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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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**2 hospital units
and Sadar
Thana**

contained

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Two hospital units in the state have been contained after reports of COVID positive cases coming from these units. The Pediatric Ward of District Hospital, Gyalshing and Jorethang Community Health Centre have been declared Containment Zones on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Sadar Thana in Gangtok has also been contained following the detection of COVID-19 in two personnel posted at the Thana. Except the traffic division in the basement and the jail, the entire Sadar Thana building has been contained for 48 hours. The Sadar Thana meanwhile will function from the Titanic Point Police Booth.

**Arunachal Pradesh CM
Pema Khandu tests Covid-19
positive**

ITANAGAR, SEP 15 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said that he tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday and is presently in home isolation in New Delhi.

"I have undergone Covid test RT-PCR and have tested positive for Covid19. I am asymptomatic and feeling healthy," Khandu wrote in his official Twitter handle.

He said that he has self-isolated himself and requested everyone who came in contact with him to adhere to the standard operating procedure.

Khandu went to the national capital on official visit on September 12.

169 recoveries improve Sikkim's recovery rate to 77.77%

Tuesday sees 54 new cases and one more COVID casualty

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

A total of 169 patients have won their battle against novel coronavirus and were discharged from different isolation facilities in the State on Monday. With the large number of recoveries, the recovery rate of the state has improved to 77.77%.

In the meantime, Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 increased to 2173 with the report of 54 new cases of novel coronavirus in the State in the last 24 hours. Out of 54 new cases, 52 have been reported in East District and two are

in South District. The number of active cases of novel coronavirus in Sikkim now stands at 464.

In the daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia stated that in the testing of 236 samples by RT-PCR at VRD Lab in STNM Hospital, 46 reported positive for COVID-19.

While giving break-up of new cases detected in RT-PCR, Mr Bhutia informed that one patient from Bar Peepal area in Bye-Pass Road, one from near Forest checkpoint in Lower Sichey, five from a paid quar-

antine facility, one from Lower Tathangchen, one from below Forest Colony in Upper Sichey, one from another paid quarantine facility and one from Manbir Colony were tested positive for COVID-19. Likewise, one staff of STNM hospital in an quarantine facility, one employee of Macleods, Ranipool, one from Thala Gaon below Metro Point Tadong, one from near Namnang traffic point, Deorali, one from below Railway guest house, one from Chalamthang, Pakyong and two other from Tathangchen were returned positive in RT-

PCR testing, he added. He further stated that one from near old Sikkim Jewels complex, Tadong, one from near Janata Bhawan in DPH area, one from Burtuk, one from near Cooperative in Sichey and one from near CS Rai SSS in Arithang were also tested COVID-19 positive in RT-PCR testing.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that one more from Arithang, one from Thami Dara Ranka, one from Sang, one from Nazitam, one from Ranipool, one from above bike garage in Bye Pass area and one from Lingdok Ward No 1, one from

Sangkhola, one from Sakhu in West Pendam, one from near Kerabari in Sangkhola ward, one from above SBI bank in Majhitar, one from near Panchayat Bhawan in Sapley ward in West Pendam, one from Rangpo, seven from quarantine facility at Epica Garden and one 10-month old child from Majhitar were also found positive for COVID-19.

Seven of 37 samples tested positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing. One person from near AIR quarter in Arithang, one from ICAR, Jalipool, one from near Greendale School,

one from Ray Khola Road, two from Melli and one from Aritar were tested positive for COVID-19 in the rapid antigen testing.

Mr Bhutia informed that one case was detected in the TrueNat testing of 19 samples. This was a 64-year-old man from Melli, South Sikkim, who passed away last evening at around 6:40 PM at STNM hospital. He added that the patient was earlier tested positive in the RAT at Namchi District Hospital and was again tested positive for COVID-19 at STNM hospital and had comorbid condition of diabetic

and hypertension.

He mentioned that the State has also recorded the 19th COVID related death on Tuesday when a 41-year-old female from Upper Sichey passed away at around 4:26 AM this morning at STNM hospital. He informed that the patient was shifted to STNM hospital from Central Referral Hospital Tadong on Monday. She was a dialysis patient and also had comorbid condition of diabetes and hypertension.

Eight COVID patients are presently in the ICU facility of STNM hospital, he informed.

Onion prices spike in Bangladesh after India bans exports

DHAKA/MUMBAI, 15 Sepy (Reuters): Onion prices in Bangladesh jumped by more than 50% on Tuesday, following a ban on exports by largest supplier India after its crop was damaged and harvesting delayed by excessive rain, industry officials told Reuters.

The surprise move, which took immediate effect on Monday, could help cut prices in India, but boost prices in Asian nations such as Malaysia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, apart from Bangladesh, since they rely on Indian shipments.

"What will we eat now?" asked Dhaka garment worker Munna Khan, who was laid off



from his job in March after the coronavirus outbreak shuttered many businesses, hitting incomes for many, while driving up the prices of commodities. "Prices of all items went up when we have no income."

Retail prices of the root vegetable, a staple of

subcontinental cuisine, jumped in Dhaka to 90 taka to 100 taka (\$1.06 to \$1.18) per kg on Tuesday, from 60 taka on Monday and 30 taka at the beginning of the month.

"Many trucks are standing on the Indian side with onions," said trader Saiful Islam. "Now

we are wondering what will happen to those supplies." India is the biggest supplier of onions to neighbouring Bangladesh, which buys a yearly average of more than 350,000 tonnes.

Onion prices in Bangladesh had jumped to a record 250 taka in 2019 after a similar Indian ban forced the government to fly in onions.

Now, Bangladesh is turning to other countries for supplies, Commerce Secretary Mohammad Jafar Uddin said.

"Our target is to import onions in the shortest possible time," he added. "The government is

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**2 Axis Bank employees
test positive
for COVID-19**

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Two employees of Axis Bank, MG Marg, Gangtok have tested positive for Covid-19. One female employee of the bank tested positive on Tuesday morning following which another employee, a primary contact, also tested positive. Contract tracing will now be a herculean task for the health department. It will be well advised for those who visited the bank recently to self-isolate and await further advice.

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**Maha: 50 per cent
tax waiver for
commercial vehicles**



MUMBAI, SEP15 (PTI): The Maharashtra government issued a government resolution (GR) on Tuesday granting 50 per cent waiver from vehicle tax for the financial year 2020-21.

However, an industry representative as well as an RTO officer said there was no clarity about how the waiver will apply.

The GR, which follows a cabinet decision last month, said the concession will benefit goods vehicles, tourist vehicles, private service vehicles, excavators, commercial camper vehicles and school buses/vehicles.

For availing of the benefit, the vehicle owner should have paid previous year's tax before March 31, 2020, and the waiver will be applicable for the period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, the GR said.

On August 26, the state cabinet had decided to waive 50 per cent tax on public transport and goods vehicles for giving relief to the transport sector which has been hit hard due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

It will cause a loss of Rs 700 crore to the state

exchequer, the government had said.

Prasanna Patwardhan, president of the Bus and Car Operators Confederation of India, said a regular tax payer who has declared the vehicle as not being in use will get a full benefit of the scheme.

"Those who have not kept their vehicles under non-use will get benefit only till September-end. But let's see how RTO (Regional Transport Office) interprets it," he said.

A senior RTO official said on the condition of anonymity that the GR lacks clarity. The condition for tax exemption will lead to confusion, he said.

"What if the owner declares the vehicle as in non-use during this period," he said.

Malik Patel, leader of the Mumbai Bus Owners Association, said the government is expecting commercial vehicle operators to pay tax when there is almost no business. "Banks have already started loan recovery and insurance companies are not ready to help," Patel said.

COVID-19 tally in India breaches 49-lakh mark

New Delhi, Sep 15 (PTI): India's COVID-19 caseload sprinted past 49 lakh with 83,809 people testing positive in a day, while 38,59,399 people have recuperated so far taking the national recovery rate to 78.28 per cent on Tuesday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 49,30,236, while the death toll climbed to 80,776 with 1,054 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection was recorded at 1.64 per cent.

There are 9,90,061 active cases of COVID-19 in the country which comprises 20.08 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and it went past 40 lakh on September 5.

According to the ICMR, a



cumulative total of 5,83,12,273 samples have been tested up to September 14 with 10,72,845 samples being tested on Monday.

India is at the number one position in terms of the number of recovered coronavirus cases followed by Brazil and the US, according to the Johns Hopkins University, which has been compiling COVID-19 data from all

over the world.

India is the second worst hit nation in terms of COVID-19 cases after the US, while it is at the third spot in terms of fatalities globally after the US and Brazil, according to the JHU data.

Of the 1,054 new deaths, 363 are from Maharashtra, 119 from Karnataka, 68 from Punjab, 62 from Uttar Pradesh, 60 from Andhra Pradesh, 58 from West

Bengal, 53 from Tamil Nadu, 29 from Madhya Pradesh, 26 from Delhi, 25 from Haryana, 18 from Chhattisgarh, 17 each from Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir, 15 each from Kerala and Uttarakhand and 14 each from Rajasthan and Goa.

Thirteen fatalities have been reported from Assam, 11 from Odisha, 10 from Telangana, nine

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Youth-led feeding campaign spreads across Nepal

NUNUTA RAI

KATHMANDU, 15 SEPT [NEPALITIMES]: Ansu Yadav's food bank campaign seems almost to be inspired by Karl Marx's famous axiom: 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their need.'

But Yadav is no communist, he is just trying to do his bit to lend a helping hand to thousands of Nepalis who have lost their livelihoods, and have no other way to feed themselves.

Just like Nepal's youth stepped in after the 2015 earthquake to provide food and shelter to survivors of the disaster, Yadav is among young Nepalis who are trying to do what the government should be doing to help those left vulnerable by the Covid-19 economic crisis.

The concept of the food bank is simple: those who have the ability deposit food and other essential items, and the neediest are free to take them. His campaign is has been feeding 600 people every day in Kathmandu Valley since April, and 1,000 plus across the country.

"Initially it was just me using some of my pocket money, but the idea spread quickly through social media and other friends and volunteers stepped in," says Yadav who was a student at the Nepal Engineering Campus and has named his growing campaign the 100's Group.

On days when the donations are not enough, Yadav has to buy what is needed to prepare meals at his home in Baneshwor. His team then dons PPEs and transports it to the Khula Manch in out-of-work Safa Templos to distribute it in paper or leaf plates to hundreds of people who are hungry because they are stranded in Kathmandu with no source of income.

Five months after he started, Yadav's feeding campaign has also expanded to Siraha and Banke districts where volunteers are carrying the work forward. This week, the 100's Group is collecting food and relief for the 30 believed killed in Sunday's landslide in Sindhupalchok.

Catching wind of the project's success in Kathmandu, the municipalities of Morang district in the eastern Tarai have also replicated the campaign, and are currently feeding more than 3,000 daily wage earners.

Members of the Nepali Congress-affiliated Tarun Dal in the Kebabari Rural Municipality organised their own food bank from 22 August till 1 September, and helped feed 1,400 of the most vulnerable local residents packaging 2kg of rice, 250gm of soybeans, ½ litre of cooking oil and a packet of salt that they got from donations.

"We started out distributing food at the municipality, but after finding out that most locals were unaware of our relief effort, we began distributing food in every ward," reports Pappu Shah, a local volunteer in Kerabari. In Sundar Haraincha municipality local youth set up their own food bank to help 1,000 families in more desperate need.

Chief Minister's message for World Ozone Day

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT (IPR):

The ozone layer or the ozonosphere is the region in the upper atmosphere roughly between 15 and 35 km above the earth's surface and contains relatively high concentrations of ozone molecules (O₃). Approximately 90% of ozone occurs in the stratosphere.

The ozone layer is known to absorb a large amount of radiation from the sun and prevents it from reaching the surface. Most importantly, it absorbs the UV light called UVB which is linked to many harmful effects, including skin cancers, cataracts, and harm to some crops and

marine life.

The ozone layer gets destroyed more quickly than it is created.

When chlorine and bromine atoms come in contact with ozone in the stratosphere, they destroy ozone molecules. One chlorine atom can destroy over 100,000 ozone molecules before getting removed from the stratosphere. In the 1980s, scientists discovered the depletion of the ozone layer due to the presence of ozone-depleting chemicals- chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) and to a lesser extent halons.

In Sikkim, we have always emphasised on

preserving and conserving our natural heritage and the surrounding. The forest cover of our State stood at 47.62 % as per (State of Forest Report) SFR 2017. There have been many positives in the State like, rural water sources have rejuvenated, increase in the wildlife population, forest gaps have filled to a large extent and soil erosion is being checked to stop the ozone-depleting chemicals.

We have adopted many afforestation activities under various programmes and schemes to rejuvenate the degraded forest lands. Non-forest and private land tree fell-

ing rules are also being implemented in the State.

Sikkim has a host of green policies that are aligned with developmental initiatives to comprehend Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the primary focus on the environment and society. The State has focused on a large number of programmes and schemes for boosting the Himalayan ecosystem.

Sikkim has been adhering to international protocols like the Montreal protocols and Vienna Convention for the preservation of our environment. Our State is

free from factories that create pollution or industrial wastes that have an adverse effect on the environment.

We should be well informed regarding the harmful effects of certain chemicals and products which in long term can harm the environment. We need to educate everyone about our environment as Earth is the only home we have and we need to sustain resources and our environment for the future generation.

Let us pledge on this day to do our best for the protection and preservation of our environment for a better and a healthier tomorrow.

10 SDF families join SKM



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Ten families from Lingding and Magardalam Ward under Barfung Constituency quit SDF and joins SKM today in a program attended by Advisor State Medici-

nal Plants Board cum vice president SKM CEC, Dechen Phigu Bhutia amongst others, a press release informs.

The new members were welcomed by SKM dignitaries with khadas and party flags.

Hindi Pakhwada organised at ICAR Pakyong

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT (PIB):

Inauguration ceremony of Hindi Pakhwada-2020 is organised at National Research Centre for Orchids, Pakyong, Sikkim on 01 Sept, 2020 under the chairmanship of Director (Acting), Dr Ram-pal, ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong, Sikkim.

All the dignitaries encouraged the audience to use Hindi language more and more in day to day official work. They also explained the importance of Hindi as Raj Bhasha. Various competitions such as poetry recitation, dictation on administrative terminology, Google Hindi typing, noting, Hindi translation, essay writing, letter writing, Hindi writing, quiz and competition along with Google Hindi typing and voice typing work-

shop were organized and managed by Hindi In-Charge, Ankur Tomar, Technical Assistant, (Computer), National Orchids Research Center, Pakyong.

Many scientists, officers, Research fellows, and all contractual staff took actively participated in Hindi Pakhwada programs.

The closing ceremony was held on 14 Sept, 2020. On the day, all the winning participants were rewarded with certificates along with the prize money and Hindi Pakhwada was successfully concluded.

The top three officials of the institute who had contributed maximum working in Hindi during the year 2019-20 were awarded with a certificate and prize money.

Open-air pandals will be the new normal amid COVID-19 pandemic, say Durga Puja organisers

Kolkata, Sep 15 (PTI): A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee advocated erecting open marquees (pandals) to contain the spread of COVID-19, several Durga Puja organisers on Tuesday said they have already started preparations to ensure revellers are able to catch a glimpse of the idols of the goddess from a distance.

Most members of Forum for Durgotsav, an association of 350 award-winning Durga Puja committees, said they will adhere to the new normal amid the COVID-19 pandemic, while celebrating Bengal's biggest festival.

Somen Dutta, secretary of Kashi Bose Lane Pujo Committee, said, "We have already made

arrangements so that the pandal is open from three sides. We will discuss the details with the administration."

Santoshpur Lake Pally has decided to place the idols in an open-air pandal with bright lights accentuating them.

"We are happy that the suggestions made by the CM and the state government's global advisory board were already incorporated in our pandal layout plan. We would urge people to enter the pandal in small groups," puja committee General Secretary Somnath Das said.

He said the idols will be visible from the adjacent road, and those wanting to come inside need to carry sanitisers and wear masks.

ECI issues revised guidelines on publicity of candidates

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT [IPR]:

In continuation of the detailed instructions dated 10.10.2018 and 6.3.2020 issued by ECI in the matter of publicity of criminal antecedents by the contesting candidates as well as by the political parties nominating such candidates, it was discussed at length in the Commission's meeting today.

Commission decided to further streamline the instructions concerning publicity of criminal antecedents by candidates concerned and by the political parties, who nominate them for elections. Commission has always emphasised on this moral yardstick for overall betterment of electoral democracy.

2. Highlights of the modified instructions are as follows:

A. Revised Timeline for Publicity

As per the revised guideline, the candidates as well as the political parties, regarding candidates nominated by them, will publish the details of criminal antecedents, if any, in newspapers and television in following manner:

(i) First publicity: Within first 4 days of last date of withdrawal.

(ii) Second publicity: Within 5th to 8th day of last date of withdrawal

(iii) Third publicity: From 9th day till the last day of campaign, i.e. two days prior to date of poll)

This timeline will help the voters in exercising their choices in more informed manner.

B. Regarding the publicity by uncontested winning candidates as well as the political parties who nominate them, it is clarified that uncontested winner candidates as well as the political parties who nominate them shall also publicise the criminal antecedents, if any, as prescribed for other contesting candidates and political parties.

3. As decided by Commission, a Compendium of all instructions and formats issued so far, in this matter, is being published for the benefit of stakeholders. This will help in creating more awareness amongst the voters and other stakeholders.

4. All instructions, in this regard, must be complied by the contesting candidates with criminal antecedents and the political parties regarding their nominated candidates.

5. These modified instructions shall apply with immediate effect.

As India bans onion export, prices in Nepal go up at least 25 percent overnight



KRISHNA PRASAIN

KATHMANDU, 15 SEPT [KATHMANDUPOST]:

With India once again imposing a ban on the export of all varieties of onions, its market price in Kathmandu has gone up as much as 25 percent within a day.

The wholesale price of onion jumped to Rs75 per kg during Tuesday morning trade from Rs60 per kg on Monday, according to Kalimati Fruits and Vegetable Market Development Board that updates rates of fruits and vegetables.

On Monday, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, India issued a notice stating that the export ban on all varieties of onion with the immediate effect. The ban comes six months after it had been lifted in March. Retailers have already started charging over Rs100 per kg on Tuesday, a trader at the Kalimati market told the Post.

"Many traders in the Kalimati vegetable mar-

ket have started hiding onions as they are looking for a big profit if severe shortage appears in the market," said a trader who did not want his name revealed.

The existing stock at the market could last for two weeks but traders have already started taking advantage of India's export ban, traders said.

Every year between September and November the demand for onions increases in India with the approach of the festive season and as a result prices in Nepal also go up.

According to the Indian media reports, the Indian government initiated the move as prices trebled in a month after excessive rainfall hit crops in its southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Wholesale prices in India's largest onion trading hub, Lasalgaon in the western state of Maharashtra, have nearly trebled in a month to IRs 30 per kg (Rs48 per kg),

Indian media reports said.

India is the world's biggest exporter of onions, a staple in South Asian cooking. Countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia and Sri Lanka rely on Indian shipments.

Last September, the Indian government prohibited the export of all varieties of onion due to inadequate supply in the Indian market, leading to severe shortages of the kitchen staple in Nepal and other South Asian countries. The ban was lifted on March 15.

Following the ban last year, retail prices had jumped on the short supply, with the spice costing up to Rs250 per kg during the festival season.

Nepal is almost totally dependent on onion shipments from India as domestic production is negligible. Last year Chinese onions had replaced Indian ones in the market but according to traders, consumers prefer the Indian variety.

SSU students condemn extension campus for PG Nepali under SU

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Students of Sikkim State University have condemned news of extension campus for Nepali PG course in Sikkim University that was shared by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha students' wing in a Facebook post today.

On its Facebook page, SKM Vidyarti Morcha, has shared that it had organized a meeting today chaired by MLA, Aditya Golay who is also the Coordinator of the Students' Wing. The meeting was attended by various SKM functionaries as well.

During the meeting, it was informed that for Sikkim University, PG courses extension campus are NBDDC [Zoology, Botany and Chemistry], Namchi Government College [Geography, Com-

merce, Nepali and Education] and Gyalshing College [Political Science].

In a press release, students of SSU have said, "Ignoring the Nepali department in our own state university and extending it under SU can be termed as an out-and-out anti-SSU move of the government."

The students have further said that they had suggested that if the government is willing to increase the number of seats in PG course for Nepali then they could increase the seats in SSU or the extension center at Namchi could have been under SSU.

SSU students have demanded immediate withdrawal of the extension campus for Nepali PG course in SU and increase in Nepali PG seats in SSU.

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Onion prices...

importing 100,000 tonnes of onions from Turkey and other countries." Dhaka sparked a rush by many poor people this week, when it offered onions at a subsidised rate of 30 taka a kilo, although some were left empty-handed on Tuesday, when supplies ran out.

In India, prices have tripled in a month to 30 rupees a kg as the summer-sown onion crop in the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh was damaged by excessive rainfall, traders said.

India's key onion-producing states have received as much as 41% more rainfall than normal since the monsoon season began on June 1.

"Supplies from the new crop have been delayed by nearly a month," said Ajit Shah, president of the Mumbai-based Onion Exporters' Association.

"Prices could remain firm in the short term."

COVID-19 tally...

each from Bihar and Puducherry, seven from Tripura, six from Jharkhand, five each from Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh, two from Sikkim while Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Ladakh have registered one fatality each.

A total of 80,776 deaths have been reported so far in the country includes 29,894 from Maharashtra followed by 8,434 from Tamil Nadu, 7,384 from Karnataka, 4,972 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,770 from Delhi, 4,491 from Uttar Pradesh, 4,003 from West Bengal, 3,227 from Gujarat and 2,424 from Punjab and 1,791 from Madhya Pradesh.

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

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

**~ SummitTIMES ~
CLASSIFIEDS**

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact: 78640-04501,62970-03235, 98320-48410

3 Sikkimese teenagers to take part in World Climate Summit 2020

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Three Sikkimese teenagers Rishal Pandey Chettri, Rushali Golay and Ashwatth Tamang will be representing India in the "World Climate Summit 2020" organised by Eco-Network. The organization started by the trio "Wakeup Movement" has got selected as Global Partners of "World Climate Summit 2020", a press release informs.

"World Climate Summit 2020" is scheduled to be held on 25 and 26 September, 2020 and will be held online due to restrictions on movement.

The trio will have an opportunity to meet globally-recognized climate activists from various countries.

The summit will see international delegates participating from 15 different countries like- South Korea, USA, India, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, China, Nepal, Ghana, Bhutan, Kenya, Philippines, Nigeria and many other countries.

The trio will be talking about various issues pertaining to Sikkim



Rishal Pandey Chettri,
DPS Siliguri



Rushali Golay, HCS
Tadong



Ashwatth Tamang, TNA

Three Sikkimese teenagers namely Rishal Pandey Chettri, Rushali Golay and Ashwatth Tamang to represent India in the

"World Climate Summit 2020"

organised by Eco-Network as their organisation - "Wakeup Movement" gets selected as Global Partners of "World Climate Summit 2020". The summit will see international delegates participating from 15 different countries like- South Korea, USA, India, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, China, Nepal, Ghana, Bhutan, Kenya, Philippines, Nigeria and many other countries.

with a paramount focus on River Teesta and its present scenario. Wake-up Movement is a social youth organisation based in Sikkim that raises awareness on various

Climate Change concomitant issues. They have organised foot rallies, competition for school students, awareness rallies both through offline and online modes.

Rishal Pandey Chettri is the founder of the organisation and is currently studying in DPS, Siliguri. Rushali Golay completed her 12th this year from Holy Cross

School Tadong and Ashwatth is a student of Tashi Namgyal Academy.

To be a part of the team you can Whatsapp at 8509472998/ rishal50@gmail.com

Hurricane Sally slows, gathering a deluge for the Gulf Coast

WAVELAND, Miss. (AP): Hurricane Sally, a plodding storm with winds of 85 mph (137 kph), crept toward the northern Gulf Coast early Tuesday as forecasters warned of potentially deadly storm surges and flash floods with up to 2 feet (.61 meters) of rain and the possibility of tornadoes.

Forecasters stressed "significant" uncertainty as to where the storm's eye would make landfall. But they kept nudging the predicted track eastward, easing fears in New Orleans, which was once in Sally's crosshairs.

By early Tuesday, hurricane warnings stretched from the mouth of the Pearl River at the Louisiana-Mississippi line to Navarre, Florida, and forecasters said Sally should reach land near the Alabama-Mississippi state line by late Tuesday or early Wednesday.

Stacy Stewart, a senior specialist with the National Hurricane Center, said Tuesday that people should continue to take the storm seriously since "devastating" rainfall is expected in large areas. People could drown in the flooding, he said.

"This is going to be historic flooding along with the historic rainfall," Stewart said. "If people live near rivers, small streams and creeks, they need to evacuate and go somewhere else."

In Gulfport, Mississippi, twin hurricane warning flags popped in the wind Tuesday morning at a marina and the sea had risen enough to cover an area normally used for bonfires in the sand. Most boat slips at the marina were empty, and many businesses in town were closed, metal storm shutters or plywood covering the windows.

The storm was moving at only 2 mph (4 kph) Tuesday morning, centered about 105 miles (169 kilometers) south-southeast of Biloxi, Mis-

issippi, and 65 miles (105 kilometers) east of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Forecasters expect Sally to turn northward Tuesday afternoon, moving near the coast of southeastern Louisiana later in the day, and then travel slowly north-northeastward through Wednesday, remaining a Category 1 hurricane, with top winds of 85 mph (137 kph), until it comes ashore.

After making landfall, Sally was forecast to cause flash floods and minor to moderate river flooding across inland portions of Mississippi, Alabama, northern Georgia and the western Carolinas through the rest of the week.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared an emergency in the Panhandle's westernmost counties, which were being pummeled by rain from Sally's outer bands early Tuesday. The threat of heavy rain and storm surge was exacerbated by the storm's slow movement.

President Donald Trump issued emergency declarations for parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama on Monday, and tweeted that residents should listen to state and local leaders.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey sought the presidential declaration after the National Weather Service in Mobile, Alabama, warned of the increasing likelihood of "dangerous and potentially historic flooding," with waters rising as much as 9 feet (2.7 meters) above ground in parts of the Mobile metro area. Ivey urged residents Tuesday to stay vigilant and heed any emergency warnings.

It all seemed a distant threat Monday afternoon in Waveland, Mississippi, as a shirtless, barefooted Trevor Clauch, of nearby Bay St. Louis, got in some last-minute beach time.

PIB Guwahati hosts webinar on Gandhian philosophy

GUWAHATI, 15 SEPT (PIB): As part of the celebration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Press Information Bureau, Guwahati organised a webinar today on "Ideologies and Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi". The main purpose for holding this webinar was to deliberate upon Gandhi's thoughts and philosophies, and decoding his ideas in today's time.

Taking part as a speaker in the Webinar today, Gandhian and founder of Shanti Sadhana Ashram, Hem bhai remarked that the whole world is realising the importance of the Gandhian philosophy and his principles of truth, love and nonviolence particularly when it is going through tough time.

He provided a reflective discussion on the Gandhian's ideology of equality and said that there is a need of equal distribution of opportunities and resources for the development. Gandhiji's thoughts and

principles guide us on many aspects like truth, peace and non-violence etc. We can contribute in nation-building by learning from Gandhi's philosophy, he said.

He referred to Unto This Last and how the book had brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. This book made him understand that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all, he added.

Head of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Prof Joya Chakraborty, Tezpur University spoke on "Communicating Khadi: Gandhi and his symbolism "in her address. She said that in the present time there is a need of decoding Gandhi's ideas and principles. Gandhi extensively used symbolism in his entire life and Khadi is a great example of that. He promoted the use of Khadi as a symbol of self-sufficiency. Talking about the communication strat-

egies adopted by Gandhi, Prof Chakraborty said that Gandhi was a great communicator who used journalism to disseminate his ideas. She said that Gandhi always wanted overall development and not only the development of urban areas. He used to speak about self-sustenance and growth of rural economy, she said. She also said that following Gandhian ideology the government is also taking initiatives like Swachh Bharat Mission and Atmanirbhar Bharat for the growth and development of the country.

Deputy Director, Palab Chakraborty, PIB, Guwahati delivered the closing remark in today's webinar. Media and Communication Officer, Gopajit Das gave the welcome address and Field Exhibition Officer, Hiramani Das, ROB, Guwahati moderated the webinar.

The webinar was attended by over 30 participants including journalists and officials of PIB and ROB, North East Zone.

European Union's top court supports net neutrality rules

LONDON (AP): The European Union's highest court has given its support to the bloc's rules that stop internet providers from charging customers for preferential access to their networks.

The European Court of Justice on Tuesday issued its first interpretation of the EU's net neutrality rules since they were adopted in 2015.

The rules require telecommunications providers to treat all data traffic the same, and prevent them from reserving better access for their own services, or selling bandwidth to big companies like Google and Netflix while leaving a slower Internet for everyone else. The Luxembourg-



based court backed the principle of an open internet after Hungarian wireless carrier Telekom Magyarorszag had sought an interpretation of the rules. Hungarian regulators had stopped the company from offering two "zero tariff" packages under which data traffic used by some applications and services didn't count but traffic for others was slowed

or blocked. Rules to "protect Internet users' rights and to treat traffic in a non-discriminatory manner preclude an internet access provider from favouring certain applications and services" through zero tariff packages and blocking or slowing traffic, the court said.

The U.S. repealed its own net neutrality rules in 2017.

SJA organizes lecture on Criminal Trials & Art of Cross-Examination

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

Sikkim Judicial Academy organized a Lecture on "Criminal Trials & Art of Cross-Examination" for Advocates of the Bar Associations of Sikkim by Video Conferencing facility on 12 Sept, 2020.

The Resource Person of the programme was former District & Sessions Judge, HS Sharma, Delhi Judicial Service and presently practicing as an Advocate in Delhi.

The Resource Person discussed in detail the basic concept of cross-examination. He emphasized on the object of a cross-examination which was to find the truth, falsity in the witnesses and to help defend the accused person during the trial.

He informed that the charge framed in the case must be borne in mind during cross-examination. It was also informed that for effective cross-examination, one must be in grips with the facts

of the case involved.

Further he also said that the cross-examination must be based on law. The Resource Person discussed the various categories of witnesses and shared the manner of cross examining such witnesses.

The Resource Person discussed all the topics with analogies drawn from his own experience as a Judge and as an Advocate. The programme was highly interactive.



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 15 SEPT:

A group of young joggers went up Atill Budang from Karmithang, Pendang this week covering a distance of 12 km in total. To boost the morale of the youth, Indian Overseas bank manager, K Misra, of the Pendang branch took part in the jog. Along with physical and mental fitness, the young joggers also

feel the need to keep the environment healthy, and so they carry out cleanliness drives too. The joggers decided to dedicate an hour or two every Sunday to collect plastic waste to keep environment clean. The young joggers carried out the cleanliness drive at different places in Budang village and took the 'Vow, not to throw' today. They also plan to reuse this plastic waste.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Treatment

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



Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9583297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Meet the Others

Insularity is unfortunately a national malaise. Address it

Identity, as in the perceptions of the outside, is a touchy issue among the marginalized communities. The ill-informed clichés, the pedantic, and almost always offensive generalizations remain sore points for the offended communities, and we live in a region that has lived with such broad-brush impoliteness for ever since we started interacting with the plains. And the brush paints both ways, one may add here.

While it is easy to take affront and fine to draft fresh introductions to correct the offending perceptions, it is definitely not okay to allow the chip on the shoulder to burden any heavier than is healthy. The more this perceived slight is allowed to fester, the more it diverts energy from pursuits that take communities forward. One refers to a “perceived slight” here because the clichés that hurt are products of ignorance and one should not really allow ignorance of others to justify withdrawals into cocoons by the othered. And defensive shells are not the best habitations from which to plan ahead because they keep thoughts and ideas rooted in a past that has lost its relevance for everyone except those who swoon in its fermented confusion. Also, while so enclosed, one fails to recognize changes elsewhere.

That said, it is important that the ignorance which has degenerated into disdain, mutual suspicion and distasteful stereotyping is lifted. One could argue that perceived slights are by nature pointless obsessions since they are born out of, well, perceptions which cannot really be tackled because, well again, they rest in perceptions and those are more difficult to address than actual instances of discrimination. They do, however, become worries when the perceptions start manifesting as actual attacks, like ones which triggered the exodus of NE people from the metros or the lynching which occurred in Nagaland a few years ago. And then there is the continuing parochialism everywhere else in the country and the reprehensible attempts at justifying such targeted attacks born out of Hate seeded in prejudices and stereotypes. These will repeat unless this country makes some earnest efforts at celebrating its much-vaunted diversity. 70 years as one nation and the citizens still don't behave as One People! This obviously needs to change, and the Supreme Court recently cracked the whip with its slew of directions, including the setting up of a three-member panel to “enhance the sense of security and inclusion of the people from the north-eastern states who faced violence and hate crimes”. The SC directive is the first step, an acceptance of sorts of a problem that exists. For it to be of any real consequence, wider, more collaborative initiatives will need to be taken.

The students provide the best opportunity to build the bridges which can span the chasms of mutual ignorance which feeds insularity among us. A simple and easily achieved course would be for the community/ state representative organisations of the students to become mediums which link communities, not strive to make them self-ensconced unit of self conscious groups. Take the freshers’ welcome parties for instance. Instead of each community, each state or region hosting a welcome party for its own kind, they should use the funds to introduce the freshers to ‘others’ in the student community. Host the parties for ‘your own’ but invite guests from all other groups. Make celebrations the medium to proffer more congenial introductions and strike new friendships. Use the organisations to speak more often about the concerns of other groups and engage more earnestly in issues and challenges which face other communities. This openness is possible only with the idealism of youth, but is currently being stifled because student groups remain obsessively insular.

WRITE US:

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



Urban planning needs to look back first: three cities in Ghana show why

NATE PLAGEMAN, JENNIFER ANNE HART & TONY YEBOAH
theconversation.com

Months into the global COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers have begun discussing what the “new normal” might look like in metropolitan environments. Some urban planners have framed COVID-19 as an opportunity to re-imagine and improve cities’ built landscapes.

Such calls follow a common prescriptive: that post-epidemic planning will reinvent cities into dreamscapes of public health, equality and technological progress.

Urbanism journalist Alissa Walker recently argued, though, that now is not the time for imagining an urbanist utopia. Instead, she writes, people must come to terms with the historical processes that have “made COVID-19 more catastrophic than it should have been”.

Doing so, argues Walker, requires an honest accounting of the role that fields like urban planning, public health and social work have played in producing urban inequality.

The connection between these fields has roots in 19th and 20th-century empire. Throughout much of the African continent, colonial officials exploited outbreaks of disease to implement racial segregation and create economic systems that intentionally marginalised Africans.

STATE-SPONSORED DESTRUCTION

We are historians of Ghana, each currently writing about a different major city. These are Kumasi, Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi. In our research efforts – and in those of many other scholars – we’ve repeatedly seen how medical experts and modernist urban planners exploited outbreaks of disease.

Their efforts legitimised emerging systems of technical expertise and advanced white supremacy, global capitalism and imperial order. Those practices, which sidelined indigenous values and systems in favour of Western models, are reproduced through urban planning, public health, and development practice in cities across the continent.

There is persistent surprise at the low levels of COVID-19 infection on the continent. There are also inaccurate predictions about its potentially deadly consequences. This suggests that Western models continue to operate as African and global

leaders grapple with COVID-19.

In the late 19th century, colonial governments often gave medical authorities wide latitude as the de facto architects of urban space. This was inspired by outdated scientific theories of contagion and disease. As the field of urban planning emerged in the 20th century, its practitioners built on these earlier models, reinforcing existing patterns of racial segregation and economic inequality.

Take the example of Accra, the Ghanaian capital city. It became the capital of the country then called Gold Coast in 1877. After 1877, British officials sought to decongest the city centre so that they could better control populations and create space for their own administrative and economic activities.

Their efforts were most effective in the aftermath of epidemics and natural disasters. These were occasions when urgent public health needs emboldened official action and left local communities vulnerable. Following the city’s first plague outbreak in 1908, colonial officials evacuated the most congested districts and moved residents to “safe” peripheral areas. An earthquake in 1939 inspired additional relocations, allowing the government to seize land for its own purposes.

Similar patterns unfolded in the second city of Kumasi, a regional trade hub. In 1924, residents experienced their first plague. Shortly thereafter, they experienced drastic spatial changes in the name of sanitation and urban order. Making a “safer” Kumasi began with the state-sponsored destruction of the city’s zongo or majority Muslim quarters. Sites were redeveloped for European residential, commercial or recreational needs. Former residents were shuttled into government-built houses not suited to healthy urban life.

In the port town of Sekondi-Takoradi, now a joint city, outbreaks of disease – real and imagined – were frequent flashpoints for the flexing of urban planning and public health muscle.

In 1940, Takoradi became home to a British Royal Air Force base and Allied aircraft assembly station. Experts designed a plan to demolish city structures and erect armed roadblocks to “protect” British and American soldiers from malaria. As one city resident quipped nearly 30 years earlier, the real disease that prompted such “emergency” measures was that of racial prejudice.

COLONIAL PLANNING MODEL

These examples emphasise two fundamental points. The first is that urban planning models and expertise were tethered to the interests of British Empire and oppression of colonised people.

In cities like Accra and Kumasi, which had been settled long before the arrival of the British, outbreaks of disease were opportunities to remake the towns and seize land from local residents. In the planned town of Takoradi, concerns about disease gave planners another chance to control urban residents. Their efforts produced two distinct zones for the colonised and the colonisers.

Second, colonial state planning and public health efforts often targeted, and at times destroyed, local forms of urban knowledge and city design. In many cases, local sanitation and hygiene practices were far more effective than those touted by European experts.

The resilience of African urban spatial, social and economic cultures in the face of this social engineering warrants more attention. But it’s also important to acknowledge the spatial, cultural, and economic violence that people endured in the name of urban improvements.

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITIES

These kinds of reflections are important in Ghana right now, as the Accra Metropolitan Assembly continues to demolish homes in working-class communities in Accra.

The patterns of colonial spatial violence that played out in Ghanaian cities echo around the world. Contemporary debates about gentrification, inequality and social determinants of health in 21st-century cities point to the importance of revisiting the politics of colonial capitalism and public health.

Building new cities needs to start with new conversations that place cities like Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi at their centre. It must recognise the thinking that pervades professional fields charged with improving urban life. This process starts with seeing and listening to the communities that experts have long excluded from policy debates.

[Nate Plageman is Associate Professor, Wake Forest University, Jennifer Anne Hart is Associate Professor of African History, Wayne State University; Tony Yeboah is PhD student in History, Yale University]

What food-insecure children want you to know about hunger

REBECCA O’CONNELL & JULIA BRANNEN
theconversation.com

Footballer and food poverty campaigner Marcus Rashford has rebuked Conservative MP Kevin Hollinrake on Twitter for suggesting that parents who need help to feed their children are failing in their responsibilities.

Children growing up in poverty today recognise it is their parents’ duty to make sure they are fed adequately. But, like Rashford, whose family struggled with food security when he was a child, they know from experience that parents cannot always fulfil this obligation. In this context, they argue, government and others have a responsibility to act.

CHILDREN SPEAK OUT ABOUT HUNGER

We know this because we have asked children about this exact issue as part of our research into food poverty. In a European study of low-income families, we asked young people between 11 and 16 years old who they consider to be responsible for making sure children have access to enough decent food. Most children argued that parents, government and organisations like schools should work together to achieve this. Phoebe, age 16, whose father had lost his job in the local authority, said:

If a family is unable to provide food then I think it’s up to schools and government to kind of make that up, if there is really nothing that they

can do. So free school meals and fruit at break I think is really important. I think it’s really important that there is enough money for schools to be able to provide free school meals, breakfast club and fruit and stuff like that.

However, attributing responsibility to those in power did not mean children exempted parents from taking responsibility. On the contrary, several young people talked about the importance of “doing the right thing” and not spending on “what you don’t really need”.

A quarter of the young people in the UK said it was primarily parents’ duty to ensure that their children had enough to eat. But they did not blame them when this proved difficult.

As Dayo, aged 15, whose family had no recourse to public funds and was on the edge of destitution, vividly put it:

If a child dies, the government is always serious ... if the child doesn’t die, they should still be serious about the child anyway.

Sean, aged 14, whose single-parent household was reliant on benefits, suggested that while parents do the best they can, no one is taking responsibility for food poverty at a higher level:

I think that it should be the government’s job, but I don’t think there is anyone that takes responsibility over that. I think parents do the best that they can. And, you know, there’s not much you can ask for other than for their best.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Marcus Rashford has forcefully and eloquently written about his own experiences of going without enough decent food as a child, despite his mother being in paid work. The shame and guilt he has spoken of were shared by children we interviewed too.

Rashford is rightly supporting the three main demands of part one of the National Food Strategy, led by Leon founder Henry Dimbleby, which include widening the free school meal entitlement to children in all families who receive universal credit. Given that more than a million children growing up in poverty in the UK do not currently qualify for free school meals, this is a welcome and, in the current climate, realistic ask.

But it leaves out those children whose families have no recourse to public funds because of their migration status and are in the most dire need as a result. Fundamentally, the demands do not address the underlying causes of rising levels of poverty and food poverty in this country, which are outside the strategy’s remit.

Part of the problem is that, as the children we interviewed pointed out, no UK government department has explicit responsibility for food poverty or food insecurity. Although some universal and targeted benefits entitle children to free school meals, these are the responsibility of the Department for Education rather than the Department of Work and Pensions, which looks after social security.

Successive UK governments have

also depended on the market to provide cheap food. In the context of this “leave it to Tesco” approach to food policy, as Tim Lang puts it, it has been up to civil society, trade unions, researchers and, yes, footballers, to argue that neither welfare benefits nor statutory minimum wages are sufficient to enable people to purchase enough food for good health, particularly in families with children to feed.

Charity is not the solution. To address the immediate crisis faced by the growing number of households in poverty as a result of the pandemic and lockdown measures, Child Poverty Action Group, along with almost 70 other organisations and individuals, are calling for an increase in child benefit of £10 per child per week - emergency support to ensure all parents can cover the basic costs of raising their children in the face of reduced income. This is an effective, fast way to get money to most families so they can buy necessities, including food for their children.

In the medium to longer term, it is vital that the UK government reviews wages and benefits in line with research on living standards, to ensure families can live and eat with dignity. Fundamentally, the UK government needs to recognise, as young people do, that ensuring our children can eat properly is indeed a duty it shares with parents.

[Rebecca O’Connell is Reader in the Sociology of Food and Families, UCL; Julia Brannen is Emerita Professor, Sociology of the Family, UCL]

Meghalaya minister tests positive for COVID-9, CM, DY CM in quarantine

SHILLONG, SEPT 14 [PTI]: Meghalaya Power Minister James P K Sangma has tested positive for COVID-19 during a re-test, a senior health official said on Monday.

His brother Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma and deputy chief minister Prestone Tynsong have also been tested for coronavirus and the results are awaited, they said.

The three ministers had travelled together to New Delhi and then to Imphal where James tested positive for COVID-19 on his arrival at the airport, the official said.

“The power minister tested positive during a retest conducted by RT-PCR,” the official said.

One of the drivers at the chief minister’s bungalow here tested positive too prompting the health authorities to conduct tests on all 70 people living in the premises, he said.

The results are awaited and the entire area has been sanitised.

As the chief minister and his deputy have returned from another state, both have been quarantined for seven days, the health official said.

Meanwhile, another 11 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Raj Bhavan here increasing the tally to 41, the official said.

Odisha reports 3,645 new COVID-19 cases, 8 more deaths

Bhubaneswar, Sep 15 (PTI): Odisha’s COVID-19 tally on Tuesday mounted to 1,58,650 with 3,645 people, including a ruling BJD MLA, testing positive for the infection, a health department official said.

The death toll rose to 645 with eight more people succumbing to the infection - three in Cuttack and one each in Boudh, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Subarnapur, he said. Of the 3,645 new cases, 2,151 were reported from various quarantine centres, and 1,494 were detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 517, followed by Cuttack at 357 and Puri at 246, the health department official said. BJD MLA from Pipili in Puri district, Pradeep Maharaty, after learning that he has contracted the disease, asked people who recently came in touch with him to isolate themselves and undergo tests, if necessary.

Odisha currently has 35,928 cases, while 1,22,024 people have recovered from the disease.

Fifty-three COVID-19 patients in the state died due to comorbidities, according to the official. As many as 25.16 lakh samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the coastal state so far, including 43,940 on Monday.

I am moved by the kindness of Nagas: Hema Chowdhary

KOHIMA, SEPT 15 [NAGALANDPAGE]: “I didn’t mean to cause hurt to any people. I have nothing against Nagas. My anger was towards those who threatened to kill and eat dogs. How can someone kill a dog?”

Hema Chowdhary, the angry animal rights activist whose objectionable video landed her in Nagaland’s jail is unapologetic about her aversion to people who eat dogs, or for that matter harm the “bezubaan” animals. But the Founder and Managing Director of Bezubaan Public Welfare Trust, a Mumbai-based animal welfare organization, says, “I am not a racist, and I never intended to cause harm to any Nagas.”

In a tête-à-tête with Nagaland Page at Kohima, Hema Chowdhary, who is currently out on bail, spoke about her career in Bollywood, memories of growing up in Hoogly district of West Bengal looked after by her grandmother, her passionate dedication towards the welfare of animals and the trauma of being locked up behind bars in an unfamiliar place far away from her family. She justified the motive behind the “derogatory” video. And she spoke of the kindness shown to her by Nagas.

Hema Chowdhary grew up without a father after her parents separated when she was a child. Her initial education was in rural Bengal and during her teens she had shifted to Mumbai. Chowdhary stepped into Bollywood, first employed as a Clap Girl. She claims to have worked with directors like David Dhavan, Raj Kumar Santoshi and handling events for the 1990s hit comedy hero Govinda. The animal rights activists had a stint in Kenya as a production manager of a news channel and worked in the costume department of Zee TV. She then started her own events management business handling star appearances for various events. The 43-year-old also owns a production house and has produced a Bhojpuri movie. Currently, her source of income is a guest house at Mumbai and an event-management company dealing in corporate events. According to Hema, her “food habits are like the English,” and she has traveled to many foreign countries. Saying that, Chowdhary who faces charges of racism makes a point, “I am well-traveled. I am a tourist. I am not a racist.” And yet even as she launched into rhetoric, it was evident that use of strong language, deemed offensive and which caused her much grief, she was true to her nature.

Hema Chowdhary has the tendency of resorting to politically incorrect vitriol when provoked, more so when provoked by cruelty shown towards animals. Even before she had landed in hot soup for her tirade against “dog-eating Nagas,” Hema had employed equally

strong and violent vocabulary in her video while reacting to the incident of killing of a “pregnant” elephant in Mallapuram, Kerala.

“I was already immensely distressed by the murder of the elephant in Kerala. And then soon after these photos of dogs tied in gunny sacks flooded social media and signature campaign demanding ban on dog meat in Nagaland

wrong,” Hema accepts, and says that after her brother pointed out the use of the word “chinky” in her video, she immediately apologized. Questioned as to why she threatened to cause bodily harm in her video, Hema sought to justify her actions saying that some people were trolling and insisting that no one can stop them from eating dogs. “I was outraged and I meant to say that somebody kills a dog in front of me, I will cut their neck. I cannot imagine someone killing a dog.”

“Many wrote that dog meat is part of traditional cuisine. You stay in Mumbai and Bangalore and you claim that you can’t do without dog meat; that means you are killing dogs here. That’s why I said we need to check their eating habits. I won’t allow dog killing to happen if I can.”

Hema confesses to not watching a single video of China’s controversial Yulin (dog meat) festival. “If I see I will die.” She claims feeding hundreds of strays every day and mostly from her own pocket. “Animals that we serve, they wait for us, look ahead to our visits. And I have been in jail for this long away from them.”

Chowdhary was arrested by a Nagaland Police team on July 17 at Mumbai and brought to Nagaland on July 20 after a Mumbai court granted a transit remand for 4 days on July 18. The animal rights activist feels that she had set out to do good and protect animals and for that she didn’t deserve to be made to undergo the “traumatic” ordeal of being “arrested like a criminal” and lodged in jail for almost 2 months. “We (animal rights activists) have to spend whole days in Police stations to get a case registered for cruelty against animals. And here I am arrested and put inside the jail.”

“Even one day in the jail seemed like forever. The jail is cold. And I was traumatized, more so as there were no familiar faces, and no family around.” Hema says that her morale has been crushed. “I am broken mentally, physically and also financially.” But, she quips, “The only good thing to come out of my time in jail is that I have lost 10 kgs weight.”

Despite her “traumatic experience” Hema says she was moved by the kindness of Nagas. Narrating her encounters with Naga people, mostly women, starting from the cop who ar-



happened. We got more signatures than targeted and I was happy when the Honourable Chief Minister of Nagaland banned killing of dogs and sale of dog meat.” Nagaland banned dog meat on July 3 after a petition started by journalist, parliamentarian and animal rights activist Prithvi Nandy, and an organization called People For Animals. The ban on dog meat sparked a huge debate with some lauding the move, while many others including well-known intellectuals terming it as food-fascism.

“Even after the ban, people started posting that they are still killing and eating dogs. I am known for my work for animal welfare and people were tagging me on posts about dog killing. They wanted me to take a stand. That was when I made the video.” Hema’s video was created on July 5, a few days after the Nagaland Government ban. The run up to the ban also witnessed controversial and misleading statements by PFA-India, whose Founder and Chairperson is Maneka Gandhi.

“I was emotional, and my words came out

176 new cases push Arunachal’s COVID-19 tally to 6,298

ITANAGAR, SEPT 15 (PTI): The COVID-19 tally in Arunachal Pradesh rose to 6,298 as 176 more people, including nine security personnel, have tested positive for the disease, an official said on Tuesday.

The death toll rose to 11 in the northeastern state after a 50-year-old man, who was working at a primary health centre near here, succumbed to the infection, State Surveillance Officer Dr L Jampa said.

“The man had tested positive for the disease on September 3 and was in home isolation. He was admitted to the Tezpur Medical College in Assam on September 6 after his health condition worsened. He died on September 11. He was suffering from acute respiratory distress syndrome,” he said.

Of the fresh cases, 83 were reported from the Capital Complex region, 20 from Changlang, 10



each from East Siang and West Kameng, nine from Lower Subansiri, seven from Papumpare and six each from West Siang and Lower Siang districts.

Five new cases each were also reported from Tawang and Lower Dibang Valley, three from Longding, two each from Pakke Kesang, Tirap, Upper Siang and Leparada and one each from Siang, Upper Subansiri, Lohit and

East Kameng, he said.

“Five Assam Rifles personnel, one Indian Reserve Battalion jawan, an employee of Indo Tibetan Border Police and two state policemen are among the fresh patients,” the official said.

Six Border Roads Organisation (BRO) personnel and a healthcare worker were also diagnosed with the disease, Jampa said, adding that 17 prisoners tested positive for the infection.

The new patients have been shifted to COVID Care Centres, he said.

At least 156 people were cured of the disease and discharged from hospitals on Monday, taking the number of recoveries to 4,531 in the state, he said.

The recovery rate among COVID-19 patients in the state now stands at 71.95 per cent.

Arunachal Pradesh has 1,756 active COVID-19 cases at present, Jampa said.

The Capital Complex region, comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, has the highest number of active cases at 486, followed by West Siang at 192, Papumpare at 173, East Siang at 152, and Changland at 116, he said.

The state has so far tested over 2.08 lakh samples for COVID-19, including, 2,645 on Monday, the official added.

COVID toll rises to 41 in Ladakh, 74 new cases

LEH, SEPT 15 (PTI): The novel coronavirus toll in Ladakh rose to 41 on Tuesday with another death, while the number of cases climbed to 3,419 with 74 new infections, officials said.

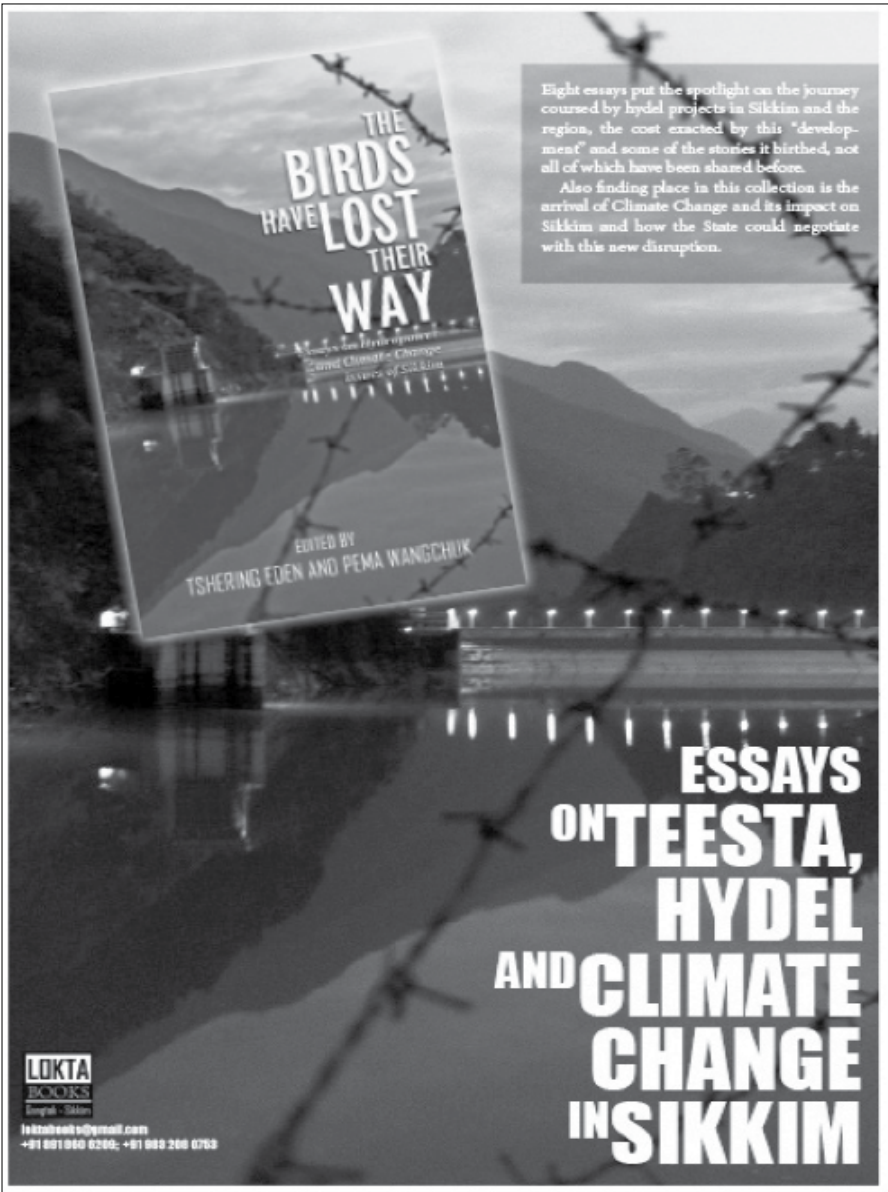
There are 903 active cases of the coronavirus

disease (COVID-19), out of which 486 are in Leh and 417 in Kargil. As many as 2,475 patients have recovered, the officials said.

A patient succumbed to the disease in Kargil on Monday, taking the

toll in the district to 24, while 17 out of the total 41 deaths were in Leh, according to the officials.

Out of the 74 new cases, 56 were in Leh and 18 in Kargil, taking the total to 3,419, the officials added.



Messi tops wealth league ahead of Ronaldo

LONDON, 15 SEPT (REUTERS): Lionel Messi was denied a potentially money-spinning move away from Barcelona this month after a contract-dispute but the Argentine maestro remains the world's richest soccer player.

According to a list compiled by Forbes, Messi's total earnings this year are \$126 million -- \$92 million from his salary and \$34 million in endorsements. Not surprisingly Cristiano Ronaldo comes in second although earnings of \$117 million will soften the blow for the Juventus forward, as will his status as the most followed soccer player in the world on social media.

Neymar comes in third on the Forbes list (\$96 million) with his Paris St Germain team mate, 21-year-old Kylian Mbappe, up in fourth spot (\$42 million).

The Premier League remains the world's richest domestic soccer league but only two of its outfield players feature in the top 10 of the wealth table -- Liverpool's title-winning striker Mohamed Salah in fifth spot (\$37 million) and Manchester United's midfielder Paul Pogba (\$34 million) in sixth. Pogba's team mate, keeper David de Gea (\$27 million) is 10th.

Barcelona's Antoine Griezmann was seventh and Real Madrid's Gareth Bale eighth. Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski, the only Bundesliga player, in ninth.

Messi reluctantly agreed to stay at Barcelona for another season this month, despite saying in the wake of an 8-2 Champions League defeat by Bayern Munich that he wanted out.

He argued that a clause in his contract stating that a 700 million euros release fee would need to be met for him to join another club was no longer active and that he could leave on a free transfer -- a situation that would have allowed him to command astronomical wages from the likes of Manchester City.

Messi, 33, is in the final year of his contract so could leave for free next summer. By staying with the Catalan club, Messi is in line for an \$83 million loyalty bonus so it is likely he will continue to top the money charts.

Murray given wild card into French Open

PARIS, SEP 15 (AP): Andy Murray received a wild card into the French Open. The former No. 1 was the only non-Frenchman of eight players to be given a free pass into the main draw of the clay grand slam which starts in 13 days.

Murray was also awarded a wild card into the U.S. Open, after his struggles with pelvic and shin injuries dropped his ranking to 129th. He went two rounds in New York, and improved to 110th, but still too low for the French Open when it published its main draw entry list.

Murray's best French Open result was the final in 2016. Tsvetana Pironkova of Bulgaria and Eugenie Bouchard of Canada were the only non-Frenchwomen to receive wild cards.

Pironkova, who made the U.S. Open her first comeback tournament since 2017 after having a son, achieved an impressive first-time run to the quarterfinals, where she was stopped by Serena Williams. Pironkova's best result at Roland Garros was the quarterfinals in 2016.

Bouchard reached her first final in more than four years in Istanbul on Sunday and lost in a third-set tiebreaker.

She lost to eventual champion Maria Sharapova in the French Open semifinals in 2014, the same year she reached the Wimbledon final.

Tokyo Games to decide COVID-19 'counter-measures' by end of year: IOC's Coates

SYDNEY, 15 SEPT (REUTERS): Organisers are ploughing ahead with the postponed Tokyo Olympics and will decide by the end of the year what "counter-measures" are required to hold them safely in the time of COVID-19, IOC Vice President John Coates said on Tuesday.

Australian Coates heads up the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Coordination Commission for the Tokyo Games, which were delayed until 2021 because of the pandemic.

Coates told reporters in Sydney that organisers were "throwing whatever resources are necessary" at the Games. "Our decision at the moment is to go ahead," Coates said at an event marking the 20th anniversary of the 2000 Sydney Olympics' opening ceremony.

"What we wait for is to decide what counter-measures we need to go ahead with, to proceed depending on what stage COVID is at.

"The extent of the ceremonies, the extent of the crowd participation, any necessary quarantine when they arrive in Japan. All of those things. "And by the time we get to the end of the year we'll make an assessment on what counter-measures we'll need to apply."

The Japanese government and the IOC took the unprecedented decision in March to postpone the Games, which were originally scheduled to begin in July.

Tokyo officials have said they intend to put on the Games in 2021 even if the pandemic has not eased substantially. Australia's retired five-time Olympic champion swimmer Ian Thorpe said he wanted to see the Games go ahead but was doubtful they could without a vaccine.

Champions Osaka, Thiem make the most of U.S. Open adversities

SUDIPTO GANGULY

NEW YORK, 15 SEPT [REUTERS]: (REUTERS) - Circumstances at this year's U.S. Open were extraordinary due to the COVID-19 pandemic but rather than getting deterred, champions Naomi Osaka and Dominic Thiem overcame them in order to fulfil their destinies.

Debate raged for months after the United States Tennis Association announced in June that the hardcourt Grand Slam would go ahead in New York, which was once the global epicentre of the novel coronavirus pandemic, albeit without any fans in attendance.

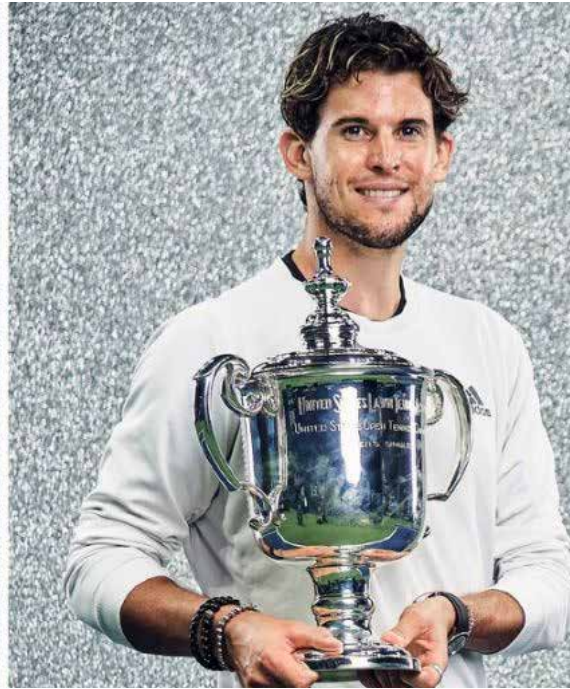
Top men's and women's players raised concerns and expressed doubts over travelling to the United States.

The organisers tried to address their concerns but also continued their preparations for the Grand Slam, putting numerous rules in place designed at mitigating health risks.

One of those was the mandatory use of face mask, which became a tool for Osaka in her activism against racial injustice in the United States.

For each of her seven matches at Flushing Meadows, Osaka walked on to the court wearing a different face mask featuring the name of a Black American who suffered racial injustice in the United States.

The only way she could ensure that the names of Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, George Floyd, Philando Castile and Tamir Rice were once again etched into public



consciousness was by making it to the final.

"I feel like I'm a vessel in order to spread awareness," the two-time U.S. Open winner said. "I do think it's a very big motivating factor for me just to try to get the names out to as many people as I can.

"So I'm not sure if that's giving me extra power."

While Osaka found extra power, Victoria Azarenka showed she still had enough motivation to once again claw her way back to the top echelons of the sport, reaching a Grand Slam final after seven years.

The unseeded Belarusian was also one of nine mothers in the women's singles draw this year and showed exemplary grit during her comeback victory in the semi-finals over

23-times major winner Serena Williams. The loss, however, prolonged the American's pursuit of Margaret Court's record 24 Grand Slam titles. The wait for a first slam, however, finally ended for Thiem.

The 27-year-old had lost in three finals - twice to Rafa Nadal at the French Open and once to world number one Novak Djokovic at this year's Australian Open - and for the first two sets on Sunday he seemed like he was heading for another heartache.

LIFE GOAL

But he somehow managed to come back from two-sets and a break down against Alexander Zverev to crawl over the finishing line first to hoist the U.S. Open trophy.

Critics could argue that Thiem's path at Flushing Mead-

ows was without roadblocks as he did not have to face any of the 'Big Three' of men's tennis.

With Nadal opting out due to the pandemic, Roger Federer injured and top seed Djokovic defaulted in the fourth round for hitting a line judge with a ball, the stars seemed to have aligned for Thiem.

The Austrian dutifully took his chance, ending a six-year wait for a new name on a men's Grand Slam trophy and a first winner outside the 'Big Three' since 2016.

"Definitely I achieved a life goal, a dream of myself, which I had for many, many years," said Thiem.

Among its many health measures, the USTA also used automated line-calls at this year's Slam on all but its two biggest show courts to reduce

the number of people at Flushing Meadows. The experiment went smoothly and Djokovic might have wished it had been in use on Arthur Ashe Stadium too because then he would not have been disqualified for hitting a lineswoman accidentally in the throat with a ball.

That was, however, not the only controversy during the last two weeks.

Frenchman Benoit Paire was withdrawn before the tournament started after testing positive for COVID-19. Those who were deemed to have been in close contact with him had to face even stricter measures and were required to take daily virus tests -- rather than every four days as was the norm for everyone else.

Kristina Mladenovic, who was one of them, slammed the protocols and suffered more ignominy when she was pulled from the doubles tournament, where she was the top seed, as health authorities ordered her to go into quarantine.

But once the tournament started, none of the 365 competitors at the U.S. Open tested positive for the virus, underlining the efficacy of the controlled environment.

"On the moments where we perhaps thought it wasn't going to happen, the adversity was there, I remember speaking to Billie (Jean King). She said, 'Stace, remember who you serve,'" Tournament Director Stacey Allaster said.

"We're serving our sport. It's been an unbelievable privilege."

With Werner and Havertz, Chelsea wins at Brighton 3-1 in EPL

BRIGHTON, SEP 15 (AP):

A Chelsea team featuring just two of its slew of high-profile and expensive signings got off to a winning start in the English Premier League by beating Brighton 3-1.

Timo Werner and Kai Havertz signed for a combined 160 million didn't manage to score at Amex Stadium, either, with Chelsea's goals coming from Jorginho, Reece James and Kurt Zouma.

James' was the most spectacular and the most crucial, the right back's swerving piledriver from 30 meters regaining the lead for Chelsea at 2-1 in the 56th minute, just two minutes after Brighton equalized through Leandro Trossard.

Zouma's deflected volley from a corner in the 66th then gave Chelsea some breathing space.

"I thought we were OK," Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said. "I liked the work ethic and discipline of the team.

"We have been together for four days. ... To expect everything to click on day one would have been difficult."

While Havertz was fairly ineffective in his position on the right of midfield, fellow Germany international Werner the lone striker was more impressive and earned the penalty that was converted by Jorginho to break the deadlock in the 21st minute.

Brighton midfielder Steven Alzate lost possession in central midfield as the hosts tried to play the ball out from the back, Werner was played through and was brought down by goalkeeper Mat Ryan. Jorginho sent Ryan the wrong way.

Much-criticized goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga was handed a start by Chelsea manager Frank Lampard but his failure to keep out Trossard's 54th-minute shot from outside the area will likely keep the scrutiny on him. Kepa seemed slow to get down as the ball squirmed beyond his outstretched right hand.

James quickly put Chelsea back in front with a stunning strike

that flew into the roof of the net, and the right back sent in the corner that Zouma met with a volley that ricocheted in off Brighton defender Adam Webster's right foot.

Of Chelsea's other offseason signings that combined to cost 250 million, left back Ben Chilwell and playmaker Hakim Ziyech were injured and center back Thiago Silva wasn't ready after only recently joining up with the squad.

"The players are still working each other out a little bit," Lampard said. "Today we weren't as fluid as we could be .. I want us to have a lot more movement up front than we did today.

Tripura journalists' body slams CM for remark about 'not forgiving' newspapers, asks him to withdraw comment

AGARTALA, SEPT 14 (PTI): A Tripura journalists' body took umbrage over Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb's recent comment to "not forgive" newspapers creating confusion" about the COVID-19 situation in the state, giving the BJP leader "three days" to take back his remark. Deb's media advisor Sanjoy Kumar Mishra, however, said his comments were taken out of context and distorted.

The CM, while laying the foundation stone for the first special economic zone at Sabroom in South Tripura district on Friday, had said, "Some newspapers are trying to confuse people, getting over excited... History will not forgive them, people of Tripura will not forgive them and I, Biplab Deb, will not forgive them. "I do whatever I say, history is testimony to that."

The speech, which went viral on media, quickly drew the ire of scribes, who held a meeting on



Sunday under the aegis of Tripura Assembly of Journalists and decried Deb's comments.

"We condemn the undemocratic and unconstitutional comments from the chief minister. We hope he will withdraw his remark within the next three days," Chairperson Subal Kumar Dey said.

Dey also claimed that journalists are facing threats and being assaulted in different parts of Tripura following Deb's statement. "Two journalists have been assaulted in

the last 24 hours. We are deeply anxious and have decided to approach Governor R K Bais, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Editors Guild of India...", he said.

Dey, who is also the president of Agartala Press Club, alleged that the ruling BJP is issuing regular threats to media organisations.

"The state is trying to enslave media persons. State government orders are issued to choke journalists' voices," he said. Mishra, in defence of the chief minister, said the Tripura government is committed to the freedom of the press.

"We have always tried to help the media, but a few local newspapers are trying to work with some agenda and that's not right," he said.

Meanwhile, police said a scribe associated with a local daily was attacked by a group of people after midnight. The journalist had criticised Deb in a social media post for his comments.

Novak Djokovic contrite and accepting of default from US Open

TUMAINI CARAYOL

NEW YORK, 15 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: Novak Djokovic says he has accepted his default from the US Open but he understands it will stick with him for a long time as he prepares to return to competition this week at the Italian Open.

After losing his serve to trail 5-6 in the first set of his fourth-round match against Pablo Carreño Busta, Djokovic fired a ball and struck a line umpire, Laura Clark, in the neck and led to her falling to the ground. He became the fifth player in the Open era to be defaulted from a grand slam tournament.

"There were a lot of speculations and discussions whether it was deserved or not. I accepted it and I moved on," he said in Rome on Monday. "I checked on Laura after the match; she said that she was fine, no big injuries. I felt really sorry to cause the shock and drama to her. She didn't deserve that in any way.

"It was totally unexpected and very unintended to hit her. But as I said, when you hit the ball like that, as I hit it, you have a chance to hit somebody that is on the court, and the rules are clear when it comes to that. I don't think I'll ever forget about it, because it's one of these things that stays in your memory for the rest of your life."

The incident was particularly notable because Djokovic had previously been close to a similar outcome. At Roland Garros, in 2016, he threw his racket and it narrowly missed a line judge. At the ATP finals later that year, he hit a ball towards his player box and into the crowd, which led to a terse discussion with reporters.

"I understand that I have outbursts and it's the personality and kind of player I have always been," the world No 1 said. "I went through ups and downs in my career, managing to control my emotions more or less. But you're alone out there, it's a lot of intensity, a lot of pressure and you have to deal with all of that.

"So sometimes situations like this happen. I cannot promise or I cannot guarantee I will never ever do anything similar to that in my life. I'm definitely going to try my best that something like that never happens again but anything is possible so I'm going to take this as profoundly as possible as a big lesson."

Rome marked Djokovic's first public remarks since his default because he skipped his mandatory press conference following the match against Carreño Busta. Djokovic was fined \$7,500 (£5,750) for the missed press conference, \$10,000 for unsportsmanlike conduct and was stripped of his \$250,000 prize money in addition to the points won at the event. "It was very hard for me to accept that right after it happened," he said. For a couple of days I was in shock. I was shaken by the whole thing. "I understand that's something that is going to stick with me for many years, but I am fine with it because I know it was unintentional.

Greece seeks EU help to run migrant camps after major fire



KARA TEPE, GREECE (AP): Greece has called on the European Union to jointly run new refugee camps being built on its eastern islands as part of a planned overhaul of the country's migration policy.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis made the call Tuesday at a meeting in Athens with European Council President Charles Michel as Greece struggles with the aftermath of fires on the island of Lesbos last week that gutted a

large refugee camp and left thousands without shelter.

Just 800 homeless migrants have been moved so far to a site being built by the Greek army, and only tents are available. "We have already started the new facility, and that is where the flags of Greece and the European Union must fly," Mitsotakis said. "In practice, there must be shared responsibility not only for construction but also for the operation of the camp."

Some 12,000 people fled the fires at Moria camp last week. The government says the fires were set deliberately by migrants protesting pandemic-related restrictions, and authorities Tuesday announced the arrested of five suspects over their alleged involvement. Most of the displaced migrants remain homeless and many are refusing to leave a nearby road where they have camped out for almost a week, fearing they could be detained at the

tent city for months.

Most of the 5,000 available places at the temporary army-built site remain empty, officials said.

Greece's migration minister said the government will use force, if necessary, to move homeless migrants to the new tent city.

Notis Mitarachi said efforts to relocate migrants on a voluntary basis, with the help of government translators and pamphlets being distributed to asylum-seekers,

were continuing.

But speaking to Greek broadcaster Mega TV, he added: "If this is not possible through discussion, then the police will have to be used. It is their obligation to be moved to the new site."

Mitarachi said it would take at least six months to build a permanent structure to replace the Moria camp, acknowledging that migrants and refugees would spend the winter in tents.

New detention sites for asylum seekers are also planned on four other Greek islands in the eastern Aegean Sea, replacing overcrowded open facilities. European Council President Michel is due to visit Lesbos later Tuesday. The European Commission is expected to present proposals later this month for the overhaul of the union's migration policy that are expected to include tougher border policing and renewed effort to resettle migrants granted asylum across EU member states. — Gatopoulos reported from Athens

Germany boosts own vaccine makers in race for COVID jab

BERLIN (AP): Germany says it is providing up to 750 million euros (\$892 million) to support three domestic pharmaceutical companies that are developing vaccines against the new coronavirus.

Science Minister Anja Karliczek said Tuesday that the government has already agreed to provide BioNTech and CureVac with 375 million euros and 230-million euros respectively to develop their mRNA-based vaccines.

Talks with a third company, IDT Biologika, are expected to conclude soon, she said. The company is developing a vector-based vaccine that delivers a coronavirus protein into cells to stimulate the body's immune response. The agreement with the three companies, which is tied to specific milestones, would guarantee Germany 40 million doses of vaccine. The amount comes on top of other vaccine supply agreements concluded through the European Union, of which Germany is a member.

Karliczek said Germany wouldn't cut corners when it comes to testing vaccines, meaning most of the population may have to wait until mid-2021 to be inoculated.

"Safety is an absolute priority," she said.

Health Minister Jens Spahn echoed that stance, saying that only vaccines which have been tested on "thousands, ideally many thousands of volunteers in phase 3" would be approved.

Spahn complained that reports from Russia and China about vaccines being developed in the two countries "aren't always such that one feels there's absolute transparency."

Japan begins trial of Nissan, ex-executive over Ghosn's pay

TOKYO (AP): The financial misconduct trial of former Nissan executive Greg Kelly began Tuesday with Kelly saying he committed no crimes and was only trying to keep his star boss Carlos Ghosn from leaving.

The charges being heard at Tokyo District Court center around Kelly's alleged role in failing to report to Japanese authorities the future compensation of Ghosn, who led Nissan Motor Co. for two decades.



Japanese prosecutors outlined allegations of what they said was a complex and clandestine scheme to pay Ghosn more than the amount the company had reported as compensation. Kelly denied the allegations and said everything that was done was intended to keep Ghosn, whom he called an "extraordinary executive," at Nissan.

"This was all in the best interests of Nissan," Kelly said, reading from a statement.

"I deny the allegations. I was not involved in a criminal conspiracy," said Kelly, whose trial opened on his 64th birthday.

Ghosn was arrested in late 2018 at the same time as Kelly but jumped bail and fled to Lebanon late last year. Since Lebanon has no extradition treaty with Japan, he may never face trial. But Kelly evinced no rancor over being left to face trial himself.

He recounted how in the late 1990s, when Nissan was losing money, the French automaker Renault bought a stake in Nissan and sent in Ghosn to help turn the ailing Japanese car maker around.

The experts believed Nissan was doomed, Kelly said, but "Mr. Ghosn

proved the experts wrong. Under Mr. Ghosn, Nissan became very profitable."

Top management at Nissan fretted they might lose Ghosn, who occasionally complained he could make more money elsewhere even though he was paid more than most Japanese top executives. They researched lawful methods to provide incentives for him to say, consulting with in-house and outside attorneys to try to retain him.

"The evidence will show that I did not break the law," said Kelly, who has a law degree and was hired by Nissan in the U.S. in 1988.

Kelly's head defense lawyer Yoichi Kitamura said little apart from: "My client is not guilty."

Later on in the session, another attorney gave more details about the defense's position, stressing that some of the alleged schemes to pay Ghosn were considered and not finalized, or never signed by Ghosn. Kelly was not involved in a couple of the schemes, he argued.

Kelly's wife, Dee, who attended the session, defended her husband outside the courthouse. She said her husband had been going over the evi-

dence for the trial to prepare for the case. "Greg has done nothing wrong," Dee Kelly said. "I'm very proud of him. He's an honorable man."

Nissan is also facing the same charges in the trial as Kelly but has acknowledged guilt and is not contesting the charges. It is paying a 2.4 billion yen (\$22.6 million) fine.

A representative for Nissan told the court the pay schemes did not benefit Nissan and were aimed at Ghosn's personal gain, but instead damaged investor trust and tarnished the company's brand.

The prosecutors said that in 2010 Ghosn returned to Nissan 700 million yen (about \$6.6 million) that exceeded the amount Nissan would disclose as his compensation. The company considered various ways to pay more compensation to Ghosn, such as paying him through an overseas or outside company, selling him real estate at a discount, giving him a loan that would be forgiven later or increasing his post-retirement compensation.

They said the discussions of how to pay Ghosn more than would be legally disclosed were

made "on the premise that he was certain to receive the payments."

Ghosn has vigorously defended himself, saying he is innocent. The defense has long argued Ghosn's compensation was never agreed upon, let alone paid.

As is routine in Japanese trials, Tokyo District Prosecutors read from a long opening statement outlining their allegations that Ghosn's compensation was underreported from 2011-2018 by almost half. They contend these were "false entries," a violation of the Financial Instruments Law.

Business experts say Japanese executives are often promised pay but with conditions such as the company performance, and they can end up not getting any money, meaning that how such compensation should be reported may be unclear.

Acquittals are extremely rare in Japanese criminal trials, more than 99% of which result in convictions. Critics have said the system is unfair. But Japanese officials defend the system as having led to a relatively crime-free society, even saying that only those who are almost certainly guilty are being charged.

Choking air from Western fires just won't ease up



PORTLAND, ORE. (AP): Relief from putrid, dangerous air spewing from massive wildfires across the West won't come until later in the week or beyond, scientists and forecasters say, and the hazy and gunk-filled skies might stick around for even longer.

People in Oregon, Washington and parts of California were struggling under acrid yellowish-green smog — the worst, most unhealthy air on the planet according to some measurements. It seeped into homes and businesses, sneaked into cars through air conditioning vents and caused the closure of iconic locations such as Powell's Books and the Oregon Zoo in Portland, the state's biggest city.

"I don't think that we should be outside, but at the same time, we've been cooped up in the house already for months so it's kind of hard to dictate what's good and what's bad. I mean, we shouldn't be outside period," said Issa Ubidia-Luckett, a Portland resident, who was grabbing lunch on Monday.

Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality extended an air quality alert to Thursday after it was to initially expire on Monday. The air was so thick that on Monday Alaska Airlines announced it was suspending service to Portland and Spokane, Washington, until Tuesday afternoon. Hazy, smoky skies fouled Washington state and experts said some parts of California might not see relief until next month.

Zoe Flanagan, who has lived in Portland for 12 years, has barely left the house but braved the smog to walk her two dogs on Monday. On Sunday, Flanagan and her husband, in desperation, turned on the heater, which has a better filter than their air conditioning.

"I can feel it in my chest and then I just feel hungover despite not drinking," she said. "I felt really hungover all day Saturday. I just couldn't get enough water, I had a headache."

Dylan Darling, a spokesman for the state's department of Environmental Quality, said: "I grew up in Oregon and lived here a long time, and to see this much smoke for this long and wide spreading, really stands out in the state's history."

nia's capital city hasn't seen consistent blue skies in weeks. People experiencing homelessness have grappled with an unrelenting onslaught of virus, searing heat and now, polluted air they can't escape.

"Some of the toughest folks you'll ever meet are people who live outdoors, unhouse, but it is getting to them," he said. "We've got COVID-19, followed by excessive heat wave, followed by smoke. What's going to start falling out of the air next on these poor folks?"

Twana James, who lives in a tent in Sacramento, coughed several times during a brief phone interview Monday, trying to clear her throat. She said her voice is not usually so hoarse.

"We got hella ashes from the fires, everything is covered in ashes," she said. "It's hard to breathe."

In Oregon, places like the Oregon Convention Center in downtown Portland are being used as a smoke advisory shelter where people in need of healthy air quality can go.

Darling said typically during wildfires in Oregon, such as those in 2017 that carried heavy smoke to the Willamette Valley and Eugene area, people can escape to other areas of the state for clean air.

"That's what's standing out — there just isn't a place in Oregon right now to find fresh air," Darling said.

State officials say they are collecting data to see how these fires compare to those in the past and the effects, not only on people's health but also the environment.

Tyler Kranz, a meteorologist at Portland's National Weather Service office, said for the smoke to disperse Oregon will need strong enough winds blowing from the ocean towards land — but there needs to be a "perfect balance" of wind so that it disperses smoke but doesn't further ignite fires.

"We need the winds to get the smoke out of here," Kranz said. "We just don't want them to be too strong, because then they could fan those flames and all of a sudden those fires are spreading again."

As she ate lunch at a popular burger place east of Portland, one of only a few places open, Ubidia-Luckett said the smoke reminded her of stories long-time Portland residents tell about the thick ash that fell on the city when Mount St. Helen's erupted in nearby Washington state in 1980. There was so much ash that for weeks many residents wore masks and had to clear ash off their cars.

After beginning the meal outside, Ubidia-Luckett and her 6-year-old son soon moved inside because the air was too much to take. The boy was with her because his first day of kindergarten was postponed Monday for the second time due to the hazardous air conditions.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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READY TO DANCE! The reality star, Kaitlyn Bristowe is seen at the studio in Los Angeles.

Wanted to make Safin unsettling: Rami Malek on James Bond villain

LOS ANGELES, SEP 15 (PTI): Oscar winner Rami Malek says as the antagonist of the upcoming James Bond movie No Time to Die, he wanted his character of Safin to be unsettling.

Malek plays the villain opposite Daniel Craig's suave British spy in the much-anticipated film directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga.

A video teasing the mysterious villain was released by the makers on Monday.

What I really wanted from Safin was to make him unsettling. Thinking of himself as being heroic... Safin is a formidable adversary. James Bond has to adapt to him, Malek told Entertainment Weekly.

Talking about the character Fukunaga said, What he wants and what he's willing to do makes him a very frightening character, both personally to Bond, but also on a global level."

Fleabag creator-star Phoebe Waller-Bridge is on board as a co-writer on the film and Malek said she had a significant role in shaping up Safin.

She had quite an impact on what I was doing. I'd have long phone conversations with her, giving her context as to what we were

essentially looking for in the scenes, and she would turn things over incredibly quickly.

"We know her as a very witty and funny writer, but she's got a knack for drama and



tension as well," he said.

No Time to Die, scheduled to hit the theatres in November, also features actors Lashana Lynch, Lea Seydoux, Jeffrey Wright, Rory Kinnear, Naomie Harris, Ben Whishaw, Ralph Fiennes, Christoph Waltz, Ana de Armas, Billy Magnussen, Dali Benssalah, and David Dencik.

Kangana Ranaut Seeks ₹ 2 Crore Damages For Demolition At Mumbai Office

Actor Kangana Ranaut has sought a compensation of ₹ 2 crore from Mumbai's municipal agency for "illegal" demolition of a part of her office in the financial and entertainment capital of the country, where real estate is among the world's most expensive.

Ms Ranaut had approached the Bombay High Court while the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation or BMC was tearing down the walls at Manikarnika Films, her movie production house in Bandra, after which the court ordered the BMC to stop demolishing it.

The BMC had listed 14 "violations" at her office, which included a toilet apparently built in space marked for a kitchen and an office set up in an area meant for a toilet.

Ms Ranaut added her claim for ₹ 2 crore in damages in an amended petition filed with the Bombay High Court, news agency PTI reported. In the amended petition, she said the demolition work was a direct result of her comments against the Maharashtra government.

"The expression used by her has displeased certain quarters and caused angst in certain quarters particularly a political party which is a part of the government in Maharashtra," Ms Ranaut's amended petition said, PTI reported.

The "same party" is also the ruling party in the BMC, the "Queen" actor said in her petition, without naming Shiv Sena, which runs the BMC - India's richest municipal corporation.

Matter escalated sharply in the first week of this month after Ms Ranaut said she feared living in Mumbai, after



which Shiv Sena leaders including Sanjay Raut told her she should move out of Mumbai. Then she retorted that "Mumbai feels like PoK", short for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, a comment that she repeated the day the BMC moved in for demolition work.

Ms Kangana has alleged the BMC was out to harass her as she got a notice for

demolition on September 7, asking her to reply within 24 hours at a time when she was in Manali amid the coronavirus pandemic. She flew to Mumbai two days later, escorted by a ring of "Y-plus" security personnel given by the centre on her complaint that she had received threats. The BMC's move had raised questions

Gaurav Chopraa, Hitisha Cheranda blessed with baby boy



MUMBAI, SEP 15 (PTI): Actor Gaurav Chopraa and wife Hitisha Cheranda have become parents to a baby boy.

The actor took to Instagram on Monday night to announce the news of the baby's arrival and shared a picture of a placard on his door which read "It's a boy."

Last month, Chopraa lost both his parents within a span of 10 days and said having a baby at such a time was "divine intervention."

"19-08-2020, 29-08-2020 and 14-09-2020. Enlightenment in three dates. The meaning of life, explained

in this short span of time.

"A roller coaster ride, a cycle never ending, an emotional and physical test and then divine intervention and a bountiful blessing today," the actor wrote.

Chopraa, 41, thanked his fans for their continued love and said it has been his "strength."

The actor, best known for featuring on the TV show "Uttaran" and "Bigg Boss" season 10, got married in a private ceremony in 2018.

He was last seen on screen in this year's medical drama "Sanjivani".

Good Times' animated reboot ordered at Netflix

LOS ANGELES, SEP 15 (PTI): Netflix is rebooting Norman Lear's classic 1970s sitcom Good Times as an animated series.

Lear and his Act III Productions is collaborating with basketball star Steph Curry and his company, Unanimous Media, as well as Seth MacFarlane and his Fuzzy Door banner, to develop the show.

According to Deadline, Carl Jones serves as creator, showrunner, and also executive produces alongside Lear and MacFarlane.

Good Times' follows the Evans family as they navigate today's world and contemporary social issues. Good Times' strives to remind

us that with the love of our family, we can keep our heads above water, the show's logline reads.

It's a dream come true to be working with the legendary talents of Norman Lear, Seth MacFarlane and Stephen Curry. We are excited to carry on the original legacy of Good Times' - but now animated and a little edgier. Let's just say the struggle has just gotten strugglier, Jones said.

Brent Miller, who heads Act III; Unanimous Media co-founder and chief creative officer Erick Peyton; Unanimous' Jeron Smith and Fuzzy Door's Erica Huggins are also attached as executive producers.

Lego to ditch plastic bags for paper ones in its boxed sets



NEW YORK (AP): Lego said Tuesday that it will stop using plastic bags inside its boxed sets and replace them with paper ones.

The Danish toymaker said it will start making the switch next year and expects plastic bags to be completely phased out in the next five years. The bags are used to hold loose bricks in boxed sets.

Lego, as well as other big brands, have been looking for ways to cut plastic use in order to please customers increasingly worried about how their purchases impact the environment. Monopoly maker Hasbro, for example, has also announced plans to eliminate plastics in its packaging.

Among the environmental issues posed by plastic is that it doesn't disintegrate. Instead, it breaks down into tiny pieces that can be eaten by birds or other wildlife, endangering their health.

Lego's colorful bricks are also made of plastic, but the company has had trouble finding another material that's as durable. About 2% of its pieces, such as Lego trees and bushes, are made of sugar cane,

Lego said kids wrote the company asking it to drop the plastic bags.

"We have been exploring alternatives for some time and the passion and ideas from children inspired us to begin to make the change," said Lego CEO Niels B. Christiansen, in a prepared statement. The paper bags, which are recyclable, are easier for kids to open, the company said.

ARIES:

You can talk about your dreams all you want, but your words mean nothing unless you're willing to put in the work. The cards are pointing towards a personal project, one that is of great importance to you. Yes, we all have to pay our bills, Aries. But don't let your 'worldly responsibilities' become the reason you put something this special on the back burner. Word for the wise: strike a balance. Remember, once you set your mind to something, no force in the world can come in your way.

Tip: Pay attention to your personal projects.

TAURUS:

You've already survived the stormiest of storms. There's nothing to be afraid of, Taurus. Nothing at all. Things will take a turn for the better in the months to come—this you must trust. The cards are urging you to be conscious of what you're putting out there in terms of both your intentions and your words. Saying all the right things will invite all the right opportunities in your world. Saying the wrong things, however, will prove to be detrimental in more ways than one.

Tip: You're making way for a better tomorrow.

GEMINI:

Joy and celebration promise to be constants in the Gemini HQ. With somebody close to you getting ready to tie the knot, you could be preparing for a ceremony of sorts. Despite your love for the big, fat Indian wedding, you're beginning to see the merits of hosting an intimate gathering. Matters related to the home are also likely to take centre stage. Some of you could chance upon that dream mansion or holiday home you've been looking for. Others may feel inspired to give redecoration a thought.

Tip: It's a time of joy and celebration!

CANCER:

You could stick to the rulebook and create what everybody else is creating, but where's the fun in that? The cards are talking about authenticity and unique expression. How and where are you holding yourself back? It's time to break free from the mental prison and show the world what you've got! Will you receive praise and appreciation for this? Yes and no. But that hardly matters. What you need to remember when you're challenging your boundaries is that revolutionaries are celebrated much after they're gone.

Tip: Unique expression is the need of the hour.

LEO:

This could be a troubled time in the Leo HQ. A time of dealing with the demons within and without. You could drown yourself in a pile of work, but the old trauma will catch up with you eventually. Word for the wise: become aware of what's coming up to be healed and have the courage to face your shadows. Clichéd as it is, this will help you find the light. Remember, you don't have to do this alone. Turn to a trusted friend or therapist for support. Tip: The support you require is available to you. Reach out.

VIRGO:

While there is a voice in your head that's whispering, "You can achieve the impossible", there's an equal and opposite force that's laughing at the thought. Which one of these voices are you going to give in to, Virgo? You already know your potential. You already know what you came here to do. Don't let your failures salt the game for you. What you want to do instead is look at your past through the lens of awareness. This will help you integrate the lessons and see the light on every situation.

Tip: Yes, you can achieve the impossible if you believe in your potential.

LIBRA:

The Madonna narrative is overrated. You're in the mood to

channel your inner Ishtar, Isis, and Mary Magdalene. The art of sacred sexuality is on the cards, Libra. You are being supported to break past the limitations you have created and express yourself fully. Trust that everything in your life will transform as a result of this awakening. The creative and intuitive arts are also blessed under this cosmic collaboration. Be aware of the guidance you are receiving and be sure to share it with those around you. If you've been thinking about exploring healing modalities, the time is now.

Tip: Channel your inner Ishtar.

SCORPIO:

A blessed move is on the cards, Scorpio. For some, this could indicate a change in department or cities too. Others could find themselves redirecting the course of their lives. No matter how big or small this change, trust that it's taking you in the right direction. The path will become clearer as you let go of the self-doubt. Remember, you are the creator of your destiny. Nobody else can decide what is and isn't right for you. Follow the advice you are receiving from your higher self.

Tip: A blessed move is on the cards.

SAGITTARIUS:

Human evolution is not a straight line. We move upwards and onwards in a spiral, often arriving at the same point over and over. What is the lesson you are unwilling to integrate? How and where are you afraid to loosen the grip? Step back, breathe, allow Spirit to come through. Learning to surrender and move on will help open new doors for you. Remember, you don't have to 'settle' or push against the flow. If something's meant for you, it will work out effortlessly, Sagittarius.

Tip: Loosen the grip. Allow Spirit to come through.

CAPRICORN:

New projects are blessed as a result of this cosmic climate. Trust that important doors will open for you effortlessly. You just have to be mindful about making the right move at the right time. Connecting with influential people will prove to be beneficial too. Birth and fertility could also be big themes right now, with you and your SO thinking about bringing your own into the world.

Tip: Make the right move at the right time. New doors are opening up for you.

AQUARIUS:

Rumi's immortal words, "The wound is where the light enters", hold true for where you are, Aquarius. You've been circling this territory for some time now. But it wasn't until recently that you managed to sit down with the wounds of your past. You understand that things were happening for you, not to you. That there was certain karmic baggage that you needed to work through. Being in acceptance of this has opened up the doors of hope and healing for you. Remember, you don't have to do this alone. The help and support of your tribe is available to you. Working with an Akashic Records practitioner or a Past Life Regression therapist could help you integrate these wounds.

Tip: It's time to free yourself from the past narrative.

PISCES:

There's a sense of déjà vu in the air. A sense of having been here before. The conversations and interactions you are having are bringing the same feeling to the fore. For some of you, this could be a time of reconnecting with a past lover (not necessarily from this lifetime). There is more to this connection than meets the eye—this is something you will discover over the next few days.

Tip: There's a sense of déjà vu in the air, Pisces.