



**TAAPSEE PANNU STARTS SHOOTING FOR MITHALI RAJ BIOPIC 'SHABAASH MITHU'**

pg 08

**THEY CONTINUE TO BE AT RISK BECAUSE THE PREDATORS CONTINUE TO GET AWAY**

pg 04

**AMITABH BACHCHAN TO STEP IN FOR RISHI KAPOOR IN 'THE INTERN' ADAPTATION**

pg 08



# Summit TIMES

Vol 06 | Issue 92 | Gangtok | Wednesday 07 April 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## 7 tourists among 23 new Covid cases in Sikkim

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

Sikkim recorded a noticeable spike in Covid cases today with the number of active cases of novel coronavirus here going up to 65 with the detection of 23 cases in the last 24 hours.

All the new cases were picked up in East District and include seven tourists from Goa and Gujarat.

In the meanwhile, seven more persons were discharged from home isolation after completing their isolation period to further improve the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim to 5,977. The state's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 currently stands at 6,286.

In his daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia informed that the 23 new cases were detected in the testing of 208 samples on

Monday. While 22 were found positive in RT-PCR testing of 159 samples, while one more person was reported positive in rapid antigen testing of 46 samples.

Among the new cases reported from in and around Gangtok are one person from Development Area, one from Sichey, one from Chandmari, one from upper Arithang, one from Bojoghari, one from 5th Mile-Tadong and one from Shyari. Likewise, a person from Pacheykhani in Pakyong, three from Ranipool, one from Asam Lingzey and one from Temi-Tarku in East District and one person from Darap, West District, who were screened at the Flu Clinic of STNM Hospital also tested positive for COVID-19.

Mr Bhutia added that 46-year-old Dhanendra Thakur who recorded his address

as Chandmari and 37-year-old Subhatra Kumar Yadav who has given Chongay as his current residence could not be contacted over the phone number provided by them and urged them to immediately contact the concerned authorities.

He informed that two tourists from Goa and five from Gujarat [a family of three members and another family of two] were also found positive for COVID-19 and all seven returned home on receiving their Covid test reports.

He added that contact tracing teams have listed out the hotels where these tourists stayed and their primary contacts.

In the meantime, a total of 2,403 persons in different categories received COVID vaccines in different parts of Sikkim on Monday.

Out of these 2403, are 2253 who received the first shot of the vaccines while 150 completed their vaccine schedule with the second dose.

While giving district-wise details of vaccination, Mr Bhutia informed that 1,569 persons [1,451 first dose & 118 second dose] in East District, 76 persons [68 first dose & 08 second dose] in West District, 537 persons [513 first dose & 24 second dose in North District] and 221 persons in South District received vaccine shots.

He added that 28 healthcare workers [14 first dose & 14 second dose], 138 frontline workers [55 first dose & 83 second dose], 1724 persons in age group of 45 to 59 years [1715 first dose & 09 second dose] and 513 persons in age group of 60 years & above [469 first dose & 44 second dose] were vaccinated for COVID-19 yesterday.

## Govt hoping youth help more elders get vaccinated against Covid



### SAGAR CHETTRI

**GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

The State Government is looking towards the younger generation to ensure wider vaccine coverage among the elderly. Health & Family Welfare Department Principal Secretary, K Sreenivasulu, while addressing a press conference today, shared that the lower than expected turn-out of the elderly for vaccination against Covid-19 is being looked at with concern by the State Government.

The Principal Secretary informed that the Chief Minister, who is currently in Gujarat, convened a meeting with Ministers and senior State Government officials on Monday to discuss the ongoing Covid vaccination drive and other pertinent issues. The meeting was triggered by the nation recording its highest incidence of daily cases yesterday.

The meeting delved at length on the low turnout of elderly people, especially those from rural Sikkim, for COVID vaccination and deliberated on alternative ways to increase vaccination coverage in rural areas.

The Principal Secretary mentioned that the State Government was putting in all efforts to ensure that every person

in Sikkim is vaccinated against COVID-19 and stressed that the youth could play an important role in rural areas to bring the elderly from their respective places to the vaccination centres.

Sikkim, he added, was fully equipped with all required infrastructure, testing and other facilities and vaccines to handle the pandemic but there was need for full support from the people to continue this fight against COVID.

This has been a common theme in the State Government's position on the efforts to contain the spread of Covid in Sikkim - wanting the people to be more responsible and insisting that the government had everything in place, including a plan to contain Covid.

The Principal Secretary today stressed on the need for people to properly follow COVID-appropriate behavior even after vaccination.

Likewise, Sikkim Police Special DGP, Akshay Sachdeva, appealed to the people to extend cooperation like they did last year when the pandemic broke out.

He urged hoteliers to check the RT-CPR reports of guests from outside and in the event that they do not have such a report, keep them in the hotel until they get tested.

## CM urges people to keep calm

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

Chief Minister, PS Tamang appealed to the people of Sikkim to keep calm after an earthquake measuring 5.4 magnitude shook the state at 8:49 pm on Monday night. In a Facebook post late on Monday night, the CM urged people to not fall for rumors and assist fellow citizens and tourists if necessary.

The CM, who is on an official tour of Gujarat, said that he is being updated by officials on the situation at home. He also informed that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi called him and enquired about the current situation in Sikkim.

Meanwhile, the State Disaster Control Room, Gangtok, said that no report of damage was received from any part of the state till 11:45 pm last night following the earthquake.

## India records 96,982 new cases

**NEW DELHI, APR 6**

**(PTI):** The daily rise in new coronavirus infections in India remained above 90,000 for the third consecutive day taking the nationwide COVID-19 tally of cases to 1,26,86,049, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

A total of 96,982 cases have been reported in a span of 24 hours, while the death toll increased to 1,65,547 with 446 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

India on Monday recorded an all-time high of 1,03,558 single day new coronavirus infections in a span of 24 hours. Registering a steady increase for the 27th day in row, the active cases have increased to



7,88,223 comprising 6.21 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 92.48 per cent, the data stated.

The active caseload was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12 comprising 1.25 per cent of the total infections.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,17,32,279, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.30 per cent, the data stated.

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

on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 25,02,31,269 samples have been tested up to April 5 with 12,11,612 samples being tested on Monday.

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### 3 MNP Councillors back Pentok uncontested candidate as president

#### SUMMIT REPORT

**MANGAN, 06 APR:**

Three of the four newly elected Councillors of Mangan Nagar Panchayat (MNP) have decided to support Norkit Lepcha, uncontested candidate from Pentok Ward, as the new President of the MNP.

The three Councillors, Pemkit Lepcha, Ugen Palzor Kazi, Hanglu Lachenpa submitted a letter/memorandum conveying the same to DM (N), Tenzing T. Kaleon at DAC Mangan today.

## Justice NV Ramana appointed next Chief Justice Of India

**NEW DELHI, 06 APR [NDTV]:** Justice NV Ramana has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of India by President Ram Nath Kovind. He will take oath on April 24.

Last month, Chief Justice of India SA Bobde, who is due to retire on April 23, had recommended Justice Ramana as his successor.

Born in an agricultural family in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district on August 27, 1957, Justice Ramana will be the country's top judge for a year and four months, till August 26, 2022.

He will be the second Chief Justice of India from Andhra Pradesh; Justice K Subba Rao was the ninth Chief Justice of India from 1966-67.

In his nearly four-decade-long

career, Justice Ramana "has practiced in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals and the Supreme Court of India in civil, criminal, constitutional, labour, service and election matters. He has specialised in constitutional, criminal, service and inter-state river laws," as per his profile on the official website of the Supreme Court.

He was "appointed as a permanent Judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on June 27, 2000. He functioned as acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court from March 10, 2013 to May 20, 2013," it further reads.

He was elevated as the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in 2013

and as a judge in the top court in 2014.

Justice Ramana, 63, was part of a bench that ruled that suspension of Internet in Jammu and Kashmir should be reviewed immediately. He was also part of the panel of judges which held that the Chief Justice's office comes under the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Justice Bobde, who has been part of several key cases including the historic Ayodhya verdict, was sworn in as the 47th Chief Justice of India in November 2019, succeeding Justice (retired) Ranjan Gogoi. The Ayodhya verdict had cleared the way for the construction of a Ram Temple, ending decades-old dispute.

The Streets for People Challenge is an initiative of the Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, to inspire cities to create walking-friendly streets through quick measures, in response to COVID-19.

The city-led Design Competition aims to crowd source innovative ideas for designing and testing the pilot interventions through quick, low-cost, and innovative solutions.

Who can participate?

- Professionals
- Students
- Multi-disciplinary collaborations

Site 1: Flagship project  
For Both:  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize : Rs.10,000    2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Rs 7,500    3<sup>rd</sup> Prize:Rs. 5,000

Site 2: Neighbourhood level

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT: <http://smartnet.niua.org/indiastreetchallenge/competition/>

Competition roll-out  
5<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Registration closes  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Walking Audit  
13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Submission by 11:59 pm IST  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Announcing of results  
27<sup>th</sup> April 2021



# IPS probationers and Mauritian cops in training call on Governor



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

A group of 18 Indian Police Service probationers and three Mauritian Police personnel called on Governor Gan- ga Prasad at the Raj Bha-

wan today.

They are in Sikkim as part of a study and cultural tour, a press release informs.

During the inter- action, the Governor advised the young offi-

cers to continue their self-learning and value what they have earned for themselves to serve the people. He urged them to work with zeal and high devotion in their respective cadre

states.

Ratna Singh and Amit Kumar from among the IPS probationers and Mo- hammad Immambocus from Mauritius Police Force shared their views and ex- periences the Sikkim visit.

Mohammad Immam- bocus lauded Sikkim for organic farming, cleanli- ness and environmental initiatives of the State.

The Governor wished the young officers very successful careers ahead.

## Middle Gyalshing school launches monthly newsletter

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

The Literary team of Middle Gyalshing Secondary School, West Sikkim, led by Ongmoola Bhutia and Sweta Gautam, assisted by the Literary Captains of the school, launched the monthly newsletter of the school today, a press release informs. The newsletter was formally launched by Panchayat President, Gyalshing-Om- chung GPU.

The newsletter has been started to promote interest in reading and writing among the students, while also recording the activities of the school on a monthly basis.



## Nearly 100 migratory birds found dead amid second wave of bird flu in Himachal

**SHIMLA, 06 APR [PTI]:** Around 100 migratory birds have been found dead in Pong Dam Lake in the last two weeks after the outbreak of a second wave of bird flu in Himachal Pradesh, wildlife officials said today. Bird flu had first been confirmed among mi- gratory water-birds at Pong Dam Lake Wild- life Sanctuary in ear- ly January that left around 5,000 birds dead in a month. It was contained in early February but has now resurfaced since late March beginning with the discovery of a doz- en bird carcasses in the sanctuary on March 25, they added.

Chief Wildlife Warden

Archana Sharma said the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) in Bhopal has confirmed the presence of H5N8 avian influenza among the samples of the dead birds.

This strain is different from the previous out- break, when H5N1 had been detected among the migratory birds, she said adding that both these strains are highly patho- genic.

Highly pathogenic subtypes of the avian influenza virus are known as highly con- tagious among birds and especially deadly for the poultry. Earli- er this year, when bird flu outbreaks were re- ported across India, most of the states in-

cluding neighbouring Haryana reported the H5N8 subtype of the vi- rus, a strain which has not been known to infect humans.

As of Tuesday, 99 birds have been found dead at Pong Dam lake during this resurgence, she added.

Like the previous out- break, most of the victims are bar-headed geese, she said adding that the dead birds also include nine greylag geese.

The outbreak has so far been confined to two adjoining forest beats and bird fatalities are higher during days of adverse weather be- cause that is when the geese tend to flock to- gether instead of flying out, leading to more

transmission of the virus, she added.

An international Ramsar site with an area that extends up to 220 square kilometres during the wet season, the Pong wetland becomes home to flocks of migratory waterfowl each winter when wetlands in Eu- rope, north and central Asia become frozen. A bird census in the sanc- tuary in February re- vealed the presence of over one lakh migratory water birds of 51 differ- ent species at the lake, in- cluding over 40 thousand bar-headed geese.

With the onset of summer, the migratory birds are now flying back to their parent wetlands, she added.

Many of the birds cur-

rently present in the lake are those which have flown from Rajasthan and other parts of the country, stopping here on their northward jour- ney, she added.

Some incidents of deaths of other birds have also been reported from other parts of the state, including Theog in Shimla district and Manali in Kullu district, and their samples have been taken for testing by the animal husbandry department.

Meanwhile the sanc- tuary has again been closed for visitors, and the bird flu action plan has been activated, which includes surveillance, testing and scientific dis- posal of dead birds, Ms Sharma said.

## Beti Bachao Beti Padhao program at Tintek



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
MANGAN, 06 APR:**

A colourful program regarding "Beti Bachao and Beti Pad- hao" was organised at Rakdong Tintek BAC in East Sikkim today.

The function was at- tended by BDO Tintek, Tshering Norgyal Th- eeng as chief guest in the presence of Pancha-

yat Inspector, Resource Person /Nodal officer, Hemlata Sharma, Pan- chayat Lower Rakdong ward. Girl students from standard 4th and 5th from different schools attended the program.

AEO Education De- partment, BR Rai delivered the wel- come speech. Various events like drawing

competition, essay, debate and extempore were conducted.

The chief guest ad- dressed the gathering on the theme of the program. The function concluded with the distribution of certifi- cates and prizes and vote of thanks deliv- ered by Newa Chetan Sherpa.

## Sikkim Riders Club begins 'Ride for the Cause' to Okhrey



**SURAJ LIMBOO  
GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

Sikkim Riders Club started its three-day 'Ride for the Cause' bike rally from Gangtok to Okhrey, West Sikkim, on Tuesday.

The main motive of this rally is to spread awareness on Covid-19 to remote places of West Sikkim and also to hold

a free mega medical camp at Okhrey. For check-up, seven spe- cialist doctors and free medicines will be avail- able, said SRC presi- dent, Arun Rai.

General secretary of the club, P.T Denzongpa said they will also be dis- tributing hand sanitizers and masks during the awareness camp.

The ride was flagged off by Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia. Encouraging the riders, he wished them safe journey and appreciated the cause of their ride. Additional Chief Secre- tary, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Dr. Jayakumar is also partic- ipating in this rally along with around 20 riders.

## Pune hospital runs out of beds, patients given oxygen in waiting area

**PUNE, 06 APR [NDTV]:** A hospital in Pune's Pim- pri has run out of beds and been forced to pro- vide oxygen support - to patients complaining of breathlessness - in a makeshift triage, or wait- ing area, where they are treated while the author- ities try and find room in- side. Seven oxygen beds have been set up in that space.

The Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Hos- pital has a total of 400 beds, including 55 in the ICU (intensive care unit). As of today not a single bed is free. Ventilators - to help Covid patients unable to breathe on their own - are in short supply, with only 79 available across Pune.

"There is constant demand from pa- tients in PCMC (Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation) limits and outside. Patients who feel breathless are im- mediately put on oxygen support in the triage... until we can find them a bed," Dr Kaustubh Kah- ane, an Assistant Profes- sor at YCM Hospital, said.

"When a new patient arrives, we have to take a call on admitting them - this depends on the se- verity of illness. If a pa- tient needs oxygen sup- port and no bed is avail- able, then we ensure the patient does not suffer... We immediately ensure oxygen support," he said.

On Monday Pune dis- trict reported 8,075 new Covid cases, taking the total number of cases re- ported during the course of the pandemic past the 5.8 lakh-mark. The Pim- pri Chinchwad township alone reported 2,152 new cases, to take its overall count past 1.53 lakh.

Pune district has been identified by the centre as one of the worst-af- fected by the fresh wave of coronavirus infections. On Friday Pune author- ities ordered a 6 pm to 6 am curfew, and direct- ed that shopping malls, religious places, hotels and bars, and cinema theatres shut down for a week.

Only home deliveries of food, medicines and other essential services

are allowed during that time.

Public bus services have also been shut down.

The situation isn't much better in other cit- ies in Maharashtra, with beds (at both private and government hospitals) filling up rapidly and oxy- gen cylinders at a pre- mium in Nashik and Nag- pur, from where shock- ing scenes emerged last week - of two Covid pa- tients forced to share a bed.

In state capital Mum- bai - where over 11,000 new Covid cases were reported in 24 hours on Sunday - an estimated 93 per cent of ventilators and 92 per cent of ICU beds are in use.

The centre has rushed medical teams - consisting of public health specialists and clinicians to Mahara- stra. On Sunday the state announced a number of new restrictions, includ- ing a night curfew and a "strict lockdown" over the weekends, as well as the closing of malls, ho- tels and bars.

India today reported nearly 97,000 new cases - down, marginally, from the 1.03 lakh a day be- fore.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, NISCHAL SHARMA (NEOPANEY) , son of Shri Neelam Sharma resident of Rawatey Rumtek, East Sikkim sol- emnly declare that previously my name has been recorded /known as NISCHAL SHARMA in my School documents and "NISCHAL SHARMA (NEOPANEY) in my Aadhar Card no. 940445462712 issued by Unique Identification Authority of India, Govt. of India. Vide this affidavit No. 103432 dt. 06.04.2021 before the Oath Commissioner, at Gangtok, East Sikkim, I declare that NISCHAL SHARMA(NEOPANEY) & NISCHAL SHARMA is one and same person i.e. myself and "SHARMA" is our caste and "NEOPANEY" is my subcaste.

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## RUCHI DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Behind telephone Exchange Near Old STNM Hospital. Gangtok

PH: 03592-203333, 204876, 8509373970

### EXISTING FACILITIES:

- ULTRASOUND
- DIGITAL X-RAY
- ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY
- COLOR DOPPLER
- PATHOLOGY
- MICROBIOLOGY
- BIOCHEMISTRY
- ENDOSCOPY
- B M D
- E C G
- DENTAL O P G
- GASTRO CLINIC
- PAEDIATRIC CLINIC
- MEDICAL CLINIC
- ORTHO CLINIC
- E N T CLINIC
- GYNEA CLINIC
- PHYSIOTHERAPY
- SPECIALISED TESTS

### BLOOD COLLECTION CENTRES AT :

- Sushruta Medical, Ranipool.
- Arihant Medical, Opp. CRH gate, 5th Mile.

### COMPLETE E N T FACILITIES UNDER ONE ROOF

**ENT O P D Monday to Friday**  
10.00 am to 2.30 pm

1. ENT OPD CLINIC
2. ENT ENDOSCOPIES
3. MICROSCOPIC PROCEDURES
4. MINOR O T PROCEDURES
5. VERTIGO MANAGEMENT
6. AUDIOMETRY, TYMPANOME- TRY AND HEARING AIDS.

### CONSULTANT ENT SURGEON DR. ONGDEN GYATSO, MS (AIIMS)

**GASTRO CLINIC & O P D**  
8.00 am to 9.00 am

**MEDICAL CLINIC & O P D**  
9.30 am

**ORTHO AND GYNEA  
CLINICS & O P D**  
3.00 pm

**PAEDIATRIC CLINIC & O P D**  
8.00 am And 6.00 pm

**VACCINATION CLINIC**



# Ranka United wins Inter-Village Archery tourney at Pachey



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 06 APR:**

Pachey-Pakyong Inter Village Level Archery Tournament, organised by Pakyong Sub-Div-

sional Committee at Pachey concluded today. The final match was played between Pempo-7 of Linkey and Ranka United with the latter

emerging victorious and lifting the trophy. The final day had Advisor, IT Dept, Tenzing Norbu Lamtha, as chief guest.

## 6 arrested for creating ruckus at UP minister's office

**BALLIA (UP), APR 6 (PTI):** Six Samajwadi Party (SP) workers were arrested following a ruckus at Uttar Pradesh minister Anand Swarup Shukla's local office here, police said on Tuesday.

An FIR was registered against local Samajwadi Party leader Dhanji Yadav and 30 women, 25 of them unidentified, for "misbehaving" with Shukla at his Gopal Vihar Colony office on Monday, Additional Superinten-

dent of Police Sanjay Yadav said. Dhanji Yadav, Rani Devi, Teejo Devi, Chanda, Durga Devi and Poonam Gupta were produced in a magistrate's court on Tuesday from where they were released. The minister had on Monday claimed the incident was "sponsored" and termed the women's outrage part of a "conspiracy". One of the protesting women, however, alleged

the minister himself "hit a woman on her head with a shoe" and got them thrown out of the premises with the help of his supporters when they had gone there with their grievances on the release of grant money for school students. The women also alleged BJP workers present at the camp office "misbehaved" with them. Witnesses said the women allegedly threw chairs around as they

were not happy with the minister's response to their complaint. They created a ruckus and "misbehaved" with the minister of state for parliamentary affairs and his supporters, Ballia Kotwali in-charge Bal Mukund Mishra had said. Rani Devi said they had been trying to get the grants for the past three years and charged the Kotwali in-charge with misbehaving with them.

# Distribution of inputs for orchid growers

**GANGTOK, 06 APR (PIB):** Inputs were distributed to the new orchid growers under Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in a programme organized at ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong. Inputs of bamboo logs, 200-micron polysheet, 50% shade net, orchid pots, orchid plants, co-chips and water cans were distributed to the beneficiaries. Theses beneficiaries were trained earlier by the ICAR-NRCO for commercial orchid cultivation. Dr Rampal, Director



(Acting) presided over the input's distribution programme, appreciated the interest of the orchid growers for taking up the orchid cultivation and briefed them the care and management practices to be followed for an economically viable orchid cultivation and gave away the inputs to the beneficiaries. 14 Beneficiaries from Loosing, Dikling, Pacheykani, Upper Parkha and Takshong received the materials. Nodal Officer (SCSP), Kalaivanan, NS and Nodal Officer (TSP), Dr SS Biswas co-ordinated the programme.

## Weeklong NSS camp concludes at Kewzing



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 06 APR:** The valedictory function of the weeklong special camp by National Service Scheme was organised at Kewzing Senior Secondary School today, a press release in-

forms. The event was attended by Chairperson Food Security & Civil Supplies Department, Dr SK Rai accompanied by Advisor State Medicinal Plants Board, Dechen Phigu Bhutia as chief guest and

guest of honour, respectively. The function was also attended by SKM CLC president Barfung, Bishnu Sharma, retired Police Officer, Daney Bhutia, AD Sports & Youth Affairs (NSS), Pintsho Bhutia,

several delegates, NSS volunteers, public, parents and students. The school presented its progress report as well as NSS activities report through PowerPoint presentation during the program.


# Assam third phase polling largely peaceful

**GUWAHATI, APR 6 (PTI):** The third and last phase of the state election in Assam which is underway amidst tight security in 40 constituencies spread across 12 districts on Tuesday is largely peaceful despite sporadic incidents of violence and disturbances in some areas, officials said. There were reports of a clash between two groups of people over some issues at a polling station at Dighaltari lower primary school at Golakganj. Police resorted to lathicharge and firing in the air to control the situation but none was injured, an official said. The polling at the booth was stopped for a brief period and resumed soon, he said. At a booth at Gutipara in Bilasipara West constituency security personnel were attacked by a group of people over distribution of free masks. Here too the police resorted to lathicharge when the attackers threw stones at the polling station. As a result voting at the polling station was interrupted for about half-an-hour but later resumed normally, officials said. In a polling booth in Bongaigaon, there was lathi charge by the police when a huge crowd arrived, an official of the force said. Another polling station in the same constituency witnessed commotion when the presiding officer went to help a differently abled person to cast his vote. The situation was brought under

control immediately by the police, an election official said. In another incident police detained at least two persons from a polling booth at Kamrup Academy Higher Secondary School in Guwahati for allegedly distributing inside it BJP pamphlets carrying minister Sidhartha Bhattacharya's pictures. Around 10 people have been detained from different constituencies where voting is on, officials said. EVM malfunctioning was reported in several polling centers and voting in them resumed after the machines were replaced, they said. Voters wearing masks were seen queuing outside the polling booths. In some places they maintained the stipulated physical distance by standing in marked circles. Voters of all the four constituencies in Guwahati city were seen abiding by the coronavirus precautions. However, most of the voters in rural areas were seen huddling in groups. Those who did not have masks were provided with them, besides disposable plastic gloves before the voters were allowed to enter the polling booths. The first voters at the polling centres were greeted with saplings and the senior citizens with 'gamosas' (traditional Assamese scarf). BJP ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chandra Mohan Patowary, Siddhartha Bhattacha-

rya and Phani Bhushan Choudhury, who are in the fray in this phase, exercised their franchise in the morning hours. BPF ministers Chandan Brahma and Pramila Rani Brahma also cast their votes as did BPL chief Hagrama Mohilary, BJP state chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Congress leader Ratul Patowary and state election ambassador and actor Kopil Bora. Arrangement for wheelchairs and e-rickshaws have been made at many booths for the convenience of senior citizens and physically challenged voters. In a celebration of the festival of democracy many model polling stations have been decorated with recyclable items, art installations made with bottles and plastic wrappers. Many others have children's play zone, seating lounge and selfie zones. Many of them also have seating areas in rainbow shades, themed on inclusivity and LGBTQ rights. Some of the voting centers are decorated to represent the cultural diversity of the state. Ethnic fabric and handicraft items are on display and mannequins draped in tribal attires are placed in the selfie zones. The Assamese festival of Bihu, which is just 10 days away, is a popular theme in several polling booths. Arched gates and seating areas with colourful chairs are imparting the polling centers a festive look.

SIKKIM



GOVERNMENT

GAZETTE

EXTRAORDINARY (LOGO)

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Gangtok

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

No. 80

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

EXCISE DEPARTMENT

GANGTOK

No. 03/Ex

Dated the : 25/03/2021

NOTIFICATION

The draft of certain rules which the State Government proposed to issue in exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 76 of the Sikkim Excise Act, 1992 (2 of 1992) is hereby published as required by that sub-section of that section of the said Act for information of all persons likely to be affected thereby and Notice is hereby given that the said draft rules would be taken into consideration after expiry of a period of 45 days from the date on which the notification is published in the official Gazette. Any objections or suggestions which may be received from any person with respect to the said draft rules before the expiry of the period so specified will be considered by the State Government.

DRAFT RULES

Short title and commencement

1. (1) These rules may be called the Sikkim Excise (Prohibited Sites for Liquors Shop) Amendment Rules, 2021(3). They shall extend to the whole of Sikkim. (2) They shall come into force with immediate effect.

Amendment of Rule 4

2. (1) In the Sikkim Excise (Prohibited Sites for Liquors Shop) Rules, 1996, in rule 4 the following rule shall be substituted namely:-  
“(1) No liquor Shop shall be licensed for retail, wholesale and consumption of liquor within a distance of 50 ft. (radius) from the hospital, places of worship, petrol pump, factories or other place of public resort, 300 ft (radius) from the schools and 200 ft (radius) from colleges and any other educational institution and from police checkpost situated at the “border” and 100 ft (radius) from bus and taxi stands proceeding towards other districts and states”.  
(2) The distance of existing 300 ft. from schools and 200 ft radius from colleges and other educational institutes is hence relaxed for the following areas:-  
(a) Gangtok Mahatma Gandhi Marg:- Straight stretch from Metro Traffic Point to Namnang (till Dinodia’s shop). This will not include old Children Park, Tibet Road area, Kazi Road area, Lal Bazaar area.  
(b) Singtam – Straight Road stretch from Sikkim Nationalised Transport till the new Bridge leading to Adharsh Goan.  
(c) Melli Bazaar – Straight Road stretch from Truck Stand of Melli Bazar to CJ Complex.  
(d) Namchi – Straight Road stretch after petrol pump, the entry point from Jorethang Road to Post Office, namchi Bazar.  
(e) Gyalshing – Sikkim Nationalised Transport Office to Naya Bazar.”  
(f) Rongli – Straight Road stretch from Rngli Bridge to bhanu Turning.  
(g) Lall Bazaar – Straight from Traffic point to Butcher House (Ghosh Khan).  
(h) Hotels of 3, 4 and 5 stars category registered with Tourism Department.

Commissioner

Excise Department

S.G.P.G 80/Com.2/Gazette/100 Nos./Dt: 27.03.2021



## No Country for Women

*They continue to be at risk because the predators continue to get away*

Sexual assaults are not a new crime in our country; unfortunately, neither is the complete lack of anything substantive in how this violent crime is addressed. This must be why the victim of one of the more gruesome rapes is now immortalized in our memories as “Nirbhaya”. Women need to be “fearless” in our country to get by because we remain distressingly impotent in providing them with them an environment without fear.

For all the Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao sloganeering, we remain a country which has become flawlessly effective in protecting its VIPs but remain clueless about how to keep the women safe. The Kathua and Unnao monstrosities remained unaddressed for a long while and then saw some follow-up in the wake of the public outrage. That news cycle appears to have run its course, and now the follow-up is at risk of being subverted again, even as the dominant politics threatens to divert the discourse and along with it the investigations, which, one must bear in mind, have only just begun and not been completed yet. There is a lot that could be compromised to save the leaders and cohorts of the hypocrisy that is in power.

The two incidents mentioned here have also brought home the fact that is not just the Rape Capital, Delhi, which has too many predators roaming around unchecked, but even the rural parts have more than their share of rapists and criminals. Of course, the crime statistics always suggested this, but it was the Kathua and Unnao horrors which reiterated it for those who live their India in the metros and who have thus far been “shocked” only by crimes in urban areas, having inexplicably bought into the fiction of rural idylls being safe for women. Not even homes or families are safe environments for most women in India, so the sooner we dispel these notions the faster we can begin the process of securing safety and access to justice for women.

It is worrying that so many predators roam without worry in our country. What is even more worrying is that sexually deviant people feel neither fear in roaming the streets for prey nor hesitation in unleashing rape to settle scores or exploit situations. They obviously gather this courage from the fact that policing, investigation and prosecution remain weak and easily compromised except in the rare case that manages to remain in the news. And the Kathua and Unnao cases have established this beyond doubt.

There has to also be something clinically wrong with us that we groom so many rapists in our country, and in the long run, that is a failing we need to address and correct.

In the meanwhile, what we need to do as a country is present a united sense of outrage to demand better of ourselves, our societies and our governments. We have to be better than a society where a woman, even a child, risks rape at every turn in most parts of the country. And they remain at risk because our systems, by and large, continue to fail the victims and survivors. It took nationwide displays of outrage for the accused in the Kathua and Unnao cases to even be booked, and even though some of the suspects are now behind bars, the power of influence and the macabre dance of caste and political ideology which kept them above the law for so long must have encouraged those of their ilk and deviation to continue with their assaults so long as they had a leader on speed-dial or money in their pockets to compromise investigations.

Admittedly, arrests or even convictions are only part of the required commitments the nation needs to make its women. Since we are nowhere close to resolving that collective failing which births so many rapists in the country, we have to find ways and means to ensure that no case of rape remains unsolved and no accused let off. Since we cannot groom our men better, let us at least resolve to bring down the entire weight of law on every perpetrator. A rapist is invariably a person dealing with his inadequacies and uses sexual assault to claim some sense of power by taking possession of a woman's body. They continue to do so because too many of them are allowed to get away with it. One way to beat them is to convince them that something more powerful will slam down hard on them if they rape. And we have to ensure that the Law presents itself as that powerful deterrent.

## 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

# Myanmar's brutal military was once a force for freedom – but it's been waging civil war for decades

THARAPHI THAN

THECONVERSATION.COM

With great fanfare – but few guests – Myanmar's armed forces recently celebrated their 76th anniversary in the nation's capital of Naypyitaw.

Only Russia, China, Thailand and a handful of other Asian countries sent representatives to attend the March 27, 2021, parade showing off Myanmar's modern war machines – mostly imported from Russia and China over the past decade, to the tune of US\$2.4 billion.

The Myanmar military has been terrorizing civilians since a coup two months earlier. On the day of the parade, soldiers killed over 90 people for protesting military rule, including a 5-year-old boy and three teenagers. An estimated 564 people have been killed in Myanmar since the Feb. 1 coup.

One of Asia's poorest countries, Myanmar spends twice as much on defense as it does on education and health combined. With half a million soldiers, at least on paper, Myanmar has the world's 38th strongest military, according to Global Fire Power, which ranks 140 nations on their capability to wage war.

Myanmar's military wasn't always a repressive force. It began as an adored liberating force founded to end colonial rule.

**HISTORY OF THE BURMA ARMY**  
Burma's first national army came out of World War II and the quest for independence.

Led by a group called the “30 comrades” who received military training from the Japanese,” the Burma Independence Army allied itself with Japan to fight the British. Everyday people sold their gold to support this revolutionary force.

The Burma Independence Army forced the British out in 1941. The Japanese then occupied Burma, fighting Britain, the U.S. and other Allied forces from this strategic location in Southeast Asia.

Soon, though, Burma's army wanted Japan out of Burma, too. So did many Burmese people. Thousands of members of ethnic and religious minorities from rural border areas joined the army.

Historically, these minority groups had kept their distance from the country's Buddhist majority, called Bamar, and from each other. The British maintained and strengthened these ethnic divisions

as a tactic to maintain their colonial rule.

But during the 1940s resistance movement against the Japanese, everyone was united behind Burma's army, my research finds – including women.

In 2007 I interviewed the first five women soldiers who joined Burma's struggle for independence.

“When the resistance movement began, we were ready to give everything, including our lives,” Daw Khin Kyi Kyi, then in her 80s, told me.

The women attended military training, traveled to villages near army camps to explain why the army was now fighting against the Japanese, and convinced locals to offer food and shelter to the soldiers. The women also enlisted locals to spy on Japanese troops.

**CIVIL WAR BEGINS**

The Japanese surrendered to the Allied forces in 1945 and withdrew from all occupied territories, including Burma.

That put Burma back in British hands, with promises of full sovereignty.

Before the British would grant Burma independence, however, they demanded that the country's Bamar leadership prove that its many minority groups also wanted independence as one nation. Burma's revolutionary army leader Aung San convened a summit in the town of Panglong with the leaders of various ethnic groups to negotiate the foundations of a unified, independent Burma.

However, the Karen, a mostly Christian population from the country's southeast, had previously been promised British help in establishing their own free state. Karen leaders refused to join the 1947 Panlong Agreement.

Burma became independent in 1948. The next year, elite Karen troops staged an armed revolt against the new national government.

Ever since, Myanmar's military, called Tatmadaw, has essentially



existed solely to fight against Myanmar's minorities.

**MYANMAR'S WAR ECONOMY**

For about a decade after independence, Burma had a democratic government. But the army was more powerful. Between 1962 and 2010, Burma was a military dictatorship. Military rule endured through occasional uprisings, show elections and several coups in which one set of generals overthrew another.

Civil war is costly, so Myanmar developed a war economy. At first, it funded its battles with rice exports and loans from the U.S. and Soviet Union. Over time, Burma's military entrenched itself in the global economic system.

In 1962, the military junta regime established Burma Trade Limited in central London as its “legitimate” international brokerage. The military also mined and sold jade, mostly in areas that were home to repressed ethnic minorities and profited from a lively opium trade in Burma.

This military-controlled economy enriched Burma's generals, but the money did not translate into national economic growth. In 1987, the United Nations rated Burma among the world's “least developed countries.”

Burma's name was changed to Myanmar in 1989.

**SANCTIONS AND BOYCOTTS**

Today, Myanmar's economy is almost entirely controlled by the

military, from telecommunications to drugs. The military's sprawling business networks – which some rights groups call “cartels” – have protected the generals from attempts to democratize.

In 2008, for example, the Myanmar military assented to a new Constitution officially giving 75% of seats in Parliament to civilian politicians and reserving 25% for army representatives.

Unofficially, though, the military largely continued to run the nation. That

included unrelenting repression of minority groups, including the Karen – who have maintained their insurgency for seven decades – and the Rohingya Muslims.

Elections in 2015 were supposed to mark a turning point in this quasi-democratic system. Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the revolutionary Aung San and leader of a prior democratic uprising, and her National League for Democracy won in a landslide.

Suu Kyi faced criticism for failing to stand up to the military, particular in its assaults on the Rohingya. Even so, she was deposed in the February 2021 coup and is now detained in an unknown location. Some dissidents are fleeing into to Karen territory and other rebel-held ethnic areas to escape the military.

As the death toll in Myanmar mounts, international pressure is growing for countries to impose harsher sanctions on the junta and for companies to cease trade. Japan's Kirin beer and a German company that supplies the Myanmar mint are among those that have cut ties with Myanmar.

Meanwhile, civil disobedience inside the country continues. Choking off the military's funding could give the protesters and deposed civilian government a fighting chance.

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# Lockdown Mental Fatigue Rapidly Reversed by Social Contact, Study Finds

DR CHRISTOPHER HAND, GREG MACIEJEWSKI & JOANNE INGRAM

THECONVERSATION.COM

Many of us are looking forward to a summer of relative freedom, with road-mapped milestones that will grant us more opportunities to see our friends and family. But we'll be carrying the effects of months of isolation into those meetings, including a sense that our social skills will need dusting off, and our wits will need sharpening.

The mental effects of lockdown have been profound. Social isolation has been shown to cause people's mental health to deteriorate even if they have no history of previous psychological problems. Alongside this drop in mood, loneliness has been linked with a host of cognitive problems, including fatigue, stress and problems with concentration.

In our recent study, we set out to understand how people recovered from last year's period of social isolation, tracking their cognitive function as the UK transitioned from a full lockdown to reduced social restrictions in summer 2020. Promisingly, we found that people swiftly recovered from cognitive issues when given the chance to blow away the cobwebs by socialising once again.

**MASS ISOLATION**

Lockdowns have given psychologists a unique opportunity to study the effects of social isolation on the general population. Such effects are normally only studied in older adults, or in very special groups of people such as astronauts, desert trekkers and polar explorers. But for over a year now, ordinary people of all ages have been experiencing prolonged periods with minimal social contact.

We know that humans derive many benefits from socialising. These range from preventing dementia and enhancing memory to improvements in concentration and the ability to think clearly. When our social lives shrank last March, we lost these cognitive payouts too.

To investigate what happens when these payouts return, we surveyed hundreds of Scottish adults between May and July 2020: a period when strict national lockdown restrictions were gradually eased. It was the perfect time to observe how the benefits of socialising might change how people think and feel.

Unsurprisingly, we found that people's moods were lowest when we first approached them in May. Those who were shielding or living alone suffered the most and only began to feel better when the final restrictions were eased towards the end of our survey period in July. But our study was most interested in other psychological indicators: those that would show whether people's cognitive abilities improved when they had more opportunities to socialise.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY**

To measure this, we asked our survey participants to complete a series of online tests to assess changes in their attention, learning ability, working memory – and even their perception of time.

Attention, learning ability and working memory are all essential for tasks we might perform at work or while studying. They're indicators of how well we remember things we've learned, how long we can concentrate on a task, and how many tasks we can juggle in our heads at one time.

All of these indicators improved rapidly as lockdown restrictions eased, with clear week-on-week

improvements each time we returned to our study participants for more data. This suggests that we're likely to enjoy a similarly speedy boost in our ability to work when lockdown restrictions ease this time around.

We've all been experiencing varying degrees of loneliness and isolation, so it's no wonder that we're running low on the benefits that socialising can bring. Our findings offer concrete proof that lockdown makes us all a little more distracted, sluggish and fatigued – cognitive problems that may be affecting our performance at work and our social interactions outside of it.

But the speed at which we witnessed cognitive function improve once people began socialising again last summer shows that there's hope. As days lengthen, the weather improves, and society reopens, our study suggests that renewed social contact will quickly and thoroughly reverse any cognitive decline we've experienced during the most recent lockdown.

Our findings extend beyond the unique circumstances brought about by the pandemic. While there's no denying that humans are social creatures, psychologists are only now beginning to recognise just how integral social interaction is to every aspect of our wellbeing and mental ability – and how isolation, whether for elderly people or those with extreme vocations, can affect our mental health and aptitude across so many measures.

*[Dr Christopher Hand is Lecturer, Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University; Greg Maciejewski is Lecturer in Psychology, University of the West of Scotland; Joanne Ingram is Lecturer in Psychology, University of the West of Scotland]*



When will next generation of tennis overtake the Big Three?

**MIAMI, APR 6 (AP):** The next generation of men's tennis remains a jumble of unrealized potential.

With Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer skipping the Miami Open, the tournament was expected to bring the game's new faces into sharper focus. Instead, the outlook remains fuzzy as the clay season begins.

Sunday's match between No. 37-ranked Hubert Hurkacz and No. 31 Jannik Sinner was the first ATP Masters 1000 final since 2003 with two players ranked outside the top 30. Hurkacz became the lowest-ranked champion in the ATP's top-level series since 2005.

Meanwhile, for players touted as future Grand Slam champions, Miami represented an opportunity missed. Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alexander Zverev failed to make it even to the semi-finals.

With the Big Three absent, I think all the NextGen guys were trying their best to play their best game, to compete as hard as they can," Hurkacz said.

Hopefully the spectators enjoyed it.

But what should fans make of it? Twenty-somethings have been trying to overtake the Big Three for years, and no front-runner for 2021 emerged in Miami.

Medvedev, seeded No. 1 at a Masters 1000 event for the first time, was upset in the fourth round by Roberto Bautista Agut. No. 2 Tsitsipas exited in the same round with a loss to Hurkacz.

I felt like it was my opportunity, Tsitsipas said.

There was more space for me to show something greater.

No. 3 Zverev flopped worst of all, double-faulting three times on break point in a loss to No. 83-ranked Emil Ruusuvuori. No. 4 Andrey Rublev, a Russian who leads the tour with 20 wins this year, reached the semifinals before Hurkacz upset him.

This all came after Nadal and Federer withdrew before the tournament started due to injuries, while Djokovic decided to stay home in Serbia amid the pandemic.

For Hurkacz, 24, the title is by far the biggest of his career, and the first for a Polish player in a Masters 1000 event. But he won't be among the favorites at the French Open.

In sum, no 20-something appears poised to wrest the mantle from the 30-somethings who have dominated the sport for so long. Dominic Thiem won his first major title at the U.S. Open in September, but he is just 5-4 this year and skipped Miami.

The next generation still has to show they can beat the Big Three, Sinner said.

The next generation is not ready yet to win against them consistently. At some point there will be the moment; I don't know when. It can be two years or five years, I don't know. But the moment will come.

## Tiger terror in Nepal's Bardiya, mahout involved in rhino count killed

**CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL**

**KATHMANDU, 06 APR [KATHMANDUPOST]:** Tiger terror has once again rocked Bardiya district. On Sunday afternoon, a man was fatally mauled by a Royal Bengal tiger inside Bardiya National Park.

The latest victim was not someone living around the park, but a park staff member deployed for the ongoing rhino census.

Policeram Tharu, 31, a mahout involved in the rhino count, was attacked by the tiger at Gaidamachan inside the core area of the park, officials said.

Bishnu Prasad Shrestha, chief conservation of the park, said the incident happened while Tharu was cutting grass for his elephant.

"Once the daily counting of rhinos is completed, elephants are rested. Mahouts usually collect grass during this time or they take their elephants out for grazing," said Shrestha. "Tharu was attacked while he was cutting grass for his elephant."

Tharu's body was recovered at around 8 pm, nearly three hours after the incident. He was the tenth victim of tiger attack in Bardiya this fiscal year.

According to Shrestha, five deaths took place in the park's jurisdiction area—the core area and the park's buffer zone—while five other deaths occurred in the areas under the scope of Division Forest Office, Bardiya.

Frequent tiger attacks in recent months have already left locals living around the park and adjoining forests terrorised.

"Tiger numbers in Bardiya National Park have increased lately. This could also be one of the reasons behind increasing tiger attacks," said Haribhadra Acharya, spokesperson with the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation. "The recent incident has shown that everyone should be alert and follow precautions while being around and inside the park."

The latest death has led the park authorities to suspend all tourism activities around the



park area for a day. The ongoing rhino census was also halted for two days—until Tuesday.

The nationwide counting of one-horned rhinos began in Bardiya National Park on March 31.

"Elephants are used for rhino counting. Since Sunday's incident also involved a staff member who was part of the census, we have decided to not conduct counting on Monday and Tuesday," said Shrestha. "We will resume counting from Wednesday."

The park had mobilised 60 wildlife technicians and officials and ten elephants for the rhino count.

This is the second time in one week that the nationwide rhino census, which began on March 22 from the Chit-

wan-Parsa complex, has been halted.

On Friday, the team counting rhinos in Chitwan National Park was attacked by a wild elephant, leaving many enumerators injured. The count was halted for one day as a result.

Officials say Sunday's case is the first in which a rhino census team member was killed in the line of duty.

"There are no known or official records of an individual killed while on duty for counting rhinos, although enumerators falling off the elephants and getting injured are common incidents," said Acharya, also an ecologist with the department. "This time, we have seen two unfortunate events in Chitwan and Bardiya."

The park authorities have darted and captured the tiger that is

said to have killed Tharu. The captured tiger would be transported to Central Zoo, according to Shrestha. This is the fourth tiger that the park authorities have captured in this fiscal year, following frequent attacks on locals and their livestock.

"Sometimes, such tragic incidents happen. We were not expecting this sudden attack on one of our staff, which led to the halting of the rhino count for two days," said Shrestha. "Now, all of us need to be extra alert. As the problem-causing tiger has been captured and removed, there is a kind of assurance that the same tiger will not be attacking anyone now."

The Bardiya National Park, which hosts 29 one-horned rhinos as per the census of 2015, has planned to complete counting within two weeks. The government has planned to release the result of the rhino census in the third week of this month.

"The third week of April is our target. If counting teams face frequent disturbances, like in Chitwan and Bardiya, the date of unveiling the findings could change," said Acharya. "For example, an adverse weather condition like a powerful storm and wind can affect the counting. Such challenges are considered even during the planning phase of rhino counting."

## Trinamool candidate chased out of poll booth, hit on head, alleges party

**KOLKATA, 06 APR [NDTV]:**

A candidate from Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress was chased out of a polling booth in Bengal today as voting was on in the third phase of the assembly election in the state. Sujata Mondol Khan was chased with lathis by a group of people in the middle of a field. Ms Banerjee said "BJP workers chased Trinamool candidate Sujata Mondal and hit her on head near a polling booth".

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) has claimed that a security personnel was injured.

Sujata Mondal Khan, the Trinamool candidate from Arambagh, was chased out of a voting booth in Arandi area of the constituency.

She had accused the opposition BJP of creating chaos and threatening Trinamool supporters in Arambagh amid the voting. The BJP has denied the allegation.

"They have inflicted serious injury on our Scheduled Caste candidate Sujata, when she visited a booth. They also hit another candidate



in Khanakul. In Canning East, security forces prevented our nominee Shaukat Mollah from entering a booth. There had been numerous such instances of attack on our candidates, party workers across the state," Ms Banerjee said at a rally in Alipurduar district, adding that she has received at least 100 complaints of assault and violence since morning, and that the Election Commission has been duly informed but to no avail.

"At booth no 45 in Batanal, despite pressing the symbol of TMC, the vote is going for the BJP. I believe that I will

get the blessings of the people. In Arandi, our workers have been beaten up. They (BJP) are thinking that by creating violence, they will get the Arambagh seat. They are mistaking. I am the kind of person who does not fear death," Ms Khan told news agency ANI.

Villagers in Arandi, however, claimed that the candidate had barged into homes and misbehaved with them. Visuals show her locked in argument with villagers.

This morning, four voting machines and an equal number of VVPATs, or paper-trail machines, were found in the house

of a TMC leader in Uluberia Uttar assembly seat in Howrah district, following which a Bengal election official was suspended. Locals surrounded the Trinamool leader's house and CRPF personnel had to be deployed in the area to keep peace.

A Trinamool candidate from Khanakul assembly seat, Najibul Karim, was surrounded by BJP supporters in a village in the constituency which falls in Hooghly district. After hearing about incidents of alleged rigging by the BJP, when the TMC

candidate arrived at the polling station, BJP supporters surrounded him. Later, a huge contingent of CRPF and Bengal Police personnel arrived the spot to diffuse the tension and rescued the TMC candidate.

In another part of Hooghly district, a woman was murdered early this morning. While the BJP claims she was murdered by Trinamool "goons", Bengal's ruling party has denied any role in the murder. The woman's son is reportedly a BJP worker.

Bengal votes in seven phases for the 294 assembly seats and the results will be announced on May 2.

## 'We dream to be Nepal's first billion-dollar IT company'

**PRAJESH SJB RANA KATHMANDU, 06 APR**

**[KATHMANDUPOST]:** In the spring of 2019, in a small apartment in Lazimpat, four bright-eyed, hopeful college students come together: Two Development Finance students from National College, on the cusp of graduating and itching for their next business project, and two Information Technology students from Islington College with a penchant for ethical hacking and software development.

Back then, Subash Gautam, 25, and Nischal Narsingh Rana, 25, were planning on opening a management consulting firm with focus on IT. At the same time, Subash was also working on a digital information platform that connected potential students with representatives from international educational institutions called AbroadSanjal with Ajay Gautam and Shishir Shrestha.

Ajay Gautam, 22, was bounty hunting for bug and security vulnerabilities in many international services, having already found and reported security flaws in web services like Facebook, Microsoft, Sony, and Etsy. Ajay was supported by his high-school friend, Shishir Shrestha, 21, a front-end developer.

Living in the same hostel, the four had been in close contact with each other and would occasionally discuss their projects. Subash, Ajay and Shishir were struggling to get AboardSanjal off the ground and with more hurdles and hassles, the trio was looking to branch out of the business as confidence in the product dwindled. Nischal, at this time, was working as a Field supervisor at a local NGO. It was at one of these informal meetings that the friends decided to work together to form a company. They figured that the business acumen and technical expertise they all shared would go hand-in-hand. Subash and Nischal would look after the business and operations, with Subash as co-founder/CEO and Nischal as chief financial officer, and Ajay and Shishir would look after the technical side, with Ajay as co-founder/CTO and Shishir as developer. Capitalising on Ajay's fame in cyber security circles they decided to form a company together focusing on cyber security.

With the team together, the quartet registered the National Agency Security System Pvt Ltd (Nassec) as a cyber security company and rented a small office space in Lazimpat. While trying to find a market for themselves locally in April of 2019, Ajay, for his efforts in identifying and reporting potential security flaws in Facebook, was invited to the social media company's BountyCon 2019 that happened in Singapore. Along with Ajay, Subash tagged along on the trip hoping to find potential business partners for Nassec and it was here that the company found one of its first cyber security contracts. Subash met representatives from AntiHack, a Singapore-based cyber security firm, who agreed to outsource some of their projects to Nassec.

After building ties with AntiHack, Nassec had a major international client but to scale up their business, Subash and Nishchal started looking to expand into local markets. While they worked with a few clients like XcelTrip, a travel and tourism website, and local e-commerce site Gyapu, the local market proved to be too immature. "Nepali businesses and startups still don't understand the need for cyber security. Instead of treating VAPT (Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing) as a necessity, many local businesses still consider cyber security as added cost. This lack of awareness made it extremely difficult for us to find local clients," says Subash. "We've built tools that show Nepali business owners the vulnerabilities in their system security and even though they know that the problem exists, they're hesitant to even pay Rs 50,000 to get it fixed. But regardless, we were still getting offshore clients like blockchain technology companies iBriz.ai and Bitsbeat."

Regardless of the immaturity of the local market, the people at Nassec continued their efforts into educating and spreading awareness about cyber security through blog posts and their YouTube channel 'Infosec Daily'. And slowly, the quartet at Nassec had grown into a business with multiple departments with 18 employees in the span of two years. The pandemic lockdowns marked the point of most growth for the company, with a drastic change in direction from a service-based to a product-based business.

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# At the Masters, Bubba Watson enjoys standard Augusta fare

**AUGUSTA (US), APR 6 (AP):** Bubba Watson has a fancy dinner to attend Tuesday night. It's the Masters Club Dinner, otherwise known as the Champions dinner.

Dustin Johnson has chosen an elegant menu, including filet mignon. But for Watson, breakfast and lunch at the Masters tend to be a bit more simple.

Food is part of the charm of Augusta National, and Watson likes to partake of some of the same fare the patrons enjoy particularly what's known as the Taste of the Masters," a trio of sandwiches that includes pimiento cheese, egg salad and some barbecue.

I always eat the Taste of the Masters, but I actually take out the egg salad and I put in another barbecue slider, so I have two barbecue sliders," Watson said.

I have pimiento cheese and then I have French fries."

The two-time Masters champion has been here for years, so when Watson's hungry, the staff at Augusta knows what he wants without any further explanation. The sandwiches, slightly modified, are his lunch. His breakfast: two scrambled eggs, two pieces of bacon, two biscuits and hash browns.

I always say hash browns without all the fancy stuff in it," Watson said.

I just want the potatoes; I don't want all the onions and all that pretty stuff in there."

**KOEPKA'S STATUS**  
Brooks Koepka spent a good amount of time on the driving range Monday, as he continues to ramp up for the Masters less than a month after needing knee surgery.

The good news, from his coach Pete Cowen, is that Koepka's swing is fine.

The to-be-determined part of the equation is how the four-time major winner will be able to navigate the 4-mile hike that is Augusta National -- a course that is daunting for many reasons, steep hills and slopes relatively high on that list.

He's in great shape, Cowen said.

The only problem is going to be the walking. It's a tough course to walk.

**THE CHAMPION**  
Reigning Masters champion Dustin Johnson played nine holes on Monday, then headed to the range and practice green to focus primarily on chipping and putting.

His early assessment: Augusta National is ready, and it should pres-

ent a different challenge from the one he conquered last November.

It's in really good shape, Johnson said.

The golf course, I think, is right where they want it to be on a Monday.

The course was soft for much of last year's first-ever fall Masters after a good amount of rain. There is some precipitation in this year's forecast, but players who were on the course Sunday and Monday are finding it in the customary fast and firm state.

The conditions are quite a bit different, Johnson said.

The weather, it had just rained a bunch in November. It was soft and played really long. ... This time, instead of it landing and stopping, it just might bounce a little bit.

**WISE MOVE**  
Carlos Ortiz, one of six first-time Masters participants in this year's field, has a strategy when it comes to practice round partners this week.

His plan: Find guys who have won at Augusta National and learn.

He was playing nine holes with Sergio Garcia on Monday and planned to connect for a round with Jordan Spieth either Tuesday or Wednesday.

I'm going to try to get all the information I can, Ortiz said.

He could also ask his younger brother.

Alvaro Ortiz tied for 36th at the 2019 Masters, getting into the field after winning the Latin America Amateur Championship. He closed with a final-round 69, one shot better than the score posted that day by Tiger Woods who won the tournament.

Alvaro Ortiz left Augusta that year with a silver medal for being the runner-up amateur behind Viktor Hovland, plus a pair of crystal highball glasses for making an eagle in his second round.

**THE GRASS**  
For those curious about the precise measurements of the grass at Augusta National, the club said Monday that the fairways were mowed to three-eighths of an inch and the second cut was exactly 1 inch taller.

Tea boxes were mowed at five-sixteenths of an inch. The greens, a mere one-eighth of an inch, and the collars were at a quarter-inch.

**HE SAID IT**  
Sergio Garcia, the 2017 Masters champion, on the best part of Masters week: Sunday afternoon can be very enjoyable.

## Dhoni becomes shareholder in F&B start-up that launches helicopter shot-inspired chocolates

**NEW DELHI, APR 6 (PTI):** Budding cricketers are not the only ones getting inspired by Mahendra Singh Dhoni's iconic helicopter shot as it has now become the inspiration for artisanal chocolates launched on Tuesday by food and beverage start-up 7InkBrews, where the former India captain is also a shareholder.

The company based out of Mumbai is founded by Mohit Bhagchandani and co-founded by Adil Mistry and Kunal Patel.

The new range of chocolates and beverages (non-alcoholic and alcoholic) have been launched under the brand Copter7 -- inspired by the iconic Dhoni shot and his shirt number.

"When you believe so strongly in the vision of a company, it makes the association that much more meaningful. I am truly elated to be a shareholder and brand ambassador for a company like 7Ink Brews," Dhoni was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the company.



After the brand launch in Mumbai, Pune, Goa and Bangalore, the products will also be launched in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Punjab and Chandigarh over the next few months.

"Built around the attributes of champion cricketer, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, and inspired by his signature 'helicopter shot', hence the name Copter7," the

press release stated. "The packaging and labelling is another noteworthy feature, inspired by Dhoni's different jerseys and their colours."

Mohit Bhagchandani, founder and managing director said the brand would look to capitalise on Dhoni's "undying 'can't stop, won't stop' spirit".

For the chocolates, the company has teamed up with well-known

chocolatier and chef David Belo of Mysore-based craft chocolate brand Naviluna.

"Using sustainably-grown cacao sourced from Southern India, these bean-to-bar chocolates are all-organic, vegan and GMO-free, allowing you to appreciate the qualities of the Indian cacao bean in its full glory," the company stated.

# Gonzaga joins long list of unbeaten teams to fall in tourney

**INDIANAPOLIS (AP):** Gonzaga coach Mark Few tried to reflect on what his heartbroken team actually accomplished this season.

It was still tough to accept. After winning 31 straight games and going wire to wire as No. 1, the Bulldogs became the 13th team to start an NCAA Tournament with a perfect record and finish it without taking the trophy home. Instead, Baylor won its first championship with an 86-70 game that wasn't ever really close.

"It's a really, really tough one to end a storybook season on but, listen, Baylor just beat us, they beat us in every facet of the game tonight," Few said. "Obviously, we're all disappointed in here but as I told the guys, you make it this far and you're 31-0 going into the last one, the last 40 minutes of the season, there's absolutely nothing you should feel bad about."

Few knows the truth, which is that perfection denied is far more common than perfection achieved in this tournament.

Only seven teams have been crowned as undefeated national champions, the last being the Indiana Hoosiers in 1975-76. The 45-year gap is the longest stretch without an unbeaten national champion since the tourney began in 1939.



Of the other 13 teams, four failed to reach the Final Four. Six lost in the national semifinals, including two played in Indianapolis (UNLV in 1991 and Kentucky in 2015). Gonzaga is now the third team to suffer its only loss in the title game and the first since Larry Bird's Indiana State team in 1979. The other was Ohio State in 1961; Bob Knight played on that team long before coaching the Hoosiers to their crowning achievement 15 years later.

This time, Baylor's perfect game upended Gonzaga's perfect season -- a loss that hit every bit as hard as the previous 13.

"You really do forget what it's like to lose and every time it happens it doesn't feel good and thankfully, I haven't had very many of them in my career," All-American forward Corey Kispert

said. "But I mean, when you come up against a team like that, that's firing on all cylinders for 40 minutes, it's really hard to compete against. You kind of forget, it doesn't feel good -- and I'm gong to remember this for a long time."

Gonzaga, like everyone else, played in front of limited fans or completely empty arenas. They were routinely tested for COVID-19. They faced restrictions about who they could see socially and they faced a schedule that could change and sometimes did on the fly.

Yet they were never challenged quite the way Baylor did.

Gonzaga entered the game as the most efficient offensive team in the nation, taking on all comers along the way and winning their first four tourney games by double digits. They even

survived Saturday's back-and-forth contest against UCLA with Jalen Suggs' incredible 3-point heave in overtime.

Then, in the match-up college basketball so badly wanted to see after December's first scheduled matchup was canceled because of COVID-19 concerns, the Zags weren't themselves. They looked rather imperfect for one of the few times all season. And with it went their hopes of making history and bringing home the school's first national title.

"We haven't played like that this year, they literally just busted us out of anything we could do on offense," Few said. "We were kind of playing, not facing up, we couldn't get anything generated to the basket. We were kind of playing sideways and at the other end, we had no answers."

# Barcelona nets late winner, cuts Atl tico's lead to 1 point

**MADRID, APR 6 (AP):** A late winner by Ousmane Dembélé gave Barcelona control of its own fate in the race for the Spanish league title.

Dembélé scored in the 90th minute on Monday as Barcelona defeated 10-man Valladolid 1-0 to move within a point of league leader Atlético Madrid.

Dembélé scored with a left-footed shot from inside the area to make sure Barcelona can secure the title by winning all its remaining games, as it hosts Atlético in one of the final rounds in May.

This is the result of our work. We worked very hard in these last few months," Barcelona defender Clement Lenglet said. Things are starting to go our way."

Barcelona had been struggling to break through the tight defensive scheme of Valladolid, which played a man down from the 80th after scar Plano was sent off for a foul from behind to stop a dangerous run by Dembélé.

It's proof that this is a very difficult league, you have to fight hard to win in every match, Lenglet



said.

We created many chances and scored the winner in the end. We are happy but we have to keep working because this is far from over.

Atlético lost 1-0 at Sevilla on Sunday to see its once-comfortable cushion vanish. Seeking its first league title since 2014, Diego Simeone's team has been gradually losing ground at the top of the standings. Its lead over Barcelona was more than 10 points a few weeks ago.

Atlético's gap to third-place Real Madrid which defeated Eibar 2-0 on

Saturday is three points with nine rounds left.

Barcelona next visits Real Madrid in the last clásico of the season on Saturday. Atlético hosts Eibar on Sunday.

Before the match, Lionel Messi received an award for breaking Xavi Hernández's record of 767 appearances for the Catalan club. He broke the record in the game against Real Sociedad in the previous round.

Barcelona has won six straight league games and extended its unbeaten streak in the competition to 19 matches. It has

won 12 times since a 2-1 loss at Cádiz in December.

Valladolid, which saw Kenan Kodro hit the crossbar with a header less than 10 minutes into the match at the Camp Nou Stadium, stayed three points from the relegation zone. It has won one of its last 12 league games.

The team owned by former Brazil striker Ronaldo loudly complained about the red card to Plano, and also about a handball by Barcelona defender Jordi Alba that could have given the team a penalty.

## North Korea says it won't participate in Tokyo Olympics

**SEOUL, APR 6 (AP):** North Korea said it will not participate in the Tokyo Olympics because of the coronavirus pandemic.

A website run by the North's sports ministry said the decision was made during a national Olympic Committee meeting on March 25 where members prioritized protecting athletes from the "world public health crisis caused by COVID-19."

South Korea's Unification Ministry on Tuesday expressed regret over the North's decision, saying it had hoped that the Tokyo Olympics would provide an opportunity to improve inter-Korean relations, which have

declined amid a stalemate in larger nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

Japanese Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa told reporters she was still confirming details and couldn't immediately comment on the matter: Japan's Olympic Committee said North Korea has not yet notified it that it wouldn't participate in the Tokyo Games. North Korea sent 22 athletes to the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, along with government officials, performance artists, journalists and a 230-member all-female cheering group.

At the Pyeongchang Games, the North and South Korean athletes jointly marched under a blue map symbolizing a unified Korean Peninsula, while the red-clad North Korean cheerleaders captivated global attention. The Koreans also fielded their first combined Olympic team in women's ice hockey, which drew passionate support from crowds despite losing all five of its games with a combined score of 28-2.

Those games were also much about politics. The North Korean contingent included the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who conveyed his brother's

desire for a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, a move which helped it initiate diplomacy with South Korea and the United States.

That diplomacy has stalemated since, and North Korea's decision to sit out the Tokyo Olympics is a setback for hopes to revive it.

While North Korea has steadfastly claimed to be coronavirus-free, outsiders widely doubt whether the country has escaped the pandemic entirely, given its poor health infrastructure and a porous border it shares with China, its economic lifeline.

Describing its anti-virus efforts as a "matter of national existence," North Korea has severely limited cross-border traffic, banned tourists, jettied out diplomats and mobilized health workers with quarantine tents of thousands of people who had shown symptoms.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga previously said he expected to invite President Joe Biden to the Olympics and was willing to meet with Kim Jong Un or his powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong, if either attended the Games. Suga, however, did not say if he will invite either of them.



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invite either of them.

Experts say pandemic border closures have further shocked North Korea's economy, already broken by decades of mismanagement, aggressive military spending and crippling U.S.-led sanctions over its nuclear weapons program.

The economic setbacks have left Kim Jong Un with nothing to show for his ambitious diplomacy with former President Donald Trump, which derailed over disagreements in exchanging the release of sanctions and the North's nuclear disarmament steps.

Kim in recent political speeches has pledged to bolster his nuclear deterrent in face of U.S.-led pressure, and his government has so far rejected the Biden administration's overture for talks, demanding that Washington abandon its "hostile" policies first.

The North ended a yearlong pause in ballistic testing activity last month by firing two short-range missiles off its eastern coast, continuing a tradition of testing new U.S. administrations with weapons demonstrations aimed at measuring Washington's response and wrestling concessions.

## US, Iran expected to begin indirect nuclear talks in Vienna



**VIENNA (AP):** Efforts to bring the United States back into the 2015 deal on Iran's nuclear program are to step up a gear on Tuesday as Iran and the five world powers remaining in the accord meet in Vienna while the U.S. is due to start indirect talks with Tehran.

Friday's announcement that Washington and Tehran would begin indirect talks through intermediaries was one of the first signs of tangible progress in efforts to return both nations to the terms of the accord, which bound Iran to restrictions in return for relief from U.S. and international sanctions.

Then-President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the accord in 2018, opting for what he called a maximum-pressure campaign of stepped-up U.S. sanctions.

Since then, Iran has been steadily violating the restrictions of the deal, like the amount of enriched uranium it can stockpile and the purity to which it can enrich it. Tehran's moves have been calculated to put pressure on the other nations in the deal —

Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain — to do more to offset crippling sanctions reimposed under Trump.

President Joe Biden came into office saying that getting back into the accord and getting Iran's nuclear program back under international restrictions was a priority. But Iran and the United States have disagreed over Iran's demands that sanctions be lifted first.

Senior foreign ministry officials from the countries still in the accord, the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, are holding a European Union-chaired meeting Tuesday in Vienna.

Also due in the Austrian capital is a U.S. delegation headed by the administration's special envoy for Iran, Rob Malley. State Department spokesman Ned Price said talks will be structured around working groups that the Europeans will form with the other parties to the accord.

Price said on Monday the talks are a "healthy step forward" but added that "we don't anticipate

an early or immediate breakthrough as these discussions, we fully expect, will be difficult."

"We don't anticipate at present that there will be direct talks with Iran," he said. "Though of course we remain open to them. And so we'll have to see how things go starting early this week."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter Friday: "No Iran-US meeting. Unnecessary."

A statement issued after parties to the accord met virtually on Friday said the aim of their meeting Tuesday is to "clearly identify sanctions lifting and nuclear implementation measures, including through convening meetings of the relevant expert groups."

Ahead of Tuesday's talks, an Iranian prosecutor said 10 officials have been indicted over last year's military shooting-down of a Ukrainian passenger plane in which 176 people died.

Iran faced withering international criticism last month for releasing a final report that blamed human error but named no one responsible.

# Palestinian leader heads to Germany for medical checkup

**JERUSALEM, APR 6 (AP):** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas flew to Jordan by helicopter on Monday ahead of an official visit to Germany on which he will undergo a health exam, officials said.

His office did not provide any further details on the trip, which was not announced in advance. A Palestinian official said Abbas would undergo a routine health check in Germany. The official was not authorized to comment and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

The 85-year-old Abbas, a heavy smoker with a history of heart problems, has attended public events in recent days and there was no indication he was ill. He received the first dose of a coronavirus vaccine last month.

But he has traveled abroad for medical treat-



ment in recent years. In 2018, he visited a hospital in the United States after appearing weak in an address to the U.N. Security Council.

He underwent an emergency heart procedure in 2016 after suffering exhaustion and chest pains, but was given a clean bill of health and

quickly discharged from the West Bank hospital.

Abbas has never chosen a successor and a number of senior members of his Fatah party are believed to be eyeing the position. Abbas took over as caretaker president following the death of the iconic Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in

2004.

Abbas was elected to a four-year term the following year but remained in office after his mandate expired. The Palestinians have not held elections since 2006, when the Islamic militant group Hamas won a landslide victory in parliamentary elec-

tions.

That ignited a political crisis, culminating in Hamas' seizure of power in Gaza the following year, leaving Abbas' authority confined to parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Abbas has decreed parliamentary elections for next month and a presidential election in July. It's unclear whether the votes will take place, however, due to the longstanding dispute with Hamas and growing schisms within Abbas' Fatah party that could lead him to call them off.

The Palestinian leader's popularity has plummeted in recent years as he has failed to make progress in achieving an independent state or mending ties with Hamas, and as he has presided over an increasingly authoritarian Palestinian Authority.

## New Zealand to open travel bubble with Australia on April 19

**WELLINGTON, APR 6 (AP):** New Zealand announced Tuesday it will open a long-anticipated travel bubble with Australia on April 19.

The start of quarantine-free travel between the neighbouring nations comes as a relief to families who have been separated by the coronavirus pandemic as well as to struggling tourist operators.

Both countries have been successful in stamping out the spread of the virus.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said health officials be-



lieve the risk of the virus being transmitted from Australia is low and that travel is now safe.

The bubble will give our economic recovery a boost and represents a world-leading arrangement of safely opening up international travel while continuing to pursue a strategy of elimi-

nation and keeping the virus out," Ardern said.

Australia had previously allowed New Zealanders to arrive without going into quarantine but New Zealand had taken a more cautious approach, requiring travellers from Australia to spend two weeks in quarantine upon arrival.

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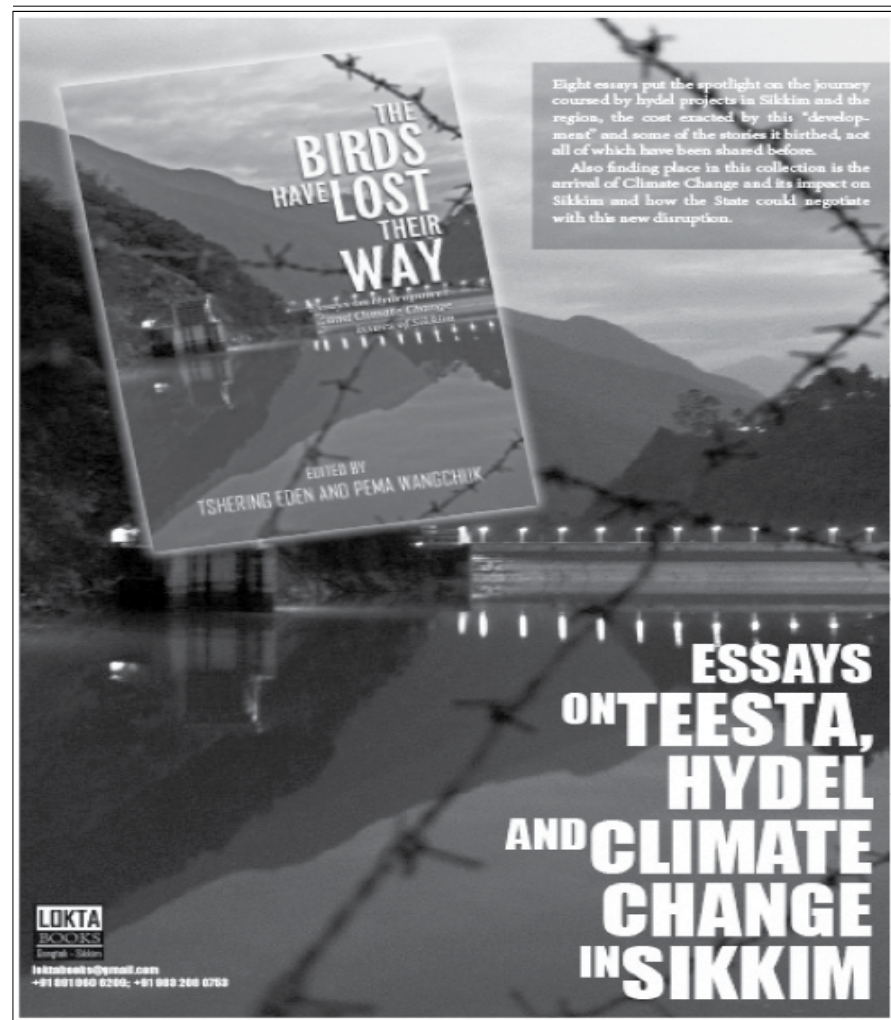
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# Amitabh Bachchan to step in for Rishi Kapoor in 'The Intern' adaptation

**MUMBAI, APR 6 (PTI):** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan is set to star alongside Deepika Padukone in the Indian adaptation of the 2015 Hollywood film "The Intern".

Bachchan is joining the project which originally starred Padukone opposite veteran actor Rishi Kapoor, who passed away last April following a two-year battle with cancer.

"The Intern" also reunites the two actors after the 2015 critical hit "Piku". Amit Ravindernath Sharma of "Badhaai Ho!" fame will direct the film.

Padukone, who is also producing the project with Sunir Khetarpal, took to Instagram on Monday to share the news of Bachchan's casting.

"What an absolute honour to be collaborating with one of my most special co-star again! Welcoming @amitabhbachchan to the Indian adaptation of #TheIntern," the actor-producer captioned her post.

Bachchan, who previously starred in 2019's "Badla", the Indian remake of the 2016 Spanish film "The Invisible Guest", said he is looking forward to working with the team.

"One more time .. Indian Adaptation



of #TheIntern," he tweeted alongside the poster of the film.

Directed by Nancy Meyers, the original film revolved around a 70-year-old widower (Robert De Niro) who becomes a senior intern at an online fashion website, where he forms an unlikely friendship with the company's workaholic CEO (Anne Hathaway).

"The Intern", distributed worldwide by Warner Bros, was a box office success, grossing USD 195 million world-

wide. Meyers also served as the writer and producer on the film.

Akshat Ghidyal and Mitesh Shah have been credited for the adapted screenplay and dialogues on the upcoming Indian version.

Athena ENM and Warner Bros India are jointly producing the project along with Padukone's Ka Productions. Chrome Pictures is attached as co-producer.

The makers are planning to release the film in the summer of 2022.

## Bhumi Pednekar tests positive for COVID-19, urges fans to follow safety protocols

**MUMBAI, APR 6 (PTI):** Actor Bhumi Pednekar on Monday said she has tested positive for novel coronavirus and has "mild symptoms".

In an Instagram post, the 31-year-old actor said she is currently under isolation and is following necessary protocols listed by the doctors.

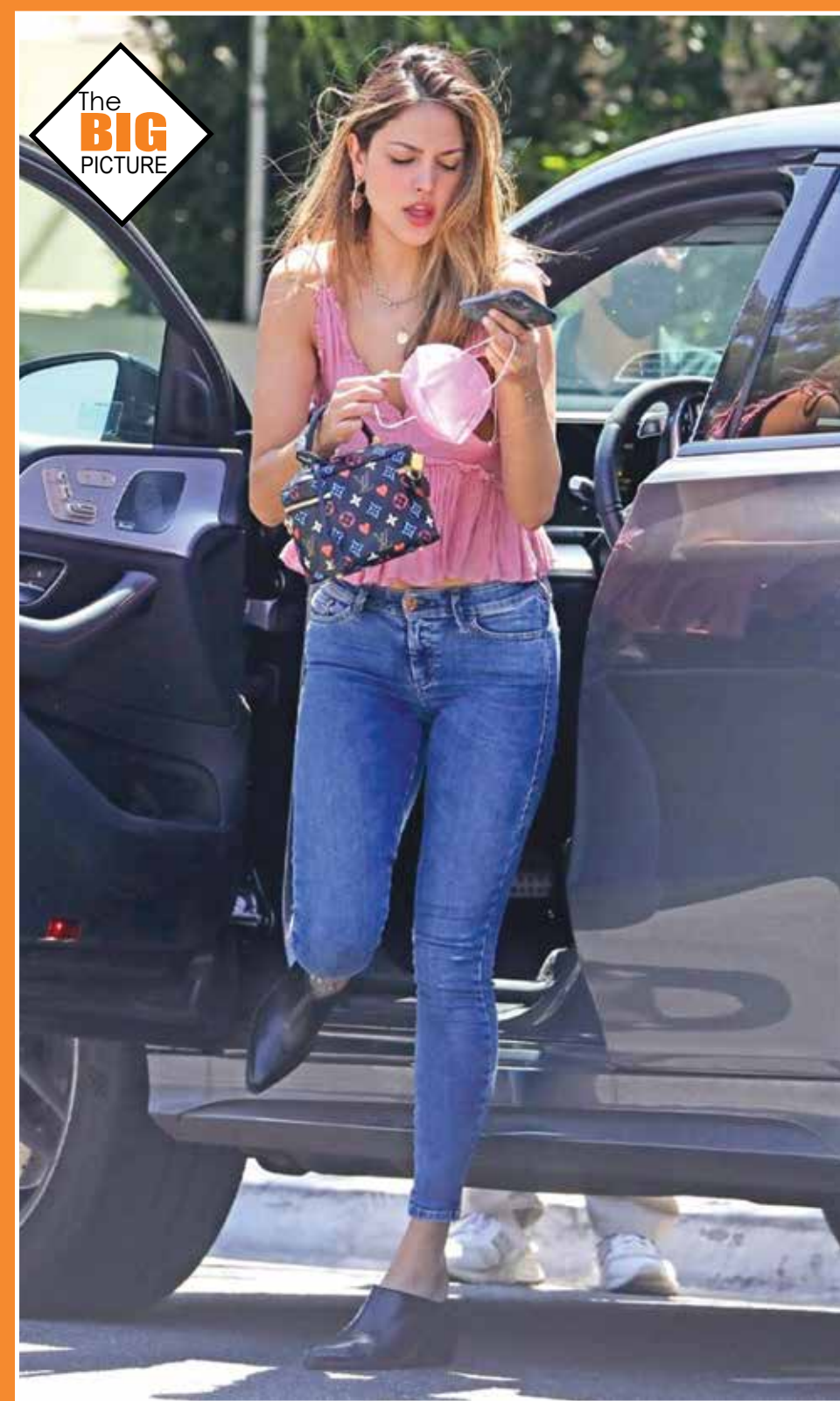
The "Durgamati" actor asked those who came in contact with her to also get tested for the virus.

"I have tested positive for COVID-19. As of today, I have mild symptoms, but am feeling ok and have isolated myself. I am following the protocol given by my doctor and health professionals. If you have been in contact with me, request you to please get tested immediately," she wrote.

Pednekar urged her fans to be cautious amid the surge in COVID-19 cases in the country.

"Please don't take the current situation lightly, even though I followed utmost precaution and care I've contracted it. Wear a mask, keep washing your hands, maintain social distancing and be mindful of your general behaviour," she added.

On Sunday, Mumbai recorded its highest single-day spike of 11,163 new COVID-19 cases, pushing the city's caseload to 4,52,445.



**SUNNY DAY!** The actress, Eiza Gonzalez looks ready for spring as she arrives to an Easter lunch in a pink top with a mini Louis Vuitton handbag.

## Taapsee Pannu starts shooting for Mithali Raj biopic 'Shabaash Mithu'



**MUMBAI, APR 6 (PTI):** Bollywood star Taapsee Pannu on Monday began filming "Shabaash Mithu", the biopic on Indian cricketer Mithali Raj.

The 33-year-old actor took to Instagram to share a picture from the sets of the movie, in which she essays the role of the Indian wom-

en's cricket captain.

"Let's go... Day 1! #ShabaashMithu #WomenInBlue," Pannu wrote.

Rahul Dholakia, best known for movies such as "Parzania" and "Raees", is attached to direct the biopic, which is backed by Viacom18 Studios.

Last month, Pannu

wrapped the shoot of Anurag Kashyap's "DoBaaraa".

In January, she finished filming on "Rashmi Rocket", another sports drama.

The actor will next be seen in "Looop Lapeta", slated for a theatrical release in October, and "Haseen Dillrubab", which will premiere on Netflix.

## Prayer vigil held outside NY hospital for rapper DMX

**WHITE PLAINS, NY (AP):** Supporters and family of the rapper DMX chanted his name and offered up prayers Monday outside the New York hospital where he remained on life support.

The 50-year-old was admitted to the hospital on Friday, following a heart attack.

The crowd outside White Plains Hospital called "DMX! DMX!" and when urged to by the main speaker, crossed their arms in the shape of an X. A woman's sobs reverberated as those in the audience heard a recording of the rapper, whose birth name is Earl Simmons.

Simmons' longtime lawyer, Murray Richman, said Sunday that the rapper was admitted to the intensive care unit but he was not sure what caused the heart attack.

DMX made his rap debut in 1998, and has released seven albums in a ca-



reer that has included three Grammy nominations. He also acted in several movies.

But substance abuse has been a struggle for him over the years, including in 2019 when he canceled shows to

go to a rehabilitation facility.

Nevertheless, he retained his standing among fans. An online face-off last year with fellow rapper Snoop Dogg as part of the Verzuz series brought more than 500,000 viewers.

### ARIES:

You're an 'all or nothing' kind of person, Aries, and that's what we love so much about you! Yet again, the Universe is presenting you with a massive opening—one that has been created for you and you alone. Let 'carpe diem' be your mantra, now and for the rest of the month. Things on the love and romance front could also be getting heated up for some of you. The cards are speaking of a certain somebody who is a master at the art of seduction and possesses the key to the portal of pleasure.

### TAURUS:

What is the true measure of success, Taurus? Winning awards and bringing home accolades or doing the things that once scared the living daylights out of you? Something tells us you already know the answer to this one. Today, the cards are urging you to take a moment to acknowledge all of your personal breakthroughs, no matter how big or small they may be. They've all contributed towards the person you are today and are helping you manifest the life of your dreams.

### GEMINI:

What's taking place right now is \*major\*, Gemini! A part of your story that was written in the stars before you boarded the spaceship to the physical world. So, don't waste a

second doubting yourself, your potential or what you are truly worth. The Universe wants you to have your best life—and the Universe wants you to have it now! PS: Trust that your reality will never look the same once you take a step into the unknown.

### CANCER:

Philosopher and poet Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "You need chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star." Today, you're embracing the madness within and without as you dedicate yourself to the creation process. There's magic waiting to happen here, Cancer. What you want to remember when you find yourself battling the demon of self-doubt is that it is often the mediocre people who get ahead in the game whilst the ones who are truly gifted tend to get stuck in an endless loop.

### LEO:

Here's the thing, honey: we're intelligent beings. But this intelligence is both our boon and our bane as it keeps us from embracing the many mysteries that surround us in every moment. Just for today, put your mind to rest and allow the magic to reveal itself. This is going to make your life more colourful than it has ever been, Leo. On the downside, you could be dealing with some kind of pain and resentment at the moment. Rise above the

situation. Look at what transpired through the lens of wisdom. This is the only way to see the light, beloved.

### VIRGO:

Sometimes, you just have to feel it all—the pain, the sadness, and the melancholy—until it has no power over you. What the cards want you to remember is that this cycle has completed itself and that there are wonderful things on their way to you. Remembering that the Universe is a parent who only wants the best for you will help you move into a space of lightness. The good news is, your money game is going to be strong this month. If you've been thinking about savings and investments, get to it now.

### LIBRA:

There are days you manage to tick everything off your to-do list, practice self-care "and" attend to social obligations. And then, there are days when rolling out of bed seems like the most colossal task you will take on in the day. This life of our moves in cycles, Libra. The ebb is followed by the flow, which is followed by the ebb once again. Similarly, the body goes through its own cycles of doing and being. Word for the wise: choose the path of least resistance and honour where you are today.

### SCORPIO:

Here's the thing, Scorpio: there's always going to be an excuse. For instance, "I haven't had the time to practice self-care because I've been so busy at work" or "I haven't managed to exercise as I've been caught up with stuff at home." But these are nothing more than excuses, and you know that better than we do. So, get real with yourself about how and where you have been slacking off as you begin to set realistic goals. Remember, if a two-hour workout at the gym feels like too much, there's no reason you can't manage a 30 minute dance yoga session at home!

### SAGITTARIUS:

We love the thrill of the wild and the unknown, don't we? We love the idea of beginning anew. But not everyday is going to bring with itself the rush of setting off on a brand new adventure. Some days you have to dedicate your time and energy towards the mundane work—the daily tasks that grow your empire. What the cards want you to remember: consistency is the key that will help you arrive at your destination.

### CAPRICORN:

It's a time of self-mastery in the Capricorn HQ. A time of reigning in the senses and putting your mind to that one thing that's been a major challenge for you. It's not going to be easy.

But then again, nothing transformative ever is. At this point, you could also be struggling with the system or somebody with a big, fat ego problem. Meeting aggression with aggression seldom solves anything. Let 'patience' and 'resilience' become your power words, beautiful.

### AQUARIUS:

This is your big moment, Aquarius! The moment that you've been consistently working towards. So, as and when you find yourself in the spotlight, know that you've earned your way here. Yes, this could mean a level up for some of you, or the opportunity of being noticed by the right people. Word for the wise: the ability to network and toot your horn tastefully will serve you well at a time like this.

### PISCES:

The Tower card in the major arcana (which may or may not have showed up for you today) is one of the most feared cards in the deck—more feared than Death itself. Unlike the latter, which is a natural progression, it shows up unannounced and rocks our world in a way that's not necessarily positive. So, what are the false foundations telling you about your life, Pisces? How and where do you need to rebuild? Damage control is going to be a big theme for you over the next few days.