



**'GOOD OMENS 2' BEGINS PRODUCTION IN SCOTLAND**  
pg 08

**WOMEN ARE MORE COMPETITIVE WHEN THEY'RE GIVEN AN OPTION TO SHARE WINNINGS – A RESEARCH FINDING THAT MAY HELP CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP**  
pg 04

**ADIVISESH'S 'MAJOR' TO RELEASE IN FEBRUARY 2022**  
pg 08



# Summit TIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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**Covid claims one more, Sikkim's toll reaches 398**  
SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 03 NOV:** Covid claimed one more life in Sikkim in the last 24 hours with a patient currently in home isolation in South Sikkim passed away yesterday. This is the second consecutive COVID death in the State in as many days. Sikkim has now lost 398 lives to the virus.

Meanwhile, 16 new cases were picked up from the testing on 327 samples over the same period, giving Sikkim a daily test positivity rate of 4.3% and taking the number of confirmed cases of Covid since testing began on 28 Feb, 2020, to 32,010 on Wednesday.

Out of the 16 new cases, 07 were registered in East District, 02 in West District and 07 in South District.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of Health Department, while 11 people tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 179 samples, four cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 188 samples and one in TruNat testing of five samples.

On the other hand, six COVID patients were discharged from home isolation after making full recoveries yesterday, to future improve the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 to 31,107. The state's recovery rate stands at 98.2%.

There are 179 active cases of COVID-19 in the State at present, of whom only 21 are in hospital  
**turn to pg02**

## After online registration for scholarships receives poor response, Secy reiterates appeal

**SAGAR CHETTRI**  
**GANGTOK, 03 NOV:** Secretary, Social Justice and Welfare Department, Tshewang Gyachho, today appealed to all students eligible for social welfare scholarships to register at socialwelfare.scholarships.sikkim.gov.in at the earliest.

He highlighted that 30 Nov was the last date given by the Ministry to register for the academic year 2021-22.

All pre-matric and post-matric Sikkimese students from families with collective annual incomes [of the parents] less than Rs 2.5 lakh and enrolled in recognised institutions are eligible for this scholarship.

Addressing a press conference here at Samajkalyan Bhawan, Lumsey, the Secretary informed that the department developed the scholarship portal in-house and re-launched it on 08 October with



some modifications based on suggestions and feedback from students, parents and institutions to make it user-friendly and accessible.

He mentioned that the por-

tal also features an eight-minute tutorial video to guide students on how to apply online.

Although the portal has been up for nearly a month, only 600 students have reg-

istered thus far. To get some context, around 10,000 students had applied for scholarships, including minority scholarship, in year 2019, and last year, around 6,700 stu-

dents had done so.

The Secretary further urged Principals and Head Masters to reach out to students and help them apply for scholarships.

Some of the scholarship

schemes under the department are pre-matric scholarships for ST students Class [IX and X], pre-matric scholarship for SC students of class [IX and X], pre-matric scholarship for OBC [Central] students of class [I to X] and pre-Matric scholarship to the children those engaged in an occupation involving Cleaning and Prone to Health Hazards of class [I to X], post-matric scholarship for sT Students, post-matric Scholarship for SC students, post-matric scholarship for OBC [Central] students, post-matric scholarship for EBC [State OBC] students and Dr BR Ambedkar's post-matric Scholarship to EBC students.

He added that students eligible for Minority Affairs Scholarship scheme can apply directly on the national scholarship portal, scholarships.gov.in.

## Coach and protégé call on CM: Lovlina Borgohain and Sandhya Gurung meet Golay



**GANGTOK, 03 Nov (IPR):** Lovlina Borgohain and Sandhya Gurung called on Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang at his official residence, Mintokgang, here today.

The Chief Minister congratulated Lovlina for her accomplishment at the Tokyo Olympics where she won a Bronze medal. Similarly, he acknowledged the ef-

forts and guidance of her coach, Sandhya Gurung, in Lovlina's success and also extended his best wishes to her on being conferred with the Dronacharya award.

Additionally, the Chief Minister announced Rs 10 lakh for Lovlina Borgohain and Rs 5 lakhs for Sandhya Gurung on behalf of the State government. He also assured to provide further support to individual sports like boxing, taekwondo, badminton, etc., and provide a platform for aspiring sportspersons in the state.

The President of Sikkim Olympic Association, Kuber Bhandari, Arjuna Awardee & former Olympian, Jasal Pradhan, Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling, and Secretary to CM, Dr SD Dhakal were also present on the occasion.

## More happy that my coach is getting Dronacharya Award, says Lovlina



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 03 Nov:** Olympian, Lovlina Borgohain, who won a bronze medal in boxing in the Tokyo Olympics 2020, is currently in Sikkim. She arrived in the state on Tuesday to meet her coach, Sandhya Gurung. On her Sikkim visit, a local media house,

Hamro Varta Television felicitated her here on Wednesday for winning a medal for the country in the Olympics and being named for the prestigious sporting honour Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award. The media house also felicitated Lovlina's coach, Sandhya Gurung for her contribu-

tion and efforts in boxing, and on being chosen for the prestigious Dronacharya Award.

In a felicitation function held here this afternoon, Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba and Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling along with president, Kuber  
**turn to pg02**

## It has been a dream journey, says Sunil Chhetri, football's first Khel Ratna awardee

**NEW DELHI, 03 NOV [PTI]:** The first footballer to be conferred with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, Indian maestro Sunil Chhetri on Wednesday said the journey that he has been through in the last 16 years has been nothing short of a dream.

Since his India debut on June 12, 2005 against Pakistan in Quetta, Chhetri has rewritten the country's football history many times and he has now added another feather in his cap by being named for the country's highest sporting award.

"I am thrilled, I am really thankful and honoured. I have always said that it is a dream that I have gone through, and it would not have been possible without my family, teammates and coaches I have played under," Chhetri said.

"It has been amazing to play for the National team, for so many years, for the number of matches, it has been an outstanding journey," said the

36-year-old year talismanic India captain in an AIFF release.

Arguably India's greatest footballer after the 'Golden Era' of the last century, Chhetri has played most number of international matches and scored most goals.

With 80 strikes from 125 international matches, he is currently tied with Argentine superstar Lionel Messi on number of goals among active players. He is one of the few Indian footballers who have won the Padma Shri and has also been conferred with the Arjuna Award. He is the first footballer to win the Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting award.

Chhetri was on Tuesday named among 12 sportspersons to be conferred with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award for 2021, on November 13.

Asked about his role models in his life, Chhetri said: "The amount of encouragement and inspiration around us is a lot, we just have to keep looking. The hunger of trying to learn

more is needed, and you will seek out from so many people."

"There're many people who came out to help people during the COVID-19 pandemic, be it financially or on the ground. They put their lives in danger and gave it their all. These people are extraordinary! So if anyone is looking for inspiration, it is all around, and if you need to find it, you can look for it anywhere."

He is not yet ready to discuss the remarkable statistics during his 16 years of illustrious career, saying he would want to focus on playing and scoring goals for the country.

"I am just happy that I get the opportunity to score for my country. That is about it! To see my name on the big screen, even for just five seconds, and to know I have just contributed in some manner for my country, is all that I need," said Chhetri.

"Once I am done whenever it is, we can pick out a goal and cherish the moment and talk about it. Once I have a big belly

with a lot of food, we will talk about it then." All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel lauded Chhetri on getting the Khel Ratna.

"Congratulations! No one deserves it more than Sunil. He has been the flag bearer and a role model for Indian football, having won so many laurels for his country and all his clubs over the years. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours, and look forward together to him leading us to unprecedented glories in near future," Patel said.

AIFF general secretary Kushal Das also congratulated Chhetri.

"The Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award is the pinnacle of all sporting awards in the country and Sunil deserves the award. He is a living legend, and the icon whom all fans look up to. "I wish him all the best for his professional and personal life. You have been a true flag-bearer for Indian football," Das said.

## Strength Lifting & Incline Bench Press c'ship travels to Namchi this year

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 03 Nov:** Sikkim Strength Lifting Association [SSLA] has announced plans to organize the 4th Sikkim Strength Lifting & Incline Bench Press Championship in collaboration with SUMOS Gym, Namchi, on 27 and 28 November at Namchi, South Sikkim.

Contests will be held in junior, senior and master [men & women] categories.

Addressing a press conference here today, SSLA chief patron, Forest Minister Karma Loday Bhutia, informed that more than 100 athletes are expected to participate and that a team from Nepal is also scheduled to join the championship.

He added that most sporting events tend to be organised in Gangtok, hence this time, SSLA decided to take the championship to Nam-



chi and plans to organize events in other districts as well.

The Minister mentioned that the Namchi event will also serve a selection trial to pick the state team for the 31st National Strength Lifting Championship to be held from 30 December to 02 January at Alwar, Rajasthan.

SSLA working president, Allen Targain, expressed gratitude towards the state government and the Chief Minister for support and encouragement in orga-

nizing the event.

He further thanked the chief patron for his guidance in organizing the championship on a grand scale and remarked that Sikkim has already produced many national and international athletes in strength lifting.

SSLA publicity secretary Chandra Kala Pradhan detailed that 108 participants have already confirmed participation. The organisers, she added, will also provide transportation and lodging facilities to participants this time.

## CORRIGENDUM

This is with regard to the news-report headlined, "SISCO Bank is now a Scheduled Bank," published in SummitTimes edition dated, 03 Nov, 2021. The report mentioned that now that SISCO Bank was a scheduled bank, it has also acquired membership in clearing houses. This information was not claimed by the bank in its press release, and was inferred by the paper as a facility now enjoyed by the bank by virtue of having been recognized as a scheduled bank. A fresh communiqué from SISCO Bank informs that this piece of information is factually incorrect. The bank has applied for direct membership to the clearing house and the same is under consideration of Reserve Bank of India, it is informed.

-EDITOR

### China continues to be ambivalent on permitting stranded Indians return

**BEIJING, 03 Nov [PTI]:** China continues to be ambivalent about permitting stranded Indians working in the Chinese mainland but stuck back home since last year due to Beijing's COVID-19 travel restrictions, saying that visas are being given only for essential economic, trade and humanitarian purposes.

"Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has been providing visa facilitation to foreign nationals who are traveling to China for essential economic, trade, technological and emergency humanitarian purposes," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told media in Beijing on Wednesday. "Going forward, we will adjust relevant measures at appropriate points in light of the evolving COVID-19 situation on the basis of effective prevention of imported cases to actively foster a new arrangement for healthy, safe and orderly personnel exchange", he said.

He was responding to a question that Chambers of commerce from America and Australia have reported that local government authorities in Beijing and a few other Chinese cities are now issuing PU letters for the dependent family members of qualified foreign workers and will this benefit be extended to India as well. PU is an invitation letter issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to apply for visa to enter China.

Besides over 23,000 Indian students studying in Chinese colleges, mostly medicine, hundreds of businessmen, employees, and their families have been stuck in India since last year.

The curbs also resulted in several people either losing jobs, businesses or separation of families.

In September, Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri also criticised China's prolonged stringent travel restrictions saying that "we are disappointed to see an unscientific approach with regard to several problems currently being faced by Indian students, businessmen, marine crew and exporters, to name a few."

# Justice Rai chairs legal awareness prog in North Sikkim

**MANGAN, 03 Nov [IPR]:** An awareness programme carried out by Sikkim State Legal Services Authority in coordination with District Legal Services Authority (North) started from KabiLunchok, North Sikkim, today.

The programme is being organized under the Pan India Awareness and Outreach Campaign as a part of 'AzadikaAmritMahotsav'.

The programme was chaired by Mrs Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai in presence of District and Sessions Judge & Chairman of District Legal Services Authority (North), NGSherpa, Member Secretary, SSLSA, Sonam Palden Bhutia, DC (North), Tenzing T. Kaleon, block district officers and panchayat members.

The event began with the offering of bouquets to the esteemed guests followed by a welcome speech by the



District Judge.

The Chief Guest, Mrs Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, in her address, stressed upon the need for people to be made aware about the availability of free legal aid for the victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

She also highlighted the need for parents to educate their children about safety rules and

urged people to come forward and avail the aids provided. She also mentioned that the victims can directly approach the concerned authorities for complaints.

District Judge, Mr. N. G. Sherpa talked about the issue of Child Sexual Abuse and mentioned various components of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). He talked

about the importance of spreading awareness about child abuse. He stated how an offender grooms the victim and carries out the offence. He also mentioned how a person can discern a person who has been abused and wary of free legal aid services available for the victims.

The Member Secretary, Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, in

his address, talked about the issue of Domestic violence and mentioned the Protection of Women from Violence Act, which states the need and importance of protecting the status of women in India.

He added that domestic violence does not only consist of physical abuse but also includes economic, social and mental abuse. Further, he said that any women facing abuse can opt for free and competent legal services against the abusers by approaching the service providers and protection officers.

It may be mentioned that similar legal awareness programmes have been scheduled at Thanphu and Pasangdang in North Sikkim on the 4th and 5th of November, which will be graced by Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Executive Chairperson, SSLSA, Mrs Justice Meenakshi M. Rai.

## Health Minister inaugurates SGAY house



**KHAMDONG, 03 Nov [IPR]:** Minister, Health and Family Welfare cum Area MLA 17-Khamdong Singtam constituency, Dr MK Sharma inaugurated a house under Sikkim GaribAwasYojana (SGAY) at Khamdong-Singtam constituency and handed over to the beneficiary, Phumsey Bhutia from Namgyethang ward under 42-Sirwani GPU today.

The Minister was accompanied by Panchayat President, Ward Panchayat, BDO Khamdong, Assistant Engineer, and Government officers of BAC Khamdong.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister thanked Chief Minister, PSTamang under whose leadership such a scheme was launched with an objective to bring equality in society and to ensure that those belonging to the weaker sections get the equal opportunity to make their lives better.

The Minister congratulated Phumsey Bhutia for being the first beneficiary under Khamdong Block. He also extended gratitude to the Rural Development Department for timely completion of the houses under the scheme despite the pandemic.

## Gold declines Rs 375; silver crashes Rs 898



**NEW DELHI, Nov 3 [PTI]:** Gold price in the national capital on Wednesday tumbled by Rs 375 to Rs 46,411 per 10 grams amid a decline in the international prices of precious metals as well as rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 46,786 per 10 gram.

Silver also tumbled Rs 898 to Rs 62,052 per kilogram from Rs 62,950 per kilogram in the previous trade.

The Indian rupee surged 22 paise to close at 74.46 against the US dollar on Wednesday.

In the international market, gold traded lower at USD 1,781 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.48 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading 0.32 per cent down at USD 1,781 per ounce on Wednesday," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

## SU reports success in saffron cultivation trials in Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 03 Nov:**

Trial of saffron cultivation in Sikkim conducted by Sikkim University has shown positive results, a press release informs.

The trials were held in eight high altitude locations, namely; Hiley, Okhrey, Yuksom and Lamathang in West Sikkim, Pangthang, Simik-Khamdong, Phadamchen and Kyongnasla in East Sikkim.

The sites were selected in consultation with saffron experts from Kashmir for conducting the cultivation trials.

As per the release, it was observed that nearly eighty percent of the saffron corms sprouted and the flowers are being picked these days. The flower samples are transported to Sikkim University for detailed observations and measurements of diverse parameters. The research team plans to analyse the quality of the flowers from different locations and also carry out extensive survey on the soil and climatic parameters to correlate the yield and quality of saffron and to ultimately identify the potential areas in the state.

In the next couple of years, the University will look into the manage-

ment aspects for increasing the productivity and the economic feasibility before recommending it for commercial cultivation.

"The results obtained so far sufficiently indicate the possibility of saffron cultivation in Sikkim," the release states.

The high-altitude areas with prolonged chilling conditions during winters and well-drained soils are conducive for saffron cultivation.

Under the leadership of Professor Avinash Khare, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, seven faculty members are working on the project (Prof. Shanti S. Sharma, Prof. Dhani R. Chhetri, Dr. Santosh K. Rai, Dr. Arun Chhetri of Botany Department and Prof. Laxuman Sharma, Dr. Niladri Bag, Dr. Rajesh Kumar of Horticulture Department of Sikkim University). The project is being exclusively funded by the Sikkim University.

Sikkim University initiated efforts to explore the possibility of Saffron cultivation in 2020. The initiative was presented in one of the meetings organised by the NITI Ayog, which drew attention of the participating experts. The Director, Agriculture, Kashmir, Dr Chowdhary Mohd Iqbal, in particular, wholeheartedly ap-

preciated the initiative and offered his support to Sikkim University for popularising saffron cultivation.

Vice Chancellor and a team of researchers from Sikkim University held several online meetings with the Director, Agriculture Department, Kashmir and several saffron experts to discuss diverse aspects of saffron cultivation. Subsequently, a team from Sikkim University visited Kashmir to gain understanding of saffron cultivation practices through visits to several farms and the centre of excellence for Saffron in Kashmir and elaborate interactions with the farmers.

The saffron corms of high quality, recommended by the experts, were air lifted to Sikkim with the help of JK HPMC (Jammu and Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing & Processing Corporation).

Later, in the month of September, the Chairman of the All India Saffron Growers Association, Mr Abdul Majeed Wani along with another progressive farmer, Mr Javid Ganie visited Sikkim to help the University for on-site feasibility assessment and method demonstration on field preparation and planting.

## Uttarakhand Chief Minister reviews preparations ahead of PM's Kedarnath visit

PM Modi is scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of Kedarnath reconstruction projects worth ₹ 400 crore during his visit.

Dehradun: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama on Wednesday visited Kedarnath to review the preparations in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Himalayan temple on November 5.

PM Modi is scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of Kedarnath reconstruction projects worth ₹ 400 crore during his visit.

The prime minister will inaugurate the rebuilt 'samadhi' of Adi Guru Shankaracharya besides unveiling a grand statue of the 8th century seer at the temple during his visit which will be telecast live.

The samadhi of Adi guru Shankaracharya was damaged in the 2013

deluge at Kedarnath. Accompanied by Cabinet colleagues Harak Singh Rawat and Subodh Uniyal, Dhama took stock of all the projects underway at the temple.

"All preparations are complete. Some minor things which remain will be completed by Wednesday evening," Mr Dhama said.

"The prime minister's vision is to develop Devbhoomi as the world's spiritual and cultural capital where people from across the globe gather for peace," Mr Dhama told reporters in Kedarnath.

Redevelopment of Kedarnath on such a large scale is a step towards implementing that vision, he said.

"It is a proud moment for us. The prime minister has done things in Kedarnath which no one even thought of for hundreds of years," he said, adding PM Modi's faith in Baba Kedar is absolute.

## NIA arrests suspected JMB terrorist in Bengal

**KOLKATA, Nov 3 (PTI):** Sleuths of the National Investigation Agency have arrested a suspected terrorist of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, an official said on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of NIA personnel conducted a search operation in Subhasgram area and apprehended the Bangladeshi national on Tuesday. The man entered India illegally around two years ago and he was picked up ahead of Kali Puja and Diwali festivals to be celebrated on Thursday.

"He has been involved

in a fake identity card racket and has helped some locals get such bogus documents. He has visited several places in the country before he started residing in South 24 Parganas," the official told PTI.

Fake voter and Aadhaar cards and several documents related to the terror group were seized from the possession of the man, identified as Abdul Mannan, who is being interrogated.

The suspected JMB member used forged documents to get a rented accommodation in Subhasgram area and was staying there for the past few months, the official said.

### Covid claims one...

[and the rest recovering under home isolation], two of who are in the ICU. At present, there are no under 18 year olds in hospital with Covid, the two who were there until recently, were discharged yesterday.

On the vaccination front, a total of 1,370 people received their Covishield vaccine on Tuesday. Out of these, 1,284 completed their vaccination schedule with the second dose and 86 received their first dose. Since Sikkim had already covered the entire adult population with at least the first dose a while back, those still receiving their first shots must be teenagers who are only now turning 18.

### More happy that my...

Bhandari and general secretary, Jasal Pradhan of Sikkim Olympic Association presented a letter of appreciation to Lovlina Borgohain and her coach, Sandhya Gurung.

In her address, Lovlina said that the love received from the people of the state have made this personal trip to Sikkim very special. She added that she has a special relationship with Sikkim since her coach is from Sikkim.

Lovlina shared her journey to the Olympics after switching from Muay Thai to boxing in 2012. She also talked about her struggle and preparation for the Tokyo Olympics.

"My dream is to win a gold medal for the country so my dream is still not fulfilled. I will prepare harder to win a gold medal for the country in the next Olympics in 2024," she said.

While expressing her happiness on getting Major Dhyana Chand Khel Ratna Award, Lovlina said, "I am happy on getting the prestigious sporting honour but I am more happy that my coach was chosen for the Dronacharya Award."

She expressed that the presence of such a talented coach in Sikkim will definitely help the state produce more boxers. She appreciated the efforts and initiatives of the State Government for the development of sports and betterment of athletes in Sikkim.

Lovlina encouraged young athletes to believe in themselves and have a strong commitment towards making the state, country and parents proud.

Sandhya Gurung expressed her happiness on being chosen for the Dronacharya Award and further thanked the people of Sikkim for their love and support. She encouraged young athletes to take Lovlina as an inspiration to move ahead in their sports career. She also thanked the Sikkim government, especially the Chief Minister for encouraging and supporting local athletes.

While applauding the achievements of Lovlina, the Lok Sabha MP said that her achievement in the Olympics at such a young age is a matter of great pride for the country. He congratulated Sandhya Gurung for her efforts and works, and expressed that Sikkim would definitely bring out Olympians in the near future. He said that sports is always a priority of the state government and it has already done lots of work for the development of sports and betterment of local athletes in a short period.

Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling congratulated Lovlina for giving an opportunity to the people of the country to celebrate an Olympic medal. He expressed his best wishes for her future endeavors.

On behalf of the state government, the CM has also announced that it will provide Rs 10 lakhs to Lovlina Borgohain and Rs 5 lakhs to Sandhya Gurung on behalf of the State government, he announced.

### KUTSE SHEGU

Kutse Shegu (49th day puja) of Namna Dorjee, who passed away on 27 Sept, 2021 falls on 14 Nov, 2021. We therefore, humbly request our relatives, friends and well-wishers to join us in offering prayers at our residence at Arithang, Gangtok on the aforementioned date, duly following the Covid-19 protocol in place.

We also take this opportunity to thank everyone who stood by us during the time of bereavement. Your support and assistance was indeed a great solace to us. It means a lot and we are truly indebted to each and every one of you.

**Chumzey Doma (Chum Maili) - wife,  
Karma Doma Youtso - daughter,  
Yangchuk Den Youtso - daughter,  
Chopel Lepcha - son-in-law &  
Jigme Norbu - son.**

# Dipawali Men's Volleyball Tournament concludes

BIKASH CHETTRI  
RAVANGLA, 03 NOV:

Constituency Level Dipawali Men's Volleyball Tournament-2021 concluded at Upper Phamtam today. The tournament was organized by Upper Phamtam Volleyball Tournament Committee.

Area MLA Barfung Constituency, TT Bhutia, attended the today's tournament as the Chief Guest and was also accompanied by Zilla Panchayat Member Ralong Borong ZTC, Tashi Dadul Bhutia as special guest along with BJP Mandal Pramukh Barfung Constituency, Pradeep Gurung, Youth President BJP, Karma Tenzing Bhutia, BJP Party workers: Basant Gurung, Pendup Bhutia, Ketang Bhutia and other local gentries were presence as guests.

The programme started with a welcome speech by Ward Panchayat, Dukmaya Rai. On the occasion while addressing the gathering by the Chief Guest of the Day appreciated the initiative of the youth of Phamtam and expressed his Dipawali wishes to all the gath-



ering.

Further, he talked about the different schemes and programme of the government and assured that Volleyball ground of Upper Phamtam will be upgraded to Community Playground in near future.

During the programme, colourful cultural programme performed by SPFO Church Phamtam, Bermeli Super Mum, Little Zion Academy Phamtam, Maruni Dance from Sada. From the same stage Health and Wellness Centre Sada Pham-

tam and Ward Panchayat awarded with certificate of appreciation to Village Covid Management Committee (VCMC), ASHA and AWW for their contribution during the period of pandemic of Covid as frontline warriors.

Final match of Constituency Level Dipawali Men's Volleyball Tournament played between Basnet VI and Lower Match won by Basnet VI with 3/2 set. Winne and Runner team awarded with Cash prize of Rs.30000 and 20000 respectively.

# Diwali greetings from CM

GANGTOK, 03 NOV (IPR): Chief Minister PS Tamang conveyed prayers for happiness and prosperity for all Sikkimese people in his Diwali greetings.

"Deepawali is a significant and joyous occasion that is linked integrally to our cultural and traditional life. The festival of lights inspires us to move towards the light from the darkness with a mes-

sage to live with social harmony and brotherhood," he conveys.

He adds: "Further, the festival serves to diffuse the darkness, ignorance, and evil from our society as people come together for the celebrations ignoring caste, class, and religious barriers. The celebrations of such significant national festivals as Deepawali have played an important role in pro-

moting social solidarity, national unity and in fostering love and friendship among the people.

I pray for the happiness and prosperity of the Sikkimese people in every sphere of their life, and may the warmth and splendor that are a part of this auspicious occasion fill their lives with happiness and bright cheer for the whole year."

## Delay in communicating bail order serious flaw: Justice DY Chandrachud

NEW DELHI, 03 NOV [PTI]: Supreme Court judge Justice DY Chandrachud has termed the delay in communicating bail orders to prison authorities as a "very serious deficiency" and stressed the need to address it on "war footing" as it touches the "human liberty" of every under-trial prisoner.

Justice Chandrachud was speaking at an online event organised by the Allahabad High Court to inaugurate virtual courts and 'e-Sewa kendras' to facilitate online legal assistance to litigants.

"A very serious deficiency in the criminal justice system is the delay in the communication of bail orders, which we need to address on war footing. Because this touches upon human liberty of every under-trial, or even a convict who has got suspension of

sentence..." he said. Recently, Aryan Khan, son of Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan, spent an extra day inside the Arthur Road jail in Mumbai, despite securing bail from the Bombay High Court in the drugs-oncruise case.

Prior to this, chief justice NV Ramana-led bench had expressed strong displeasure over reports of delay in implementation of bail orders and had said it would set up a "secure, credible and authentic channel" for transmission of orders. Even in the digital age, "we are still looking at the skies for the pigeons to communicate orders", the bench had said.

The Supreme Court had then ordered the implementation of a project -- Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records (FASTER) -- for faster communi-

tion and compliance of its orders and had asked all states and union territories to ensure internet facility, with adequate speed, in every jail.

Speaking at the event, Justice Chandrachud referred to one of the initiatives of the Orissa High Court which provides for the grant of "e-custody certificate" to every under-trial prisoner and convict who is undergoing sentence of imprisonment.

"That certificate will give us all the requisite data with regard to that particular under-trial or convict, right from initial remand to the subsequent progress of each case. This will also help us in ensuring that bail orders are communicated as soon as they are made, from the place they are communicated, to the jails for immediate implementation," he said.

Several trains cancelled as protesters block tracks for over 24 Hours in Bengal's Nadia

KOLKATA, 03 NOV [PTI]: Train services in the Ranaghat-Lalgola section of Sealdah division were disrupted for more than 24 hours owing to obstruction by a section of people at Jalalkhali Halt station in Nadia district, demanding stoppage of all trains passing through it, an Eastern Railway official said on Wednesday.

The agitators, who have been squatting on the tracks since Tuesday morning, claimed that residents of around 15 villages in the area depend on train services from the station, but only a few trains stop there.

"We are holding discussions with the agitators to lift the protest so that services are normalised," ER spokesperson Ekalabya Chakraborty said.

He said that Jalalkhali being a halt station, it is not possible that all trains would stop there.

Chakraborty said that the agitators have been offered stoppages of a few more trains at the halt station.

He said that 12 EMU locals on the Sealdah-Krishnanagar line and at least two express trains connecting Sealdah and Lalgola were cancelled on Wednesday owing to the agitation.

# Indian Sports Award for Pema Dorjee Bhutia

SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 03 NOV:

Sikkim Strength Lifting Association chief coach, Pema Dorjee Bhutia, will receive the Indian Sports Award 2021 in the field of strength lifting on 14 November. The award, conferred by the Indian Community Hindustan Gaurav Awards Foundation, will be conferred on Children's Day in New Delhi, it is informed.

On his achievement, Mr Bhutia said, "Strength lifting is a non-Olympic game but I have been working



continuously to bring out national and international athletes till these years. So such recognition of my hard work has encouraged me to work harder."

He said that it was a

proud moment for the entire strength lifting fraternity of the State, and added that strength lifting was being included for the first time in this award.

## Maruti Suzuki sales fall; Tata Motors reports 94 pc rise on Dhanteras

NEW DELHI, NOV 3 (PTI): Car market leader Maruti Suzuki India on Wednesday said it sold around 13,000 units on the day of Dhanteras, lower than last year hampered by supply constraints due to semiconductor shortage, although Tata Motors stated its deliveries grew 94 per cent.

Automobile dealers' body FADA on Tuesday termed the current festive season the worst in terms of business in a decade for its retail partners across the country as chip shortage impacted supplies in passenger vehicles creating a huge shortage of vehicles in SUV, compact - SUV and luxury segment.

"Demand and bookings have been good. We tried our best to deliver as many vehicles as possible. However due to supply side constraints we closed a little lower than last year, at around 13,000 units," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTI.

On the other hand, homegrown auto major Tata Motors had a good day on Dhanteras on Tuesday.

"On the auspicious day of Dhanteras, our deliveries nearly doubled as compared to last year.

# Covaxin gets WHO approval, finally

New Delhi, 03 Nov [PTI]: The World Health Organization on Wednesday granted Covaxin an emergency use listing, or EUL, which means the 'made-in-India' vaccine will finally be recognised by other countries and Indians who received the shot need not self-quarantine or face restrictions when travelling abroad.

Covaxin has been cleared for use in all age groups (18+) over two doses spaced four weeks apart.

No recommendation has been made for use on children, and available data on use of Covaxin on pregnant women is insufficient to assess safety or efficacy.

"The Technical Advisory Group (an independent panel that provides the WHO with vaccine recommendations) has determined Covaxin meets standards for protection against COVID-19... the benefit of the vaccine far outweighs risks (and) the vaccine can be used," the global health body said.

"WHO has granted emergency use listing (EUL) to COVAXIN (developed by Bharat Biotech), adding to a growing portfolio of vaccines validated by WHO for the prevention of COVID-19," a tweet read.

The emergency listing, or EUL, comes after a lengthy and rigorous review period - manufacturers Bharat Biotech applied in April and provided the first batch of data on July 6 - that involves assurances about the vaccine's safety, efficacy and stability, as well as checks of production facilities.

The extended delay left millions of Indians - students, working professionals, families divided by the pandemic and others - waiting anxiously for news that Covaxin will be accepted by other countries.

So long as Covaxin was not a WHO-approved vaccine, Indians who had been given the shot and had to travel abroad were either asked to quarantine on arrival, take (at their own expense) and return negative Covid tests, or receive a fresh dose of vaccines approved in the destination country.

Last week the Technical Advisory Group (an independent panel that provides the WHO with recommendations) asked for "additional clarifications" to conduct a "final risk-benefit assessment".

WHO spokesperson Dr Margaret Harris was then quoted by news agency PTI as saying: "... if the committee is satisfied, we expect a recommendation within the next 24 hours or so."

The WHO had said it "understand many people are waiting for Covaxin to be included in the COVID-19 Emergency Use Listing" but had also stressed "we cannot cut corners before recommending a product for emergency use... we must evaluate thoroughly to make it is safe and effective".

The global health body, which said EULs depended on how quickly manufacturers provided extra information, has also said Bharat Biotech had "regularly and quickly" responded to data requests.

Faced with growing concerns over the delay, the WHO also underlined its trust of the Indian vaccine industry, which has emerged as a key supply point in the world's fight against the coronavirus.

In its defense the WHO referred to grant of the EUL for Serum Institute's Covishield (the name under which the AstraZeneca-Oxford University shot is made here), which it said took 30 days.

"... this is not about moving quicker with one or another vaccine. We really trust the Indian industry.

Covaxin is one of a few 'made-in-India' vaccines and, with Covishield, is the mainstay of the country's vaccination drive; as of this evening over 12.14 crore people have been vaccinated with Covaxin.

However, Bharat Biotech has yet to release peer-reviewed data on efficacy and safety; data from a pre-print study indicates it is 77.8 per cent effective against symptomatic COVID-19.

It also offers 65.2 per cent protection against the new 'delta' variant of the virus.



**STATE BANK OF SIKKIM**  
(A Government of Sikkim Undertaking)  
**RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT MANAGER**  
**IN STATE BANK OF SIKKIM**

NOTIFICATION NO. SBS/AM/2021/02 dated: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.

This is to notify all candidates who has applied for the post of Assistant Manager in the State Bank of Sikkim in terms of notification No. SBS/AM/2021/01 dated: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021, that the written examination shall be held on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2021 (Sunday). Therefore, all candidates are advised to note the following.

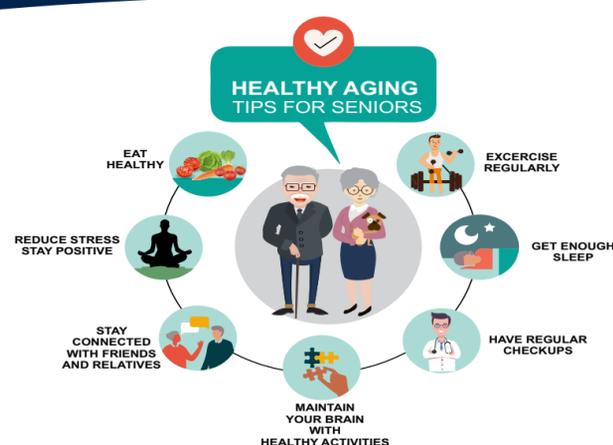
1. Admit Card/Call letter for the examination shall be available for download from bank's website [www.statebankofsikkim.com](http://www.statebankofsikkim.com) using their respective user-id and password from 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 onwards.
2. Candidates shall be allowed to appear in the examination at the centre, on the date and time specified in their Admit Card/Call letter only.
3. Candidates should also download examination instruction, OMR sample etc. and properly acquaint themselves with the process of examination.
4. Candidates should regularly visit bank's website and should also keep their registered mobile and email-id active for further updates in the matter.

sd/-

(Deepika Chettri)

GENERAL MANAGER (HR)

# International Day For Older Person



State IEC Bureau  
Health & Family Welfare Department  
Government of Sikkim



Protect yourself and protect others...  
Follow the COVID Appropriate Behaviour

State Helpline No.102/108

# SummitTIMES

## The Next Lot Sans Prejudice

*Can we give the young confidence instead of paranoia*

It's festive time. A time when people are lavish with gifts, blessings and best wishes. In this time of giving, can we expect the present generation to gift the next a grooming sans prejudice?

Just look around, the world as we know it is turning into a global village and WTO is blurring international boundaries as far as trade is concerned, but people in general are becoming more and more parochial. Almost every district wants to express itself as a State, every province wants to be a country and every community swears it has a unique identity independent of all others. While it would be improper to deny anyone their right to self-expression, it would be criminal to ignore the fact that self expression in the present-day politically charged times almost always comes at the cost of denying someone else the same right. The generation in control of things has abused with alacrity this fundamental right, and mindsets are already fixated on ideas which are prejudiced and even illogical. There is little that can be done on this front, but if we accept that things need to change and improve, we could try and do so with the generation still untrained in the biases which we have fomented.

Much as we would want to deny it, an obvious communal divide is getting sharper by the day in Sikkim as well. Enter homes, and opinions which could later inflame into searing conflagrations, are all there. Passing comments which never posed serious repercussions earlier are no longer as innocent as they used to be in times when violent expressions were rare. We need to be more careful and at the cost of sounding trite - more politically correct in the presence of younger adults. If we are to remain free of the communalism which has already swept most of the country and is trying to find its own interpretations in Sikkim, the State needs to address the issue more scientifically. The best places to start are the schools. It is perhaps time that classes were set aside to educate the younger generation on what makes their culture, their heritage and history interdependent and not hermetically independent. No attempts should be made to bring every community under one umbrella and students should be allowed the chance to celebrate each community's individuality and then learn of how each relies on the other. Once they know of other cultures and are also aware of their own, they will not feel threatened. The paranoia which inflicts various communities in Sikkim is borne not from any obvious threat, but from their own lack of sound moorings in their culture and history. Half-baked notions of identity are the most susceptible to exploitation and they are being exploited at present. There is no need to keep the future generation in the dark about differences which exist between different communities here. Perhaps, if they are well informed about the points of attrition, they will also be able to work out the solutions that have failed others so far. They might even discard the whole concept of notional contradictions.

Can we equip the next generation well enough to do that?

# Facebook has a misinformation problem, and is blocking access to data about how much there is and who is affected

ETHAN ZUCKERMAN  
*theconversation.com*

Leaked internal documents suggest Facebook – which recently renamed itself Meta – is doing far worse than it claims at minimizing COVID-19 vaccine misinformation on the Facebook social media platform.

Online misinformation about the virus and vaccines is a major concern. In one study, survey respondents who got some or all of their news from Facebook were significantly more likely to resist the COVID-19 vaccine than those who got their news from mainstream media sources.

As a researcher who studies social and civic media, I believe it's critically important to understand how misinformation spreads online. But this is easier said than done. Simply counting instances of misinformation found on a social media platform leaves two key questions unanswered: How likely are users to encounter misinformation, and are certain users especially likely to be affected by misinformation? These questions are the denominator problem and the distribution problem.

The COVID-19 misinformation study, "Facebook's Algorithm: a Major Threat to Public Health", published by public interest advocacy group Avaaz in August 2020, reported that sources that frequently shared health misinformation — 82 websites and 42 Facebook pages — had an estimated total reach of 3.8 billion views in a year.

At first glance, that's a stunningly large number. But it's important to remember that this is the numerator. To understand what 3.8 billion views in a year means, you also have to calculate the denominator. The numerator is the part of a fraction above the line, which is divided by the part of the fraction below line, the denominator.

### GETTING SOME PERSPECTIVE

One possible denominator is 2.9 billion monthly active Facebook users, in which case, on average, every Facebook user has been exposed to at least one piece of information from these health misinformation sources. But these are 3.8 billion content views, not discrete users. How many pieces of information does the average Facebook user encounter in a year? Facebook does not disclose that information.

Market researchers estimate that Facebook users spend from 19 minutes a day to 38 minutes a day on the platform. If the 1.93 billion daily active users of Facebook see an average of 10 posts in their daily sessions – a very conservative estimate – the denominator for that 3.8 billion pieces of information per year is 7.044 trillion (1.93 billion daily users times 10 daily posts times 365 days in a year). This means roughly 0.05% of content on Facebook is posts by these suspect Facebook pages.

The 3.8 billion views figure encompasses all content published on these pages, including innocuous health content, so the proportion of Facebook posts that are health misinformation is smaller than one-twentieth of a percent.

Is it worrying that there's enough misinformation on Facebook that everyone has likely encountered at least one instance? Or is it reassuring that 99.95% of what's shared on Facebook is not from the sites Avaaz warns about? Neither.

### MISINFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

In addition to estimating a denominator, it's also important to consider the distribution of this information. Is everyone on Facebook equally likely to encounter health misinformation? Or are people who identify as anti-vaccine or who seek out "alternative health" information more likely to encounter this type of misinformation?

Another social media study focusing on extremist content on YouTube offers a method for understanding the distribution of misinformation. Using browser data from 915 web users, an Anti-Defamation League team recruited a large, demographically diverse sample of U.S. web users and oversampled two groups: heavy users of YouTube, and individuals who showed strong negative racial or gender biases in a set of questions asked by the investigators. Oversampling is surveying a small subset of a population more than its proportion of the population to better record data about the subset.

The researchers found that 9.2% of participants viewed at least one video from an extremist channel, and 22.1% viewed at least one video from an alternative channel, during the months covered by the study. An important piece of context to note: A small group of people were responsible for most views of these videos. And more than 90% of views of extremist or "alternative" videos were by people who reported a high level of racial or gender resentment on the pre-study survey.

While roughly 1 in 10 people found extremist content on YouTube and 2 in 10 found content from right-wing provocateurs, most people who encountered such content "bounced off" it and went elsewhere. The group that found extremist content and sought more of it were people who presumably had an interest: people with strong racist and sexist attitudes.

The authors concluded that "consumption of this potentially harmful content is instead concentrated among Americans who are already high in racial resentment," and that YouTube's algorithms may reinforce this pattern. In other words, just knowing the fraction of users who encounter extreme content doesn't tell you how many people are consuming it. For that, you need to know the distribution as well.

### SUPERSPREADERS OR WHACK-A-MOLE?

A widely publicized study from the anti-hate speech advocacy group Center for Countering Digital Hate titled Pandemic Profiteers showed that of 30 anti-vaccine Facebook groups examined, 12 anti-vaccine celebrities were responsible for 70% of the content circulated in these groups, and the three most prominent were responsible for nearly half. But again, it's critical to ask about denominators: How many anti-vaccine groups are hosted on Facebook? And what percent of Facebook users encounter the sort of information shared in these groups?

Without information about denominators and distribution, the study reveals something interesting about these 30 anti-vaccine Facebook groups, but nothing about medical misinformation on Facebook as a whole.

These types of studies raise the question, "If researchers can find this content, why can't the social media platforms identify it and remove it?"

The Pandemic Profiteers study, which implies that Facebook could solve 70% of the medical misinformation problem by deleting only a dozen accounts, explicitly advocates for the deplatforming of these dealers of disinformation. However, I found that 10 of the 12 anti-vaccine influencers featured in the study have already been removed by Facebook.

Consider Del Bigtree, one of the three most prominent spreaders of vaccination disinformation on Facebook. The problem is not that Bigtree is recruiting new anti-vaccine followers on Facebook; it's that Facebook users follow Bigtree on other websites and bring his content into their Facebook communities. It's not 12 individuals and groups posting health misinformation online – it's likely thousands of individual Facebook users sharing misinformation found elsewhere on the web, featuring these dozen people. It's much harder to ban thousands of Facebook users than it is to ban 12 anti-vaccine celebrities.

This is why questions of denominator and distribution are critical to understanding misinformation online. Denominator and distribution allow researchers to ask how common or rare behaviors are online, and who engages in those behaviors. If millions of users are each encountering occasional bits of medical misinformation, warning labels might be an effective intervention. But if medical misinformation is consumed mostly by a smaller group that's actively seeking out and sharing this content, those warning labels are most likely useless.

### GETTING THE RIGHT DATA

Trying to understand misinformation by counting it, without considering denominators or distribution, is what happens when good intentions collide with poor tools. No social media platform makes it possible for researchers to accurately calculate how prominent a particular piece of content is across its platform.

Facebook restricts most researchers to its Crowdtangle tool, which shares information about content engagement, but this is not the same as content views. Twitter explicitly prohibits researchers from calculating a denominator, either the number of Twitter users or the number of tweets shared in a day. YouTube makes it so difficult to find out how many videos are hosted on their service that Google routinely asks interview candidates to estimate the number of YouTube videos hosted to evaluate their quantitative skills.

The leaders of social media platforms have argued that their tools, despite their problems, are good for society, but this argument would be more convincing if researchers could independently verify that claim.

As the societal impacts of social media become more prominent, pressure on the big tech platforms to release more data about their users and their content is likely to increase. If those companies respond by increasing the amount of information that researchers can access, look very closely: Will they let researchers study the denominator and the distribution of content online? And if not, are they afraid of what researchers will find?

*[The writer is Associate Professor of Public Policy, Communication, and Information, University of Massachusetts Amherst]*

## Women are more competitive when they're given an option to share winnings – a research finding that may help close the gender pay gap

MARY L. RIGDON  
*theconversation.com*

Women are more likely to take risks and engage in competitive activities if they're allowed to share their potential winnings with peers, according to new research I co-authored. Since one explanation of the gender pay gap is that women tend to be less competitive than men in workplace settings, this finding could lead to ways to narrow it.

In a study published on Nov. 1, 2021, in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Alessandra Cassar and I report an experiment in which we invited 238 undergraduate students – split almost evenly between men and women – into our labs to solve a simple numbers puzzle. We wanted to see how different types of financial incentives prompt men and women to compete differently. We randomly assigned them to groups of four and had them do versions of the puzzle over three rounds.

Researchers have conducted this experiment many times, with the result that women show less interest in competing than men. But we added a twist.

Half the students followed the usual methodology. They were first told they'd receive US\$2 for every numbers problem solved. In the second round, we offered \$4 per solution to the top two performers in each foursome, leaving the others with

nothing. In the final round, participants were able to choose whether to receive \$2 for every problem solved or engage in the more competitive game and potentially earn more money.

Mirroring the results of past stud-

ies, our research found that while 52% of the men chose the competitive option in the third round, only 34% of women did.

Our twist on this experiment, which we conducted with the other half, was very similar to how the standard version was conducted except in one way. In the second round, students who won were told they could choose to share some portion of their winnings with one of the two low performers in their group. We then

looked at how this option to share affected their choices in round three.

We found that this eliminated the male-female competitiveness gap. Men chose to compete at about the same rate as before, but 60% of women opt-



ed for the riskier option when offered a chance to share their winnings.

WHY IT MATTERS

The latest wage data shows women earn 83 cents of every dollar a man is paid, a stat that has barely budged in decades. And while controlling for job type and individual characteristics closes much of the gap, we think this adjustment misses the point.

The persistent gap in average earnings suggests women consistently go into careers that pay lower salaries than

those that men go into or are systemically underpromoted. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this imbalance.

To more meaningfully close or at least narrow the gap between how much men and women earn, it's important to understand its causes. Some economists have suggested it's at least partly due to different levels of competitiveness among men and women.

After all, high-risk competitive roles like managers and lawyers tend to come with lofty salaries. Since many of the studies cited above show women seem to be less competitive than men, this could help explain why women are underrepresented in those careers and on average earn less.

Our research suggests the explanation may be more nuanced. It's not that women don't like competition, but that they are sensitive to social aspects of it that men aren't. When incentives reflect those social aspects, women are just as competitive as men.

### WHAT'S NEXT

We're not sure how our findings translate into the workplace or how companies can adjust the way they pay workers to encourage women to be more competitive. We are uncovering more of the what, and need to better understand the why.

*[The writer is Professor and Associate Director, Center for the Philosophy of Freedom, University of Arizona]*

### 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](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

# Bangladesh's villages bear the brutal cost of climate change

**SHYAMNAGAR, BANGLADESH (AP):** With each tide, AbdusSatter watches the sea erode a little more of his life.

His village of Bonnotola in southwestern Bangladesh, with its muddy roads and tin-roofed houses, was once home to over 2,000 people. Most were farmers like the 58-year-old Satter. Then the rising seas poisoned the soil with salt water. Two cyclones in the last two years destroyed the mud embankments that shielded the village from tidal waves.

Now, only 480 people remain, with the rest rendered homeless by the sea.

The effects of global warming — particularly increased cyclones, and coastal and tidal flooding that bring salt water further inland — are devastating Bangladesh and destroying the livelihoods of millions, said Mohammad Shamsud-doha, chief executive of the non-profit Center for Participatory Research Development.

"It's a grave concern for a country like Bangladesh," he said, adding that projections show some 30 million people may be displaced from the country's coastal regions.

With world leaders gathered in Glasgow, Scotland, for a U.N. climate conference this week, countries like Bangladesh are pressing for more financial support to cope with global warming.

A decade-old deal for rich countries to give poor nations \$100 billion each year to switch to clean energy and adapt to climate



change has not been fulfilled. Even the money that is being provided — about \$80 billion in 2019 — is spread too thin to make much of a difference on the ground.

In Gabura, another village in the Bengal River delta, NazmaKhatun, 43, has been struggling to feed her two daughters. Half of her meager daily income — less than \$3 from sewing and selling cloth — goes toward medicine for skin diseases she says everyone in the village suffers from due to rising sea levels, which have contaminated land and water.

"We have water everywhere, but we don't have a drop any more to drink from ponds or wells," she

said.

This land was once fertile. Khatun said mango and jackfruit used to flourish, and everyone grew vegetables in their backyard, relying on ponds, rivers and wells for drinking water.

"Now it's impossible. See the pond here, fresh water is gone," she said.

In 1973, 833,000 hectares (3,216 square miles) of land was affected by the encroaching sea water, accelerated by more frequent cyclones and higher tides that have contaminated water supplies. That's bigger than the U.S. state of Delaware.

This grew to 1.02 million hect-

ares (3,938 square miles) in 2000, and 1.056 million hectares (4,077 square miles) in 2009, according to Bangladesh's Soil Resources Development Institute. Salinity in soil has increased by 26% over the past 35 years.

At BonbibiTola village, women gather daily at a hand-pump well to collect water for cooking and drinking. The women walk up to 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) hauling water daily.

But this won't last long. Wells in the region only have fresh water in the months after monsoon rains. In the summer — when the flow from Himalayan rivers decreases — fresh water becomes scarce,

said one of the women, Maheswar-iHalder.

"This is the fate we all surrender to," she said.

The three villages lie in Bangladesh's southwestern Shyamnagar region, home to 400,000 people. Officials say the government lacks funding for additional desalination plants to convert salt water into fresh water.

"The area needs maybe 500 desalination plants. But we've only 50 or so," said AlamgirKabir, director of a local NGO, the Nawabenki-Ganomukhi Foundation.

Despite seeing its gross domestic product rise from \$6.2 billion in 1972 to \$305 billion in 2019, Bangladesh can't pay the cost of global warming on its own. There are only six countries in the world more impacted by climate change from 2000 to 2019, according to the 2021 Climate Change Performance Index by nonprofit Germanwatch. In those years, Bangladesh lost 0.41% of its gross domestic product due to climate change, and a single cyclone in 2019 caused losses of \$8.1 billion.

Nor should it, says AbulKalam Azad, the country's special envoy to the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of nations most at risk from the impacts predicted of a hotter future. Bangladesh, a country of about 160 million, has historically contributed a fraction of the world's emissions, and yet the country is being devastated by climate change, he said.

Azad says aid in the form of

high-cost loans would be of no use, but low-cost loans combined with grants would help.

Environmental campaigners say a sea change is needed in the international debate on climate aid to ensure a steady increase in funding to poor, vulnerable nations from a variety of public and private sources.

"You also need to make sure that at least 50% of the funds go into adaptation (to climate change) because people are on the front line," said Jennifer Morgan, the head of Greenpeace International.

Speaking before fellow leaders Monday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh raised the thorny issue of major polluters paying compensation for the destruction caused by global warming.

"The issue of loss and damage must be addressed, including global sharing of responsibility for climate migrants and those displaced by sea-level rise, salinity increase, river erosion, floods, droughts," she said.

The 2015 Paris accord already contains a provision for this. Article 8 states that parties to the pact, "recognize the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, and the role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage."

## Ladakh records eight fresh COVID-19 cases

**LEH, NOV 3 (PTI):** Eight more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Ladakh, taking the tally to 20,979, while the number of active cases in the Union Territory reached 81, officials said on Wednesday.

Ladakh has registered 208 coronavirus-related deaths -- 150 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. No new Covid-linked fatality has been reported in Ladakh, the officials said.

Three coronavirus patients in Leh were discharged from hospital, bringing the recovery count to 20,690, they said.

All of the fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in Leh, while 475 samples in Ladakh tested negative for the disease, the officials said.

Leh accounts for 76 of the total active novel coronavirus in Ladakh, while the remaining five such cases are in Kargil district, they said.

## Arunachal logs six new COVID-19 cases

**ITANAGAR, NOV 3 (PTI):** Six more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, pushing the tally to 55,167, a senior health department official said on Wednesday.

The death toll in the frontier state remained at 280 as no fresh fatality was reported in the past 24 hours, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 82 active cases, while 54,805 people have recovered from the

disease.

Lower Dibang Valley district has the highest number of active cases at 17, followed by Tawang (14), Lohit and East Siang districts (10 each).

The state has tested 11,86,807 samples so far, the official said, adding, the positivity rate stood at 0.81 per cent.

State Immunisation Officer DimongPadung said a total of 13,23,530 people have been inoculated thus far.

## Pondy registers 29 new cases of COVID 19



**PUDUCHERRY, NOV 3 (PTI):** Puducherry registered 29 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday pushing overall caseload to 1,28,106.

Each of the four regions of Union Territory-- Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam reported less than 10 fresh cases. While Puducherry logged nine fresh cases Karaikal reported eight cases and Yanam and Mahe regions reported four and eight fresh cases respectively.

The fresh cases were identified at the end of examination of 2454 samples.

The active cases were 359 of whom 73 patients were in hospitals and remaining 286 patients were in home isolation.

No fresh fatality was

reported today from any of the four regions. Fatalities remained 1859.

Fifty-eight patients recovered and were discharged during last twenty-four hours while overall recoveries were 1,25,888. Director of the Department of Health G Sriramulu said the government has tested so far 19.23 lakh samples and found 16.26 lakh out of them to be negative.

Test positivity rate was 1.18 percent while fatality and recovery rates were 1.45 percent and 98.27 percent respectively, he said.

The Department of Health has administered so far 11,32,702 doses and they comprised 7,27,420 first doses and remaining 4,05,282 were second doses.

## Tripura police files criminal cases against 71 for "Provocative Social Media Posts"

**S**trict action will be taken against those who are "spreading rumours of communal violence and trying to create hatred in the society", Tripura Police said. The Tripura Police on Wednesday said it has registered five cases against 71 people for alleged provocative and fake posts on social media aiming at disturbing peace and communal harmony in the state.

Strict action will be taken against those who are "spreading rumours of communal violence and trying to create hatred in the society", it said.

Taking to Twitter, the state police said, "Five criminal cases have been registered against 71 persons who posted provocative posts on social media. Strict action shall be taken against those persons who are trying to create hatred in the society."

The five cases were filed for allegedly spreading rumours on social media platforms on the issue of recent communal violence incidents in Tripura, a senior officer said.

"Preliminary investigations revealed that fake pictures and videos were uploaded on social media to tarnish image of the government and the state police," he said.

The police appealed to people "not to like or retweet provocative posts since it amounts to rumour-mongering".

Fake news is being circulated that a mosque in Kakraban area of Gomati district has been damaged and vandalised, it said on the microblogging site. "This is a com-

plete misrepresentation of facts. The mosque in Dargabazar area of Kakraban is completely fine & Gomati police is working to maintain peace and tranquillity," it said.

Replying to a tweet, the cybercrime department of the police said, "These are fake videos being circulated under criminal conspiracy to disturb the peace and communal harmony in the state and defame the state government and police. Police has registered criminal cases and suitable action against the fake rumours is being taken expeditiously."

The state government had on October 29 alleged that a group with vested interest from outside had hatched a conspiracy against the administration to create unrest in Tripura and malign its image by uploading fake photographs of a burning mosque on social media.

An investigation by the state police revealed that "no mosque was burnt in Panisagar subdivision in North Tripura district," Information and Culture minister SushantaChowdhury said.

A mosque was allegedly vandalised and two shops were set ablaze at Chamtila during the October 26 Vishva Hindu Parishadrally which was organised to protest against the recent communal violence in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Three houses and a few shops, reportedly owned by members of the minority community, were also ransacked in nearby Rowa Bazar, North Tripura Superintendent of Police BhanupadaChakraborty had said.

## Aviation body to get 122 acres of land for new Terminal at Jammu Airport

**T**he Jammu deputy commissioner has been asked to demarcate the land and hand it over to airport authorities so that work can begin on the new terminal.

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir administration will soon hand over 122 acres of land to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to build a state-of-the-art 25,000 square metre new terminal building at the airport in Jammu, officials said.

Divisional Commissioner of Jammu, Raghav Langer, informed about the development during a meeting to review the progress on demarcation of land for the new terminal, they said.

The 122 acres or 974

kanal of land has already been identified, the officials said, adding that it will soon be handed over to the AAI to build the terminal.

The runway at the Jammu airport has been expanded and the 30 per cent load penalty has been removed. It will bring huge relief to airlines and passengers, the officials said.

The divisional commissioner also directed the animal husbandry department to immediately shift its animals and its office buildings to other locations as over 100 acres of its land has been identified for the expansion of the Jammu airport, they said.

The Jammu deputy

commissioner has been asked to demarcate the land and handover the same to airport authorities so that work can begin. The deputy commissioner informed that land at Nagrota has already been allotted to the animal husbandry department for relocation of offices and poultry.

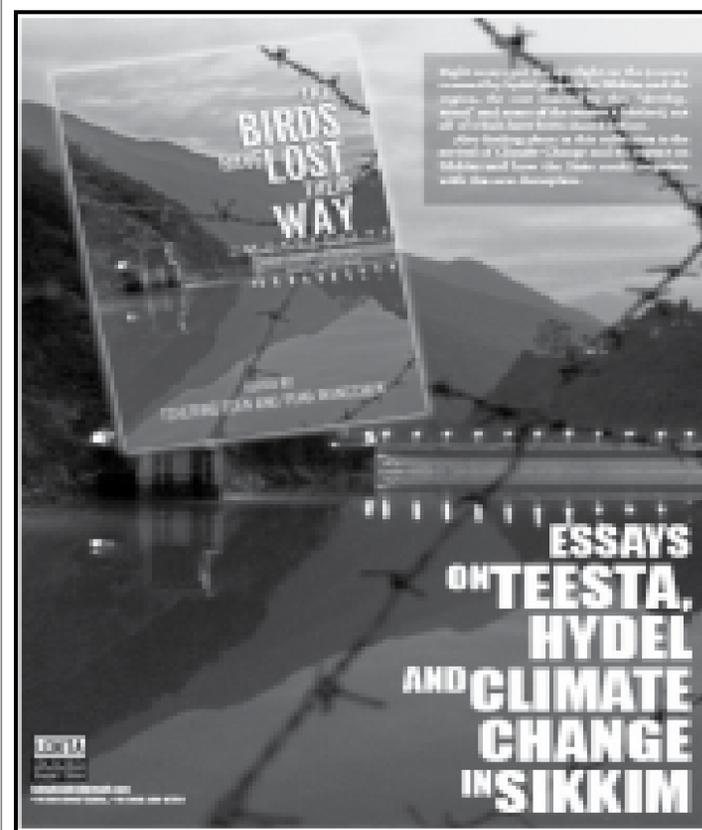
The divisional commissioner also reviewed the alignment of the Delhi-Katra expressway stretch from Satwari to Fourth Bridge.

The expressway will be constructed from Delhi to Katra via Kunjwani and SatwariChowk to Bhagwati Nagar Fourth Bridge to link it with the Jammu Akhnoor road project, they said.

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Com



## Bumrah only notable movement among Indians as others dominate rankings

**DUBAI, Nov 3 (PTI):** India's senior opener Rohit Sharma moved a place up to 23rd in the batting chart while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah jumped 10 places to joint 24th in the ICC men's T20 rankings issued on Wednesday.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam's two successive half-centuries in the T20 World Cup have helped him overtake England's Dawid Malan and grab the No. 1 position for batters in the latest chart.

Babar, who scored 51 against Afghanistan and 70 against Namibia to lead the 2009 champions into the semifinals, is at the top for the sixth time in his career. The 27-year-old had first attained top position in January 28, 2018. He is presently also ranked No. 1 in ODIs.

Babar's tally of 834 rating points keeps him 36 points ahead of Malan but Babar's career



best remains 896 rating points that he achieved after scoring 65 against England at Cardiff on May 5, 2019. Malan had been at the top since November 29 last year.

England's performances in the tournament too reflect in the rankings, with both their openers Jos Buttler and Jason Roy moving up in

the latest weekly update.

Buttler has gained eight slots to reach a career-best ninth position after smashing his maiden T20I hundred against Sri Lanka while Roy was up five places to 14th.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has topped the bowling chart for the first time in his career af-

ter two successive three-wicket hauls against South Africa and England. He replaced South Africa's Tabraiz Shamsi, who was at the top since April 10 this year.

The top four bowlers in the rankings are all wrist spinners, with England's Adil Rashid overtaking Afghanistan's Rashid Khan to take third

place with a career-best 730 rating points. A fast bowler who has made rapid rise is South Africa's Anrich Nortje, who has gained 18 slots to reach seventh position.

At the top of the all-rounders' table, Mohammad Nabi has caught up with Shakib Al Hasan on 271 rating points. Hasaranga was fourth in this list.

## Poland protests to Belarus over 'intrusion' by armed forces

**WARSAW, POLAND (AP):** Poland's foreign ministry said Wednesday that it summoned a Belarusian diplomat over an "intrusion" into Polish territory of "uniformed individuals armed with long guns."

Polish soldiers noticed three uniformed people with long weapons on Polish territory, said Stanislaw Zaryn, the spokesman for Poland's security services.

"After meeting a Polish patrol, they reloaded their weapons and then departed towards Belarus," Zaryn said.

The incident comes as Poland, a member of the European Union, faces significant migration pressure on its eastern border with Belarus. That border forms part of the EU's eastern frontier with autocratic Belarus.

The foreign ministry spokesman, Łukasz Jasina, said that the incident took place on the night between Monday and Tuesday.

He said that the Belarusian charge d'affaires, Alexander Chesnovsky, was summoned to Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.

During the meeting, a deputy foreign minis-

ter, Piotr Wawrzyk, demanded an explanation and emphasized "that that the actions taken by the Belarusian authorities in recent weeks have the increasingly evident hallmarks of a deliberate escalation."

Wawrzyk "pointed out that Poland deems such actions unacceptable and won't tolerate them. He highlighted that Poland is determined to defend its borders and the external borders of the European Union," Jasina said in his statement.

There was no immediate comment from the Belarusian side.

In recent months, thousands of migrants from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa have been lured to Belarus on tourist visas and encouraged to cross into Poland, Lithuania, and to a lesser extent Latvia — the three EU nations bordering Belarus.

Polish and other EU leaders have accused the government of President Alexander Lukashenko, which is backed by Moscow, of encouraging the migration as a form of hybrid warfare aimed at creating instability in the region and the EU more broadly.

## Pakistan's consistency has impressed me the most: former women's team captain Sana Mir



**DUBAI, Nov 3 (PTI):** Former Pakistan women's team skipper Sana Mir is impressed with the consistent manner in which Babar Azam and his men have performed in the T20 World Cup, a trait not often associated with the squad.

Pakistan have become the team to beat in the ongoing tournament. Armed with a potent bowling attack and a solid batting unit, the 2009 champions are yet to lose a fixture, registering wins over India, New Zealand, Afghanistan and Namibia.

They have already sealed a semifinal berth.

"What has impressed me most about Pakistan at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 has been their consistency," Mir wrote in her column for ICC.

Over many years, Pakistan have proven to be an unpredictable side. Statistics and predictions have time and again failed to determine their results.

"It is not usually something you associate with Pakistan. We always hear about an unpredictable Pakistan but in this tournament they have maintained their intensity.

"The catching has been good, the running between the wickets as well and as a unit they are performing to the standards we expect them to.

"At international lev-

el, you make plans and you have to execute them. That is exactly what they are doing," Mir added.

She hailed coach Saqlain Mushtaq for "empowering" the players while also lauding former Australian cricketer Mathew Hayden and South Africa Vernon Philander, who are working with the team for the tournament.

"A lot of the credit goes to the players who are working so hard and that is the platform that they have used to achieve what they are right now. But I think Saqlain Mushtaq also deserves a lot of praise for the work he is doing.

"Matthew Hayden and Vernon Philander have of course been a big influence and Ramiz Raja has given extra responsibility to Babar Azam as captain. When the captain has that responsibility, they feel confident making decisions. It is the same for the players."

Mir feels the players are playing with freedom which has also led to the good show.

"There are of course more factors in their success, but there is a freedom in this team for the players to express themselves. The environment is great for the players to succeed."

Having chased in their first three matches, skipper Babar opted to bat first in the 45-run win over Namibia on Tuesday. "I was pleased

to see Pakistan decide to bat first against Namibia to give themselves a bigger challenge.

"Regardless of the opposition, it is not easy to bat in those conditions, but they did very well and now they are in a great position to top the group and avoid England, who are playing some great cricket, in the semifinal."

Talking about India's clash against Afghanistan on Wednesday, she said it "will be an interesting contest."

Skipper Virat Kohli had said his team was not brave enough with the bat, ball and in its body language after the loss to New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan have been playing fearless cricket and almost got the better of Pakistan.

"Virat Kohli talked about how India needed to be braver after the loss to New Zealand. Now they are playing the most courageous team in the tournament," Mir said.

"Afghanistan are the only team who love to win the toss and bat. That should make for a great game and it is huge in the context of Group 2.

"It is not easy to get over a big defeat like India suffered to Pakistan and it felt against New Zealand that they had still not fully moved on. For their sake, they will hope to have put those defeats behind them against Afghanistan.

## It's not all doom and gloom for Australia but top order needs to fire: Lee

**DUBAI, Nov 3 (PTI):** Former Australia fast bowler Brett Lee is confident Aaron Finch and Co. can bounce back from their crushing group stage defeat at the hands of England provided their top-order fires in the upcoming matches of the T20 World Cup.

England put up a thoroughly professional display against Australia last week, bundling out the Men from Down Under for 125 before overhauling the target of in 11.4 overs to record a dominating eight-wicket win.

"England were outstanding against Australia. The 50-over World champions were just too good in the end, it's as simple as that," Lee wrote in his column for the ICC's official website.

"Parts of the game were outstanding for Australia but in other parts they probably let themselves down."

Australia have four points from three outings and are under the pump to win their remaining fixtures as South Africa are ahead of them with six points from four games and also have a better net run rate.

"Now it's not all doom and gloom for Australia I try and look at things from a positive point of view. There are a lot of people saying, 'he shouldn't be in the team', 'he shouldn't be batting there' and so on.

"But they say in Hindi, aaram se, aaram se', and that means to relax and go about things patiently. I think that's a really good expression that the team can use just to relax. Everything will be okay.

"I know that there could be changes, they



might look to shuffle the order, they might look to some different bowling options but sometimes you just get outplayed and England outplayed Australia."

Lee feels it is imperative that the Australian top-order, comprising the likes of David Warner, skipper Finch, Steve Smith and all-rounders Glenn Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis, fires upfront, while wicketkeeper Matthew Wade provides a solid finish.

"The top order has to fire, they have to get runs from guys like Steven Smith, Glenn Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis, who has been in good form the first two games but missed out with a duck against England and that's part of the game.

"Matthew Wade has been getting a few runs, getting some starts but Australia need a big 40 or 50 from him to finish so there are areas where Australia can take some positives out."

Lee suggested that the openers could try out a slightly different strategy than going all out in the beginning of the innings.

"I know the Aussies want to get off to a flyer,

I heard Warner say it, I heard it from Aaron Finch and they are two brilliant players, two guys I'd pick in my side every single day of the week.

"Maybe it's about taking the foot off the accelerator a fraction at the top. I know that some teams go really hard in the first six but other teams don't take as many risks so perhaps Australia can do that but I'll still back Warner every day of the week to go down town first ball if he has to."

Talking about the Australian bowling unit he said "They probably didn't get the right line or length against England and in this format there are days where the batsmen miss out and the bowlers defend.

"But when collectively you don't have your best game, you can see what happens."

Despite the ordinary performance against England, the 44-year-old backed Australia to lift their maiden T20 World Cup title.

Ahead of the tournament, Lee had picked India as the team to beat but the former pacer feels England and Pakistan are top contenders.

## Odisha FC announce squad for upcoming ISL season



**BHUBANESWAR, Nov 3 (PTI):** Odisha FC on Wednesday announced their squad for the Hero Indian Super League 2021-22 season.

The Bhubaneswar-based team is gearing up for the opening match against Bengaluru FC on November 24 at Tilak Maidan in Vasco, Goa.

The Kalinga Warriors had already announced the three captains for the season -- Vinit Rai, Victor Mongil, and Hector Rodas a few days ago. The promotion of three youth team graduates - Deven Sawhney, Akshunna Tyagi, and CVL Remtluanga - into the senior side was also announced last month.

The squad includes six foreigners - Victor Mongil, Hector Rodas,

Javi Hernandez, Aridai Cabrera, Liridon Krasniqi (AFC), and Jonathas De Jesus while seven youngsters - Lalhrezuala Sailung, Deven Sawhney, Thoiba Singh Moirangthem, Isak Vanlalruatfela, CVL Remtluanga, Akshunna Tyagi, and Nikhil Raj have been classified as developmental players.

Speaking about the squad, head coach Kiko Ramirez explained, "We have a good mix of experienced and young players. We are really happy with the team that we are building and pleasantly surprised to see the level of the Indian players. We think that some of them will make an impact this season in the Hero ISL."

"Also, all the players have a really good attitude to learn and the foreigners

will bring their experience about how to play in different situations."

**ODISHA FC SQUAD:**  
Goalkeepers: Kamaljit Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Ravi Kumar

Defenders: Gaurav Bora, Lalruathara, Sahil Panwar, Hendry Antony, Lalhrezuala Sailung, Sebastian Thangmuansang, Deven Sawhney, Victor Mongil, Hector Rodas

Midfielders: Thoiba Singh Moirangthem, Vinit Rai, Paul Ramfangzauva, Isaac Vannalsawma, Isak Vanlalruatfela, Liridon Krasniqi, Javi Hernandez, Jerry Mawihmingthanga, Nandhakumar Sekar, CVL Remtluanga, Nikhil Raj

Forwards: Akshunna Tyagi, Daniel Lalhlhimpua, Aridai Cabrera, Jonathas Cristian De Jesus.

## Mizoram logs 638 fresh COVID-19 cases, one fatality

**AIZAWL, Nov 3 (PTI):** The COVID-19 situation continued to improve in Mizoram, where single-day cases have remained below the 1,000-mark for the last 20 days, as the tally rose to 1,22,992 with 638 fresh infections, an official said on Wednesday.

The death toll mounted to 436, as one more patient succumbed to the virus, he said.

At least 153 children and a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan are

among the newly infected people, the official said.

Mizoram now has 6,325 active cases, while 1,16,231 people have recovered from the disease, including 796 since Tuesday.

More than 13.24 lakh samples have been tested for COVID-19 so far.

Meanwhile, State Immunisation Officer Lalzawmi said a total of 12.16 lakh vaccine doses have been administered to beneficiaries.

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# China, Russia urge UNSC to end key sanctions on North Korea

**UNITED NATIONS (AP):** China and Russia are urging the U.N. Security Council to end a host of sanctions against North Korea ranging from the export of seafood and textiles to the cap on imports of refined petroleum products and the ban on its citizens working overseas and sending home their earnings.

A draft resolution circulated to council members and obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press stresses the economic difficulties in North Korea and says these and other sanctions should be lifted "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

The Security Council initially imposed sanctions on North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and made them tougher and tougher in response to further nuclear tests and an increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile program. Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley said in 2018 that the sanctions had cut off all North Korean exports and 90% of its trade and disbanded the pool of workers whom North Korea sent abroad to earn hard currency.

The draft resolution expands on a similar resolution Russia and China had circulated in December 2019. It faced opposition from Western nations when it was discussed and was never formally introduced at the council for a vote.

Several U.N. diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because the draft has not been made public, indicated it would likely face a similar uphill struggle today, pointing to North Korea's continuing violations of U.N. sanctions.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations said North Korea has failed to comply with sanctions on its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and the Biden administration "remains committed to the sanctions regime" and calls on all member states to enforce the measures.



On Oct. 19, North Korea fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine in its fifth round of weapons tests in recent weeks, all of which violated U.N. sanctions. It was the North's first underwater-launched test since October 2019 and the highest-profile test since President Joe Biden took office in January.

The China-Russia draft resolution makes no mention of the missile tests. Instead, it notes that the North has refrained from conducting nuclear tests since September 2017, has kept to a moratorium on further nuclear tests and test launches of intermediate-range and intercontinental missiles from April 21, 2018, and has taken additional denuclearization measures since.

The proposed resolution underscores "the necessity to respect the legitimate security concerns of the DPRK and ensure the welfare, inherent dignity and rights of people in the DPRK," using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It reaffirms that U.N. resolutions "are not intended

to have adverse humanitarian consequences" and notes "the serious impact of sanctions and the COVID-19 pandemic" within the country.

North Korean is struggling to deal with soaring prices of goods and shortages of medicine and other essential supplies that have accelerated the spread of water-borne diseases such as typhoid fever. The country has yet to report any cases of the coronavirus though experts have questioned its claim of a perfect record.

The China-Russia draft calls on all U.N. member nations to intensify their efforts to provide humanitarian assistance, "including but not limited to food, fertilizer and medical supplies," and to provide goods, materials, technology and financial services needed by North Korea to combat COVID-19, improve livelihoods and develop the economy.

The draft resolution would lift a ban on North Korea importing some industrial machinery and transport vehicles used to build infrastructure that can't be diverted to the

country's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The long list of construction and humanitarian items that would be exempt from sanctions includes bulldozers and firefighting vehicles; materials for railways and traffic control; air conditioners and radiators for heating; iron or steel parts for roofs and windows; screws and bolts; sewing needles and vacuum cleaners; kitchen utensils and equipment; agricultural equipment, bicycles and fire extinguishers.

On the political front, the China-Russia draft welcomed "the positive outcomes" of talks between the DPRK and South Korea and between former President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. At Kim's second summit with Trump in Hanoi in February 2019, negotiations faltered after the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

The proposed resolution calls on the U.S. and DPRK to resume dialogue aimed at

building lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. It calls on all parties to consider taking further steps to reduce military tension and the risks of military confrontation, including by adopting a declaration or peace treaty ending the 1950-53 Korean War. The war ended with an armistice, leaving the peninsula technically in a state of war.

South Korea, which has expressed a desire for engagement with the North within the boundaries of the U.N. sanctions, did not immediately react to China and Russia's proposals for lifting sanctions on the North.

During a period of diplomacy in 2018, South Korean President Moon Jae-in met three times with North Korea's leader and vowed to resume inter-Korean economic cooperation when possible, expressing optimism that the sanctions would end and allow such projects.

But North Korea cut off cooperation with South Korea as its diplomacy with the Trump administration derailed in 2019.

## Dutch king, queen visit the United Arab Emirates

**SWEIHAN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (AP):** The king and queen of the Netherlands visited a strawberry farm Wednesday as part of a tour of the United Arab Emirates, which will see the royals also stop by Dubai's Expo 2020.

King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima visited a strawberry

farm in the deserts of Abu Dhabi near the city of Sweihan. While there, they toured the facility, walking among the rows of strawberries growing inside the facility.

The king and queen later will visit the Netherlands pavilion at Expo 2020, the world's fair now ongoing in Dubai.

## EU lawmakers meet Taiwan premier in first official visit

**TAIPEI, TAIWAN (AP):** Bumping their elbows in greeting, European Union parliamentarians met with Taiwan's premier Su Tseng-chang on Wednesday, in the first official visit of an EU delegation to the island.

Thirteen members of the EU's committee on foreign interference in democratic processes are visiting Taiwan, after the EU parliament passed a resolution last month calling for the body to "intensify EU-Taiwan political relations."

"Although we are geographically very far away, between our two sides, we share the same values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law... In those regards, we are actually very close," said Su.

The European delegation will also meet President Tsai Ing-wen and digital minister Audrey Tang, and visit Taiwanese think tanks, NGOs and others working on countering disinformation.

The visit comes amid growing support for the island and rising negative perceptions toward China in Western countries.

"The flourishing of your democracy is formidable and this is why we are so happy to be here," said Raphael Glucksmann, the chair of the foreign interference committee. "You have shown that in this region democracy can flourish and that authoritarian regimes are not the future." Lithuania, an EU member country, accepted Taiwan's request in July

to open a "representative office" in its capital city that will act as a de facto embassy. It has also donated hundreds of thousands of vaccines to the island this year, while courting China's displeasure. In August, China withdrew its ambassador to Lithuania in protest and expelled Lithuania's ambassador to Beijing. In October, the EU parliament voted to pass a resolution on Taiwan issues, noting tensions in the South China Sea.

The non-binding resolution, which passed with 580 votes in favor, 26 against and 66 abstentions, calls on the European Union to immediately begin taking steps to establish a bilateral investment agreement with Taiwan. It also proposes the politically symbolic gesture of changing the name of the representative office in Taiwan from the European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan to the European Union Office in Taiwan.

The report also "call(s) on China to put an immediate end to its ongoing intrusions into Taiwan's air defence identification zone," saying that the "EU greatly values security in the Taiwan Strait."

China has sent an increasing amount of fighter jets toward the island in a prolonged campaign of military harassment since at least last year, when Taiwan began publicly releasing the data. China has said it sends the planes as a warning to "Taiwan separatists" and to safeguard its sovereignty.

# France says Australia hits 'new low' leaking Macron texts

**CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA (AP):** Australia leaking French President Emmanuel Macron's text messages to the media was a "new low" and a warning to other world leaders that their private communications with the Australian government could be weaponized and used against them, the French ambassador said on Wednesday.

French Ambassador to Australia Jean-Pierre Thebault used an address to Australia's National Press Club to make a withering attack on Canberra's surprise decision to scrap a 90 billion Australian dollar (\$66 billion) contract with France to build a fleet of 12 diesel-electric submarines.

The extraordinarily bitter bilateral spat is heightened by both national leaders seeking reelection early next year. Doubts are growing about how the relationship can be effectively reset if both Marcon and Morrison remain in charge.

France is undermining international confidence in Australia as its government tries to finalize a free trade deal with the European Union.

Australian media on Tuesday reported the contents of a text message from Macron to Prime Minister Scott Morrison in September in which the French leader asked: "Should I expect good or bad news for our joint submarine ambitions?"

Morrison used it as proof that Marcon knew the deal was in doubt after Macron accused the Australian leader of lying during a Paris dinner in June. Marcon said Morrison gave him no indication the deal would not go ahead.

France has condemned the leak as a further breach of trust.

"This is an unprecedented new low, in terms of how to proceed and also in



terms of truth and trust," Thebault said. "Doing so... sends a very worrying signal for all heads of state: Beware, in Australia there will be leaks and what you say in confidence to your partners will be eventually used and weaponized against you," Thebault added.

Rather than proof that Morrison hadn't lied to Marcon, the message suggested Australia had left France in the dark.

"It completely demonstrates that until the last minute, we didn't know where things were heading to," Thebault said. "It completely demonstrates that nothing has ever been told to us."

Australia canceled the deal when it formed an alliance with U.S. and Britain to acquire a fleet of eight nuclear-powered submarines built with U.S. technology.

Morrison maintains that he did not lie to the French leader and had been clear that conventional submarines would not meet Australia's evolving strategic needs. Thebault rejected Mor-

risson's account. "The deceit was intentional," Thebault said. "The way it was handled was plainly a stab in the back."

The French ambassador agreed with Macron's assessment that he had been lied to by Morrison on multiple occasions. "Maybe there is a difference between misleading and lying," Thebault said.

"But, you know, among heads of states and governments, when you mislead a friend and an ally, you lie to him," Thebault added.

Malcolm Turnbull, the Australian prime minister who signed the French submarine contract and considers Marcon a personal friend, joined the attack on his successor's credibility.

"Scott has always had a reputation for telling lies," Turnbull told reporters. "He's lied to me on many occasions."

Asked if the prime minister's office had leaked Macron's text, Morrison did not directly answer.

"I don't think there's any profit for anyone in continuing down this path,"

Morrison told reporters in the United Arab Emirates, where he is visiting on his way home from Scotland.

"Claims were made and claims were refuted," Morrison said. "Australia made the decision not to go ahead with a contract for a submarine that was not going to do the job that Australia needed it to do, and I'll never make any apologies for that decision."

Damien Kingsbury, a Deakin University expert on international politics, described the French envoy's strident criticisms, extraordinary for an ambassador of a host nation, as "hugely embarrassing" for the government.

But Kingsbury ruled out Australia reacting by sending Thebault home.

"Anything the Australian government does now in response would be seen to be at a minimum engaging in tit for tat and that would just prolong the dispute and that's the last thing the Australian government wants," Kingsbury said.

Thebault and French Ambassador to the United States Philippe Etienne were recalled to Paris after Australia's new nuclear propulsion alliance was announced.

Etienne returned to Washington in September, but Thebault did not come back to Canberra until last month.

Thebault said France had "found again the path to acting together" with the United States.

The broken submarine contract had led to postponements in the European Union's negotiations with Australia on a free trade agreement that had been scheduled to resume last month.

France had "no reason to interfere" with the European Commission's negotiations on behalf of the 27 member countries, Thebault said.

**CORONAVIRUS**  
PRECAUTIONS & SAFETY TIPS  
DON'T LOWER THE GUARD

LOCKDOWN HAS BEEN LIFTED, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THE THREAT OF COVID-19 HAS NOT YET SUBSIDED.

As we adapt to the new normal, here is a reminder of the precautions you must take-

**WEAR A MASK**

Always wear a mask to prevent droplets from going outside



**GET A FLU VACCINATION**

Get your flu shot to develop an immune response before flu season begins, particularly if you have comorbidities



**WASH YOUR HANDS**

Wash your hands often, for about 20 seconds each with soap & carry a sanitizer



**MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people



**GET TESTED**

Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Stay at home until you get the result.



**COVER YOUR MOUTH & NOSE WHILE SNEEZING, OR COUGHING**

Before stepping outside, make sure to carry a handkerchief or a packet of tissues.



**FOLLOW PRECAUTIONS BEFORE STEPPING OUT**

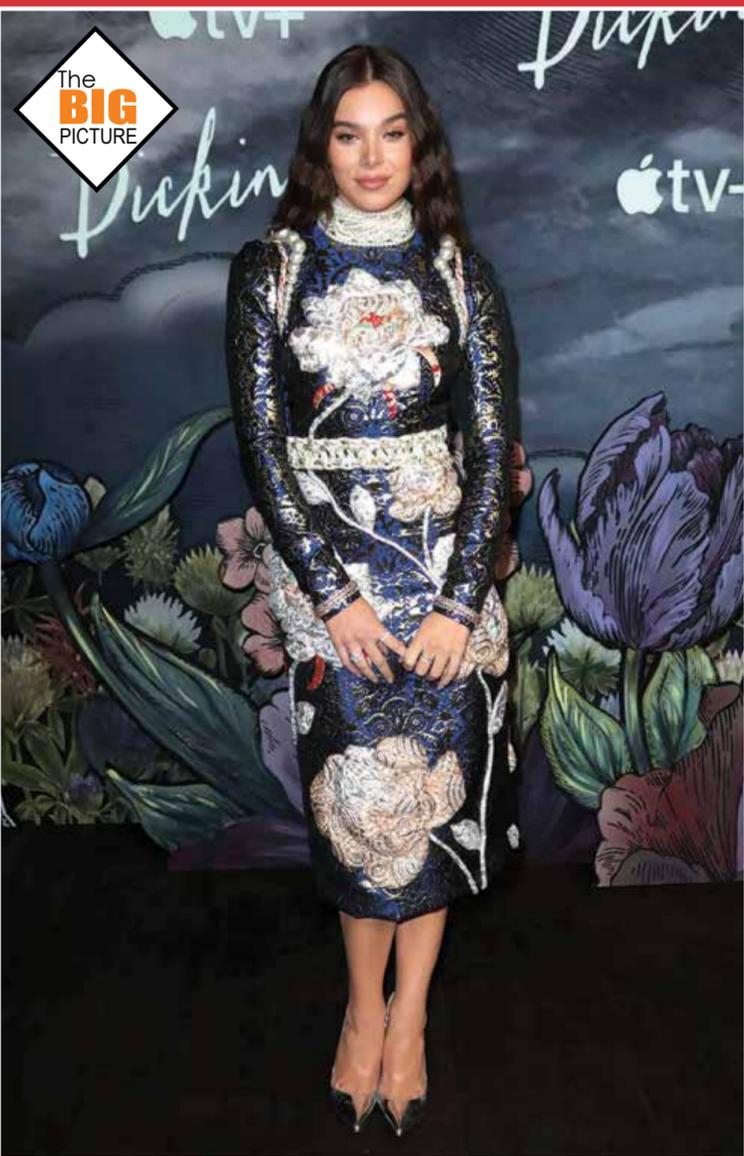
Carry your sanitizer, water bottle and mask. Importantly, avoid crowded areas.



**CHECK YOUR TEMPERATURE**

Monitor your temperature on regular basis





**ROUND 3!** Actress HaileeSteinfeld walked the red carpet premiere of season 3 of Dickinson.

## AdiviSesh's 'Major' to release in February 2022

**MUMBAI, NOV 3 (PTI):** South star AdiviSesh on Wednesday announced that his multilingual feature "Major", based on the life of 2008 Mumbai terror attack martyr Major SandeepUnnikrishnan, will release theatrically on February 11, 2022.

The movie, directed by SashiKiranTikka of "Goodachari" fame, traces the journey of Major SandeepUnnikrishnan, who selflessly fought to save the lives of people during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

Backed by South superstar Mahesh Babu, "Major" has been postponed a number of times owing to the coronavirus pandemic.

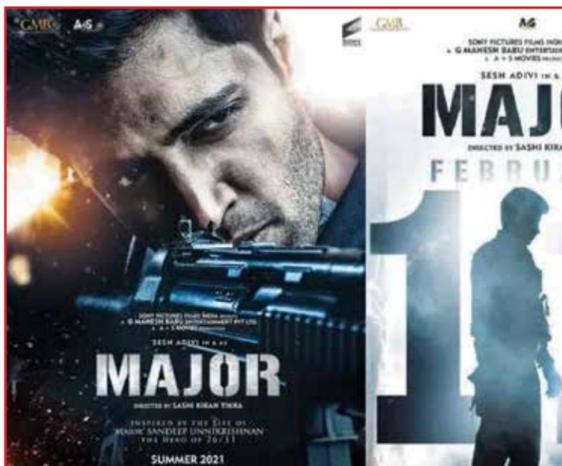
The movie has been shot across 75 locations in 120 days in three languages -- Telugu, Hindi and Malayalam.

In a social media post, the 35-year-old actor announced the new release date of his much-awaited movie.

#MajorTheFilm releases on FEBRUARY 11th 2022! WORLDWIDE in THEATRES only #MajorOnFeb11, Sesh wrote alongside a one

minute 26 second behind-the-scenes video from the film.

"This video shows you a glimpse. A Massive film inspired by the life, love and LEGACY of #MajorSandeepUnnikrishnan @ur-



strulyMahesh. Hindi: Telugu: Malayalam, he added. "Major" also stars SobhitaDhulipala, SaieeManjrekar, Prakash Raj, Revathi and Murlu Sharma in pivotal roles.

The film is produced by Sony Pictures Films India in association with Babu's GMB Entertainment and A+S Movies.

# 'Good Omens 2' begins production in Scotland

**MUMBAI, NOV 3 (PTI):** Production has begun in Scotland on the second season of the Amazon Original series "Good Omens", starring award-winning actors Michael Sheen and David Tennant, who return in the leading roles of the angel Aziraphale and demon Crowley.

Supporting Sheen and Tennant are many of the key cast from the first season, who return for the season season with some reprising their roles, and others playing new characters.

A premiere date will be announced later.

Originally based on Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's international best-selling novel, the new season will explore storylines that go beyond the original source material to illuminate the uncanny friendship between Aziraphale, a fussy angel and rare book dealer, and the fast-living demon Crowley.

Having been on Earth since The Beginning, and with the Apocalypse thwarted, Aziraphale and Crowley are getting back to easy living amongst mortals in London's Soho when an unexpected messenger presents a surprising mystery.

Paul Adeyefa, Michael McKean, Gloria Obianyo, Miranda Richardson, Maggie Service, Reece Shearsmith and Nina Sosanya round off the returning cast.

I am so happy to be back here on the streets of Soho, watching, every day, the glorious performances of Michael Sheen and David Tennant. I miss having Terry

Pratchett's genius, but it does feel like we are still all walking around inside his head.

"It's been an absolute pleasure to have the brilliant John Finnemore co-write this season's story shenanigans with me, and to work with director and

have reassembled. Our team is being enriched with new talent on both sides of the camera so I am excited to be at the helm for six more episodes of what we hope will be heavenly entertainment.

The new season is produced by Am-



azon Studios, BBC Studios Productions, The Blank Corporation, and Narrativa. Gaiman continues as executive producer and will co-showrunner along with executive producer Mackinnon, who will also return to direct.

Rob Wilkins of Narrativa, representing Pratchett's estate, John Finnemore, and BBC Studios Productions' head of comedy Josh Cole will also executive produce, with Finnemore serving as co-writer alongside Gaiman.

Co-showrunner and director Douglas Mackinnon said: Having a company of players reuniting for this second season of Good Omens is like bringing a family back together, this time in Scotland. Not only the cast, but also many of our Good Omens Season One crew

## Kristen Stewart engaged to partner Dylan Meyer

**LOS ANGELES, NOV 3 (PTI):** Hollywood star Kristen Stewart has announced her engagement to Dylan Meyer.

The 31-year-old actor shared the news during her appearance on SiriusXM's "The Howard Stern Show".

"We're marrying, we're totally gonna do it," Stewart told Stern.

"I wanted to be proposed to, so I think I very distinctly carved out what I wanted and she nailed it. It was very cute. She did very well," she added.

The actor further said that she wants to have an intimate wedding ceremony in her and Meyer's hometown.

"I want to stay home. I want to be in LA so everyone can come, and I want it to be pretty chill. I don't want anyone walking anyone down any aisles. Like, we're just gonna stand, do vows," Stewart said.

Stewart and Meyer, a screenwriter, have been dating since 2019 when they were first romantically linked. The actor was earlier in a relationship with model Stella Maxwell.

On the work front, Stewart currently stars in the Princess Diana film "Spencer", which is set to release in US theatres on Friday.

## Kristen Stewart is engaged to Dylan Meyer: 'We're marrying'

**K**risten Stewart is engaged to screenwriter Dylan Meyer. The 31-year-old actor announced the news The Howard Stern Show Tuesday.

"We're marrying, it's happening," Stewart said.

She also revealed that Meyer did the proposing.

"I wanted to be proposed to, so I think I very distinctly carved out what I wanted and

she nailed it," Stewart said.

The two started dating in 2019 after they met at a mutual friends' party and bonded over having grown up in Los Angeles. Meyer posted a photo of them laying on the floor in each other's arms with the caption "Awful proud of this hard-working princess."

## Diwali 2021: How Amitabh Bachchan And Other Stars Wished Fans

**D**iwali is here at last. And, we cannot stop gushing about this wonderful festival of lights. Bollywood celebrities, too, can't keep themselves from spreading joy on this occasion. From posting photos about the celebration at their homes to wishing their fans a peaceful Diwali, our celebrities have already embraced the festive vibes. Diwali is not just another day for a mere photo dump. Instead, it's a day to spread some warmth. And, the posts on social media are already showing us this bright side. From Amitabh Bachchan to Yami Gautam, stars are wishing their Instafam a hearty Diwali this year.

First up is veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan. He does not lose a chance to spread good vibes among his fans. And, Big B left a heartwarming message for Diwali too. In this post, the actor wrote, "May this Diwali be filled with the brilliance of lights, calm, peace and prosperity. Anek such kamaanaayein Deepavali ki [Many many good wishes for Diwali]."

Farhan Akhtar left a family postcard on Instagram where the Diwali Puja is underway. The photo radiates the joy of the festive season.

The Bollywood star simply wrote in Hindi, "Happy Diwali."

Tusshar Kapoor's Diwali wishes poured in with a sweet photo featuring himself and sister, producer and director Ekta Kapoor. The siblings smiled for the camera and called it, "Diwali shenanigans."

Soha Ali Khan's house is dazzling with lights, rangoli and beautiful decorations. How do we know? The actress showed us around the festive decorations on Instagram stories. We see colourful rangoli patterns, candles and lamps around her house.

Actress Pooja Hegde also gave us a glimpse of her home during Diwali. On her Instagram Stories, we see jars of marigolds kept alongside diyas. We definitely feel the homely warmth.

This is Yami Gautam's first Diwali after her marriage. This year, the festival bears a freshness for her and it reflects in her post. She posted a photo with her husband, Aditya Dhar and wrote, "Every year, Diwali brings new memories and new beginnings." She added, "Happy Chhoti Diwali to you and your family. Wish you a year full of happiness, health and success."

### Aries:

It's time to assess both your actions and words, Aries. Where are you coming from and what is the message you want to put out there? Make that metaphorical journey toward your heart. Tap into that space of kindness and compassion. Begin to embody the love that you have been speaking about. By doing so, you will watch your interpersonal relationships transform for the better, beautiful.

Tip: Speak with love.

### Taurus:

This phase of your life is about the hustle. You're putting in your best efforts without being attached to a specific outcome, which in turn is propelling your career in the right direction. The good news is, November is bringing with it a solution to your financial woes as well. We're talking about a surge in profits + a sense of feeling secure about where you are. Yes, everything is as good as it looks on paper! So, ease into the feeling of being held and taken care of by the Universe.

Tip: The financial security you desire is on the cards.

### Gemini:

Here's the thing, Gemini: you're saying one thing and doing another. You're talking about living a life of passion and settling for what seems practical and looks good on paper. So, consider changing your approach a little. Tak-

ing a step towards that which reignites your inner fire, no matter how intimidating it seems. The transition won't be easy. You will be tested at every step along the way. But, settling for a lukewarm existence has never been your style, baby!

Tip: It's time to realign with your sacred purpose.

### Cancer:

We all start off with a certain dream. However, as we go along, the given dreams shapeshifts into a new form. Could this be true in your case too? Are you holding on to an idea of what could be rather than how you are being guided to evolve? Loosen the grip a little, Cancer. Assess the possibilities that are available to you. Know that no matter where you are in your life, you have the permission to start over.

Tip: Sometimes, you have to grow out of old aspects of yourself.

### Leo:

You've been repeating the story of limitations, Leo. You've been telling yourself all the people you will never be and all the things you will never achieve. So, how about changing the narrative a little? How about adopting the language of hope and of faith? The change that you have been manifesting is just around the corner and it requires you to believe in your power and potential.

Tip: It's time to believe in your power and potential, baby!

### Virgo:

The trouble is, we waste too much time trying to rationalise our feelings. But, the head has no business in matters of the heart. So, recognise what's taking place underneath the surface. Give yourself the permission to feel all that you need to. And then, as you move into a space of wholeness within yourself, communicate your truth to the other in a tangible manner. Remember, love is all that there is, beautiful. Everything else is but an illusion.

Tip: Speak from your heart.

### Libra:

We're not always prepared for the changes coming our way, yet we somehow are. It's time to go with the flow, Libra. It's time to witness your life taking a one-eighty-degree turn before your own eyes. Overheard at the cosmic conference: this transformation is going to be as exciting as it sounds on paper. What's more, you will also be presented with the opportunity to expand your empire. Keep the long-term vision in mind as you make that bold move. Something tells us you're going to have a lot to smile about.

Tip: There are big changes coming your way.

### Scorpio:

Opportunities such as these don't come by every day, Scorpio. Opportunities such as these don't come by every day. So, don't waste time thinking over the "ifs" and

the "buts". Say yes to what's coming your way knowing that you will always be taken care of. But, that doesn't mean you should act recklessly. Keep your feet firmly planted on the ground, beautiful. Tapping into your practical side will help you make decisions that will serve you in the long run.

Tip: Make the most of the given opportunity.

### Sagittarius:

This is a testing time in the Sagittarius HQ with all kinds of unresolved trauma to the fore. Yes, we're talking about repressed emotions that you haven't had the chance to look at for a while now. Instead of denying yourself the healing process, lean into it. Sign up for therapy. Call upon your friends. Get the support you need at this moment. You will get through this as a stronger and more resilient person.

Tip: Dedicate yourself to the inner work, beautiful.

### Capricorn:

It's time to show up for your mission, Capricorn. It's time to show up for what you love without worrying about the outcome. The only question you want to ask yourself today: How can I be of service to the Universe? What's more, you are stepping into a period of deep healing. A period of doing the work consistently and pulling the weeds out of your garden. Stepping out of the darkness can blind you temporarily. Ease into the discomfort none-

theless knowing that Spirit has your back.

Tip: You are stepping into a period of deep healing.

### Aquarius:

Your defenses are up, Aquarius, and you're doing everything in your control to shut them out. What do you think is the reason behind your actions? Is this a clear case of incompatibility or are your inner demons out to play again? Work through those fears, beautiful. Heal the old wounds that are telling you you will get rejected by the one(s) you love. The Universe is holding space for a major transformation. The real question: are you willing to show up?

Tip: It's time to heal the old wounds that are coming in the way of deeper bonds.

### Pisces:

Here's your affirmation for the day, Pisces: "I trust myself to create the abundance I deserve." Repeat these words out loud to yourself with unyielding faith in the Universe. Even better, write it down in your journal a few times or pin it up on your work desk as a reminder. It's true that things haven't been great on the financial front for you. But that doesn't mean matters will not take a turn for the better. It all comes down to transmuting that lack mentality and calling in the blessings you deserve. What Spirit wants you to know: both your wants and your needs will be taken care of. Tip: It's time to call in the abundance you deserve.