



**SWARA BHASKER SAYS SHE 'CAN'T EVEN POST A PHOTO OF A FLOWER WITHOUT PEOPLE LINKING IT TO MASTURBATION'**  
pg 08

**DON'T BURDEN EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYABILITY**  
pg 04

**AMBER ROSE EXPLAINS WHY THE "PAIN CUTS SO DEEP" AFTER ALEXANDER EDWARDS ADMITS TO CHEATING**  
pg 08



# Summit **T**IMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Donce Lama condemns fake FIR being attributed to her, disgusted by character assassination triggered by SNS press conference

**SAGAR CHHETRI**  
**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Donce Lama, whose name has been dragged into the allegations of molestation against Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling, today rejected the FIR being attributed to her as a forgery and informed a press conference that she had already clarified the matter with Sikkim Police last month itself.

Dredging up the matter now has further reinforced her resolve to charge those who are so disingenuously peddling this piece of forgery, because of which she has been targeted with misogynist and harsh character assassination.

The issue relates to the Sikkim Naagarik Samaj press conference on Saturday during which Sikkim Police's alleged inaction on an FIR accusing Mr Khaling of molestation and attempt to rape was condemned. Although SNS did not share details of the complainant, shortly after the press conference, people leaving comments on Facebook posts reporting on the press conference were naming

## JOURNALISTS UNION OF SIKKIM



Ms Lama as the supposed complainant and some even shared copies of the FIR.

Ms Lama informed the press conference today that Sadar Thana had contacted her on 15 July last month about the FIR received by Sikkim Police via speed-post [on 09 July].

"I informed the IO that the FIR was not posted by me and that even the signature on it was not mine. The allegations contained in it were false. In fact, I even told

the investigating officer that if I had a complaint to file, I would do so personally and not post it," Ms Lama said.

Ms Lama called and addressed the press conference alone today.

The letter FIR was made out in Ms Lama's name and even gave her address and contact phone number, a detail which hints at a deeper conspiracy to sully her name and also target Mr Khaling.

Ms Lama, it may be recalled,

was recently appointed member of the State Women's Commission, and this has been used uncharitably and in very offensive tones by many people leaving comments on Social Media as a "compromise."

Sharing that she had filed a General Diary with the police last month itself when she learned of the fake FIR into which her name had been dragged, Ms Lama said today that she will now go after those behind this cheap trick more

concertedly. To start with, she has filed an FIR against SNS and its office-bearers for yesterday's press conference.

"The SNS office-bearers know me personally, they could easily have picked up the phone and cross-checked the matter with me," she said, while adding that she even respected some of them for the pro-Sikkim positions they have been taking and was hence even more disappointed with the latest development.

In her FIR lodged with Sikkim Police on the matter, Ms Lama alleges that fake FIR of last month must have been prepared by SNS general secretary Passang Sherpa in connivance with Tseten Tashi Bhutia, Bharat Basnett and others to settle their political scores otherwise how could they have been in possession of a copy and privy to other details like when it was posted and received by Sikkim Police.

Ms Lama also informed that she has been out of Gangtok for past month since she was assisting with the medical treatment of a patient and hence did not have the time to follow-up the case.

## Covid recoveries cross 27K mark in Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Sikkim's count of recovered cases of Covid-19 crossed the 27,000-mark today and currently stands at 27,086 with 116 COVID patients making full recoveries in the past 24 hours and getting discharged from home and facility isolation. The State's cumulative count of Covid cases detected since testing began on 28 Feb, 2020, stands at 29,314.

The number of daily recoveries continue to be substantially higher than the new cases, and today, only 70 new cases were reported. With this, the number of active cases has also come down to 1,583.

However, the State recorded a new COVID death after a gap of two days taking Sikkim's COVID toll to 365. This death was reported from home isolation in West District.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim issued by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, the 70 new cases were detected from the testing of 776 samples on Saturday which gives Sikkim a daily test positivity rate to 9%.

While 35 of these cases were picked up in RT-PCR testing of 365 samples, 35 more tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 407 samples.

While 33 new cases were registered in East District, 18 were in West District, 13 in South District and 06 in North District.

18 COVID-positive people were hospitalized in the past 24 hours taking the number of Covid patients in hospital to 113, only 5 of whom are under 18 years of age. Thus far, only 10 under 18 year olds have been hospitalized for Covid-19, five of whom have already recovered enough to be discharged from hospital and sent to home or facility isolation.

Currently, there are 14 Covid patients admitted in ICU facilities at STNM Hospital and Central Referral Hospital.

## State Sports Academy graduates launch Academy Knights Foundation



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

A group of like-minded footballers have come together to establish a football foundation for the betterment of football and footballers. Academy Knights Foundation for U-21 boys was launched here on Sunday and the official jersey launched by officials and players of the

foundation.

Academy Knights Foundation founder Palzor Lepcha informed that the AKF aims to produce more professional footballers from the State.

He further shared plans of the foundation to develop a professional footballing attitude among local players and help them find place in big professional clubs

within and outside the State.

AKF comprises of graduates from the State Sports Academy of 2014 batch and a few senior footballers of the State.

Mr Lepcha thanked YG Collections and Sikkim Aakraman FC and Sikkim Himalayan SC for extending support and assistance to the foundation. Membership to AKF is open to all.

## 95% of eligible population has received at least one Covishield jab in Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Nearly 95% of above 18 year olds in Sikkim, the age-group eligible to receive the Covid vaccine, have received at least the first dose of Covishield in Sikkim.

As per the Daily Report of Covid-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, of the 5,36,728 people eligible to receive the vaccine, 5,06,875 have received at least the first dose [94.43%]. Of these, 1,65,664 have completed their vaccine schedule having received both shots. This means that 30.86% of the eligible population is now fully vaccinated against Covid in Sikkim.

## Petrol, diesel prices cut by 20 paise

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22**

**(PTI):** Petrol and diesel prices were cut by 20 paise per litre each on Sunday - the first reduction in petrol rate in over a month, and the fourth in case of diesel in less than a week.

Petrol price in Delhi was cut to Rs 101.64 a litre and diesel to Rs 89.07 per litre, according to a price notification of state-run oil companies.

The reduction came as international oil prices tumbled to their lowest level since May, after the US Federal Reserve signalled it was set to start tapering asset purchases within months, hurting

commodities and lifting the dollar.

The price cut in diesel is the fourth since August 18, when the reduction cycle began. All four reductions have been of 20 paise per litre each.

On the previous three occasions when diesel rates were cut, petrol prices remained unchanged.

Sunday's cut in petrol price came after 36 days of status quo in rates. Diesel rate change was effected after 33 days of no change.

The freeze in rate revision coincided with Parliament session, where the opposition parties tried to corner the government on various issues including the hike in fuel prices.

**OBITUARY**

"Death ends a life, not a relationship."



**LATE SHRI TSETEN TASHI BHUTIA**  
(1952-2021)

**Ex-General Manager, State Bank of Sikkim**

Lovingly called "Tashi Sir" by all, the State Bank of Sikkim family remembers Late Shri Tseten Tashi Bhutia as a soft hearted strict administrator. Born on 20th December 1952, Shri Tseten Tashi Bhutia joined the State Bank of Sikkim on 7th September 1972. The State Bank of Sikkim was still at its early years of establishment when 20 years old young "Tashi Sir" started his banking career. Since his early career he exhibited unmatched commitment and determination to push the bank towards rapid growth path. He is witness to many ups and downs of the bank and played pivotal role in manoeuvring the bank out of many economic difficulties. His role at the initial stage of bank's computerisation shall always be remembered as a turning point for the bank. It is only due to his relentless effort and faith in new technology, that the bank could make many technological transformations. His unmatched professional competence and outstanding work ethics distinguished himself as a successful banker which lead to several business re-engineering in the bank. During his distinguished career of 38 years, he made phenomenal rise up to the post of General Manager of the bank before opting for voluntary retirement in 2010.

Passing away of Shri Tseten Tashi Bhutia is a great loss, not only for his family but also for the society at large. State Bank of Sikkim family mourns the passing away of Shri Tseten Tashi Bhutia and pray for his eternal peace.



**STATE BANK OF SIKKIM**  
Head Office: National Highway 10, Gangtok (Sikkim)

Mail us at [advertise@summittimes.com](mailto:advertise@summittimes.com)  
or call us at 03592-208698

## BJP trains NHVC volunteers at Namchi and Namthang



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Two Mandal-level training workshops were held at Namchi and Namthang in South Sikkim by the Bharatiya Janata Party today to prepare volunteers for the party's National

Health Volunteer Campaign which aims to prepare two health volunteers from each village to shore up the country's defence against the probable third wave of Covid-19. S i k k i m - B J P president DB Chauhan

was present as the chief observer accompanied by Melli MLA, Farwanti Tamang, BJP-Sikkim spokesperson Dr. Raju Giri and the state coordinator of the campaign, Bhupendra Giri. A BJP press

release informs that volunteers will be briefed by experts about various aspects of Novel Coronavirus and the use of medical equipment like thermometers, thermal scanners and oximeters.

## 282 families cross over from SDF into SKM in Soreng-Chakung

**PRITAM LAMA**  
**GYALSHING, 22 AUG:**

Crossovers from Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim Krantikari Morcha resumed today with news arriving of 282 families from Soreng-Chakung constituency, currently being represented by the Chief Minister's son in the legislative assembly, quitting SDF and joining SKM at a function held at the SKM party office at Singling.

The new members were received by Soreng-Chakung MLA Aditya Goyal, the CM's Press Advisor, CP Sharma, Agriculture and Horticulture Board Chairperson Chandra Kumar Rana, SKM's



CLC chairperson Sukraj Subba and other party officials.

Among those who left the SDF and joined

SKM today are sitting Panchayat Presidents and Panchayat members from various Gram Panchayat Units and the

general public. This was the third joining program in Soreng-Chakung in the past week.

## India's active Covid cases lowest in 152 days

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** India logged 30,948 new coronavirus infections, while the active cases declined to 3,53,398 comprising 1.09 per cent of the total infections, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The total tally of COVID-19 cases has increased to 3,24,24,234. The death toll has climbed to 4,34,367 with 403 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The active cases have declined to 3,53,398, the lowest in 152 days, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has increased to 97.57 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the ministry said.

A reduction of 7,942 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

As many as 15,85,681 tests were conducted on Saturday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of COVID-19 in the country to 50,62,56,239. The daily positivity rate was recorded at 1.95 per cent. It has been less than three per cent for



the last 27 days.

The weekly positivity rate was recorded at two per cent. It has been below three per cent for the last 58 days, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,16,36,469, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed

80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

Cumulative, 58.14 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered under the nationwide vaccination drive till Sunday morning.

The 403 new fatalities include 145 from Maharashtra and 83 from Kerala.

A total of 4,34,367 deaths have been reported so far in the country including

1,35,817 from Maharashtra, 37,123 from Karnataka, 34,686 from Tamil Nadu, 25,079 from Delhi, 22,792 from Uttar Pradesh, 19,428 from Kerala and 18,356 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

## Kalyan Singh, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, dies at 89

**NEW DELHI, 22 AUG [NDTV]:** Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh died on Saturday in Lucknow due to sepsis and multi-organ failure. He was 89. The senior BJP leader had been undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit of the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) in the Uttar Pradesh capital since July 4. On Friday, his condition deteriorated, following which he was placed on dialysis.

Last month, Prime Minister Modi had tweeted saying "countless people across India are praying for the speedy recovery of Kalyan Singh Ji".

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who visited Mr Singh in the hospital earlier on Saturday,

also expressed his condolences, calling his death an irreparable loss. His government has declared three days of state mourning and a holiday on August 23 when Mr Singh's body will be cremated.

Former Chief Ministers Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati, too, expressed their sadness on Twitter over his passing.

Mr Singh was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, twice -- June 1991 to December 1992 and September 1997 to November 1999. He also served as Governor of Rajasthan between 2014 and 2019.

His first term as Chief Minister is remembered for the demolition of the long-disputed Babri mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.

This incident sent shock waves across the country and is widely viewed as a milestone in modern India's socio-political history and in the rise of his party, the BJP.

Mr Singh resigned as Chief Minister immediately following the demolition while the then President Shankar Dayal Sharma also dismissed the Uttar Pradesh government on the same day. Along with other BJP stalwarts like LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, Mr Singh was charged with conspiracy over the incident.

Last year, a Lucknow court acquitted Mr Singh and others in the case. In a 2009 interview to NDTV, the senior politician vehemently denied any

conspiracy behind the demolition.

"There was no conspiracy. It was an outpouring of the sentiments of crores of Hindus whose aspirations had been forcibly subdued for hundreds of years. We had made all security arrangements," he said.

"It is true that the structure came down despite it. I can only say that sometimes the security cannot match up. I was a strong Chief Minister despite what happened. I had made it clear that there will be no firing. If I had ordered firing, then thousands of people would have died. They were my orders to not fire."

Born in Atrauli town of Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh district, he was first elected to the state legislature in 1967.

**BIKASH CHETTRI**  
**NAMCHI, 22 AUG:**

Panglhabsoi was celebrated at Karma Tekchenling Gumpa in Rabongla today. Rabongla has been hosting a grand Panglhabsoi celebration since 1984, but the pandemic has forced a pause on the scale.

Today's program was organized by the Gumpa Committee and had Barfung MLA, TT Bhutia, as chief guest.

On the occasion, the MLA provided an ambulance for the people



of Barfung.

Also today, Kadenla Sherpa, a student of Ravangla Higher Secondary School who

scored high marks in her recent examinations, was presented with the Dr Serap Gyamcho Bhutia Award, while Pavitra Rai

was awarded the Chhani Gyamcho Bhutia Award and Yangchen Sherpa the Chiringdoma Bhutia Award.

## Tamil Nadu Lok Sabha seats cut after success in population control: Court

**CHENNAI, 22 AUG [NDTV]:** Tamil Nadu has faced "unfair" political representation in the Lok Sabha since 1962 after the state managed to successfully bring down its population, the Madras high court said recently.

In its order passed on August 17, the court asked the centre to see if the Lok Sabha representation of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh - the other state that has seen a drop in representation in the parliament - be restored, or to see if the two can be compensated monetarily. The court pegged the monetary compensation to Tamil Nadu at ₹ 5,600 crore.

"Tamil Nadu and

Andhra Pradesh lost 2 Lok Sabha seats after they effectively controlled population. Why states which could not successfully implement population benefits with more representation in Parliament? Why not compensate these states with equal Rajya Sabha states," the bench of Justices N Kirubakaran and B Pugalendhi asked.

Justice Kirubakaran retired a few days ago. Till 1962, Tamil Nadu had 41 Lok Sabha members. The state's Lok Sabha representation was reduced to 39 ahead of the 1967 general polls after it successfully controlled its population growth.

"Notionally, the contribution of a Member of Parliament in 5 years could be taken at least as Rs.200 crores, though it cannot be determined monetarily. Therefore for every election, Tamil Nadu should be compensated with a sum of Rs.400 crores for reduction of two political representatives. If that is so, Tamil Nadu has to get the compensation for the loss of two seats in 14 elections, viz., 28 seats, which amounts to approximately Rs.5,600 crores, the bench said.

The court also directed the centre to see if Article 81 can be amended to maintain the same number of parliamentary constituencies irrespective of change

in the population of the respective states.

The matter has been listed for further consideration in four weeks.

This comes amid the construction of the new parliament by the BJP government. The new Lok Sabha would reportedly have a seating capacity of 1,000. The original writ sought to turn the reserved Lok Sabha constituency of Tenkasi into a general seat so that candidates from other communities too can contest. The petition sought a rotational mechanism. However, the court had turned down the plea, citing Tenkasi has a large population of scheduled castes.

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## Taliban Blame US For Evacuation Chaos At Kabul Airport

**KABUL, 22 AUG [AFP]:** The Taliban on Sunday blamed the United States for the chaotic evacuation of tens of thousands of Afghans and foreigners from the capital, one week after the hardline Islamist group returned to power in a rapid victory that stunned the world.

The United States has warned of security threats and the European Union admitted it was "impossible" to evacuate everyone at risk from the Taliban, who have vowed a softer version of their brutal rule from 1996-2001.

But terrified Afghans continue to try to flee, deepening a tragedy at Kabul airport where the United States and its allies have been unable to cope with the huge numbers of people trying to get on evacuation flights.

"America, with all its power and facilities... has failed to bring order to the airport. There is peace and calm all over the country, but there is chaos only at Kabul airport," Taliban official Amir Khan Mutaqi said.

Britain's defence ministry said Sunday seven people had died

in the crowds, without giving further details.

A journalist, who was among a group of other media workers and academics lucky enough to get to the airport on Sunday for a flight, described desperate scenes of people surrounding their bus on the way in.

"They were showing us their passports and shouting 'take us with you... please take us with you'," the journalist told AFP.

"The Taliban fighter in the truck ahead of us had to shoot in the air to make them go away."

Britain's Sky News on Saturday aired footage of at least three bodies covered in white tarpaulin outside the airport. It was not clear how they had died.

Reporter Stuart Ramsay, who was at the airport, called the deaths "inevitable" and said people were being "crushed", while others were "dehydrated and terrified".

The footage was the latest imagery of utter despair, after video of a baby being lifted over a wall at the airport and horror scenes of people hanging onto departing planes.

# Lesser Known Aspects of Pang Lhabsol

rePrint

SD TSHERING

**Intro: The annual Pang Lhabsol festival in Sikkim had been rising in popularity until Covid put a pause on things, and hopefully this is a temporary condition. Now that the visual grandeur of Pangtoed Chaams has remained denied for a second year because of Novel Coronavirus, we reprint this article from the vaults on aspects of Pang Lhabsol prayers which not too many know about, but that should not mean we don't remember them either.**

Pang Lhabsol prayers and rituals are recorded in the Nyesol which was composed by Lhastun Chempo after he discovered the Ter of Rigdzin Sokdrup - 'Accomplishing the Life-Force of the Vidyadharas' - a cycle of teachings revealed to him after a pure vision while meditating in the Cave of the Heart of the Deity to the north of Drakkar Tashiding in Sikkim. The cycle includes the famous practice of Riwo Sangchö. Nyesol also contains the prayers related to the guardian deities of Sikkim which include the Pang Lhabsol puja. Pang Lhabsol celebration has evolved since the Chogyal era from a purely religious affair to a socio-religious festival. But first, a peek back into history. Pang Lhabsol received a great boost during the reign of Chagdor Namgyal. In 1700, Chagdor Namgyal ascended to the throne after his father's death. He was a minor at that time and this outraged his elder half-sister, Pendi Ongmu, daughter of the departed king's first wife, who ousted him with the help of the Bhutanese. Chagdor fled to Tibet where he remained in exile for ten years before returning and reclaiming his throne with the help of the Tibetans. While in Lhasa, Chagdor Namgyal became very proficient in Buddhism and Tibetan literature, and became the state astrologer to the sixth Dalai Lama. The sixth Dalai Lama, pleased with the erudition of Chagdor Namgyal, conferred on him exclusive rights to an estate in Tibet. He returned after the withdrawal of Bhutanese forces from Sikkim due to intervention from Tibet. He commanded that the second of every three sons of a Bhutia family must be ordained a monk of the Pemiongchi Monastery. He choreographed the Pangtoed chaam after getting a vision of the dance while in a meditative trance. Pangtoed chaam depicts the war of the generals of Khangchendzonga against evil to safeguard Sikkim. The chaam was also meant to keep alive martial and native traditions. During the time of the kingdom, emphasis was mainly on performance of prayers but it has now transformed into celebration of the blood brotherhood sworn at Kabi Lungchock. Earlier, Pang Lhabsol was celebrated at Tsuklhakhang in Gangtok though prayers were offered in all monasteries. It was customary for representative from villages to come to Gangtok bringing offerings to Tsuklhakhang monastery for the puja. The only exception was made for Bey, Lingzya and Tholung villages of Dzongu which were exempted from bringing offerings to Gangtok due to the historical event connected to the funeral of Chogyal Tsugphud Namgyal in which these three villages were the main patrons. These three villages made their offerings at Tholung monastery in Dzongu and performed their pujas there. Tsuklhakhang monastery was also the venue for the Pangtoed chaam which used to be performed only here at one time. The Pangtoed dancers were carefully chosen from certain families and it was an honour to be chosen to perform the chaam. Two horses were especially bred to act as the mounts of deities Khangchendzonga and Yabdue during the Pangtoed chaam. These horses were chosen according to the specification laid down in the scriptures and had to conform strictly to it. Both horses were never shod and were not used for any other purpose except for the Chaam. Before the celebration at Gangtok, special threads woven from wool at the palace were sent to Pemayangtse monastery and to a Bongthing at Teesta along with other offerings for pujas to be performed at Yangdzo Drakin in West Sikkim, the sacred rock symbolizing the deities of Rigdzin Sokdrup which was sanctified by Lhastun Chempo and at the four sacred caves and at Teesta. Prior to the rituals at Tsuklhakhang, a Bongthing from Nung in Dzongu used to come to the monastery to perform prayers

according to the old traditional ways. This bongthing was especially trained to perform this puja and it was carried down their family for generations. It is said that when the Bongthing started his journey from Dzongu for Gangtok, he was accompanied by a storm which was actually the manifestations of the guardian deities which were accompanying him. The people of Dzongu avoided the path the bongthing took on his trip to Gangtok to avoid harm by the deities. The origin of bongthings according to one song begins with the story of six Lepcha brothers who decide to become Kong Chen's (Khangchendzonga's) soldiers. When they tell their sister, she promises her brothers that when she bears children, she will ensure that they worship Kong Chen and his soldiers. On bearing a son, however, she forgets her promise and as a result Kong Chen sends a mythical serpent that coils itself at the mountain's feet across the Talung river that flows through Dzongu, damming it. As the river begins to flood, causing general panic, the son prays to Kong Chen and the waters recede. This boy, according to legend, became the first Bongthing.

Under the Chogyals, the annual ritual used to be preceded by a trek by the Bongthing, accompanied by young men from Nung, to Sikkim's capital at Tumlong near Dzongu, where they would be received by the reigning Chogyal and entertained at the royal palace. The Khangchendzonga Bongthing was especially feted. Apart from the offerings for the prayers, the Bongthing was provided ration for the year, a new set of clothes, money and gifts. In the days when the importance of the prayers was recognized, the entourage from Nung would stop at several places along the way to offer prayers at special locations on the return journey. They would take four days to reach Nung, where it normally took just a day and a half at most. With their return would begin the Khangchendzonga prayers.

An important part of the royal offering used to be a full grown Yak bull to be offered as sacrifice at the Khangchendzonga altar at Nung. In 1973, however, the Chogyal decreed that a yak sacrifice, which had been part of the ancient ritual, should be discontinued as being against the tenets of Buddhism. Taso, it is said, believed that the discontinuation of the sacrifice displeased Kong Chen and brought an end to the 300-year-old Namgyal dynasty of the Chogyals. The last of the Nung Bongthings was Samdup Tasho who passed away in 2010. The Khangchendzonga Bongthing used to be held in high esteem and people would make way for him when he approached. His house, now a dilapidated shell of a cottage, used to be known as Rum Vik, the Teeth of God, [Vik means both soldier and teeth in Lepcha], a name perhaps earned because of the presence of an elephant tusk - a gift from the Chogyal - that enjoyed pride of place in his altar. Alternately, Rum Vik could also mean the Soldier of God. The Bongthing's ancestors were after all the first Lepchas to enlist as Khangchendzonga's soldiers.

Meanwhile, the prayers at Teesta were performed by another Bongthing to appease the guardian deities of Teesta and of the plains. In olden days, the puja used to be performed in a jungle above Kali Jhora above Teesta but this was discontinued when the Bongthings were attacked by tigers and other wild animals. The old puja site is said to be about a five-hour hike from the Kali Jhora bazaar into the jungle. Two lakes are said to have existed there, one of blood red colour and the other milky white. The present Bongthing, Pem Tshering who is eighty one years old is the 45th generation of Bongthings in his family. [Bongthing Pem Tshering also passed away in 2014 - ed]. His family has been performing this puja for over two hundred and fifty years. He was trained by his father Pembu Lepcha to perform this ritual and he started in 1962 after the death of his father. Pem Tshering was born at Changra basti

above Teesta bazaar where he leads a very humble life dedicated to his puja duties. Animal sacrifices were performed during the pujas which have been discontinued. Besides performing the Pang Lhabsol puja the Bongthing also performs daily prayers for the benefit of Sikkim. The present altar site at Changra basti was purchased by the Chogyal to continue the prayers. The puja at this site was started by the grandfather of Pem Tshering due to the dangers at the Kali Jhora site. At present, the puja at Changra basti is sponsored by the Tsuklhakhang committee; Rs 8000 is given to the Bongthing as his yearly fee to perform the rituals. The residents of this basti also attend the puja. It may be mentioned that the puja site has been affected by a landslide and needs urgent repairs. Bongthing Pem Tshering has no son and he has trained his nephew to continue the tradition after him but how long this tradition continues will depend on the interest of the Sikkimese people in upholding this rich heritage of the state or like Samdup Tasho, the Teesta Bongthing too will also pass away due to our inattention.

After Pangtoed chaam was stopped at Tsuklhakhang in the eighties, the chaam was performed at Pemayangtse and Rabong which boosted Pang Lhabsol celebrations in these areas. Though the popularity of Pang Lhabsol has grown, the religious aspects of the festival is being diluted with more emphasis on cultural features, it would be a shame to lose such a rich religious heritage due to stress on popular demands.

-The article was originally published in Sikkim NOW! in September, 2011.

[The writer retired as Director General-cum-Secretary, DESME, Government of Sikkim]



## GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME GANGTOK

No. 255/SJ&amp;WD/CPS/2021

Dated: 19/08/2021

### INVITATION FOR QUOTATION

Interested bidders are invited to submit quotation for installation and commissioning of integrated video conference system in the Juvenile Observation Home (East and South districts) and Juvenile Justice Boards (East and South districts). The quotation must have the following configuration:-

1	All-in-one Conference Solution  * POLY STUDIO X 30  * Partner Premier, One Year, Poly Studio X30
2	Beetel Cloud-way (application software license)
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The date of opening of quotation shall be 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 at 11.00 am in the chamber of Special Secretary-cum-Director, CPS. The interested bidder may have their presence on the scheduled date and time.

The department reserves the right to accept or reject the quotation.

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## GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SIKKIM STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN GANGTOK

No. 375/SSCW/2021-22

Dated: 17/08/2021

The Sikkim State Commission for Women seeks applications for one (1) post of Project Coordinator for the Project funded under the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India from experienced Professional for a period of 22 months on purely contractual basis or co-terminus with the Project. The selected candidate will not have any right towards claim for regularization or extension of his or her service.

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- The applicant should have a Certificate of Identification.
- The applicant should have the relevant working experience in the field of Gender issues.
- The minimum age of the applicant should be 30 years and the upper age limit should not exceed 45 years.

### Additional Required Skills and Experience:-

- Proficiency in computer applications (Microsoft Office and Web VC Expert)
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- Fluency in English, Hindi and Nepali.
- Presentation and Communication Skills.
- Should be able to understand the relevant stakeholders within the State with the ability to engage with them, build trust and be a bridge between the stakeholders and the Commission.
- Ability to organize events and should have good networking skills.
- Attention to details, ability to deliver tasks on time with limited supervision.
- Ability to deliver trainings and coordinate workshops.

Interested candidates can Walk in Interview for the said post on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 between 11 am and 4 pm, Venue: Office of the Sikkim State Commission for Women, Old Secretariat, Opposite Super Market, Near National Highway, Gangtok, East Sikkim.

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## School to reopen Monday in UP and Karnataka

**NEW DELHI, 22 AUG [NDTV]:** Schools in Karnataka are slated to reopen from tomorrow, August 23. The schools will reopen for Classes 9 to 12 only in some selected districts. Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh schools for Classes 6 to 8 were to reopen but due to the demise of UP's former Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, UP will be observing a public holiday.

The state government has issued a Statement Of Procedures(SOPs) and it is mandatory for all educational institutions to adhere to the norms mentioned in the SOP.

As per the released SOP, only the districts where COVID-19 Test Positivity Rate is less than 2 per cent will be allowed to reopen the schools.

It is mandatory for all the students, staff, and parents coming to the school premises to follow the guidelines mentioned in the SOP.

Both in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, schools are set to

reopen for Classes 9 to 12 and Classes 6 to 8, respectively.

In Karnataka, schools will also conduct online classes for those students who abstain from attending offline classes. Additionally, it is mandatory for all the staff members (teaching and non-teaching) staff to be vaccinated before entering the school premises.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has expressed his surety to the parents that the government has been careful before reopening schools and will ensure that all the COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

In Uttar Pradesh, classes will be conducted in two shifts in all the schools following all the COVID-19 safety protocols. The two shifts are as follows: The first shift will be from 8 am to 12 pm and the second shift will be from 12.30 pm to 4.30 pm.

Classes will have only 50 per cent of accommodation at all times.



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## Don't Burden Education with Employability

*There is already too much confusion in the classrooms*

In an aping of a national obsession, one gets to hear a lot about how the education system and the syllabus in schools need to be made more job-oriented. While there is no denying that the education system, like any other system we have inherited, could do with an overhaul, the clamour to make education 'job-oriented' is perhaps not as advisable as it appears convincing on first look.

As a nation, we already suffer an education system drafted by the British to keep a people subservient; to consciously start grooming people for jobs right from school would be a regressively disturbing pursuit of a colonial model, albeit for a different master and also possibly a new disaster. Of course, it would be wonderful to have education which also made students 'employable', but employability is too dispersed a spectrum to lend itself to any easy packaging into a curriculum. Come on, we already know that even secondary school is too early for students to decide their "stream," to also have them decide their jobs this early would just suffocate their dreams. Also, since it is not possible to fashion an 'employable' curriculum, it makes sense to let that aspect be left alone and concentrate instead on working towards an education that returns to its true purpose - grooming confident people who can apply themselves to learning and who have a thirst for knowledge. If we can pull this off, the schools will automatically churn out well rounded graduates who can adapt to the challenges and requirements of the job market, even in these fickle times of post-demonetization and GST-inspired recession.

The best way to ensure that education does not lose its focus would be to divorce it from any overt responsibilities of feeding employment. That should be an independent pursuit. Sikkim has made the right start by setting up an independent Directorate of Capacity Building which has thankfully not been clubbed with the Human Resource Development Department which looks after education in the State. The task for this Directorate is straightforward and it is required to groom the interested young for job openings within and outside the State. The focus for the planners of Education should thus solely be on education, as in learning. If education is delivered efficiently, then even the skill development trainings will end up being more effective, because it would be taken by youth who are inquisitive, willing and who respect knowledge. One does not get to see enough of that in the skill development programmes being dispensed across the State at present and that is probably because the schools are not successfully inspiring true learning. Deliver in the latter aspect and everything will fall in place, do not address this issue and burden classrooms with vocational learning as well otherwise the already stressed classrooms will prepare an even more confused generation.

Education should remain exclusively about learning and inspiring inquisitiveness. There are enough professional courses around for those who know what job they want to do. The regular schools and colleges should create minds that further understanding and discovery. Yes, the corporate world will want order takers and meek foot soldiers, but humanity requires the free thinkers and inquiring minds. Education should seek to groom more of these. Throw employability into the mix, and these minds will be lost.

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# Climate Change: Why Government Failure to Act Isn't the Problem

NICK BERNARDS  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report underscored the dire state of the climate crisis, concluding that "immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions" are needed to limit global warming even to 1.5°C or 2°C. The report renewed calls for urgent action and an end to "dithering" by politicians. These echo longstanding arguments which bemoan the lack of "political will" to tackle climate change.

The world absolutely needs to reduce or eliminate emissions, and fast. But while many of the problems inhibiting effective climate action are political, they aren't really about politicians failing to do anything. There has actually been plenty of climate action over the last couple of decades. So far, however, it's largely failed.

#### CLIMATE ACTION FOR WHOM?

Different kinds of climate action have different costs and benefits for different people. Because of this, choices about what courses of action to pursue are profoundly shaped by relations of power.

We live in a world marked by severe disparities of wealth and power within and between countries, many of which are rooted in longer histories of colonialism and exploitation. These disparities have often allowed powerful companies in sectors like finance and energy to dictate the course of climate action. This has made it very difficult to pursue measures that might threaten their interests, but which would dramatically reduce emissions - like banning fossil fuel exploration.

Instead, we've had a slew of measures to address climate change which rely on making emissions reductions profitable. But the

quickest ways to reduce emissions aren't always the most profitable. And what is profitable for some can be harmful for less powerful people and communities.

One example is carbon credits - permits that allow firms and governments to meet emissions targets and offset their pollution by funding projects that reduce emissions elsewhere, mainly in developing countries. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) organised by the UN was meant to help reduce emissions this way. As agreed in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the CDM was supposed to mobilise investment to install renewable energy, retrofit factories and restore habitats.

While a large market developed for carbon offsets, it failed to substantially reduce emissions. A major reason for this was its reliance on profit-seeking private investors. Many of the projects funded through the CDM were probably profitable on their own - the distribution of CDM credits very closely mirrors patterns of private foreign investment in developing countries, with the vast majority funding projects in China and India.

Only a narrow range of possible emissions reduction projects, which either delivered their own revenue or provided cost savings for existing businesses, were financed as a result. But even these efforts were hampered by the push to create secondary markets for carbon credits, in which banks and financial institutions speculated on the price of credits. This was supposed to create more accurate prices, but instead, it made them more volatile, inhibiting new projects, as it became hard to predict how much the carbon credits they generated were worth. Carbon trading also privileged

the interests of private investors over those of communities near CDM-funded projects. Windfarms built in southern Mexico and financed through the CDM, for instance, privatised communal land, displacing indigenous communities.

#### NOT-SO-SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Another major plank of climate action so far has been incentivising the adoption of new technologies with lower emissions. Governments in developed countries have offered subsidies for people to buy electric cars, or increased funding for research and development of clean energy technology.

It is tempting to think public and private investment in renewable energy might allow governments, businesses and civil society to pull together and fight climate change. But there remain significant obstacles. For one, many of the major energy firms investing in wind and solar power, like Shell and British Petroleum, also supply oil and gas. As long as producing fossil fuels remains profitable, these firms will resist efforts to stop selling them.

More importantly, shifting to fully renewable energy sources would require mineral extraction on a truly massive scale to supply the materials for batteries, wiring and other components of solar panels and wind turbines. Recent estimates suggest that meeting current global energy demand with 100% renewable energy would take more cobalt, lithium, and nickel than is known to exist on earth.

A scramble for these minerals is already underway. Demand for batteries in phones, laptops, and electric cars has triggered a rush to establish industrial mines in the southeast of the Democratic

Republic of Congo, where the majority of the world's known reserves of cobalt are found.

Foreign-owned industrial mines employ very few Congolese workers and the profits largely accumulate abroad. Some communities have been removed to make way for mining operations. Small-scale mining by local people, often operating without permits or formal mineral rights and using their own tools, has become the main means by which cobalt has benefited local livelihoods.

But according to media and activist reports, child labour is rife in these smaller mines. Meanwhile, the cobalt boom has been linked to landslides, river pollution, and deforestation, and locals have suffered widespread exposure to toxic mining dust in the air and in food and drinking water.

Some firms, including manufacturers of cars and electronics, as well as financial institutions involved in trading cobalt, have tried to minimise the negative effects of mining. Most of these programmes focus on tackling child labour, by certifying that cobalt was extracted from industrial mines rather than from the small-scale mines where most of the problem exists. But replacing smaller mines with industrial-scale ones wouldn't necessarily benefit mining communities.

Climate action so far has failed to confront the interests of powerful businesses and governments, while passing costs on to vulnerable people and places which have contributed very little to the climate crisis. If we want results, we may need to go beyond simply demanding action and instead focus on changing the way the global economy is organised and governed.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Global Sustainable Development, University of Warwick]*

## Afghan troops sought safety in numbers - igniting a cascade of surrender

TODD LEHMANN  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The swift collapse of the Afghan military in recent days caught many in the U.S. by surprise, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In the months after President Joe Biden's April 2021 announcement of the troop withdrawal, intelligence reports warned that the Afghan military might not fight on its own, opening the way for a Taliban takeover after U.S. forces withdrew.

Yet few expected that the Taliban would succeed so quickly.

On Aug. 10, a U.S. intelligence assessment had predicted a Taliban takeover within 90 days. It took just five.

My research into what game theorists and academics call "commitment problems" identifies the problem, and it's not one that most experts are talking about, like poor planning or corruption. The patterns of the Afghan military's collapse indicate it was the collective result of individual soldiers making rational decisions about their own situations and deciding not to fight.

#### LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT CAUSE

Throughout the conflict, the perennial emphasis on a U.S. "exit strategy" meant U.S. politicians always focused on whether it was time to leave yet. For 20 years, U.S. efforts focused on short-term thinking and problem-solving that shifted both military and political goals over time, rather than investing the time and effort to develop a comprehensive long-term strategy for the war. An arguably lukewarm U.S. commitment steadily created many of the underlying conditions for the Afghan military's collapse. However, it did not entirely determine the outcome.

Biden claimed that the Afghan military lacked the will to fight. Others have blamed possible



training problems, incompetent or corrupt Afghan soldiers, and too much reliance on private contractors to prop up Afghan forces. Based on my research and analysis, the primary cause of what happened in the Afghan military is not any of those, nor was it a failure of character. Instead, soldiers encountered a "commitment problem," seeing rapidly shifting conditions that changed their minds from being willing to fight to realizing it was a bad - and dangerous - idea now.

#### A CASCADE OF SURRENDER

Soldiers seek strength in numbers. When soldiers fight in battle, they only succeed if they fight as a unit. However, individual decisions to fight or flee depend on mutual expectations. If they expect most of their comrades will fight, soldiers' best interest is also to fight.

But if they expect most of their comrades will surrender, soldiers may find it more attractive to surrender - which leads to a

"collective action problem." If soldiers learn that other units have actually surrendered, they expect their own comrades' resolve to be low and will become less likely to fight. A few initial surrenders or desertions can spark a few more, and then more and more until an entire army collapses.

This is precisely what happened to the Afghan military. As the U.S. withdrawal began in May, the Taliban started gaining territory. As they advanced, the Taliban also negotiated with groups of Afghan forces stationed at outposts and in towns, and convinced some troops to surrender. Once the first bout of surrendering occurred and the news began to spread, others quickly followed, facilitating accelerating momentum to the Taliban as they advanced without facing major resistance. In the end, Afghan soldiers chose safety in numbers by surrendering together.

*[the writer is Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science, University of Michigan]*

# Afghan returnees to be vaccinated against polio in India

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** India has decided to vaccinate Afghanistan returnees against polio for free as a preventive measure against the wild polio virus, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Sunday.

The minister also shared a photo where returnees could be seen getting jabs at the Delhi international airport.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only two countries in the world where polio is still endemic. "We have decided to vaccinate Afghanistan returnees with free Polio Vaccine - OPV & fIPV, as a preventive measure against Wild Polio Virus. Congratulations to the Health Team for their efforts to ensure public health Take a look at the vaccine drive at



Delhi International Airport," Mandaviya tweeted.

India on Sunday evacuated 168 people including 107 Indians from Kabul in a military transport aircraft of the IAF amid the deteriorating security situation in the Afghan

capital city following its takeover by the Taliban a week back.

The country had earlier evacuated 200 people including the Indian envoy and other staffers of its embassy in Kabul in two C-17 heavy-lift transport aircraft of the IAF after the Taliban

seized control of Kabul.

The first evacuation flight brought back over 40 people, mostly staffers at the Indian embassy, on Monday.

The second C-17 aircraft evacuated around 150 people including Indian diplomats, officials,

security personnel and some stranded Indians from Kabul on Tuesday.

The Taliban swept across Afghanistan this month, seizing control of almost all key towns and cities including Kabul in the backdrop of the withdrawal of the US forces.

# Assam MP lists 'failures' of Himanta govt's 100 days

**GUWAHATI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Ripun Bora has slammed the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam government for the alleged slow pace of vaccination in the state and "jeopardising" age-old social harmony by bringing in a cattle preservation law.

Making an analysis of the 100 days performance of the BJP-led government in Assam, Bora also alleged that the inter-state border disputes have escalated during the new dispensation and it has gone back on the promise of waiving off the micro finance loan of women.

The Congress leader said in a statement that Sarma's government has made tall claims about success in various fields but "practically there is nothing to show as achievements".

Out of Assam's 3.35 crore population, just 20 lakh were fully vaccinated till now while 1.28 crore people got just single dose and 1.07 crore people of the age of

above 18 years did not get even a single dose of vaccine, which is very alarming, he said.

Bora claimed that there were 35 encounters between police and drugs peddlers in the first 100 days of the BJP government in the state, which is a serious threat to human rights and against a Supreme Court ruling.

Even the chief minister has provoked the police to shoot the accused, he claimed.

The former president of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee said the Cattle Preservation Bill 2021 will "jeopardise" the long-lasting peace and tranquility between the Hindu, Muslim and Christians in Assam.

"Under this Act selling of beef is banned within 5 km radius of any religious place. But Assam is such a state where almost all villages or areas, Hindus, Muslims and Christians have been living together since time immemorial. As such there will be not a single place where there will not be Hindu

or Muslim within the 5 km radius of a temple or a 'satra' (Vaishnavite monastery), 'namghar' (a kind of Assamese temple)," he said.

Bora also termed as "gross failure" of the Sarma's government in protecting Assam's interest with regards to border disputes with the neighbouring states as six Assam Police personnel were killed and over 50 others injured by Mizoram Police in a border clash last month.

Repeated tension along the Assam-Mizoram, Assam-Nagaland and Assam-Meghalaya borders and lack of progress in the talks over boundary disputes cannot be termed as success, as claimed by the Assam chief minister, he said.

The Congress leader also said the BJP-led government has not yet fulfilled a party promise during the election campaign that the micro finance loan of the women borrowers will be waived off within one month of forming the government.

# Rescue center becomes home for orphaned rhinos of Assam

**GUWAHATI, AUG 22 (PTI):** A four-month-old Ganga had lost her mother to surging waters of the Brahmaputra nearly two decades back, but she has now found her home on the banks of another river and is a healthy mother of four young ones.

Orphaned by the floods in Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park, Ganga had found a refuge on the periphery of the Park where she was raised before setting out to live on her own in her natural habitat.

Ganga was the second rhino to be rescued by the Center for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) in Kaziranga in 2003, along with another rhino calf, Rathin Barman of Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) told PTI.

Hand-raised by the staff of the CWRC, the pair was translocated to Manas National Park (MNP), about 300 km away from their birthplace, four years later where they have thrived over the years.

Named Ganga-Jamuna for their bonding by the frontline staff of MNP, they were the second lot of rhinos sent to the Park with the first being Mainou (Lakshmi



in local Bodo language) preceding them by a year to Manas, also from the CWRC.

While Ganga gave birth to her fourth calf in the last week of July this year, Jamuna has three calves of her own and Mainou had also become mother to three calves over the years before dying of natural causes a couple of years back, Barman said.

The Center was established by Government of Assam, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), with the support of Government of India, in 2002.

It is located at the periphery of the

Kaziranga National Park and attends to wildlife displacements originating mainly from the Park and adjoining Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.

The Center has been engaging in rescue of wildlife that stray out of their natural habitats and rhinos of KNP have been among such animals that have found a new lease of life in its premise. It has handled 101 rhino cases since its inception.

There are close to 3,000 rhinos in Assam, with the major numbers present in Kaziranga National Park.

"The CWRC annually rescues two to four rhino calves during floods in the KNP. In 2016, we

rescued as many as nine rhino calves," he said.

The rescued rhino calves from KNP have been mostly translocated to the MNP, while two were experimentally released in KNP itself and two sent to the state zoo's breeding facility at Guwahati, Barman said.

The CWRC has four rhino calves rescued during the 2019 floods at its establishment at Kaziranga currently, Dr Bhaskar Choudhury, veterinarian at the Center said.

He said the calves are kept at the Center till they are about one-and-a-half to two years of age, after which they are released back in the wild. The rhinos are

generally not released back into KNP due to high tiger concentration which leads to high predation and high rhino density in the Park, he added.

"We bring the rhinos to the Center only if they are too young or ailing. Else, along with the Forest personnel, we try to send them back into their original habitat," Choudhury said.

Since the inception of CWRC and its satellite facilities, altogether 7,532 numbers of wildlife cases, belonging to 258 species of mammals, birds and reptiles, have been attended to by the Center in the state till July 2021.

Of these, 22% were mammals, 36% birds and 42% reptiles. Overall, 62% of the animals attended to by the team in Assam have been released back to the wild.

# One new case takes COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 7,557

**PORT BLAIR, AUG 22 (PTI):** Andaman and Nicobar Islands reported just one new COVID-19 case, which took the tally in the Union Territory to 7,557, a health department official said on Sunday.

The new patient has a travel history, he said.

The death toll remained at 129 as no new fatality due to the infection was reported in the last 24 hours, the official said.

No one was cured of the disease during the period, and the total number of recoveries in the archipelago remained at 7,419.

The Union Territory now has nine active cases.

The local administration has been



strict to contain the spread of the disease and has adopted an approach of tracking, testing and treating, he said, adding that people arriving here from the mainland are mandatorily required to undergo COVID test.

Altogether, 3,34,151 people have been inoculated with 1,00,753 of them having received both doses of the vaccine.

Of the total number of immunised people, 1,20,498 beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years have been vaccinated till Saturday, the official said.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration has conducted over 4.71 lakh sample tests for COVID-19 so far, and the positivity rate stands at 1.60 per cent, the official added.

# Ladakh records 8 fresh COVID-19 cases



**LEH, AUG 22 (PTI):** The total number of COVID-19 cases in Ladakh climbed to 20,491 as eight more people tested positive for the disease, officials said on Sunday. As many as 12 more

patients recovered from COVID-19, they said, adding the number of active cases dropped to 68.

So far, Ladakh has recorded 207 coronavirus-related deaths -- 149 in Leh and 58 in Kargil.

The officials said over 3,282 people were tested for COVID-19 in Leh and Kargil on Saturday. Of these, seven tested positive in Leh and one in Kargil.

Ten patients were discharged after

successful treatment for COVID-19 in Leh and two others in Kargil, bringing down the active cases in Ladakh to 68 -- 62 in Leh and six in Kargil, they said.

So far, 20,216 patients have recovered from the disease in Ladakh.



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# Yordenis Ugás beats Manny Pacquiao by unanimous decision

**LAS VEGAS, 22 AUG [ALJAZEERA]:** Yordenis Ugás has beaten Manny Pacquiao by unanimous decision to retain his WBA welterweight title in what some observers speculated could be the Philippine senator's final fight, ending a legendary boxing career.

After an unimpressive performance in his return on Saturday night from the longest layoff of his quarter-century in professional boxing, Pacquiao said he has not decided whether he will fight again.

He also would not confirm whether he will enter the Philippines' presidential race, as is widely expected. He intends to make an announcement next month.

"That's boxing," a deflated Pacquiao said afterwards. "I had a hard time in the ring making adjustments. My legs were tight. I'm sorry I lost tonight, but I did my best."

It was a sweet victory for Ugás, who had been awarded the WBA title after Pacquiao was stripped of the belt by the sanctioning body earlier this year for inactivity.

Ugás (27-4) seized



his opportunity as the late injury replacement for Errol Spence Jr, frustrating Pacquiao (67-8-2) throughout what might be the final fight of the 42-year-old Filipino senator's career.

T-Mobile Arena appeared sold out and the crowd of 17,438 was vocally behind its Filipino hero. Even after a lengthy layoff in the last stages of his career, Pacquiao remains a surefire draw and a bankable star in a sport lacking both at its

highest levels.

The 35-year-old Ugás threw far fewer punches than Pacquiao, but his blows were more precise and more effective. Pacquiao struggled to get inside on Ugás' effective jab, while Ugás landed his right hand to increasing effect in the later rounds.

Two judges scored it 116-112 for Ugás, and a third had it 115-113.

The victory was the culmination of a lengthy journey for Ugás, who

defected from Cuba two years after winning a bronze medal in the Beijing Olympics.

Ugás quit boxing for two years midway through the last decade, but recovered his career and capitalised on this unexpected shot against one of the greatest fighters of this era, earning his 12th victory in 13 fights.

"He's a great competitor, but I came in here to show I am the champion of the

WBA," Ugás said through a translator. "A lot of respect for him, but I won this fight."

Ugás had a clear game plan despite the short notice, working hard in the early rounds with an effective jab and body shots. Pacquiao was more aggressive and occasionally got the crowd to its feet with combinations, but he did not immediately find a consistent way to get inside the jab.

# Poland's Maria Andrejczyk auctions Olympic Silver medal for 8-month-old's heart surgery

**WARSAW, 22 AUG [NDTV]:** Poland's Maria Andrejczyk won the silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics with a best attempt of 64.61m in the women's javelin throw final on August 6. While Andrejczyk's performance got her a podium finish at the quadrennial event, it was her kind gesture after the Games that made people across the world stand up and tip their hats to her. Andrejczyk auctioned her Olympic silver medal to help raise funds for an eight-month-old boy who needed a heart surgery

in the USA. Andrejczyk took to Facebook on August 11

to announce that she would be auctioning her Olympic silver after coming across a fundraiser for Miloszek Malysa.

"He already has a head start from Kubus -- a boy who didn't make it in time but whose amazing parents decided to pass on the funds they collected. And in this way, I also want to help. It's for him that I am auctioning my Olympic silver medal," ESPN translated Andrejczyk's Facebook post which she wrote in Polish.

On Monday, Andrejczyk announced that a supermarket chain -- Zabka -- won the

auction by placing a bid of USD 125,000. In another post on Facebook, Zabka revealed that the medal will stay with the 25-year-old Olympian from Poland.

Andrejczyk had missed out on a medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics by a whisker after finishing fourth with a best attempt of 64.78. She missed out on a podium finish by a margin of 0.02cm.

In 2019, Maria Andrejczyk underwent a surgery after being diagnosed with an osteoma, a benign bone tumour. However, she recovered and got her first Olympic medal in Tokyo.

# Daniil Medvedev crashes into TV camera and kicks it in loss to Rublev



**CINCINNATI, 22 AUG [PA MEDIA]:** Daniil Medvedev had an angry run-in with a courtside TV camera as he missed out on a place in the final of the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati.

The top seed was a set ahead against fellow Russian Andrey Rublev when he ran into a camera during a rally.

Clearly annoyed at its positioning on the court, Medvedev shoved the lens with his foot before complaining to the umpire that he "could have broken my hand".

The right-hander, who is ranked second in the world, needed a medical time-out for treatment on his left

hand. Whether it inhibited him was unclear, but fourth seed Rublev took advantage to gain a first career win over his compatriot, prevailing 2-6, 6-3, 6-3.

In the women's event, Jil Teichmann's remarkable run continued as she reached the final. The Swiss wildcard, who had already beaten the world No 2, Naomi Osaka, and the Olympic champion, Belinda Bencic, saw off Karolina Pliskova, the Wimbledon runner-up, 6-2 6-4.

She said on court: "It's tough to explain, but when I ask my coaches what they think of me they say you're an

unexpected person who does random things. I guess this is one of them. I'm feeling really good, serving good, moving well. I cannot even describe it."

Teichmann, the world No 76, will face Ashleigh Barty in the final after ensuring there would be no repeat of last month's Wimbledon showpiece. Barty, the SW19 champion, defeated Angelique Kerber in straight sets to reach her sixth final of the year.

Barty swept aside Germany's Kerber 6-2, 7-5 in one hour and 14 minutes to extend her 2021 record to 39 wins and seven losses -- a WTA Tour-leading number of victories.

# Jorginho's golden touch makes him invaluable presence in Chelsea revival

**JACOB STEINBERG LONDON, 22 AUG [THEGUARDIAN]:** Even Jorginho finds the idea that he could win the Ballon d'Or this year hard to accept. He did not take it as an insult when he heard Antonio Cassano, the former Italy striker, say that any journalist who votes for the Chelsea midfielder "should have his licence taken away".

Instead of picking a fight with Cassano after finding him on an Italian beach earlier this summer, Jorginho found common ground with the 39-year-old, agreeing that it would be a scandal if he takes the Ballon d'Or off Lionel Messi. "Now I admire Jorginho even more," Cassano said last week. "We were talking for a good 90 minutes. He is an exceptional guy: very intelligent, humble and polite"

Thomas Tuchel is happy to go along with that assessment of Jorginho, who has remained level-headed after winning the Champions League with Chelsea and Euro 2020 with Italy. "He's a top guy," Chelsea's manager said as he prepared for the trip to Arsenal. "He is funny, he has a big smile on his face every single day. You can have chats with him, you can laugh every single day with him, because he's up for a laugh, up for a good life.

"He's in love with this game. He never stops transmitting this energy that he's really into thinking about tactics and loves to be involved and feel a true connection with the game. That makes him a very important player and a huge link in the middle of the pitch -- not only for us but also for Italy."

Tuchel does not doubt the 29-year-



old's quality. Jorginho may not be as glamorous as Messi, but football is about the collective. Everyone has a part to play in a successful team and Jorginho has been outstanding in recent months, a reassuring, metronomic presence in midfield, his ability to keep possession ticking making him invaluable for club and country.

Gradually perceptions of the former Napoli midfielder have changed, although it has been a slow process. English football has not always felt like a natural fit for Jorginho, who has often been the subject of furious debate among Chelsea supporters since his £50.4m move from Napoli in 2018, with some adamant that he is not suited to the Premier League and others stubborn in their defence of a cultured, misunderstood passer.

Part of the problem was that Jorginho seemed inextricably linked to "Sarri-ball" because of his connection with Maurizio Sarri, who was not a popular figure during his year in charge of Chelsea. There were good spells -- Jorginho helped Chelsea win the Europa League in 2019 -- but the doubts refused to go away. The Italy international seemed to lack the pace to play at the base of midfield, where he often looked

defensively suspect, and he was in and out of the team under Frank Lampard, who craved a faster style of play after replacing Sarri two years ago.

It never quite clicked under Lampard and there were constant whispers about Jorginho leaving in the summer of 2020. Arsenal gave strong consideration to the move and there were also links with Paris Saint-Germain, who were managed by Tuchel at the time. "I would have picked him up personally if there was a chance," Tuchel said.

In that context it was not a surprise when Jorginho's fortunes changed after Lampard was sacked in January. He has been excellent since Tuchel's arrival, his efficiency, poise and leadership proving crucial as Chelsea won the Champions League last season.

Jorginho had a fine game when Chelsea beat Manchester City in the final in May, providing balance alongside N'Golo Kanté's relentless dynamism. It was easy to see why Tuchel loves working with him. "Jorgi is a very strategic player," the German said. "He can imagine what is going to happen one or two passes ahead. He knows where to help out in short distances, when to

switch the play, when not to switch the play. He has a good sense of rhythm."

The key has been fitting Jorginho into the right system. After all Tuchel acknowledged that Jorginho can make errors at times. He thought back to the stray back-pass that gifted Arsenal victory over Chelsea in May and admitted the midfielder can be vulnerable against pace in the Premier League.

Yet there is a reason why managers love Jorginho. He has excelled in Tuchel's 3-4-3 system, his positional discipline improving, and Roberto Mancini did not regret making him a key part of his Italy side. Jorginho was outstanding when Italy beat England in the final of the Euros, combining with Marco Verratti to take control of midfield, and he has continued to collect silverware after returning from a short break, helping Chelsea win the Super Cup at Villarreal's expense 10 days ago.

Now the individual accolades could follow. On Thursday Jorginho, who had another good game when Chelsea opened their campaign with a convincing 3-0 win over Crystal Palace last weekend, joined Kanté and Kevin De Bruyne on Uefa's three-man shortlist

for men's player of the year.

Recognition has finally arrived. De Bruyne was brilliant when City swept to the Premier League title last season and Kanté was instrumental in Chelsea becoming European champions, but it would not be a scandal if the award goes to Jorginho.

Tuchel described him as a player who makes others shine and he deserves his moment in the spotlight after his dazzling displays this year.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coured by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

**ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM**

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*Air quality panel asks NCR states to adopt ISRO's farm fire estimation protocol*

**NEW DELHI, 22 AUG [PTI]:** Ahead of the harvesting season, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has asked Delhi and neighbouring states to ensure the adoption and application of a standard protocol developed by ISRO for estimation of crop residue burning fire events using satellite data.

The commission, mandated to devise and execute plans to prevent and control air pollution in the national capital region and adjoining areas, has also asked Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan to develop a time-bound comprehensive action plan, in consultation with stakeholder agencies responsible for monitoring and reporting of agriculture residue burning events, based on the protocol.

The commission had stressed the need to develop and implement a standardised methodology across NCR and adjoining areas for the monitoring of fire events at meetings with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at a meeting held in December last year.

The protocol has been prepared in consultation with stakeholder agencies like State Remote Sensing Centers and Indian Agricultural Research Institute, it said.

"Now, therefore, in view of the compelling need to monitor and control air pollution from stubble burning, the commission...hereby directs government of NCT of Delhi to ensure adoption and application of the standard protocol for estimation of crop residue burning fire events using satellite data," the directions read.

The commission said the protocol should be adopted uniformly across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi, and not restricted to Punjab and Haryana alone.

The panel on air quality has also asked these states to submit a compliance report on the adoption of the protocol by August 30.

The northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh attract attention during the paddy harvesting season between October 15 and November 15.

Farmers set their fields on fire to quickly clear off the crop residue left behind after harvesting and before cultivating wheat and potato. It is one of the main reasons for the alarming spike in pollution in Delhi-NCR.

Despite a ban on stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana, farmers continue to defy it as there is a short window between the harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat.

The high cost of manual or mechanical management of straw is a major reason why farmers choose to burn it.

## Afghan journalists win right to come to Britain after media appeal

**MICHAEL SAVAGE LONDON, 22 AUG [THE GUARDIAN]:** More than 200 Afghan journalists who worked with the British media are to be granted access to the UK after an appeal by a coalition of British newspapers and broadcasters.

Dominic Raab, the foreign secretary, has agreed to issue visa waivers for the group after officials said the government recognised the risks they took in pursuit of media freedom and the defence of human rights through their work.

The group will now be given leave to enter the UK outside immigration rules, handing them the chance to settle in Britain. They can be accompanied by their immediate family, such as a partner and dependent children under 18. However, with chaos still surrounding Kabul airport, there are still serious concerns about when the group will be able to fly out of the country.

Media organisations, including the Observer and Guardian, appealed to the Foreign Office after it emerged that the journalists would not qualify to come to the UK under existing schemes. Officials said those who qualified are being contacted.

Raab said: "We must protect those brave Afghan journalists who have worked so courageously to shine a light on what is really



going on in Afghanistan. That's why we have granted these journalists and their media staff visa waivers to come to the UK."

In an open letter last week, the UK's major newspapers and broadcasters said their ability to keep the British public informed of events in Afghanistan over two decades had been "heavily reliant on the loyalty and commitment of the Afghan journalists, translators and support staff".

However, many other cases are emerging of Afghans who have worked with British institutions but are struggling to secure a path to the UK. The Observer understands that more than 80 Afghans who worked with the British Council, the quango that promotes British interests through education and culture, say they have been left in diplomatic limbo. Some are in hiding following the Taliban's swift return to power, after

being unable to secure places on a refugee visa scheme for people who supported the UK mission in Afghanistan.

Many of the Afghans, who worked to teach English or encourage education, say they have yet to be contacted by British officials, and many fear they will be left behind. The government has said that British Council workers are eligible for the scheme, but some of those still in the country say they have been told they are not, and are struggling to reach British officials.

Their former UK colleagues fear that some who did not work directly for the British Council, but on programmes outside Kabul, may be treated differently. They are trying to use the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (Arap), a fast-track resettlement scheme for people under threat from the Taliban for their UK links, run by the Ministry of Defence.

Campaigners are warning that the British

had been rejected have recently been asked to submit their details.

Hywel Coleman, a former British Council consultant, said 83 Afghan staff members and consultants claimed that they have not yet been contacted. At least a third are women. "We have lost touch with 10 in the past week and we fear the worst, but believe there is still a window of opportunity to save, hopefully, all of them," he said. "A public inquiry is necessary into how this situation was allowed to occur, and lessons must be learned for when the British Council hires local staff and consultants, particularly in dangerous locations."

About 25 Afghan former British Council staff and consultants based at its Kabul HQ were offered relocation to the UK, and most of them have already been evacuated. A government spokesperson said: "Our officials are working as quickly as possible to bring more people to safety in the UK. British Council staff are eligible for the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy."

The British Council said it was working with the MoD to "explore every avenue of support available to ensure ... all former and current colleagues receive the fullest consideration possible", adding: "The safety of all those involved in our work is our utmost concern."

## Dozens hurt as Israel raids Gaza, fires at Palestinian protesters



**GAZA, 22 AUG [ALJAZEERA]:** The Israeli military launched air raids on Gaza following clashes between its soldiers and Palestinian protesters during a demonstration to commemorate the burning of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque 52 years ago.

In a statement late on Saturday, the Israeli military said it struck four weapons manufacturing and storage sites in Gaza belonging to Hamas, the group that governs the besieged Palestinian enclave. Eleven Palestinians were reportedly wounded.

The raids came hours after Israeli soldiers opened fire on crowds of young Palestinians protesting at the fence separating Gaza and Israel.

The Palestinian health ministry said dozens of people were wounded, including a 13-year-old Palestinian boy who was shot in the head.

"Forty-one civilians were wounded with various injuries," the ministry said in a

statement.

The Israeli military called the protesters "rioters" and said some had tried to climb the border fence and hurled "explosive devices" at its soldiers.

The military said it "responded with riot dispersal means, including when necessary live fire".

The Israel border police said a 21-year-old sniper in its undercover unit was critically wounded when he was shot by a Palestinian protester. "His condition is critical and there is a risk to his life," it said.

Al Jazeera's Youmna al-Sayed, reporting from Gaza, said at least 10 of the Palestinians wounded were children and two were in a critical condition.

She said Palestinian factions had urged a peaceful commemoration ahead of the demonstration, while "Hamas called out the Israeli occupation forces' excessive force against unarmed civilians as a regular thing Israel is used to".

## Police say Melbourne anti-lockdown protest 'most violent in nearly 20 years'

**Melbourne, 22 Aug [AAP]:** An anti-lockdown protest held in Melbourne on Saturday was one of the most violent the city has seen in 20 years, Victoria's top police officer says.

Chief commissioner Shane Patton said his officers had no choice but to use non-lethal weapons to defend themselves from an angry mob that came armed and appeared intent on attacking them.

It is the first time during a lockdown protest, police have used such tactics that included rounds of pepper spray projectiles and canisters.

At least nine officers ended up in hospital after being pelted with projectiles, punched and kicked by some members of a 4,000 strong crowd who turned out to protest the city's Covid-19 lockdown.

The mostly unmasked protesters let off flares, yelled slogans and blasted music as they moved through the CBD.

More than 700 extra Victorian police officers were deployed to contain the lockdown protest.

Patton said he was nothing short of disgusted with the conduct of some in the crowd.

"What we saw yesterday ... was probably one of the most violent protests we've seen in nearly 20 years," he told reporters on Sunday.

More than 200 people were arrested including

some on remand for previous crimes. At least 19 will be taken to court rather than issued with fines in excess of \$5,000. Two people will face assault charges.

He said many in the crowd came armed with projectiles that were hurled at police and it was clear they were there not to protest for personal freedom but to "confront and attack".

Eight of the nine wounded officers have since left hospital but one remains for further examination. Injuries included blows to the body, cuts, bruises, suspected broken noses, one possible incident of loss of consciousness, and one leg injury.

"It appears to us that they came in with an intention of that violence," Patton said.

"This wasn't a group that had a specific leader. It seemed that it was angry men ... between 25 and 40," he said, "who were intent on causing this mayhem, intent on being involved in this criminal activity."

"I just hope it doesn't result in the mass spread of Covid-19. The risk that those people have now posed to the rest of the community, by their conduct yesterday, was disgraceful and selfish."

Patton also revealed 48 people have been fined almost \$5,500 each over an illegal engagement party in Caulfield North, including the future bride and groom.

## New Zealand reports 21 new Covid cases as Delta outbreak grows

**CANBERRA, 22 AUG [THE GUARDIAN]:** New Zealand recorded 21 new cases of Covid-19 on Sunday as the outbreak of the Delta variant continued to grow, bringing associated infections to 72, health officials said.

Of the 21 new cases, 20 were in Auckland, the largest city, and one in the capital, Wellington. Five people were in hospital but no one was in intensive care.

New Zealand is under a strict lockdown until midnight on Tuesday as the outbreak has widened beyond the two key cities. The prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, would convene her cabinet on Monday to confirm lockdown extensions for Auckland and Wellington, and consider restriction levels for the rest of the country, AAP reported.

On Sunday the Covid-19 minister Chris Hipkins said scanning in at places and gatherings would become compulsory to aid with

contact tracing. Ardern's government had pushed back against the measure for months.

"We've been exploring how best to do this," Hipkins said, saying the delay was down to overcoming legal, privacy and technical hurdles.

The government will also allow for childcare for households where both parents are essential workers - allowing emergency service workers and border workers to return to the frontline.

The director general of health, Ashley Bloomfield, revealed a potential super-spreader event had taken place at the Samoa Assembly of God's church service last Sunday. He urged attendees to isolate and get tested urgently.

"Several of the new cases are linked to [that] church service," he said.

"It's one of a number of large gatherings and we've got several large schools also involved. This is a priority for our contact tracing efforts."



Bloomfield commended New Zealand's Pacific community - which has been the centre of previous outbreaks - for responding to the call to get tested.

"They're very good at mobilising to get tested ... by far the highest rates of testing is among our Pacific community," he said.

Hipkins said about a million people had been fully vaccinated in New Zealand, after more than 50,000 doses of the vaccine were given on Saturday. "We continue

to deliver incredible numbers we can be proud of," he said.

Until the current outbreak, however, New Zealand's vaccination pace was the slowest among the OECD, with only a fifth of the population fully vaccinated. The country has recorded 2,660 confirmed coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic and 26 related deaths, according to the health ministry.

The opposition has accused the government of having left New Zealand a "sitting duck" for the

Delta variant by failing to make good use of its six months without Covid-19. "It's pretty clear that we haven't used the last year since the August 2020 lockdown to plan for the future," said Chris Bishop, the National party's Covid-19 spokesman.

"It took many months to do [quarantine hotel] and airport workers. We still have 35 per cent of frontline port workers who are completely unvaccinated. The fact we've got 3,000 healthcare workers in Auckland who are unvaccinated is deeply troubling."

## More than dozen killed in southwest Niger village attack

**NIGER, 22 AUG [ALJAZEERA]:** At least 16 people have been killed in an attack on a village in southwestern Niger where attackers have repeatedly massacred civilians this year, a local official and a security source said.

The unidentified gunmen opened fire during Friday prayers in the village of Thiem in the Tillaberi

region and killed 16 people, Mayor Halido Zibo told Reuters news agency on Saturday.

A security source confirmed the attack and put the death toll at 17.

The attack follows the killing on Monday of 37 civilians, including 14 children, in a village in the same region.

Thiem is about 20km (12 miles) from three

other villages where a series of attacks in May by fighters linked to the ISIL (ISIS) armed group forced more than 11,000 inhabitants to flee.

Armed groups in Tillaberi and Tahoua regions bordering Mali have killed more than 420 civilians and driven tens of thousands of others from their homes in



2021, New York-based rights group Human

Rights Watch said in a report this month.

## Priyanka Chopra, Lara Dutta and others remember "Mentor" Pradeep Guha

Film producer Pradeep Guha died in Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital on Saturday. The late producer's wife Papiya Guha and son Sanket Guha shared the news of his death in a statement issued to the media, reported news agency PTI. "We regret to announce the sad demise of our dear Mr Pradeep Guha.

In these COVID times the family has requested to be allowed to grieve in private and will share a date for a prayer meeting in a few days. No condolence visit at home due to COVID restrictions. Please keep him in your prayers," the statement read. Stars from the Hindi film industry remembered the film producer on social media. Priyanka Chopra, who met him during her pageant days in the year 2000, described him as her "mentor" and she wrote an emotional note.

An excerpt from Priyanka Chopra's note read: "You were always my forever champion. Your random calls of encouragement, your zest for life and your ambition was something I have always admired so much. This loss is so personal. I will miss your voice and strength so much. I've had very few constants in my life and outside my parents, you were one that I truly saw as my mentor. You saw something in me I never knew I had. You never shied away from reminding me on how I could be better. You always lead with charge." She added, "I've learned so much from you PG. With such a heavy heart I say a final goodbye to a huge constant in my adult life. I'll miss the laughter, the gossiping, the stories, the encouragement. Will



keep striving to make you proud. Picture abhi baaki hai."

Former beauty queen Lara Dutta too paid tribute to Pradeep Guha and she wrote: "My dearest PG, you were always the king who was the most successful 'Queen maker'. May we, your protégés always keep your memory alive and shining bright and may you always watch over us as you have always done. RIP"

Dia Mirza, recalling an incident from her Miss Asia Pacific days, wrote: "I will never forget that car ride as he dropped me off to the airport as I left the country to represent India at the Miss Asia Pacific. "What if I lose?" I had asked him and he said "It will be their loss. You are a winner." Those words were everything. They gave the 18 year old me so much strength. And over the years he stood by me. Through good times and bad."

Neha Dhupia, who was also mentored by Pradeep Guha during her

Miss India days, wrote an emotional post remembering him. "I still remember the first day I stepped foot in Mumbai with dreams in my eyes of becoming Miss India and I had , had a brief meeting with you guys which was nerve racking and witty before that during the audition round in Delhi ... Our beloved Pradeep Guha, who knew that life with its twists and turns would get us so close ... It feels like yesterday, every life lesson you taught me I have carried forward till today, every time I would see you or call you , you only added value in my life ... your loss will take a long time to process ,"

Pradeep Guha had backed the film Fiza, starring Hrithik Roshan and Karisma Kapoor. He had also produced 2008 film Phir Kabhi, starring Mithun Chakraborty and Dimple Kapadia. He had over four decades of experience in the fields of media, advertising, marketing and branding.

### Kanye West and Irina Shayk reportedly split 2 months after whirlwind romance



As Kanye West once rapped, "Your love is fadin'."

The 44-year-old musician, who is currently hard at work with his new Donda album, has once again reached single status. According to multiple reports, Kanye and Irina Shayk have decided to go their separate ways after enjoying a whirlwind romance for two months.

"It was never a serious thing that took off," a source told People, who first reported their breakup on Saturday, Aug. 21.

A second source explained to the magazine that the Yeezy designer is focused on his work and spending time with his four

kids—North West, 8, Saint West, 5, Chicago West, 3, and Psalm West, 2—whom he shares with ex Kim Kardashian.

As the outlet's insider put it, "He doesn't have time to date right now. He finds Irina amazing though. They remain friendly."

Us Weekly also confirmed their split, reporting through a source that "Kanye and Irina are over, but they never really started, there's nothing going on there."

The duo first sparked romance rumors in June when they were spotted looking smitten together near Provence, France. At the time, an eyewitness told E! News, "They looked incredibly happy and relaxed. It was just them and a few friends."

### Swara Bhasker says she 'can't even post a photo of a flower without people linking it to masturbation'



Actor Swara Bhasker said that even though she gets nasty comments online, some of which are akin to 'cyber sexual harassment', she refuses to succumb to it. During a recent Twitter Spaces chat, she opened up about how trolls link every post of hers to her masturbation scene in Veere Di Wedding.

Swara took to Instagram to share an excerpt from her Twitter Spaces conversation. "Social media is a [virtual] public space like roads & restaurants are, but the public decency and basic social etiquette maintained offline are absent online. I can't even post a photo of a flower without people linking it to masturbation or referencing 'ungli' (finger) after Veere Di Wedding came out."

"It's ugly and amounts to cyber sexual harassment but I feel very strongly about not succumbing to online bullying or limiting my presence online because of it. We cannot cede the virtual public space to hate, bigotry and bullying," she added. She captioned her post, "Speak your truth. Stand your ground."

Earlier this year, as Veere Di Wedding completed three years of its release, Swara gave a shout-out to trolls and claimed that her masturbation scene in the film provided them with employment. "3 YEARS (June 01) to the birth of an obsession - my nafrati chintus obsession with my fingers! Happy 3rd to the film that gave rise to an economy: the two rupees per tweet employment guarantee scheme that it seems I launched for my trolls #veereediwedding #sakshislays," she wrote on Twitter, adding that she was 'grateful' to have been a part of the film.



**FEELING GOOD AS HELL!** Singer Lizzo steps out in L.A. wearing a T-shirt featuring a photo of herself and the message "Enuff to Feed the Needy."

### Amber Rose explains why the "Pain Cuts So Deep" after Alexander Edwards admits to cheating

While Amber Rose publicly blasted her now-ex boyfriend Alexander Edwards for cheating on her with 12 women—which he later admitted to—but that doesn't mean she isn't experiencing heartbreak.

Taking to Instagram Stories on Saturday, Aug. 21, the model opened up about why she stayed with the music executive for so long despite his actions.

"Ur brain tells you to run when ur heart says stay," her message read. "I wish it was easy to 'fix him' but that's not for me to do. The pain cuts so deep especially when children are involved. I will always love him so much but I know I can't heal him only he can do that."

Amber, who shares 22-month-old son Slash Alexander Edwards with Alexander, explained that she discussed his infidelity on social media as a way to break free from the relationship.

"I knew I had to set myself free publicly or I would've stayed forever never receiving the love I craved and begged for," she wrote.



"Tough choice because it hurts so bad but I choose me."

As she put it, "I didn't wanna have to do this at all. I just wanted my family, MY HUSBAND."

"There's only so many times I can ask a man to be transparent, honest and love me wholeheartedly," she added. "I don't know if I'll get the happy ending I wanted but maybe I'll get the happy ending I deserve."

On Wednesday, Aug. 18, the 37-year-old star called out Alexander, writing on Instagram Stories, "I'm tired of getting cheated on and being embarrassed behind the scenes. All 12 of y'all bums (the ones that I know of there's probably more) can have him."

three is anything to go by, then everything you put into the Universe comes back to you threefold.

**GEMINI:** The full moon in Aquarius finds you reassessing your career goals and introspecting on how you can make a greater impact. Success that serves you alone is not success at all, Gemini. You want the collective to rise with you and that's what you're working on in this phase. Remember to keep your feet firmly planted on the ground as you go along. Making practical decisions at this point will serve you well in the future.

**CANCER:** It's all about joy and celebration in the Cancer HQ. You're connecting with your soul squad in a way you never have before \*and\* honouring the differences that make your relationship oh-so-beautiful. Some of you may be celebrating or prepping for a special occasion too, such as an engagement or baby shower of a loved one.

**LEO:** You're feeling what you're feeling, Leo, and there is no need to justify or logically explain

the emotional turbulence that's weighing you down at this point. What you want to remember, though, is the mantra, 'the only way out is through'. So, feel the turbulence in its entirety. Offer it a cup of tea. Before you know it, the poison will have turned into a sweet elixir of peace and wisdom.

**VIRGO:** The cards are urging you to pay attention to the seemingly mundane ideas that are coming through from the unseen realms. You never know what they may blossom into. You never know, Virgo. You never know.

**LIBRA:** There are times we have to do-do-do and dedicate ourselves to the hustle, but now is \*not\* such a time in your life. The full moon in Aquarius is urging you to hit the pause button, refuel your reserves and prepare for the next chapter. So, make time for mindful practices, Libra. Spend time in nature (or near a water body) and engage in activities that uplift your soul. If you are a believer of the divine arts, sign up for a session with your healer.

**SCORPIO:** Offer a prayer of gratitude when you find you reach a dead-end. Offer a prayer of gratitude when the road ahead seems like an obstacle course. Offer a prayer of gratitude when delays and difficulties are a constant in your world. It's all happening for a reason, Scorpio.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Sometimes, the only way to deal with a problem is by stepping away from it. Time does heal all wounds, Sagittarius, as you will discover in the days to come. For now, focus on activities that uplift your soul and help you refuel your reserves. Given that we're under the spell of the full moon this weekend, you're also being called to honour the cycles of nature in your own special way. PS: take your crystals to the roof and soak in some of those healing la luna rays.

**CAPRICORN:** Today, you're in the mood to spend quality time with your spiritual bestie, obsess over your favourite crystals, channel messages from the beyond, work with your Oracle cards, and honour the energy of the full

moon in your own special way. If you've been a student of mysteries since time immemorial, now is a good time to delve deeper and uncover newer truths.

**AQUARIUS:** You've never known a love like this before, Aquarius. A love that's equal parts soulful and passionate. A love that meets you where you are and accepts you as you are. It's time to rise in this love, beautiful. Single water bearers are being reminded that their divine counterpart has been manifesting them too, and that it is just a matter of time before Fate brings you together. So, make a wish, beloved. Make a wish.

**PISCES:** It's all about love and other intoxicants in the Pisces HQ. You and your beloved are vibing at a whole new frequency—and this frequency is called 'unconditional love'. Yes, this means honouring the differences as much as the similarities, for this is what makes your relationship flavoursome. For some of you, this may be a time of taking your commitment to the next level or giving cohabitation a shot.