



DEEPTI NAVAL UNDERGOES ANGIOPLASTY, SAYS SHE'S FINE NOW
pg 08

TO TAKE THINGS FORWARD, ADDRESS WHAT IS DISTRESSING FARMS
pg 04

CMT MUSIC AWARDS TO FEATURE TRIO OF HOSTS, OUTDOOR STAGES
pg 08



Summit **T**IMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | RS. 5

With 34 new cases and 35 discharges, Sikkim's active COVID cases settle at 253

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 Oct:

Sikkim's tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 reached 3,677 on Wednesday with the detection of 34 fresh cases of novel coronavirus in the previous 24 hours. East Sikkim continues to report the highest numbers with 28 of the 34 new cases being reported from the district while four were reported from West District, two from South District and none from North Sikkim.

Meanwhile, 35 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Tuesday to further improve the number of discharged COVID-19 patients in Sikkim to 3,280. As a result, Sikkim now has 253 active COVID-19 cases in the State.

Five COVID-19 patients are currently admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital.

RT-PCR testing of 107 samples at the VRD Lab on Tuesday returned 12 positive results, while eight new cases of COVID-19 were detected in TruNat testing of 36 samples. 14 persons were found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 62 samples.

While giving the break-up of the new cases found in RT-PCR testing, State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, informed that one person from the Church Road area in Upper Arithang, one from near White Hall, one from below TV Tower in Chandmari, one from below Hospital Dara in DPH area, two from near Ruchi Clinic Gangtok, one admitted in the Emergency ward of STNM hospital, four from Rhenock and one person of CRH from IBM Rangpo were found positive for COVID-19.

Likewise, two persons from near Lingdok Junior High School, one from Singtam, one from Pacheykhani, one from Deorali, one from near Haat Bazaar in Rangpo and one near Cooperative in

Sichey tested positive in TruNat, he added.

A 53-year-old female, who tested positive for COVID-19 in TruNat could not be contacted over the phone number provided by her and the State IEC officer has appealed to her to contact the authorities immediately.

Cases detected via rapid antigen testing are: a person from below Tamang Gumpa in Sichey, one from Rawtey Rumtek, one from near the Taxi Stand in Syari, one from the Pani House area, one from near Joredhara-5th Mile Tadong, two from SMIT Majhitar and one from near the Sirwani Junior High School.

Likewise, one person from Namchi and one from near Children's Park in Kazitar in South District and one from Timberbong-Soreng and three from Gyalshing Bazaar in West District were also found positive in COVID-19 via RAT, it is informed.

Lachen lifts ban on entry of Govt officials and tourists

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 Oct:

Lachen in North Sikkim has lifted its ban on entry of government officials, NGOs and tourists. The Lachen Dzumsa has also removed the mandatory 10-day quarantine for locals that was in place earlier.

These decisions were taken in a meeting of the Lachen Dzumsa held today which also had Area MLA cum Minister for Roads and Bridges Department, Samdup Lepcha.

The meeting, however, mentioned that tourism may take more time to resume as

there is a lack of staff and management team in hotels in Lachen.

Locals coming to Lachen have also been requested "not to roam unnecessarily and follow the government guidelines, wear mask and maintain social distancing."

Opposition, U.N. call for release of elderly priest held on terror charges

ALASDAIR PAL

New Delhi, 21 Oct [Reuters]: Indian opposition leaders on Wednesday called for the release of an elderly priest held on terror charges, one of 16 similar arrests rights groups say are politically motivated.

Stan Swamy, an 83-year-old Jesuit priest working with tribal groups in Jharkhand, was arrested earlier this month on accusations he assisted Maoist groups active in the region.

He was refused bail and is being held under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), that critics say is one of several laws being abused by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

"The charges seem to be preposterous," said Shashi Tharoor, a lawmaker from the opposition Congress, that was one of half-a-dozen parties to speak at a news conference on Wednesday.

"He should be released on bail even if the government insists on these far-fetched charges."

Sonia Narang, a spokeswoman for India's federal National Investigation Authority that is in charge of the case, did not respond to a request for

comment.

Swamy's arrest is one of sixteen in connection with what began as an investigation into clashes between groups from India's upper and lower castes in 2018, according to the People's Union for Civil Liberties, a rights group. All are activists, academics and other intellectuals.

The United Nations and several rights groups have said the detentions are part of a pattern of the government using India's laws to crack down on dissent, although New Delhi denies this.

"He was charged and detained, and we understand that he is still detained, despite being 83 years old, despite being a long-standing respected human rights activist, working particularly on the rights of marginalized groups," Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, said on Tuesday.

"So in our view this is an example of these laws being used to detain the wrong type of people for the wrong reasons."

The UAPA has also been used to arrest several left-wing activists in connection with communal riots in India's capital earlier this year.

SKM FELICITATES CHAIRPERSONS AND ADVISORS

Despite COVID-19, development will continue: Golay

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 Oct:

Sikkim Skrantikari Morcha president and the Chief Minister, PS Tamang appealed to all newly appointed Advisors and Chairpersons to reach out to the people in every corner of the State to address their problems and issues.

The CM was addressing a special function of felicitation and consultation with the newly appointed Advisors and Chairpersons organized by SKM party here at Manan Kendra on Wednesday.

He said that their prime responsibility is to serve the people after being a part of the government and further suggested that they always work in the interest of Sikkim and its people.

The programme, which had the SKM president as the chief guest, was attended by Ministers, MLAs and newly elected Advisors and Chairpersons.

On the occasion, the CM congratulated all appointed Advisors and Chairpersons by offering khadas, informs a SKM press release issued by its chief coordinator [press & publicity] and Confidential Secretary to the CM, Bikash Basnet.

The CM further mentioned that despite difficult situation in the State due to COVID-19 pandemic there was no obstacle in the development and progress of the State and in the distribution of benefits to the people. He stated that in other parts of the country salaries were also cut but the people and employees of Sikkim have never witnessed such a situation. He also listed out various schemes and achievements so far of the SKM government.

The CM mentioned that the SKM government has mainly been working in rural development, education and other priority sectors. He urged Advisors and Chairpersons to reach



out to the people with programmes and benefits of the government.

The press release informs that after in the welcome address by vice-president [headquarter]

Uttam Lepcha, Press Advisor the CM, CP Sharma highlighted the vision, principles and programme of SKM party. The programme

was also addressed by Teesta Urja Chairman, G Lachungpa and ended with the vote of thanks by the Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, the release mentions.

Sikkim Milk convenes 24th Annual General Meeting at Ravangla

RAVANGLA, 21 OCT

[IPR]:

The 24th Annual General Meeting of Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited (SCMPUL) was held at the Conference Hall of Tathagata Tsal (Buddha Park) in Ravangla, today.

Minister for Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services and Information and Public Relations Departments Lok Nath Sharma graced the occasion as the Chief Guest in the special presence of Area MLA TT Bhutia as the Guest of Honour.

Present amongst other were Vice-Chairman (SCMPUL) M.S Rai, Managing Director AB Karki, AH/VS Department Director BM Chettri along with concerned department officials, shareholders and progressive farmers.

Addressing the gatherings, Minister LN Sharma extended his warm congratulations for its remarkable achievements throughout years since its establishment. Further, commending the

dairy farmers' hard work and toil, the Minister announced to celebrate the foundation day of Sikkim Milk Union as the Gwala Diwas.

The Minister encouraged the gatherings to work forward with great enthusiasm and benefit from white revolution to develop rural economy. He also informed that various other upcoming incentives for cash crops likewise 8 rupees per liter milk incentive will be launched in the coming months to ensure the growth of progressive farmers.

He also informed that the State Government is working upon bringing about adequate plans to expand and streamline marketing facilities for the benefit of the dairy along with other farming communities. Further, he stressed to take up farming as an attractive commercial activity for the overall growth of farmers. He also informed that the Government is taking various strategies to



improve the performance of the farmers and to make them financially strong. He expressed the fact that farmers are the most hardworking and dedicated person and should be placed in a respected position

MD AB Karki spoke about the significant achievements and progress of activities of the Union. Mr. Meena underlined the turnover of SMU which has grown from Rs.7820. 17 lakhs in the year 2018-19 to Rs.8465.79 lakhs in the year 2019-2020 which is a growth of 8.1%. Besides calling attention to the significant achievement in various

segments in the current financial year, he said that there has been the tremendous increase in the procurement of milk from various dairy collection societies located in the east, west & south district of Sikkim.

He also spoke on the upcoming business models to avoid plastic packaging in executing milk deliveries and other plans such as installation of vending machines in bazaar areas for sustainable use. Furthermore, he explained about budget and business development plan for 2021 and its growth

plans. In addition, exposure trips and training for shareholder in modern techniques were also discussed with the gatherings.

The program also saw felicitation to the Chief Guest Minister, LN Sharma for his immense love and dedication towards the upliftment of farming communities. The Chairpersons of all registered MPCS were also felicitated through the Chief Guest present. Prizes were also distributed to the top milk cooperative societies and Top 3 farmers of East, West and South district registered under Sikkim Milk Union.

COVID-19: Active cases remain below 7.5-lakh mark

NEW DELHI, OCT 21 (PTI):

Active cases of COVID-19 in India settled below the 7.5-lakh mark for the second successive day, while the national case fatality rate (CFR) has dropped to 1.51 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

Presently 14 states and UTs including Chhattisgarh (0.96 pc), Jharkhand (0.87 pc), Andhra Pradesh (0.82 pc), Telangana (0.57 pc), Bihar (0.49 pc), Assam (0.44 pc), Odisha (0.43 pc) and Kerala (0.34 pc) are reporting case fatality rate of less than 1 per cent.

The Centre has advised states and UTs to aim at bring down the CFR below 1 per cent.

There are 7,40,090 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 9.67 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

With a high number of COVID-19 patients recovering every day, India's steady trend of posting high levels of daily recoveries also continues.

A total of 61,775 recoveries have been registered in a span of 24 hours in the country whereas 54,044 new

infections were reported during the same period, the ministry said.

This is when 10,83,608 tests have been conducted in a span of 24 hours in the country, it underlined.

"Successful implementation of test, track and treat strategy along with timely and appropriate treatment has led to the consistent slide in the fatality rate. The national CFR has fallen to 1.51 per cent today," the ministry said.

A total of 67,95,103 people have recuperated from the disease so far in the country. Higher number of single day recoveries has resulted in a continuous increase in the national recovery rate, which is fast approaching 89 per cent (88.81%).

The ministry said that 77 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 states and UTs.

Karnataka outnumbered Maharashtra in new recovered cases with more than 8,500 new recoveries. Maharashtra and Kerala both contribute more than 7,000 to the new recoveries.

SGAY distribution in South Sikkim

NAMCHI, 21 OCT (IPR):

A programme was held at South District Zilla Panchayat Bhawan under the Chairmanship of In-charge 10-Poklok-Kamrang Assembly Constituency, KBRai. The programme was attended by the Gram Panchayat concerned, Addl District Collector DevNamchi, Dr CP Rai, DPO SDZP, Saran D Kalikotey, BDO Namchi, Babita Rai, BDO Sikkim, Tirsang Tamang, BDO Poklok-Nandugaon, Tenzing Bhutia, CLCs, WLCs and local gentries.

It is pertinent to mention here that the area of Poklok-Kamrang Assembly Constituency is wide spread to three BACs viz Namchi, Sikkim and Poklok-Nandugaon.

During the distribution programme COVID-19 Protocol



was also taken care of duly ensuring the social distancing of the gatherings.

Details of schemes covered in Sikkim BAC is that 28 beneficiaries were covered under Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna (SGAY) 48 beneficiaries were given house upgradation and 12 beneficiaries were provided with GCI sheets. Similarly, for Namchi BAC 216 and 54 beneficiaries received house upgradation and

GCI sheets respectively.

Likewise for Poklok-Nandugaon 136 beneficiaries were given house upgradation and 34 were provided with GCI sheets.

It may be mentioned here that Namchi BAC and Poklok-Nandugaon BAC could not distribute SGAY as the allotment order was not provided by Head Office, RDD, Gangtok and the same shall be distributed as and when received from Head Office.

House up-gradation cheques disbursed in Khamdong

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 OCT:

Cheque disbursement program for house up-gradation to the beneficiaries of Singtam-Khamdong Constituency was held at Khamdong BAC today, a press release

informs.

Distribution of Rs. 20,000 was presented to the beneficiaries by Health Minister and Area MLA, Dr MK Sharma. Other dignitaries present on the day included BDO, Tikendar

Sharma, Khamdong BAC, officials from Khamdong BAC, Panchayats of different GPUs and others.

It was also announced at the program that the remaining Rs. 30,000 shall also be released soon.

SGAY distribution program at Martam

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 OCT:

The distribution programme for allotment orders of Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna, GCI sheets and cheques for House Upgradation was organised at Martam BAC under Martam - Rumtek Assembly Constituency on Tuesday. The programme was chaired by Area MLA cum Chairman of Denzong Agricultural Cooperative Society, Sonam Tshering Venchungpa.

The distribution program had the presence of Panchayats of four GPUs under Martam BAC, SKM CLC President, BDO Martam, SKM CLC Committee & Nari Shakti.



The allotment order for Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna, tokens for CGI sheets and House Upgradation were distributed to the beneficiaries of four GPUs namely Samlik Marchak, Namli, Martam Nazitam GPU & Byeng Phegyong.

Addressing the function, Area MLA and the chief guest of the function, Mr Venchungpa extended warm regards to all the beneficiaries on behalf of the Government and appealed to make the best use of the schemes and government benefits.

Taps installed in Yuksam schools and health centres

PRITAM LAMA

GYALSHING, 21 OCT:

Yuksam-Dubdi GPU has sponsored and installed hand washing taps at Yuksam Primary Health Centre and schools/educational

institutions under Yuksam-Dubdi GPU.

The taps were inaugurated on Tuesday. Yuksam Dubdi GPU has taken this initiative in view of the importance of washing hands to prevent

the spread of COVID-19, said Panchayat member, Bhim Bahadur Gurung.

The initiative was funded by Yuksam-Dubdi GPU through State Finance Commission (SFC), it was informed.

SGAY allotment orders disbursed in Temi Namphing



NAMCHI, 21 OCT (IPR):

Temi Namphing constituency also saw disbursement of allotment orders of Sikkim Garib Awas Yojna (SGAY) today. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Area MLA cum Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, BSPanth, also present in the event were BDO (Temi), Prem K Subba, members of

Zilla & gram panchayats, officials of RDD/CLC/BLC & all WLC members.

The Chief Guest spoke about SGAY which he said is an initiative of the Sikkim State Government to facilitate and augment in providing the basic facilities for the poor.

In today's allotment 63 GCI sheets, 61 house upgradation along with

248 number of cheques has been distributed to the beneficiaries belonging to 3 GPUs namely Temi/Tarku-Tanak & Ben Nampruk GPUs under Temi-Namphing constituency.

It may be mentioned here that the remaining distribution program will be continue tomorrow for rest of the remaining GPUs

Dalle Khorsani

MAHESH DAWARI

Red cherry pepper (*Capsicum annum var cerasiforme*) - locally known as Dalle Khorsani in Sikkim is well known for its unique taste, flavor and pungency. Dalle khorsani is mostly cultivated in mid hills of south, west and east district of Sikkim and adjoining in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The crop was firstly grown commercially in Namphok, South Sikkim by Nanda Lall Dawari in the year 1996 with approx 600 saplings. Later it was sold in the nearby market in Rabongla and Singtam at Haat Bazar. Because of its unique taste and flavor became popular in entire Sikkim and Darjeeling, now tourist from all over the globe loves to purchase dalle as the "Gift of Sikkim".

The dalle crop belong to the family *solanaceae* and genus *capsicum*. Dalle can cultivate upto 100 to 130 cm height under open field and 150 to 180 cm height in the green house. Each plant produce 2.5 to 3.0 kg fruits with about 500 to 1000 pods. This crop can be grown throughout the year under the protected condition. The scoville score (pungency level) of this chilli is rated in the range of 1,00,000 to 3,50,000 SHU. Now it has become a valuable cash crop of Sikkim since it is valued for its diverse commercial uses. Dalle Khorsani is a round cherry size, bright red when fully ripen, full ripen fruits are use in pickles sauces and paste making process. Dalle processing was initially started in Rabongla by Samir Tamhane with the brand name of High Altitude in the year 1998 Later "Sikkim Supreme" a government food preservation factory started production in Singtam, East Sikkim in the year 2000. Then farmer started commercial production for Sikkim supreme and high altitude. In the year 2007 new unit setup at lower Sichey, Gangtok with the brand name of Sikkim Greengrocer for the production of dalle chilli pickles and paste. Bit by bit dalle became popular in national and international market. And in the year 2015 M/S Greengrocer started production of dalle sauce with the brand name of "peero (a global registered trade mark)". This product gave great value of dalle khorsani and could reach dalle to national and international market, 180 years old American company tobasco send legal notice for the product, later it is solved. Recently world trade organization gave geographical Indication Tag for the dalle to Sikkim, it is a great matter of proud for Sikkimese farmers.

Dalle khorsani of Sikkim is a pungent chilli but has many medical properties. Dalle chilli contains Capsaicin which produces different pungent level as well as carotenoids and phenolic compounds and is being used as natural pigment and antioxidant agents. However, the scoville scale indicates that its pungency is **VERY HIGH**. Dalle khorsani are high in vitamin-A, vitamin-E and potassium and low in sodium. One hundred grams of fresh dalle khorsani has 240 gm of vitamin-E, vitamin-C is sensitive to heat and drying but vitamin-A is very stable and paprika and dried chilli both contains relatively high amount of this important nutrient. Pepper is well known for their health benefits. Herbalists have long promoted pepper for their health enhancing effects. These includes clearing the lungs and sinuses protecting stomach by increasing the flow of digestive juices, triggering the brain to release endorphins (natural painkiller) making the mouth water, which helps to neutralize cavity causing acids and help protect the body against cancer, through antioxidant activities. Recently puja swami Ram Dev ji and Acharya Bal Krishna ji are promoting health benefit of dalle in India TV & Astha TV program, this indicates the great future of dalle in near future. Patanjali has also launched dalle pickles and sauces with Hot Hill brand for its own store, now a day swami Ram Dev ji have been giving alarming alert to be away from normal red chilli, which is so toxic for health, whereas dalle chilli got so many proven scientific evidence for its medical values.

Method of production:

SOIL AND CLIMATE

Red cherry pepper prefers warm and humid climate. The crop can



be tolerate high temperature and cannot withstand heavy rain during growth, flowering and fruit set, very cold weather less than 12°C during the night also hampers growth and fruit set. Ideal temperatures for flowering are 20-25°C. It can be also cultivated in wide range of altitude and soil, sandy loam soil with ph of 5.5 to 7.5 is ideal. Water stagnation is detrimental to the crop. Highly acidic soil need to be reclaimed using limestone or dolomite.

Land preparation:

The main field should be ploughed 3-4 times for the fine filth. Farm yard manure is incorporated during last ploughing. Cow urine can also be use for drenching for soil preparation.

Nursery Management:

Site should be elevated place and preferably near the planting site, it should be sunny, near to the water source and land should be well drained and nursery bed should be made near partially shaded area.

Nursery can be raised under the protected structure like poly house and net house, bed should be prepared by mixing FYM@7kg/M2 Neem cake @2kg/m2 vermi compost @1kg/m2. The continent size of bed is 1mx1m, sufficient space for the central path and inter bed path to carryout intercultural operation.

Mulching is done with dry leaves, paddy straw and black polythene for early germination, weed should be removed regularly, from beds and frequent watering should be done. Damping off is the most common diseases which can be managed by applying Tricoderma Viridis and *Pseudomonas Floreseens* culture @10gm/liter but in the sever case drenching with Ridomil/Matco @3gm /liter is also advisable.

TRANSPLANTING:

Generally 30-35 days old seedling is ready for transplanting. It is better to keep seedling in open condition a day before transplanting. Transplanting should be done in the afternoon.

PLANTING:

Dalle khorsani can be grown round the year if proper care is taken under protected condition. It prefers warm humid climate during early stage and dry weather towards maturity of pods. It can be grown up to 500-1400m above mst. Excessive rainfall causes defoliation, rotting of pods and with incidence. Normally crop is planted in March-April. The optimum spacing for this crop is 1m/1m and planting should be preferably being done raised bed. Water stagnation in the field causes serious damages to the crop.

Nutrient Management:

Nutrient management is done through organic sources with the use of different nutrient rich manures and growth promoter. The recommended manures and bio fertilizer for dalle khorsani is as follows.

Source	Dose	Application	Time
FYM	20t/ha(2kg/plant)	soil	15 days before planting
Neem Cake	2t /ha(20g/plant)	soil	7 days before planting
Azosprillum PSB	20%(200g /l)root dip for 15 minutes	Seedling treatment	At planting
Vermicompost	2.5 t/ ha 250g /plant	Soil treatment	20 days after planting
Bio NPK	0.3%(3ML/L)	Foliar spray	30 days after planting
Boron (multiplex)	0.2%(2g /l)	Foliar spray	30 days after planting
Miraculon	0.05%(0.5ml/plant)	Foliar Spray	20&40 days after planting
Cow Urine	20% (urine :water 1:4)	Soil drench	At 20 days interval

INTERCULTURAL OPERATIONS:

Manual weeding should be done. Gap filling is done during second irrigation 10 days after transplanting. Light hoeing is required to remove weeds and loosen soil for better aeration and root growth. In order to boost vegetative growth, fruit set and yield, buds from the first and second nodes are pinched off. Unproductive branches below first nodes are also clipped in cooler season especially when sunscald is not a problem. Tall growing chilli needs staking to prevent lodging due to fruit weight. Earthling-up of the plots should also be done after 30-45 days of planting. Dried leaves, paddy straw, saw dust can be used for mulching. Black polythene sheet (mulching plastic) is the most preferable mulch material for this crop.

IRRIGATION:

A Continuous supply of optimum water is essential for proper growth and fruit yield. The first irrigation should be given immediately after transplanting and water should be provided at weekly interval. Heavy irrigation is avoided because it causes soil borne diseases like wilt and collar rot.

PLANT PROTECTION:

Aphids (Aphis gossypii and Myzus persicae), locally called as Lye Kira, attack the sap and reduce the vigour of the plant and secrete honey dew which attract ants and develop sooty mould in the lower part of the leaf. They also act as vector for viral diseases. Application of systemic bio-pesticides like *Verticillium Lecanii* petroleum base oil sprays @6 ml/lit is recommended. Fruit fly also attack the plant. They lay eggs in the fruits an after hatching, maggot starts feeding on fruits resulting fruit drop. Placing of 8-12 pheromone traps per ha at the time of fruit set and collection and destruction of dropped fruits manages the problem.

HARVESTING:

The plant starts flowering after 70-80 days of planting and first picking is done at ripening stage. It continues to bear fruits for 2-3 years. While picking the fruits lifted gently off the plant without causing injury or breakage of stem. Dalle is sensitive crop, it has to be processed within a week, it can dry in sun and use as chilli dust. Dalle has great future aspects; it can replace the use of normal chilli, as it has no side effects and have so many medical proprieties. Many global companies have shown interest in dalle. Sikkim will always be remembered as "Motherland of Dalle".

PIB Guwahati organises webinar on Covid and Law

GANGTOK, 21 OCT (PIB): Communication and Information Awareness plays a vital role in empowerment of youth and to tackle Covid-19 issues, experts emphasised in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic here today. A Galaxy of experts from Industry and Legal fraternity, Government sector along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the topic from varied perspective.



Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Prof (Dr) A Lakshminath, Maharashtra National Law University and former Vice-Chancellor, Chanakya National Law University said that Legal fraternity, Media and Communication has a huge role in empowering the citizens of the country by making them aware of their responsibilities. He said that there are many issues related to Covid which a citizen has to be aware such as precautions for health, redressal of grievances related to Disobedience to quarantine rule, acts which endanger the life of fellow citizens, negligent act related to contamination of diseases, disobedience to state health norms/rules and Health department guidelines, fake news, harassment to children and inducing stress on children and disobedience to restrictions related to gathering of people in social functions, among others.

Advocate-on-Record, Anurag Pandey, Supreme Court conveyed his message of importance of Covid precaution and provisos related to issues for healthcare workers and medical professionals of the country as he was present in the webinar

which deliberated on the various ways to communicate to people the efficacy of precaution to tackle Covid. Adding to the discussion, Advocate, Amit Khemka, Supreme Court and Delhi High Court said that there are numerous provisos in IPC 1860, Epidemic Disease Act 1897, Cr PC, Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Disaster Management Act 2005 and National Disaster Management Guidelines, 2008 which relates to the management of biological disasters. He said that the interpretation of law is for justice and people should not hesitate in redressal of their grievances if anyone is aggrieved.

Abdur Rahman Mallick, Advocate, Delhi High Court mentioned that the law and justice system is fully equipped to tackle any issues and grievances related to Covid. He said that Technology and latest Video Conferences facilities had eased the process of adjudication and legal system and a case in point is the latest amendments in Consumer Protection Act, 2019. He said that students have a important role to play when it comes to awareness on Covid precautions. He said that Education system has also acclimatized with the changes with classes on the internet and telecommunication and IT changing the way how the education is being

He said awareness on these topics is quintessential for the well-being of all the medical professionals.

Assistant Professor, Dr Ajay Sonawane, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi said that students of law and judicial system is responding with optimism the utilisation of technology and its vital role in latest law curriculum and pedagogy. He said that Covid precautionary measures have to be integral to the lifestyle and disciplined behaviour of the individuals to tackle Covid.

provided to the students. Advocate, Sanyuk Banerjee, Purbo Bardhamaan, said that emergency arrangement for medical practitioners, hospitals moral and ethical responsibility of treating all patients including those with Covid infection, accessibility to hospital and medical facilities to all, affordable and judicious Hospital fees and consultation fees for patients/wards, health care facilities to children and pregnant women are aspects where legal fraternity along with health care authorities have to be judicious and play a role of facilitator. He further said that there are law which apply to health care workers and doctors when they are extending their service.

The webinar was managed and coordinated by Joint Director, Samrat Bandyopadhyay, PIB Guwahati. While Deputy Director, Pallav Chakravorty, PIB welcomed the experts, along with students, eminent journalists and other government senior officials from Doordarshan Guwahati, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati, All India Radio Guwahati were also present on the occasion.

SGAY distribution in Sumbuk



NAMCHI, 21 OCT (IPR): A distribution program of cheques for House Upgradation and allotment orders for GCI sheet was held at hall of

BAC, Sumbuk today. Area MLA, Farwanti Tamang graced the occasion as the chief guest and Area Incharge, Tilak Basnett

attended the function as the guest of honour. Also present amongst were BDO (Sumbuk), Kiran Thatal and other staff. In today's program a

total of 184 beneficiaries were given house upgradation and 56 beneficiaries were provided with GCI sheets.

16 tiger teeth seized, 4 arrested in Assam

GUWAHATI, OCT 21 (PTI): Four persons have been arrested and 16 tiger teeth seized from their possession in Assam's Karbi Anglong district on Wednesday, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team apprehended four persons and seized the tiger teeth, worth lakhs of rupees in the international market, from their possession in Birla in Diphu police station area, a police spokesperson said.

Further investigation is underway, he added.



Two-Tier Cricket Club Tournament update

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 21 OCT: In the ongoing Two-Tier Club Tournament today, the match was played between Royal Dragon Cricket Club (RDCC) and Himalayan Rivals Cricket Club Namchi (HRCC) wherein Royal Dragon Cricket Club won the toss and chose to field first, a press release informs.

In the first innings, HRCC Namchi were all-out for 131 runs in 29.5 overs, where Ruben Lepcha scored 46 runs in 61 balls, followed by Captain Dipen Pradhan who scored 29 runs off 24 balls. Preteek Sharma took 4 wickets for RDCC, MD Shahzafar Ansari

3 wickets and Aznoor Ansari 2 wickets.

In the second innings Royal Dragon Cricket Club scored 127 runs with the loss of 9 wickets in 30 overs. Siddarth Prasad was the highest scorer for the side scoring 38 runs off 62 balls. Shahzafar Ansari scored 17 runs and Prateek Sharma 16 runs. Dipen Pradhan took 3 wickets, Ruben Lepcha and Mushtaq took 2 wickets each and Moses Gurung took 1 wicket.

HRCC Namchi won the match by 4 runs. Ruben Lepcha was announced the man of the match for his 46 runs and 2 wicket.

SISCO Bank felicitated for outstanding performance

GANGTOK, 21 OCT (IPR): The Government of India has acknowledged the commendable work done by SISCO Bank in Self Help Group linkage/financing during the year 2018-19. The letter of appreciation was handed over by the Chief Minister, PS Tamang to the Managing Director and Deputy General Manager of the Bank during a Government function on 20 Oct, 2020 in presence of Minister of Co-operation

Department, Sonam Lama, Ecclesiastical Department & Rural Development Department.

SISCO Bank continues to strengthen its presence as a credible banking institution owned by the State of Sikkim. The Bank has planned to expand its footprints in the State rapidly to ensure complete financial inclusion and economic upliftment of every section of the Sikkimese society.


Phone: 03592-281913
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STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD SIKKIM
FORESTS AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
DEORALI, GANGTOK – 737102

APPEAL

The festive seasons of Durga Puja (Dashain) and Diwali, the festival of light & flowers is approaching once again. You may be aware that the Government has banned the manufacture, sale & bursting of all types of sound and light emitting fire crackers in Sikkim through Gazette Notification No. 544 dated 19th December 2014.

Further, all are aware that plastic is non bio-degradable and its use leads to environmental problems. Hence all are requested to refrain from using any plastic items during the festive occasion to prevent littering and generation of plastic waste.

The State Pollution Control Board Sikkim solicits kind co-operation of every one in making this “ban” successful and keep the State of Sikkim clean, green & pollution free. The State Pollution Control Board-Sikkim also wishes all a very happy and pollution free Dashain & Diwali 2020.

*State Pollution Control Board
Forest & Environment Department
Government of Sikkim*

RO No. 116/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21
Date. 21.10.2020



SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SAMAJ KALYAN BHAWAN, LUMSEY
5th MILE TADONG, GANGTOK-SIKKIM

No. 263/SJ&WD/ADM/2020 Dated: 09.10.2020

NOTICE

Post Matric Scholarships for ST, SC, EBC & OBC and Pre-Matric for ST
Online applications are invited from students fulfilling the requisite criterion under the Post-Matric scholarship Tribes (ST), Scheduled Cast (SC), Economically Backward Class (EBC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) for the Academic Year 2020-21, at scholarships.sikkim.gov.in portal. The last date of submission of the online application for the aforementioned scholarships is 31.12.2020, time 5.00 pm. The extension in the last date of submission of application (if any) will be mentioned in the scholarships portal. For further queries or relative issues the applicants can contact at scholarshipsikkim@gmail.com

*Sd/-
Additional Director
Social Justice and Welfare Department
Government of Sikkim
GoS/165/SJ&WD/WD/2020*

R.O. No. 105/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21
Dt. 12.10.2020

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SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No.204/SJ&WD/CPS/2020 Dated: 21.10.2020

ADDENDUM

In continuation of our previous employment NOTICE No.117/SJ&WD/CPS/2020 dated 07/09/2020, the vacant post of 01 Member is added for Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), East-District. Hence the total number of vacant posts, for Member, JJB, East – District is 02(two).

The “TERMS AND CONDITIONS” and “OTHER REQUIREMENTS” have been indicated in the afore-mentioned NOTICE.

As prescribed by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Childred) Act 2015/ Rules, the CWC/JJB Members, are required to sit on all working days unless the case pendency is less. Furthermore, the CWC Members are required to hold atleast 20 sittings in a month.

The last date for receipt of applications for the NOTICE No. 117/SJ&WD/CPS/2020 dated 07/09/2020 and this ADDENDUM has been extended to 13/11/2020(Friday) till 4.30 pm.

Please visit www.sikkimsocialwelfare.gov.in

*Sd/-
Additional Secretary cum Director
Social Justice & Welfare Department
Govt. of Sikkim.*

R.O. NO. 117/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21
Date. 21.10.2020

Organic Planning

To take things forward, address what is distressing farms

Sikkim is now into Phase-2 of its ambitious Organic Farming plans. Given the havoc that chemical fertilisers and pesticides wreck on the environment and health, this was always a very laudable mission. It was clearly also a difficult task, given that twelve years since it was first mooted and two since Sikkim became officially "organic", one still hears the government complain of resistance being incited against the initiative and the excitement that such a major paradigm shift is expected to make palpable.

To get a grip on what Sikkim decided to go up against when it began the Organic Sikkim experiment in the year 2005, some perspective is required. As per the annual report of the Department of Food Security and Agriculture, Sikkim had consumed 3,429.6 metric tonnes of fertilisers in 2003-2004! That is a huge amount for tiny Sikkim and to really understand the shock this was delivering to the State, one has to see the 3,429.6 metric tonnes not just as consumption but also as procurement. This quantity of chemical fertilisers was sourced by the concerned departments and supplied onwards to the farmers. One is looking at massive handling of funds and issuing of work orders and all its attendant "arrangements", and expectedly, the first resistance to the proposal clearly came from within the departments themselves even if these were never overtly expressed. Apart from the dependence of the local farmers and local officers on non-organic fertilizers and pesticides, the policy makers in Sikkim also had to contend with a national policy which is structured to benefit the fertilizer-pesticide manufacturing cartel. Soil-poisoning, cancer-causing chemical fertilizers were given Rs. 12,000 crores in subsidy each year (as of 2005) by the Centre which makes them the cheaper option as against the more eco-friendly, but labour intensive hence also more expensive organic options. Much of the central subsidy makes its way to the fields in Sikkim by way of distribution schemes and subsidised supplies and this process leaked and wasted. But this was the convenient system in place and we should know by now how resistant we are to change. The job, hence, was easier said than done.

But Sikkim has pulled it off at least at the policy commitment level even if the practise has still not become as instinctive as would help the sector. Here, one needs to also recognise that the lethargy one sees in the farming sector is neither unique to Sikkim nor something caused by its shift away from chemical fertilisers and pesticides. This is a condition across the country caused as much by skewed economic-planning priorities and climate change. It would serve the Sikkim Government well to also look deeper into the high attrition rates from the farms of the State. Agriculture has been plagued by diminishing returns for decades now, and that is perhaps when it lost its sheen. Also, Sikkim was never known as a surplus agriculture society, and when farming is sustenance level for generations, every aspiration for a better life would have meant a move away from the fields. Agricultural plots in the hands of the actual farmers (as different from the landlords who are not active agriculturists) have traditionally been very small in Sikkim and this must have contributed towards the farms not becoming as bountiful as they might have potential for is the belonged to the hands that tilled them. Because of how the social hierarchies worked, farmers never ranked very high in the pecking order which is also probably why naukari was aspired for more than farming. Remember, the State Government banned import of vegetables into Sikkim. The intention was clearly to support local growers and encourage them to grow more. It is unlikely that it had any such impact beyond hurting kitchens here. If the Organic Mission is to become truly sustainable, the thrust should start from understanding what ails the farms and fields from a social, logistical and practical point of view. That way a more holistic approach could be fashioned and less disruptive, but more sustainable, course of action could be initiated.

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Can America survive the re-election of Donald Trump?

HENRY GIROUX
THECONVERSATION.COM

The 2020 presidential election may be one of the most significant and far-reaching events of the 21st century. The stakes almost defy comprehension — suggestive less of a competition over who will become the president of the United States, but whether people will vote to either retain the ideals and promises of an already wounded democracy or to sanction a further slide of American society into the abyss of authoritarianism.

Noam Chomsky has argued that Donald Trump represents not simply a threat to democracy, but to the planet itself. Chomsky situates the possible re-election of Trump within an era that he terms "the most dangerous moment in human history owing to the climate crisis, the threat of nuclear war and rising authoritarianism."

The editorial board of the New York Times argues that Trump's "re-election poses the greatest threat to American democracy since World War II."

Many other pundits and commentators believe Trump will not only refuse to address these threats to humanity, but will exacerbate them. Yet the focus shouldn't be on Trump alone, because that risks personalizing politics in such a way as to lose sight of the conditions that made Trump's political career possible in the first place.

U.S. ON A DOWNWARD SLIDE SINCE THE 1980s

The fear of emerging fascism in the United States is not without foundation. Since the 1980s, American society has taken on the appearance of a failed state. All the signs are in full view and have been made more visible in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis: widening inequality, widespread alienation, the collapse of civic culture, the dismantling of the social contract, long-standing systemic racism and ballooning civic illiteracy, among other forces.

As democratic values were replaced by market values, public assets were strip-mined in order to serve private interests while

enriching the financial elite and further decimating the hopes, dreams and security of the middle and working classes.

The bonds of trust and solidarity have been replaced by the bonds of fear, suspicion and a growing culture of bigotry. All of these have deepened among the American public a growing sense of anxiety, social atomization and powerlessness.

With the rise of the corporate-controlled social media that functioned as a disimagination machine that accelerated a culture of distraction, language has succumbed to the esthetics of vulgarity. Drained of civic values and lacking a commanding vision, the institutions of liberal democracy atrophied, further undermining civic literacy, historical memory and the capacity to discern the truth from falsehoods.

The underlying forces that created the conditions for Trump to win the presidency became more visible after 2016. In the midst of both an economic and a health crisis, he has sowed social divisions and resurrected the discourse of racial cleansing and white supremacy.

DEFENDER OF WHITE SUPREMACY

Not only has he refused to criticize racist groups like the Proud Boys, Trump has elevated himself to the defender of a white supremacist notion of white America. He has defended maintaining Confederate monuments along with their insidious values, and has criticized NASCAR for removing the Confederate flag from its racing events. He has used his rallies to fan the flames of racism and bigotry while putting the lives of his followers in danger by refusing to abide by restrictions designed to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Trump has also enacted a range of regressive policies, with the help of a syncophantic Republican Senate. He has accelerated and expanded the conditions leading to extreme inequality in wealth and power, revelled in his role as a pathological liar, enriched himself in violation of the

emoluments clauses in the U.S. constitution, falsely claimed an epidemic of voter fraud, lied about the seriousness of the pandemic and failed miserably in addressing the COVID-19 crisis that has claimed the lives of more than 220,000 Americans.

Trump has also weakened American institutions. As Stephen Eric Bronner of Rutgers University observes, the president has "trampled traditional political and constitutional norms, and — perhaps most important — reorganized once independent state institutions to serve his needs." Drawing on a fascist playbook, Trump believes he is above the law and that his immunity from it is central to his wielding of power.

And yet, in spite of this long list of political, cultural and economic horrors, more than 40 per cent of the American population still support Trump.

WHAT IF TRUMP WINS AGAIN?

What lessons are to be learned about the United States if Trump is re-elected?

One key lesson is that democracy is fragile and without the proper institutions, values and social connections that make it possible, it can give way to updated modes of authoritarianism. A Trump victory on Nov. 3 would prove it.

Trump's re-election would represent a deliberate U.S. turn towards authoritarianism stemming from a loss of vision and a belief that there's no alternative to America's brutal form of capitalism. According to this logic, all problems are a matter of individual responsibility and there is no way to change the current socio-economic-political order.

The existing depth and wide-ranging influence of such views among the American people is in part due to a conservative, hermetically sealed disinformation media ecosystem. As democratic institutions wither alongside the public spaces that nourish critically engaged citizens, limited political horizons become normalized along with a diminished sense of hope.

Under Trump, the degradation

of language reinforces the late Italian philosopher Umberto Eco's remark that education plays a role in fascism. Eco noted one of the central features of what he called "Ur-Fascism" was its undermining of civic literacy through fascist schoolbooks that "made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning."

TRUMP IS THE OUTCOME OF THE PAST

Trump represents a distinctive and dangerous form of American-bred authoritarianism. But condemning him for this isn't enough if we are to understand the forces at work in Trump's potential re-election and the slide of the United States into the pit of fascism.

Trump is the outcome of a past that needs to be remembered, analyzed and engaged for the lessons it can teach us about the present.

His attacks on democracy, his alignment with corrupt and ruthless dictators and his willingness to sacrifice social needs and human lives to the cruel script of raw power and a ruthless market-driven society should force us, as global citizens, to ask questions we have never asked before about capitalism, power, politics, the demands of citizenship, the purpose of education and civic courage itself.

There will be no real movement for real change in America without addressing a revolution in consciousness, one that makes education central to politics.

Americans can survive Trump — and even a second term of Trump — if they resurrect a language of critique and possibility, and develop a mass movement that draws from history and provides the economic, cultural and political conditions to lift the U.S. out of the present-day socio-political morass.

Americans need a vision they can fight for, not just a fear they can overcome.

[The writer is Chaired professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the Department of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University]

A local food diet can make you and your community healthier during COVID-19

KIMBERLY HILL-TOUT & WILLIAM TYLER HARTWIG

THECONVERSATION.COM

This past summer, many students were not able to fill the suggested 700 farming jobs funded by the federal government due to geographical or transportation barriers, limited positions or career irrelevance. At the same time, there was a larger demand for food grown locally in response to initial concerns about international imports during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

News stories from earlier this year covered farm problems such as milk dumping, produce dumping, an anticipated rise in meat prices and concern about a lack of agricultural production to feed the country.

Since March, farmers have continued selling at farmers markets, have sold out of community-supported agriculture (CSA) shares and responded to an increased demand as more people have taken up homesteading activities such as home cooking, gardening and canning.

This turn to local food, a more plant-based diet and home-based food production has been recommended by health professionals, climate scientists and community resilience builders alike. As graduate and medical student researchers, we see that the potential silver lining of COVID-19 health measures may be the fostering of a healthier lifestyle and building community resilience.

HEALTH BENEFITS

The most recent version of Canada's Food Guide was released in March 2020. There was a stark contrast — the new guide was a move away from its lobbyist-informed predecessor. It recommended daily foods comprising half vegetables and fruit, and in the protein section there was reference to alternative protein sources such as beans, nuts, legumes and tofu.

Plant-based diets have for years now been the recommendation for maintaining a healthy body weight, reducing one's risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. These diets can also lower cholesterol, slow the progression of Alzheimer's, help with digestion by increasing fibre intake and reduce the risk of developing hypertension.

Eating locally also means that there are fewer chances for food-borne contamination, and better contact tracing within local systems. For example, red onions imported from the United States were the cause of a salmonella outbreak in Canada, infecting 457 people.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Community resilience is the ability of a community to survive and recover from adverse situations and events. Essentially, the resources that a community has — like food — can be affected by an event, and then adapt and grow in a way that will be more effective to withstanding future adverse events.

Social networks can be a crucial part of building community resiliency. The growing interest in local food as a reaction to COVID-19 can ultimately build social networks through farmer and non-farmer interactions as people seek out local farms and attend farmers markets.

An additional factor that builds community resilience is the increased interest in home skills. During quarantine, there was a surge of people taking up home cooking both as a necessary action as well as for stress relief. People also took up baking, preserving foods, gardening and crafting.

This skill building creates community resilience because people learn to manipulate their resources. Whether it be in the form of stress relief or becoming less dependent on outsourced labour, people "bounced forward," developing and adapting new methods and skills to mitigate future adversities.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS

There are also limitations to the surge of interest in local food and skill-based activities. Similar to the inaccessibility of organic foods to households without disposable income, the affordability of local foods and access to farmers markets during COVID-19 can be a challenge to individuals without transportation or financial means.

An example is Knuckle Down Farm in Stirling, Ont. A small share costs \$20 per week, while a large share costs \$35 per week, which works out to be between \$400 and \$700 for a 20-week commitment. These need to be picked up weekly at the farm itself, which is inaccessible by transit. The price increases by \$5 per week for delivery to the Toronto region, where it would still need to be picked up from an east-end address.

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY DIETS DURING A PANDEMIC

The federal government needs to consider both larger social factors involved in overcoming adverse conditions and support communities that are in need of assistance. CERB financial relief can help cover a few monthly costs, but may not help everyone in taking up healthier diets or fostering community resilience.

To increase access and participation in local food markets, governments need to subsidise local food and deter the dumping of agricultural goods. Community resilience can also be encouraged by offering courses in skills-based activities like food prep and preserving.

COVID-19 has disrupted and changed the way we live our lives. Food can provide a means to encourage healthy diets, improve community relationships and address social inequalities as a way to enhance community resilience.

[Kimberly Hill-Tout is Ph.D. Student, Geography and Planning, Queen's University, Ontario; William Tyler Hartwig is M.D. Student, University of Toronto]

Gold rises Rs 512, silver jumps Rs 1,448



NEW DELHI, OCT 21 (PTI): Gold prices rose by Rs 512 to Rs 51,415 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday, following a positive global trend and rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 50,903 per 10 gram in the previous trade.

Silver prices also jumped Rs 1,448 to Rs 64,015 per kilogram from Rs 62,567 per kilogram in the previous trade.

The rupee pared

its initial gains and depreciated 9 paise to settle at 73.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday.

“Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi were higher by Rs 512, reflecting rally in international gold prices

and rupee depreciation,” HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

In the international market, gold jumped to USD 1,921 per ounce, while silver rose marginally to USD 25.10 per ounce.

Navneet Damani, VP Commodities Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said, “Gold prices edged higher supported by softer dollar and increasing hopes for a new US coronavirus relief package ahead of the November elections.

15 new cases push COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 4,141

PORT BLAIR, OCT 21 (PTI): At least 15 more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, raising the tally in the Union Territory to 4,141, a health department official said on Wednesday.

Of the fresh cases, 12 were detected

during contact tracing, while three have travel history, he said.

Ten more people were cured of the disease on Tuesday, taking the total number of recoveries in the archipelago to 3,902, the official said.

The Union Territory now has 183 active

COVID-19 cases, and 56 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, he said.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration has sent 77,200 samples for COVID-19 tests, of which 76,837 reports have been received, the official added.

EC notice to Kamal Nath on ‘item’ jibe



NEW DELHI, OCT 21 (PTI): The Election Commission on Wednesday issued a notice to former Madhya Pradesh chief minister and Congress leader Kamal Nath on his “item” jibe at BJP candidate Imarti Devi, saying his remarks were found to be in violation of the model code in place in the state due to the assembly by-election.

“Now, therefore, the Commission gives you an opportunity to explain your stand in

making the above said statement within 48 hours of receipt of this notice, failing which the Election Commission of India shall take a decision without further reference to you,” the notice said.

Addressing a poll meeting on Sunday in Gwalior’s Dabra town, where the BJP has fielded Imarti Devi, Kamal Nath had said the Congress candidate was a “simple person” unlike his opponent who was an “item”.

Madhya Pradesh BJP leaders, led by Chief

Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on Monday held a protest against Kamal Nath, while the National Commission for Women sought an explanation from the Congress leader for his remark.

Kamal Nath, who is the state Congress president, had later expressed regret over it and asserted that he did not say anything disrespectful.

Bypolls to 28 Madhya Pradesh Assembly seats will be held on November 3.

Assam’s Kaziranga National Park reopens after 7 months

GUWAHATI, OCT 21 (PTI): The Kaziranga National Park (KNP), famed for one-horned rhinoceros, was opened to tourists on Wednesday, after being closed for seven months due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal formally reopened the KNP and expressed hope that this will revive the states tourism sector which has been severely hit by the pandemic.

The KNP remains shut for around five months every year since April-end during the monsoon season when floods also occur in the state. The Park was closed in March this year after the government imposed lockdown.

Sonowal said that unemployed youths in



and around Kaziranga would find meaningful employment again through jeep safari and other tourism-related activities.

He said that the state government had provided a one-time financial assistance to

people engaged in the jeep safari to alleviate their economic stress brought by COVID-19.

The state government would take more such initiatives in future for providing succour to the people engaged in the tourism sector of the

state, the chief minister said.

He asked the people of the five districts covered by the KNP and the local communities residing in the surrounding areas of the park to extend full hospitality to the visitors coming from outside.

Sonowal also urged tourists to maintain all COVID-19 protocols while visiting the KNP and other places so that the spread of the pandemic can be contained.

The chief minister said that the state government was able to stop rhino poaching to a great extent in the last four and half years and thanked the people of the nearby areas for extending their full cooperation in this regard.

Accompanied by Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Water Resources Minister Keshab Mahanta and Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Sonowal went around the KNP in a jeep safari.

NIA interrogates a student, not for terror link: police

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 21 (PTI): A NIA team Wednesday interrogated a student after picking him up from a place under Khandagiri police station area here but not for any terror link, police said.

The student was questioned for about five hours at Khandagiri police station but the reason for it was not disclosed to the media.

He was picked up with help of the Odisha Police.

The commissioner of police S S Sarangi said As per our information, the interrogation is not linked to any terrorist activities.

The student was not



taken to any undisclosed location for interrogation but was interrogated at the Khandagiri police station itself, he said.

None has been detained or arrested by the central agency and its team has already completed its

interrogation and left, Sarangi said.

He asked the media not to disclose the student’s name or identity.

Tripura reports 112 new COVID-19 cases, one more death

AGARTALA, OCT 21 (PTI): At least 112 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Wednesday, pushing the tally to 29,800, a health department official said.

The death toll rose to 329 with one more patient succumbing to the infection, he said.

West Tripura district, of which state capital Agartala is a part, has accounted for 174 of the 329 COVID-19 deaths.

Tripura currently has 2,458 active coronavirus cases, while 26,990 people have recovered from the disease.

Twenty-three patients have

migrated to other states, the official said.

Altogether 265 people were on Tuesday discharged from G B Pant hospital, the main referral facility in the state for COVID-19 patients.

As many as 4,38,337 samples have been tested for the infection in the northeastern state so far, he added.

Barcelona extends contracts of Pique, Ter Stegen and others

BARCELONA, OCT 21 (AP): Barcelona extended the contracts of captain Gerard Pique, goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, midfielder Frenkie de Jong and defender Clement Lenglet, the club said.

Barcelona said the agreements for the extensions came after “weeks of negotiations” and included a temporary salary adjustment because of the financial difficulties caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The 33-year-old Piquenow has a contract until June 2024, with a buyout clause of 500 million euros (USD 587 million). Barcelona said the extension is conditioned on the defender playing a certain number of games beginning next season. The club did not elaborate on the number of games.

Ter Stegen had his contract extended until June 2025, while Lenglet and De Jong will remain



with the club until June 2026.

Ter Stegen also has a buyout clause of 500 million euros, while De

Jong’s clause is set at 400 million euros (USD 470 million) and Lenglet’s at 300 million euros (USD 352 million).

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FC Goa signs 18-year-old midfielder Muhammed Nemil

MARGAO, OCT 21 (PTI): Indian Super League franchise FC Goa has roped in 18-year-old midfielder Muhammed Nemil on a four-year deal.

Nemil, who spent a season with the club’s developmental side, is a product of Reliance Foundations Youth Champs (RFYC) academy and is among its first batch of graduates, having joined the programme as a 13-year-old back in 2015.

Nemil was sent to Spain last year to train



with Marçet’s High-Performance Academy in Spain by RFYC. The youngster will spend this season out on loan in Spain as a part of Gramanet’s U-18 set up, who play in the Juvenil Liga Nacional.

“I have been in Spain for some time and gotten used to the style of play. It suits me perfectly to take

the initiative and control the game via passing and movement. That’s what FC Goa is all about and I feel this is a dream fit,” Nemil said.

Speaking on his signing, FC Goa’s Director of Football, Ravi Puskur remarked, “We’re extremely happy to have brought Nemil on board to FC Goa. He is one of the standout players of this batch of players coming through from the RFYC and we’re excited about the prospect of him joining our club.”



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One of our top four has to finish off games, we have to correct that: Rahul

DUBAI, OCT 20 (PTI): Kings XI Punjab skipper KL Rahul was relieved to see his team finally get over the line comfortably but said the top-four batsmen must consistently close out games in the remainder of their IPL campaign.

KXIP have often struggled to finish games from comfortable positions in this IPL.

For a change, it was a straightforward chase for KXIP against Delhi Capitals on Tuesday despite a rare failure from their opening pair of K L Rahul (15) and Mayank Agarwal (5).

Nicholas Pooran (53 off 28) came up with another blinder of a knock and Glenn Maxwell (32 off 24) finally found some form to set up their five-wicket win over Delhi Capitals.

"My heart keeps reaching new limits every game but yeah it is nice to finish it in the 19th over for once. I did wonder, I won't lie, especially when you are



playing with six batsmen and an all-rounder," Rahul said at the post-match presentation.

"It is something every team talks about: the set batsman has to finish off the game. One of the top four does that. We have to correct that," he added.

KXIP's bowling unit pulled things back in the death overs to restrict DC to a below-par 164 for five.

Under-fire Glenn Maxwell played a crucial 24-ball 32 and took a

wicket. Rahul said it was important to back the Australian.

"Glenn is a great team man. He has been batting well in the nets. It was important to back him. It was good to see him get time in the middle. Hopefully, he carries this good work into the coming games," he said.

In their last match, KXIP had beaten Mumbai Indians via a second Super Over and Rahul said he "didn't sleep a whole lot" after

that game on Sunday night.

"Took a long time to sink in. Kept thinking all night how we could have closed it off before the Super Over. But it keeps us humble, the game is bigger than any of us."

Shikhar Dhawan (106), who was awarded the Man of the Match for his historic back-to-back hundred, said he took the onus on himself to do bulk of the scoring after not getting support from the other end.

"I took the responsibility of holding one end up and was also hitting the boundaries when I got the chance. I really enjoyed it today. It is good that I am scoring consistently so you carry it into the next games," he said.

"We are going to have a discussion and see where we can improve. We have been playing very good quite consistently. This is not going to put us down."

Delhi Capitals captain Shreyas Iyer said his team was 10 runs short but vowed to come back stronger.

"I feel that we fell around 10 runs short, but we got a lot of learnings from this game. Tushar leaked runs but that happens to the best of us. I'm sure he will come back," he said.

"The good thing is that the boys will be charged up for the next game. We weren't upto the mark tonight, but I'm sure we will be next time.

Mumbai City FC ropes in Nigerian striker Ogbeche



MUMBAI, OCT 21 (PTI): Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC on Wednesday signed Nigerian striker Bartholomew Ogbeche for the upcoming 2020-21 season.

The Nigerian centre-forward joins the franchise on a year-long deal.

Ogbeche kicked off his youth career at Lobi Stars in Nigeria and was then signed by Paris Saint-Germain into their youth system before making his first team debut for the French giants in 2001-02 at just 17.

An illustrious journey began for Ogbeche, playing in France (Bastia, Metz), the UAE (Al Jazira), Spain (Alav s, Valladolid, C diz, Xerez), Greece (Kavala), England

(Middlesbrough) and the Netherlands (Cambuur, Willem II).

The 36-year-old made his debut in Indian football in the 2018-19 season, captaining NorthEast United FC and scored 12 goals in 18 games.

Continuing with the ISL, he went on to represent Kerala Blasters in the 2019-20 season and finished with 15 goals in 16 games, the joint top goal-scorer in the division.

Ogbeche has also represented Nigeria on several occasions, including twice in the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

"Besides the brilliant mix of youth and experience in our team, the apparent quality and level of the squad speaks

volumes about the ambitions we have here at the club," Ogbeche said.

"In my two years in the ISL, I've come up a fair few times against Sergio Lobera's team, and our coach's positive and free-flowing brand of football perfectly fits my style and idea of the game as well," the striker added.

Mumbai City head coach Sergio Lobera described the Nigerian as a top-class player.

"He is not only a terrific goal-scorer but also a leader in the true sense. Bart (Ogbeche) can be a role-model to plenty of the young boys in our squad and not to mention, be a winner for us on the pitch with his attacking talents," Lobera said.

UEFA cancels men's soccer under-19 Euros

NYON (SWITZERLAND), OCT 21 (AP): UEFA has called off the under-19 European Championship in men's soccer that was twice postponed and pushed into 2021.

Europe's governing soccer body says the cancellation in Northern Ireland is "due to the current unresolved epidemiological situation in Europe and resulting traveling difficulties."

The decision sends high-ranked England, France, Italy, Netherlands and Portugal direct to the 2021 under-20 World Cup representing Europe.

That FIFA tournament is due to be hosted in Indonesia and kick off in May.

Plans for the European under-19 event in Northern Ireland kept changing as the coronavirus pandemic continued to affect soccer.



Neymar and Bruno Fernandes reveal a tale of two talismans in Paris

JONATHAN LIEW PARIS, 21 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: How Manchester United must wish they could play Paris Saint-Germain every week. Of course, given the current mood within the game, one imagines the Glazers are probably sitting down with the relevant European stakeholders to make that prospect an imminent reality. Yet at a deserted Parc des Princes, United conjured up a triumph that in many ways more impressive than their great heist of 2019.

Nineteen months have passed since the remarkable 3-1 comeback victory that put United into the last eight and sealed Ole Gunnar Solskjær's ascent to the permanent job. Nineteen months in which a good deal of water has passed under the bridges of the Seine. And yet, until Bruno Fernandes's first-half penalty the last goal PSG had conceded at home in the Champions League was scored by United themselves. That was a measure of their achievement.

For this was no heist. Indeed for Solskjær this may well go down as one of his most satisfying games as a manager: one that will have answered a few of his critics. If United trusted a little to luck in the first half when Fernandes was given a second go from the penalty spot, and early in the second half when Paris began to turn the screw, then can be no

quibbles with the overall outcome.

United defended with intelligence and courage, they countered with pace and verve, and when the game began to tilt away from them Solskjær's tactical switch – bringing on Paul Pogba and switching from a back five to a back four – turned things decisively back in their favour. United came with more than a plan. They came with a Plan B.

Naturally, the temptation will be to attribute this to the profligacy and fecklessness of last season's beaten finalists, on which more later. And in fairness, you could scarcely have concocted a more favourable opposition for United to play right now: a team that play slow, patient football high up the pitch, but don't really press and don't really like to defend. In a way, it was as if United had been granted an opportunity to play themselves.

But even if the counterattacking tone of the game suited United, they executed to the letter. Marcus Rashford applied the final flourish, but in truth United enjoyed multiple strongholds. Alex Telles, who with his slick ponytail and trendy beard looks like he should be serving macchiatos in the Northern Quarter, enjoyed a fine debut at left wing-back. Axel Tuanzebe, in his first game for 10 months, left the field with Kylian Mbappé's internet



banking details. PSG have been beaten, outfought, outwitted before. But rarely have they played a team who showed them this little respect.

In a way, it was a game defined by its two creators. This may have been Fernandes's first game as United captain, but he has been their de facto leader for a while now: dead-ball specialist and talisman, standard-bearer and standard-setter. And for all his quality on the ball, what distinguished him here, playing almost in a front three with Rashford and Anthony Martial, was his effort, his effervescence, his basic need to contribute.

"Contribute" is the operative word here. Neymar, by contrast, craves the ball, and here he was willing to drop as deep as he needed to get it. But his net contribution is often less clear. Swallowed up by United's back five, with Fred and Scott

McTominay ahead of them, too often Neymar tried to do it all himself, even if he was 40 yards from goal and there were better options around him. When he lost the ball, he simply walked away. Neymar does what he wants, which is sometimes – but not always – what the team need.

As he laboured his way through the game, you realised just how little of the pizzazz of his early years has survived into his late 20s. There were still the little tricks and twiddles, particularly early on, before the game got away from him, before the little kicks and frustrations began to chip away at his joy. Late in the first half, he was booked for dissent. Somewhere along the line – and this is perhaps the real travesty – one of the world's most expressive, exuberant players simply stopped being fun.

In a way, this is the essential malaise of Paris:

a deeply unhappy club, despite having all the money and silverware you could want. They are the kings sulking about not being emperors. Even in victory, nobody really seems to be enjoying themselves. Their coach, Thomas Tuchel, wears the manic scowl of a rogue doctor about to harvest your kidneys. He has been engaged in an increasingly fractious dispute with sporting director Leonardo over recruitment and probably won't see out the season. They'll still win Ligue 1 by 15 points.

United are another of those deeply unhappy superclubs whose discontent seems to follow them around like the weather. But it's the memory and the strength of nights like this, when they shed their torments and discover themselves again, that can sustain them through the lean periods. The road ahead is long and uncertain. But they'll always have Paris.

European Premier League: talks held over lucrative breakaway competition

PAUL MACINNES LONDON, 21 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: Plans for a lucrative breakaway European Premier League involving top English clubs that would supersede the Champions League have been revived, with the banking giant JP Morgan being asked to seek financing for a new competition.

Liverpool and Manchester United have been approached to join the league, which would comprise 18 teams – including three more English sides and teams from Spain, Italy, Germany and France – and have no promotion and relegation, according to proposals reported first by the Spanish outlet Vozpopuli and by Sky News.

Real Madrid, advised by the investment company Key Capital, are said to be behind a plan for a European Super League, first reported by Der Spiegel in 2018.

Fifa was dismissive and Uefa said it strongly opposed a format that would "inevitably become boring". In private, officials believe the plans are an attempt to put pressure on Uefa in advance of the regular negotiations over a revamp. But the revelations, a week after it emerged Liverpool and Manchester United were behind a blueprint to change the English game, Project Big Picture, offer a further threat of restructuring to accommodate the financial wishes of the clubs at the very top of the game. The bank is seeking financing of £4.6bn, Sky reported.

Kevin Miles, the chief

executive of the Football Supporters' Association, said: "The latest reports of plots, allegedly involving Manchester United and Liverpool, to create a European Super League, expose the myth that billionaire owners care about the English football pyramid, or indeed anything other than their own greed. This has to be the last nail in the coffin of the idea that football can be relied upon to regulate itself: these billionaire owners are out of control."

"Decisive action is now needed to protect the game we love. We have already been promised by government a fan-led review of the governance and regulation of football: that process needs to start as a matter of urgency before the super-rich custodians of the biggest clubs can do any more damage."

Uefa and the European Club Association are discussing a reshaping of the Champions League when the agreed global and European calendar is concluded in 2024, with the expectation this will result in an expanded format providing more lucrative matches and a bigger TV deal, mostly for the top clubs. A draft plan last year, which was reported and opposed by European leagues, was for a top division of 32 clubs, in a structure that envisaged 64 clubs in an expanded Europa League, and promotion and relegation between the two.

A Uefa statement said: "The Uefa

president has made it clear on many occasions that Uefa strongly opposes a Super League. The principles of solidarity, of promotion, relegation and open leagues are non-negotiable. It is what makes European football work and the Champions League the best sports competition in the world. Uefa and the clubs are committed to build on such strength not to destroy it to create a Super League of 10, 12, even 24 clubs, which would inevitably become boring."

At the same time, Fifa and its president, Gianni Infantino, are working on a revamped Club World Cup, currently played every season between the champions of Fifa's six continental confederations and the host country's champions, to a tournament expanded to 24 and involving the world's biggest clubs. The first enlarged tournament is scheduled to be played in China in June and July next year, then played every four years. Infantino said in December, before the Covid-19 crisis hit and disrupted so much of football's scheduling, that Fifa had nine offers to take on and sell the new tournament's commercial rights.

That JP Morgan has been asked to support a different tournament suggests it is a commercial breakaway proposal, outside of the discussions continuing between the clubs, Uefa and Fifa.

Cathay Pacific cuts 8,500 jobs, shutter regional airline



Polish academics protest 'fundamentalist' education minister

WARSAW, POLAND (AP): Activists dressed as security guards climbed onto a balcony of a Polish Education Ministry building early Wednesday and hung a banner protesting the appointment of a new minister whom they consider to be a religious fundamentalist and a danger to the nation's youth and universities.

Many university academics in Poland are protesting the conservative government's appointment of Przemyslaw Czarnek, who has said that LGBT people aren't equal to "normal people," women were created to produce children and who has voiced support for corporal punishment.

The banner that two activists hung said "Boycott Czarnek. Homophobe. Xenophobe. Fundamentalist." Security guards removed it quickly, before the minister arrived at work, and a large contingent of police officers showed up to question the two activists.

Wearing orange security vests and hardhats, they used a long ladder to climb up to a balcony and hang the banner.

Rafal Suszek, a physics professor at Warsaw University who led the operation and was one of the two, told a police officer who questioned him afterwards that he believed a man with Czarnek's "backward views" shouldn't be allowed to have such a position of authority.

Wearing a mask, Suszek added that Czarnek represents a "virus of hate" more dangerous than the coronavirus.

Suszek later told The Associated Press that he and his fellow activist were charged with the illegal hanging of banners and not adhering to social distancing rules.

Suszek is one of 2,700 professors and other academics to sign a petition vowing to boycott Czarnek, a member of the ruling conservative party, Law and Justice, who was sworn in this week by President Andrzej Duda. In his role, Czarnek will oversee the nation's system of schools and universities. He was named in a recent government reshuffle, but was sworn in two weeks after the other ministers as he recovered from COVID-19.

Duda said that appointing Czarnek would help restore some ideological balance to academia, which he said has been dominated by left-wing views.

"In recent years, people trying to achieve higher ranks in scientific development ... have been brutally attacked for not having a worldview that is politically correct, that is, liberal-leftist," Duda said. He said university life would be made richer by having people with opposing views confront each other.

The protesting academics, however, view Czarnek, who has also taken part

in demonstrations organized by a far-right organization, the National Radical Camp, as an extremist and religious fundamentalist who risks damaging Poland's educational system. They fear his hostility towards gays and lesbians means he won't act to protect young sexual minorities, who sometimes suffer from depression and bullying, and that he could seek to suppress academic research into areas like gender studies.

"Before our eyes a symbolic rape of Polish education and science is taking place," says the petition.

The academics' petition calls on members of the academic community to boycott events that Czarnek takes part in and to refuse to participate in the work of any collegial bodies that could subvert humanistic values. However, they say they won't take any steps that would hurt their institutions, such as not teaching their students.

During this year's summer presidential campaign that culminated in Duda's reelection to a second term, Czarnek, who worked on that campaign, drew controversy for language against LGBT people.

He said at the time: "Let's protect ourselves against LGBT ideology and stop listening to idiocy about some human rights or some equality. These people are not equal to normal people."

After those words, broadcast on TV, caused a huge uproar, he insisted they were taken out of context and he later clarified his view, saying: "LGBT people are people, and LGBT ideology is ideology."

A professor of law at the Catholic University of Lublin, Czarnek had also called LGBT "deviants" and faced disciplinary proceedings at his university for his statements.

The 43-year-old father of two has argued that parents — under certain conditions — have the constitutional right to inflict corporal punishment on their children.

He has suggested that women's key role is to have children and that they should start early.

In a lecture last year during a scholarly conference, he argued that modern society's message that women can first pursue a career "and then maybe a child ... leads to dire consequences."

"The first child is not born at the age of 20-25, but at the age of 30. When the first child is born at the age of 30, how many of these children can be born? These are the consequences of explaining to a woman that she does not have to do what God has called her to do," said Czarnek, whose own wife has a Ph.D. in biology and also teaches at his university.

HONG KONG (AP): Hong Kong airline Cathay Pacific Airways said Wednesday it would cut 8,500 jobs and shut a regional airline as it grapples with the plunge in air travel due to the pandemic.

About 5,300 employees based in Hong Kong and another 600 elsewhere will likely lose their jobs, and 2,600 unfilled positions will be cut. The cuts are about 24% of the company's workforce, Cathay Pacific said in a statement.

"The global pandemic continues to have a devastating

impact on aviation and the hard truth is we must fundamentally restructure the group to survive," Cathay Pacific CEO Augustus Tang said in a statement.

"We have to do this to protect as many jobs as possible, and meet our responsibilities to the Hong Kong aviation hub and our customers," Tang said.

The company said it will also shut down Cathay Dragon, its regional airline unit, with operations ceasing on Wednesday. It will seek regulatory approval for most of the routes to be operated by Cathay

Pacific and its budget airlines subsidiary HK Express.

The restructuring is aimed at reducing Cathay Pacific's cash burn to 500 million Hong Kong dollars (\$64.5 million) a month, from about 1.5 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$193.5 million) to 2 billion Hong Kong (\$258 million) dollars a month currently, the company said.

The plan will cost about 2.2 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$283.8 million), it said.

Executive pay cuts will continue throughout 2021 and there will be

no pay increments for 2021 nor bonuses for this year for all Hong Kong employees, Cathay Pacific said. Ground staff will be offered a voluntary leave plan in the first half of next year.

In a news conference, Cathay Pacific Airways chairman Patrick Healy estimated that passenger levels will only return to pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

"The future remains highly uncertain. This crisis is deeper and the road to recovery slower and more patchy than anyone thought possible just a few short months ago," he said.

Healy said Cathay Pacific is more affected than its peers as the airline is "100% reliant on cross-border travel," much of which has stopped as passengers remain wary of flying amid travel restrictions. Major destinations such as mainland China and other countries like Singapore and Thailand have temporarily closed their borders to visitors.

Cathay Pacific will be operating at less than 25% of capacity for the first half of 2021, and under 50% of capacity for the rest of the year as a whole, Healy estimated.

That might pick up in the second half of the year as travel constraints will hopefully ease, he said.

In June, Cathay Pacific raised 39 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$5 billion) in a recapitalization plan that gave the city's government a stake of about 6% in the airline.

The vice chairwoman of Cathay Pacific Airways Flight Attendants Union, Amber Suen, said in a news conference that the union is "completely disappointed" with the company's decision, and said there are others who worry that there may be future redundancies.

From Detroit to Oakland, pandemic threatens urban renewal

DETROIT (AP): Downtown Detroit was returning to its roots as a vibrant city center, motoring away from its past as the model of urban ruin.

Then the pandemic showed up, emptying once-bustling streets and forcing many office workers to flee to their suburban homes. Anthony Frank, who manages Dessert Oasis and Coffee Roasters on Griswold Street, said everyone loves Detroit's comeback story, but a 20% drop in business has been difficult to handle.

"We definitely had to do a lot of soul searching just to try to make sure that we were able to keep this thing going," said Frank, who is hopeful that things will eventually pick up again.

From midtown Manhattan to San Francisco, just about any city built around clusters of office buildings that used to bring in thousands of workers every day is feeling some degree of angst.

But experts say cities such as Detroit, Cleveland and Oakland, California, that were shedding years of decay and starting to turn a corner will have a harder time recovering because they don't have an established base of large office tenants. And even though downtown populations in Cleveland and Detroit are growing, their overall populations are still declining, making their comebacks all the more challenging.

If the virus persists, some businesses will ultimately close, and the damage could ripple through downtowns and hurt the businesses that remain, said Daniel Shoag, an economics professor at Case Western Reserve

University in Cleveland.

"There's a possibility that this could be really bad in terms of wiping out the base and being really hard to start from scratch," Shoag said.

In resurgent cities, restaurants, dry cleaners and other businesses were banking on continued growth to fund investments, said Christopher Mayer, a finance and real estate professor at Columbia University.

"Their (profit) margins weren't that high, they were making a bet on the new neighborhood," he said. "All of that I think has been upended, and I don't know when it's going to recover."

In Cleveland, the downtown was thriving before the pandemic with two new residential towers opening and paint maker Sherwin Williams announcing a new headquarters with about 3,500 workers. Downtown's population is nearing 20,000, up 25% since 2010, the Downtown Cleveland Alliance says.

But the pandemic sent businesses on a downward spiral. At Maestro Tailor in the Playhouse Square theater district, owner Mark Srour's alteration and clothing business is down 80% from before the virus. He's hoping customers come back when theaters reopen and workers at nearby law firms and office towers stop working remotely.

"Sometimes I don't pay myself," said Srour, who emigrated from Lebanon a decade ago. "It's OK. As long as I can survive and keep going with my dream."

The pandemic also is threatening dreams

in downtown Oakland, a city long overshadowed by San Francisco. But San Francisco's soaring real estate prices prompted companies and residents to begin migrating across the Bay Bridge.

Last year, Blue Shield of California moved from San Francisco to a new 24-story headquarters in Oakland, bringing 1,200 more employees to the roughly 80,000 whose jobs normally bring them downtown. Two other San Francisco tech companies, Square and Credit Karma, also leased offices in Oakland.

As of late last year, office

projects totaling 4 million square feet — enough room to accommodate roughly 20,000 workers were — were underway.

But the pandemic left downtown Oakland businesses that were accustomed to daytime customers in a financial drought. Many once-busy restaurants are now boarded up while others are trying to survive by offering takeout.

"It's like a ghost town," Nohemi Percec, owner of Juice Joint, a 12-year-old Mexican deli, said on a recent afternoon when there were no lines at the once-bustling lunch

spot. "We are just waiting for all the workers to come back, but I am hearing from some of my longtime customers that they are being told they probably aren't coming back until next June or July."

Business is off roughly 80% since March, forcing Percec to cut staff in half while taking advantage of reduced rent that her landlord offered as lifeline. Detroit's downtown was teeming with people before the virus. Since 2014, when the city emerged from bankruptcy, its downtown population

rose nearly 22% to more than 13,000 by 2018. The number of people working downtown rose 12% from 2014 to over 62,000 in 2016, the latest year for census statistics.

People moved to refurbished lofts and new condominiums a short distance from Quicken Loans, General Motors and other employers. They bought coffee or lunch, and suburban commuters stayed for concerts and sports. Long-decaying skyscrapers were scrubbed clean and parks rejuvenated with food trucks and new places to play.

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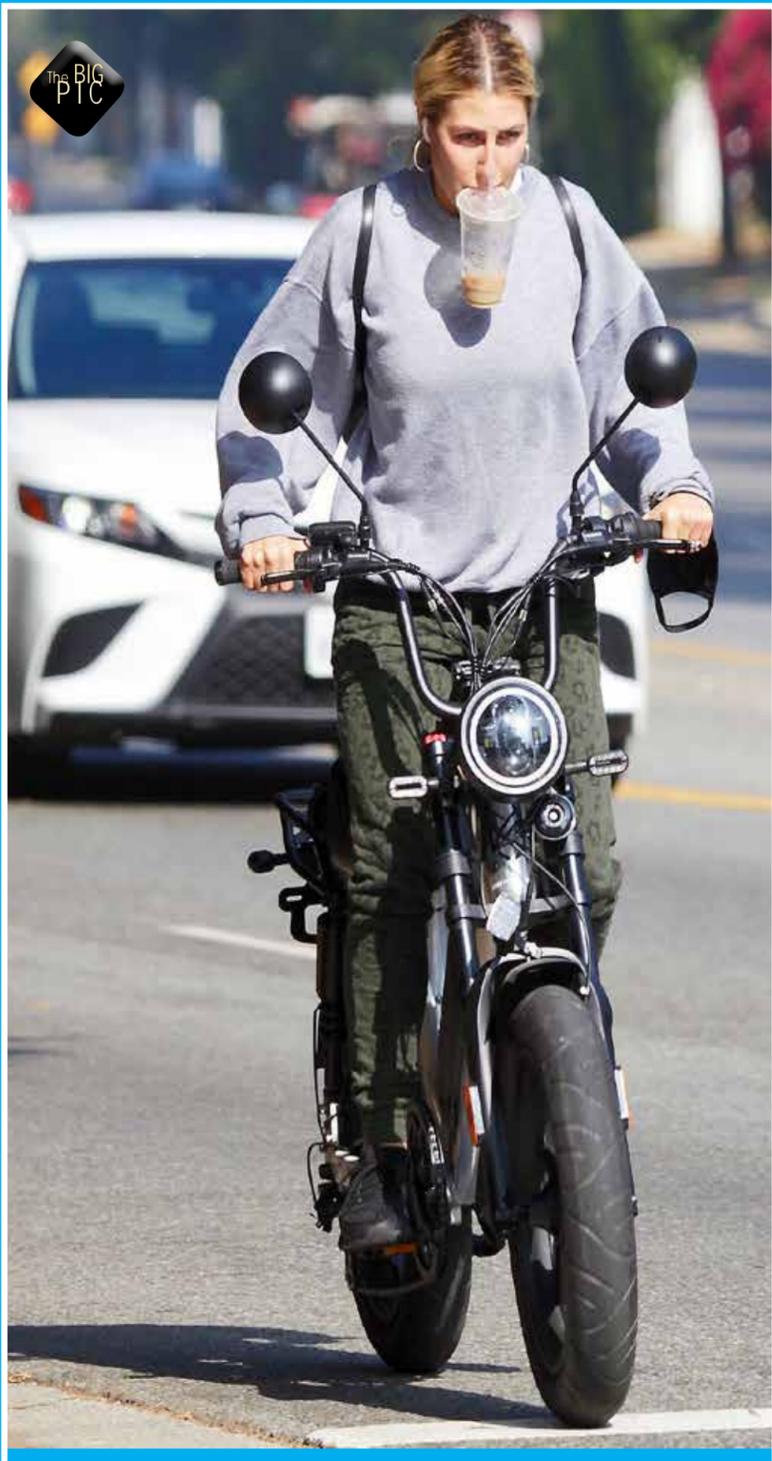
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SummitTIMES

CMT Music Awards to feature trio of hosts, outdoor stages



SLATER'S COFFEE SOLUTION! Pro dancer, Emma Slater got creative with her iced coffee cup while riding her electric bike in Studio City, California.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE (AP): A trio of new hosts will lead fans through a new look at this year's CMT Music Awards, which replaced the live arena audience with performances in scenic outdoor locations around Nashville, Tennessee.

Country singers Kane Brown and Ashley McBryde join "Modern Family" actor Sarah Hyland as co-hosts during Wednesday night's show airing on CMT, MTV, MTV2, Logo, Paramount Network, Pop and TV Land.

Finalists for the top award, video of the year, were narrowed down to Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban, Kelsea Ballerini, Luke Combs, Miranda Lambert and Tanya Tucker,

who is a first-time nominee as well.

Performers include Dan + Shay, Little Big Town, Luke Bryan, Maren Morris, Morgan Wallen, Sam Hunt and Shania Twain. The show, which is also known for highlighting cross-genre collaborations, will include special performances with Jimmie Allen and Noah Cyrus, Combs with Brooks and Dunn and Ballerini with Halsey. Some first-time nominees this year include Halsey, Blanco Brown, Gwen Stefani, Marshmello and The Highwomen.

The fan-voted awards show, which is normally held in the summer but was delayed because of the coronavirus

pandemic, has a new category, quarantine video of the year, that highlights country artists who got creative with music videos and songs during the pandemic. Some of the nominees include Brad Paisley's "No I in Beer," featuring Paisley surprising people on video calls, Combs' socially distance-themed song "Six Feet Apart," and Dolly Parton's nostalgic "When Life is Good Again."

Also new this year is the CMT equal play award, which will be presented to singer, actor and activist Jennifer Nettles, for her work advocating for women and diversity in country music.

Deepti Naval undergoes angioplasty, says she's fine now

MUMBAI, OCT 21 (PTI): Veteran actor Deepti Naval, who underwent a angioplasty at a hospital in Mohali on Monday, said she was discharged from the medical facility on Tuesday and is "perfectly fine now".

There were reports that the actor suffered a heart attack in Manali but responding to a text message, Naval said, "It was a heart symptom."

"That's true (about the angioplasty) and I'm perfectly fine now," Naval told PTI.

Coronary angioplasty is a procedure used to open clogged heart arteries.

The 68-year-old actor is in Rohtang since last month.

Naval spearheaded her career in parallel cinema with films like, her debut with Shyam Benegal, the 1978



film "Junoon" and went on to feature in "Chashme Buddoor", "Ankahee", "Mirch Masala", "Firaq", "Memories of March",

"Listen Amaya", among others.

She most recently starred in Amazon Prime Video's "Made in Heaven".

Disney Plus greenlights 'Willow' series, Warwick Davis to return

LOS ANGELES, OCT 21 (PTI): Disney Plus has announced a sequel series to Ron Howard's 1988 classic movie "Willow" with original star Warwick Davis set to return.

The fantasy drama movie, which was produced by George Lucas, was about a reluctant farmer (Davis) who plays a critical role in protecting a baby from a tyrannical queen who vows to destroy her and take over the world.

"Crazy Rich Asians" helmer John M Chu will direct the pilot episode from a script by Jonathan Kasdan, who will showrun the series with Wendy Mericle.

"Growing up in the '80s, Willow' has had a profound effect on me. The story of the bravest heroes in the least likely places allowed me, an Asian-American kid growing up in a Chinese restaurant looking to go to Hollywood, to believe in the power of our own will, determination and of course, inner magic..."

"Jon Kasdan and Wendy Mericle have added such groundbreaking new characters and delightful surprises to this timeless story that I can't wait for the world to come along on this epic journey with us," Chu said in a statement.

Davis, 50, will reprise his role of Willow Ufgood for the series, which will be produced by Lucasfilm.

The show will introduce new characters to the enchanted realm of fairy queens and two-headed Ebersisk monsters, and welcomes back its namesake hero, Willow.

"So many fans have asked me over the years if Willow will make a return, and now I'm thrilled to tell them that he will indeed. Many have told me they grew up with Willow' and that the film has influenced how they view heroism in our own world.

"If Willow Ufgood can represent the heroic potential in all of us, then he is a character I am extremely honoured to reprise," Davis said.

Besides "Willow", the actor is known for starring in many critically-acclaimed films, including the "Star Wars" series and the "Harry Potter" franchise.

The series will be Lucasfilm's first foray into storytelling outside the "Star Wars" universe since 2015.

Howard will executive produce the series alongside Kennedy, Michelle Rejwan, Chu, Kasdan and Mericle.

Bill Cosby, now 83, grins in newly released prison mug shot

HARRISBURG, PA. (AP): A newly released prison mug shot shows Bill Cosby smiling with a disposable mask hanging off his face.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections recently updated Cosby's mug shot, something routinely done to document changes to inmates' appearance as they age. Cosby's new photo was taken Sept. 4.

Later in the evening, a blurry picture was tweeted from Cosby's verified account showing him using what appeared to be a prison telephone, pulling a mask away from his chin as he smiled.

It was accompanied by text that said: "This photo was taken by his publicist, Andrew Wyatt, during his first virtual

video conference call with Mr. Cosby last week. We are posting this to reassure his family and supporters that he is doing ok during this pandemic."

Cosby, 83, was convicted of felony sex assault and is serving a three- to 10-year prison term. An appeals court had upheld his conviction, but the Pennsylvania Supreme Court agreed this year to review two key issues in the case. The appeal is scheduled to be heard Dec. 1.

Cosby, a once-beloved comedian long known as "America's Dad," became the first celebrity convicted of sexual misconduct in the #MeToo era when he was convicted of drugging and sexually assaulting a woman at his home near Philadelphia in 2004.

that you need to overwork yourself in order to feel worthy, which in turn could be leading to exploitation on the work front. Confront your issues related to self-authority and remember the choices that are available to you at all times. You are being given the chance to liberate yourself from this vicious cycle. "Trust" and "surrender" are also keywords to keep in mind as you do. Stepping into the unknown can be daunting. Remembering that the Universe has got your back and will help you get through this.

LEO: You may find yourself playing the role of the secret-keeper this week. When the information that's coming your way is *this* juicy, it's hard to contain it. Challenge yourself to stay mum anyway. Your temptations could cost you your friendships. When in doubt, put yourself in the other person's shoes and ask yourself how you would feel if your well-kept secrets became public information.

VIRGO: "Unconditional love really exists in each of us. It is a part of our deep inner being. It's not so much an active emotion as it is a state of being. It's not 'I love you' for this or that reason, not 'I love you if you love me'. It's love for no reason, love without an object." A quote by mystic Baba Ram Dass that beautifully describes where you are in your journey. You're learning to bare your heart and soul to friends and strangers alike, and show up for them without the expectation of receiving anything in return. Loving from this space of purity promises to uplift both,

you and those around you.

LIBRA: Your love story is one that will go down in the pages of history, Libra. It is the perfect blend of a traditional and modern romance, one that boasts of truth, loyalty, passion, playfulness, and unconditional love. You will find that your partner is supporting you in all of your ventures in a way they never have before. This is also a time of truth and awakening as far as your purpose is concerned. Living a life that's merely self-serving doesn't cut it anymore. You're finding ways to create an impact in the world.

SCORPIO: Some of you could be dealing with a bossy boss situation, which in turn is making you question your place in the world. Remember this Scorpio: you have a choice. You always have a choice. So, stand up for yourself and stop giving other people the power to push you around. No, you won't lose anything in the bargain. You will, however, gain the respect of those around you. If you're the one who's throwing their weight around, know that every action will have repercussions. PS: How about planting the seeds of goodness instead?

SAGITTARIUS: Sagittarius, you've always been the magical one. The sensitive one. The 'connected one'. The one who possessed the inherent power to look beyond the veil and communicate with the divine forces. Over a period of time, however, you learned to adopt a garb of 'normalcy'—a garb that may be imprisoning you in some ways. Remember, we can suppress our gifts but we can't make them go away. Today, you're being asked to get in

touch with your inner sorceress and activate the power within.

CAPRICORN: Capricorn, the cards are pointing towards your ability to turn base metal into gold. You have the Midas touch working for you. So let go of the old story, which is 'things don't work out for me', and embrace the infinite possibilities that are being offered to you right now. However, investing your time and energy into a project that's merely self-serving has never been your style. Find a way to uplift your community alongside you.

AQUARIUS: Wednesday sees you getting on board with the hottest pandemic trend—the indoor/kitchen garden. Your way of bringing the wilderness into your space for when you cannot venture out into the wilderness yourself. Remember, nature's apothecary boasts of all kinds of miraculous herbs and spices. There's never been a better time to channel your inner medicine woman. As such, you're undergoing a major renaissance as far as health and wellness is concerned. It's time to understand your body better and work on healing yourself inside-out.

PISCES: Pisces, you're made of both stardust and soil. You're a starseed—a magical being—hiding behind the veil of normalcy. Today, the cards are urging you to tap into your inner magician and look at your entire life as a blank canvas, irrespective of what unfolded in the past. Spirit does give us second chances, and you could say this is yours. Rediscovering your hidden gifts and talents is also going to be a big theme. What you will realise in the process: the things you took pleasure in as a child were no coincidences at all.