from it. Be mindful of what you are consuming at this time lest you find yourself stuck in a vicious cycle. On the work front, you're being asked to adopt the mantra 'go big or go home!' The time to level up has finally come, Leo. By playing it small or dimming your light, you will be of disservice to the world.

VIRGO:

After we set an intention, it's important for us to surrender the outcome to the Universe. We don't get to decide how the blessings will be delivered to us or who will play the role of the messenger. The only thing we can do is stay open and trust. So, stay open and trust, Virgo. If the signs are any-

thing to go by, there is something intoxicating being concocted behind the scenes for you.

LIBRA:

Here's the thing, Libra: you're saying one thing and doing another. You're talking about living a life of passion and settling for what seems practical and looks good on paper. So, consider changing your approach a little. Consider taking a step towards that which reignites the fire within.

SCORPIO:

The reason we shy away from speaking our truth is because we worry about pushing people away from us. But, this is not the case, Scorpio. Relationships that are based on the foundation of authenticity are only strengthened by the gift of honesty. So, pay attention to what you're being called to share with those you love.

SAGITTARIUS:

There are times in our lives we have to let go of all that is familiar and take a step into the unknown. Venture into that mysterious place where past learnings will fail to provide us with a sense of comfort. Yes, you will long to go back to the familiar, Sagittarius. Your mind will conjure up all sorts of excuses to keep you chained to the darkness. Take a shot of courage and soldier on anyway.

CAPRICORN:

To quote Leo Tolstoy, "Move different if you want different. Old keys will never open new doors." We repeat: Old keys will never open new doors. Something's got to change here, Capricorn. Maybe you? It's time to bring more adaptability and flexibility into the game.

AQUARIUS:

Some people turn to words of affirmation to express what's in their heart. Others like to indulge their lovers with bespoke presents. Today, you'll find that your amour is turning to all the tricks to make you feel seen and heard. Stay open, Aquarius. Revel in the love that you have attracted into your world. Something tells us, this is a brand new start and that things are going to get better from here.

PISCES:

This is your big moment, Pisces! The grand finale you've been working relentlessly towards. Don't shy away from sharing your story with those who matter. Let go of the narrative that you will call terrible things upon yourself if you celebrate your success. The good news is, your victories are likely to get your noticed by the people who matter *and* open several doors for you. When in doubt, say yes a hundred times over.