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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Landslide victims rue lack of Govt support, blame authorities for causing slide

SURAJ LIMBOO
GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

The family of Hari Das Pokhrel, victims of a landslide in Menglee, South Sikkim, has demanded proper assistance from the government to relocate the family.

Hari Das Pokhrel's family has been living in a temple since their house was damaged by a landslide on 03 September morning at around 4.30 am. According to Kunti Maya Sharma [daughter-in-law], seven of them were present in the house on that day.

There was heavy rain in Menglee on the night of 02 Sept and water run-off from the PMGSY road above was entering their house. They also tried to block the water flow but failed.

When the landslide occurred at around 3am on 03 Sept, the 85-year-old father and 75-year-old mother along with five other members managed to escape. The



house and kitchen have been completely damaged and a newly constructed house is also damaged.

Ms Sharma blamed the absence of proper drainage on the PMGSY road above the house for the landslide.

According to the fam-

ily, the concerned department was informed about a year back about the danger that improper drainage system on the road posed. But the department did not look into the matter, said Kunti Sharma. The family has become homeless today due to the lack of initia-

tive of the concerned authorities, she alleged.

DC South, M. Bharani Kumar, along with several concerned officials visited the site on the same day and also handed ex-gratia of Rs 2.1 lakh.

But the losses were worth more than Rs 15 lakh, Kunti Sharma informs.

The family has demanded that the concerned department inspect the affected site and make arrangements to provide security to the existing house, and immediately sanction the construction of a protection wall above the house.

Covid claims one more, infects 74 others even as Sikkim's active count drops to 859

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

Sikkim lost one life to Covid in the last 24 hours taking the state's Covid death toll to 376 on Tuesday. The fatality was reported from STNM Hospital. This is the third COVID death of the week in Sikkim thus far. It may be recalled that two COVID deaths were recorded here yesterday.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, the State also recorded 74 new infections from the testing of 656 samples yesterday giving Sikkim a daily test positivity rate of 11.2%.

While 32 of the new cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 225 samples, 41 more tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 424 samples and one case was picked up in CB-NAAT of seven samples.

Of the 74 new cases, 39 were registered in East District, 20 in West

District, 11 in South District and 04 in North District. Sikkim's tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 has now reached 30,330.

Meanwhile, Sikkim's count of active Covid cases has come down to 859 with 127 more formerly Covid-positive people making full recoveries and getting discharged from home and facility isolation in the last 24 hours. Sikkim's figure of recovered Covid cases has further improved to 28,806.

Over the same 24 hours, six more COVID patients were admitted to hospitals in Sikkim and there are currently 10 COVID patients admitted in ICU facilities at STNM Hospital and Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

On the other hand, 6,628 people received their Covishield jabs on Monday, of whom 434 received their first shots while 6,184 others completed their vaccine schedule with the second dose of the vaccine.

Secretary Spices Board meets CM, discusses Rs 26.5 cr Spices Park project



GANGTOK, 07 SEPT [IPR]:

Secretary Spices Board, D Sathiyam met Chief Minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang today to discuss the current production and export of spices and future prospects in the state known for large cardamom.

Secretary Spices Board outlined the projects and activities being implemented by the Board in the state starting with the Spices Park project at Namcheybong near Pakyong in East District under the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) scheme. The total cost of the project is Rs 26.51 crores and the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India has

released Rs 8.87 crores as the first installment to the Board. The Board has signed a MoU with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) for the construction of the spices park and the pre-construction activities have been commenced by the CPWD and the project is expected to be completed in 36 months.

It was also informed by the Secretary, Spices Board that an online auction for large cardamom would be introduced shortly in the state for ensuring better price realization to the farmers.

In regards to the exports, the Secretary notified that 10 prospective entrepreneurs in Sikkim will be identified and

registered as exporters for major spices like large cardamom, ginger, turmeric, cherry peppers (Dalle khorsani) and so on in the state and the entrepreneurs will be supported under the Board's export promotion schemes.

Apart from these projects and programmes, the Spices Board is implementing certified nursery programmes, replanting schemes, modified Bhatti scheme, and spice clinic for the benefit of large cardamom farmers in Sikkim.

Secretary Spices Board complimented the Government of Sikkim for implementing the farmer incentive scheme

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COVID-19: Active cases dip below four lakh

NEW DELHI, SEP 7 (PTI): India logged 31,222 fresh cases of coronavirus infection taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,30,58,843, while the active cases were recorded below four lakh, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The death toll has climbed to 4,41,042 with 290 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The case fatality rate was recorded at 1.33 per cent. The active cases have declined to 3,92,864 comprising 1.19 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 97.48 per cent, the ministry said.

A decrease of 12,010 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. As many as 15,26,056 tests were conducted on Monday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of COVID-19 in the country to 53,31,89,348.

The daily positivity rate was recorded as 2.05 per cent. It has been less than three per cent for last eight days while the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 2.56 per cent. It has been below three per cent for the last 74 days, the ministry said.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,22,24,937. With more than 1.13 crore vaccine doses ad-

ministered in the last 24 hours, the cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide vaccination drive has reached 69.90 crore according to the ministry.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 290 new fatalities include 135 from Kerala, and 37 from Maharashtra. A total of 4,41,042 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,37,811 from Maharashtra, 37,426 from Karnataka, 35,036 from Tamil Nadu, 25,082 from Delhi, 22,861 from Uttar Pradesh, 21,631 from Kerala and 18,515 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities. "Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Meeting reviews SGAY at Nandok



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

A review meeting on Sikkim Garib Aawas Yojana was conducted at Nandok BAC today, a press release from Additional Political Secretary [East] to the Chief Minister informs.

Area MLA cum Minister Education Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha, attended the occa-

sion as chief guest.

The Minister also visited an old age home and met the facilitators, caretakers and occupants. He also donated ₹ 2 lakh to GR Rai, the caretaker of the home, for maintenance and other expenses.

It may be mentioned that a total of 112 houses have been allotted for the Syari constituency,

out of which 12 have been completed.

The meeting also informed about the inauguration ceremony of SGAY in Syari Constituency.

Minister, Mr Lepcha informed about the vision of the State Government for providing houses to the poor and needy people of the State. He appealed to the gathering to be aware of how the government is proactively working for the upliftment of the people.

The meeting was attended by Additional Political Secretary to CM East, Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha, ADC Development East, Radha Pradhan, Panchayat members, Dinesh Kumar Chettri, Shanker Chettri, Chong Donka Bhutia, Dawa Doma Bhutia, Tshering Lhamu Bhutia and Sarita Chettri and local gentry.

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

Sikkim Democratic Front has placed three demands with the state government to resolve the ongoing protest of ad-hoc teachers in the State. The party has demanded an "unconditional meeting" on the demands of the ad-hoc teachers, a solution to the issue within 48 hours, and 24x7 medical attention and surveillance for teachers on hunger strike.

An SDF press release issued by its vice-president [publicity affairs], Krishna Kharel, states that the ongoing hunger strike and protest of the ad-hoc teachers is into its 7th day with five of them on hunger strike since 03 Sept

2021 in front of the DAC, Gangtok.

"We are also concerned that their health status is deteriorating and have urged the Government and Health authorities to provide 24x7 medical cover," the release states.

The party has condemned the way the SKM Government has allowed this impasse to develop and snowball into a problem from which they now cannot run away further adding that they have had enough time to solve this and other similar issues.

The party has stated that it will not be surprised if those other issues will also come to haunt the government in the not-too-distant future.

"They cannot blame our party for this problem as this was made into a

major political issue by them in 2018-19. They have derived political benefit from the political opportunism during that time. They had not only promised to solve this but a whole lot of other issues within 10-100 days. We might, at this stage, like to ask where have all those promises gone? The Sikkimese electorate believed you and handed over the Government to you so that you could bring the 'change' that you have been harping on," the release expresses. SDF has further alleged that shifting the blame to the previous government is a lame excuse and no one is going to buy it, not for this or any other issue in the future.

"Five years is a long time to resolve a whole lot of issues. But not long enough

if the Government is not serious or is playing all kinds of games with lives of the teachers and through them the lives and careers of lakhs of students of Sikkim," the release adds.

Further stating that civil society groups have already extended their support to the ad-hoc teachers, the party has said that the popular sentiment is in favour of the teachers.

The release further adds that SDF does not want to politicise this issue but only wants justice to be meted out to all the ad-hoc teachers without favouring anyone and a proper system of onboarding the teachers as regular employees as was promised in the first place.

Agri Minister attends virtual meet with Union Agri Minister

GANGTOK, 07 SEPT (IPR): Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Departments, Lok Nath Sharma, represented the State of Sikkim in a virtual conference of the Chief Ministers of States called by the Union Minister, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Narendra Singh Tomar, today.

The video conference was also joined by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Horticulture Department, Yashoda Bhandari and Secretary Agriculture Department, Rinzing C. Bhutia.

During the interaction, various subjects including the recent modification in initiatives of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and opportunities for the states were discussed in detail.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) and KCC data with a focus on saturation of KCC for small and marginal farmers, National Farmers database with connectivity to land record database were also emphasized in detail under Digital Agriculture initiative.

Besides, the meeting also contemplated the need to make India self-sufficient in edible oils and pulses, the role of states and credit availability.

Minister Lok Nath Sharma



while speaking on the agenda of AIF informed that the departments of Agriculture and Horticulture are making efforts to dovetail the AIF scheme with other schemes like MOVCD-NER, HMNEH etc. for the creation of functional infrastructure for post-harvest activities. In Sikkim, more than ten thousand farmers have been benefited and more farmers are being enrolled, he added. He also informed that the 99% of land record of the state has been digitised and shared planning of hosting online very shortly.

Minister Sharma also proposed for the establishment of

an export-oriented, industry-empowered Organic Food Park cum Free Trade Warehousing Zone (SEZ-FTWZ), offering common third party logistics and supply chain infrastructure organics- only processing, handling and warehousing facilities, which will serve as an attraction for private players into organics in Sikkim and the other NE States.

Drawing attention to the dry region of the South and West District, he also stressed the necessity of the construction of water harvesting structures for secondary and micro storage and enhancing the potential of traditional water

bodies at the village level. He also expressed gratitude for the benefits being received by the farmers under PMKSY and also underlined the difficult topographical challenges of Sikkim and for additional support for the creation of water resources.

He also requested Union Minister to provide subsidies on organic manure to the farmers of Sikkim as a substitute for chemical fertiliser.

He also articulated the efforts of the State Government and also on production incentives initiated under Mukhya Mantri Krishi Atmanirbhar Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Pashud-

han Samridhi Yojana, financial incentives in the dairy sector under the leadership of the Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang.

Earlier, Union Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar in his opening remarks, acknowledged the efforts of the State Government in the implementation of various schemes of Central Government and further urged to ensure a better and bright future of farmers. He also advised connecting agriculture with advanced science and technology, which will be influential in doubling the farmer's income and productivity.

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs and Textiles Piyush Goyal correlated the indispensable need of agriculture with food security and consumers requirements. He stressed to have serious look upon various aspects of discussion for further strengthening infrastructures like storage and warehousing and enhancing farmers income.

The programme also had the participation of the Chief Minister of various states including, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya along with the Agriculture Ministers from different states.

Powergrid makes push for greener future

MEGHALAYA/GURUGRAM, 07 SEPT, 2021: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking under Ministry of Power, has laid down the foundation stone for first ever Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS) in the state of Meghalaya at its office complex at Lapalang, Shillong on 03 Sept, 2021.

The EVCS are being developed under Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles (FAME) India Scheme Phase-II. Under this scheme, POWERGRID shall be developing 11 EVCS in Shillong city (5 Public EVCS and 6 at government establishments). Each station shall have four 15 kW DC-001 Chargers and one 100 kW CCS-2/CHADEMO Charger (dual gun) making it 66 charging points in Shillong city. Out of the 11 locations, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed for 4 locations which include POWERGRID Office Complex at Lapalang, MTC Ware House at

Demthring, MTC Parking Lot at Police Bazar and Polo Parking Lot at Polo.

POWERGRID has developed itself as one of the market leaders in EVCS business and has its presence in major cities of India like Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bengaluru, Gurugram and Kochi.

The foundation stone was laid by Member Secretary, AK Thakur, North Eastern Regional Power Committee (NERPC) in the august presence of Executive Director, RK Tyagi, North Eastern Regional Transmission System, POWERGRID, and Chief General Manager (I/C), N Roy, NERLDC, POSOCO.

POWERGRID has presently 172,154 ckm of transmission lines, 262 Sub-stations and more than 446,940 MVA of transformation capacity. With the adoption of latest technological tools and techniques, enhanced use of automation and digital solutions, POWERGRID has been able to maintain average transmission system availability >99%.

Taliban detains TOLONews, Ariana journalists covering Kabul anti-Pak protest: Reports

NEW DELHI, 07 SEPT [NDTV]: The Taliban militia today arrested several journalists -- and later reportedly released some -- for covering today's massive protests in Kabul against Pakistan's alleged interference in the war-torn country. Among those arrested were reporters and cameraperson of TOLONews and Ariana News.

TOLONews said its cameraperson Waheed Ahmady was arrested while filming the protest. Lotfullah Najafizada, head of Afghanistan's first 24 hour news and current affairs television channel, appealed to the terrorist group to release him.

"Waheed Ahmady... has covered many frontlines over the years," Mr

Najafizada tweeted. Bais Hayat, a journalist with Ariana News, another leading Afghan news TV network, also reported that his colleague Sami Jahesh, along with cameraman Samim, had been detained by the Taliban during coverage of today's protests. "We have been out of contact with them for more than two hours and we do not know their status," Mr Hayat tweeted.

A little later, however, the TOLONews head said cameraman Ahmady had been released.

Hundreds of Kabul residents came out on the city streets today in protest against what they said was meddling by Pakistan in Afghanistan's affairs, three weeks after the Taliban's takeover.

Matru Vandana Saptah concludes in Namchi



NAMCHI, 07 SEPT [IPR]: Closing ceremony of Matru Vandana Saptah and Poshan Maah was observed at DAC conference hall, today.

The ceremony had the presence of Namchi Municipal Councillor, Sailendra Chhetri, Chief Medical Officer (South), Dr DC Sharma who highlighted about nutritional

anaemia in women and adolescents girls.

Present amongst others were CDPO, Medical Officers Ayush Namchi, Nutrition Inspector, District coordinator, PA POSHAN, PA PMMVY, all the supervisors, pan-chayat president of different GPUs Awws and Awhs also attended the programme.

Equipment and loans distributed to farmers in Namthang

NAMCHI, 07 SEPT (IPR): An awareness cum distribution programme jointly organized by Agriculture Engineering Cell, Horticulture, Directorate of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry was held at the training hall of Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Namthang, today.

The chief guest for the occasion was Area MLA cum Minister of Building and Housing and Transport Department, Sanjeet Kharel. He was accompanied by Secretary (Agriculture), Rinzing C. Bhutia, Secretary (AH & VS), Dr. Sangay D. Bhutia, officials from the organizing department, Bank Managers and beneficiaries at large.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Minister Sanjeet Kharel extended his congratulations to the beneficiaries who will be receiving equipments and loans from the department. He said that these kinds of programs helps the farmers of the area in identifying the different roles that agricultural practice and livestock species play in the communities.

It also provides an opportunity for the department in communicating the different kinds of schemes available and in turn involving farm-



ers and Self Help Groups to avail the perks of the schemes which can be used to upgrade the skills of the common person resulting in becoming self-reliant and contributing in an increased income.

The Minister also encouraged the public to collect and make optimum use of the livestock distributed by the Animal Husbandry Department as these livestock is responsible for major food supply in rural and urban areas he cited some examples such as dairy, eggs which livestock can generate.

He underlined about the advantages of the livestock which is being distributed throughout

the programme and informed that the livestock species plays an important economic and socio-cultural roles for the welfare of rural households these livestock give food supply and has the potential to become source of income. Moreover, he said that the livestock also contributes to the family nutrition, the consumption of protein increases and some of these produce can be sold in the market as well.

During the course of the programme the officials from the organizing departments spoke in depth about the various on-going and upcoming schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

(PMFBY), Horticulture Mission in North East and Himalayan States, National Bamboo Mission, National Livestock Mission, Cold Storage facility and various other diverse projects shaped by the Central as well as State Government for the well-being of the grass-root community. They also asserted the gathering to adopt schemes from the department as these schemes will aid the individuals or the self-help group to learn skills and help them in production and selling of the items.

The officials all concurred that key objective of the schemes is to address issues relating to the development especially in farming industry while also providing a new impetus thereby enabling the realisation of Sikkim's considerable potential in production and profit generation in farming and in other allied activities.

The Minister handed over various tokens, including Power Tiller, Coil pipes, Knapsack Sprayer, Pulverizer, Spices Grinder, Chaff Cutter and other Farm Machinery. The programme also saw the distribution of a total of 30 tokens and 52 loans to various beneficiaries.

Secretary Spices...

for large cardamom (Rs 100/kg) and other spices for increasing the production of spices in the state.

Sikkim is the largest producer of large cardamom. Though the area under production has declined, productivity is increasing. Blight disease is a major challenge in large cardamom cultivation. Use of disease-free quality planting material, regular replanting, adequate shade management, manuring, irrigation, application of biocontrol agents and Phyto sanitation will help to address the disease issue in large cardamom as well as improve productivity.

Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of the Board and asked them to work closely with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research Institute at Gangtok, Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa, New Delhi and Sikkim University to address the fungal and viral diseases of large cardamom to increase the production in the state.

Secretary, HK Sharma, Commerce and Industry Department, Government of Sikkim, Tadong, Scientist, Dr TN Deka, Indian Cardamom Research Institute, Tadong, Deputy Director, MS Ramalingam, Spices Board and Assistant Director Spices Board, Phurba Tshering Lepcha were also present in the meeting.

Mehbooba Mufti says she is under house arrest

SRINAGAR, SEPT 7 (PTI): PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday claimed that she has been placed under house arrest, and said the move has exposed the government's claims of normalcy.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister also posted on Twitter pictures of a security force vehicle blocking the main gate of her Gupkar residence here.

"I've (I have) been placed under house arrest today because according to admin(istration) the situation is far from normal in Kashmir. This exposes their



fake claims of normalcy," she tweeted.

She also hit out at the Centre alleging that while the Government of India was expressing concern for the rights of people in Afghani-

stan, the same were denied to Kashmiris.

"GOI expresses concern for the rights of Afghan people but wilfully denies the same to Kashmiris," the PDP leader charged.

WANTED

A leading NGO based in Gangtok requires the following personnel:

- Senior Manager Operations.** Candidate should be a graduate/post graduate with minimum 10 years experience in the development sector, capable of independently managing project staff, developing project proposals, securing projects, liaising with the Government and other agencies, preparing quality reports, and capable of handling finance and all other operational work related to the organisation. Candidate shall report directly to the CEO.
- Project Coordinators.** Candidates should be graduates/postgraduates in Social Sciences, Agriculture, Botany/Zoology, Ecology or Tourism with minimum five years experience in the development sector. He/she should have good communication skills at the grassroot level and good report writing skills with good command of English and a local language. Knowledge of GIS software operation shall be an added advantage.

Salaries will commensurate with experience and qualifications. Apply with full resume to rpgeccoss@gmail.com Phone 9733088003. Shortlisted candidates will have to appear for an interview.

DOCUMENTS LOST:

I, Dipasa Rai, daughter of Parsu Ram Rai, resident of Upper Rinchenpong, under 30-Tadong Rinchenpong GPU, West Sikkim, has lost my Class X (ISCE, New Delhi- Year 2018) Mark Sheet bearing no. TF 20162183 & Unique ID no 6772211 on 20.06.2021 while travelling from Kaluk to Soreng. If found please contact 7407178417. My GD no is 158 dt. 23.08.2021 at Kaluk Police Station.

SU Professor gets Academisthan's Teacher of the Year award

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

Assistant Professor, Department of Horticulture, Sikkim University, Dr Sujata Upadhyay, has been felicitated as one of the top three winners [third rank] in North East category (Young Professor/ Junior category 40 or below years of age) in Teacher of the Year Award 2021 by Academisthan Foundation, Mumbai, a press release informs.

The felicitation function was held virtually

on 06 Sept, 2021 and was attended by Chairman, University Grants Commission, Prof DP Singh, as chief guest and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, Dr Vinay Sahasrabudhe, and President, Indian Council of Cultural Relations and MP, Rajya Sabha and Vice Chancellor, Prof TV Kattimani, Central Tribal University, Tripura as guests of honour.

The nominations re-

ceived from Central Universities, State Universities and Colleges etc. were scrutinized by Vice-Chancellors and Deans of all eight states of North-East for NE Category of Awards and interviews of top five nominations were also held by the selection committee. There were more than 10,000 nominations received by Academisthan Foundation under nine categories of awards.

The first two positions in NE category of awards were held by

teachers from Gauhati University and IIT, Guwahati from Guwahati, Assam (Chemistry/Mathematics discipline). In senior Professors (NE category), two Professors were felicitated from Dibrugarh University, Assam (Statistics/Mathematics discipline).

Dr. Sujata Upadhyay was the only female faculty to be felicitated among top five teachers from NE region including senior and junior category of NorthEast category

of Teacher of the Year Award 2021.

Deepak Kumar Mukadam, Chancellor's nominee to the management council of University of Mumbai, is the founder of Academisthan Foundation (www.academisthan.com) which is a not-for-profit organization working for networking and welfare of Indian teaching community in higher education. The virtual programme is available on Facebook and You Tube page of Academisthan.

International Day of Clean Air and Blue Skies observed



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

International Day of Clean Air and Blue Skies was observed at the meeting hall of Urban Primary Health Centre, Gangtok, today, a press release informs.

The programme was

designed for ASHA and health workers elaborating on various reasons for pollution and its impacts.

During the programme, Air Quality Index of various towns of Sikkim was also shown and discussed.

BJP demands 30-minute Hanuman Chalisa in Jharkhand House amid Namaz Room row

RANCHI, 07 SEPT [PTI]:

Unrelenting BJP MLAs disrupted Jharkhand Assembly proceedings on Tuesday for the third consecutive day as they protested against the allotment of a Namaz room by the speaker and demanded allocation of 30 minutes every week for reciting the Hanuman Chalisa.

The BJP members chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' and snatches of the Hanuman Chalisa. Many lawmakers of the party, which is the main opposition in Jharkhand, sported saffron outfits and saffron angavastram with 'Jai Shri Ram' printed on them.

The protest against the allotment of a room in the Assembly for Namaz began even before the House assembled for the day's proceedings. BJP MLAs sat on the stairs at the entrance of the Assembly and chanted the Hanuman Chalisa and party MLA Narayan Das was seen wearing a garland made of 'belpatra' (wood apple leaves).

As soon as the House assembled, they began to vociferously protest against the allotment of the namaz room and the state's employment policy even as Speaker Rabin Nath Mahto repeatedly urged them to allow the House to function.

The unrelenting opposition members, however, continued to shout slogans during the question hour which lead to the adjournment of the House till 12.30 pm.

"No disrespect would be tolerated to the Chair. Beat me if you are angry, but don't disrupt the pro-

ceedings," Mr Mahto was heard telling the protesting MLAs. "Please go back to your seats... I am pained. The Chair is not a subject of mockery. Yesterday you behaved badly... This is the question of the faith of 3.5 crore people and your conduct gives pain," he added.

In reply, BJP MLA CP Singh said though the Business Advisory Committee had decided to take up the employment policy issue it was changed. "This (speaker's statement) is an emotional statement. We are also sad. Speaker is supreme in the assembly but it hurts when we see that your behaviour is not impartial," he told Mr Mahto.

Amid the din, the speaker asked BJP MLA Bhanu Pratap Shahi to respect Hanuman Chalisa and not to use it for political gains. He said may 'Bajrang Bali' grant wisdom to the agitating MLAs. When the House reassembled after the adjournment, BJP members trooped into the well of the house and Singh demanded allocation of 30 minutes every Tuesday for recitation of Hanuman Chalisa.

"If a room can be allotted for Namaz, why can't 30 minutes be allotted for Hanuman Chalisa? I take pride in being a Hindu," Singh said.

Jharkhand Minister Mithlesh Thakur was heard voicing his protest and ruling JMM MLA Pradeep Yadav said that there should not be any politics in the name of God. He demanded to know why BJP did not do so when it was in power in the state. .

Food Safety Training held for dairy sector workers

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 SEPT:

The Food Safety Cell of the Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim, in collaboration with Council Of Scientific And Industrial Research-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CSIR-CFTRI), conducted two-day Food Safety Training and Certification program from 05-07 Sept at the conference hall of Sikkim Milk Union, 5th Mile Tadong, East Sikkim. CSIR-CFTRI is an empanelled Training Partner with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Government of India.

A press release from Health Department informs that the program was held under the direction and guidance of Additional Chief Secretary cum Food Safety Commissioner, K. Sreenivasulu, Health and Family Welfare Department

A total of 30 partici-



pants from dairy industry of North, South and East Districts attended the training program.

MD Sikkim Milk Union, Dr. A.B. Karki chaired the program along with Joint GM, Vishal Tiwari as co-chair.

Addressing the program, Joint Food Safety Commissioner Food Safety Cell, FDA, Health & Family Welfare Department, Niraj Thapa, stressed upon the need and importance of undergoing the training for all the Food Business Operators as mandated under the Food Safety & Standards Act 2006 and Rules and Regulation.

Reinstate texts by Mahasweta Devi, Dalit writers, appeal academicians

NEW DELHI, 07 SEPT [PTI]:

Over 1,100 academicians, writers and civil society members have written to Delhi University's acting vice-chancellor, urging him to reinstate the works of Mahasweta Devi, Bama and Sukirtharani in the English (Honours) syllabus.

The petition came a few days after the teachers of English in the university made the same plea and accused the Oversight Committee of making a "complete mockery of all democratic and due processes" while drafting the syllabus.

The petition has been signed by the likes of writers Arundhati Roy and Vikram Chandra, actors Sharmila Tagore and Shabana Azmi, filmmaker and writer Adoor Gopalakrishnan and filmmaker Anand Patwardhan.

"The exclusion of Bama and Sukirtharani is a blatantly casteist act as it discriminates against contemporary Dalit women authors in a core paper on women's writing, Surely, to delete, without any justification, two living Dalit women authors is a rare example of political disregard, omission and marginalisation of existing living writings..."

"Both Bama and Sukirtharani are contemporary Tamil writers, is

it not important to teach and know, in a central university located in Delhi, the regional diversity of India," the petition questioned.

Mahashweta Devi's short story Draupadi, which has been dropped from the syllabus, revolves around a Dalit woman who is picked up by the police on the accusation of being a Naxal and is then raped.

"The charges against Mahasweta Devi's 'Draupadi' are based on an inadequate understanding or deliberate misreading of the nationally and internationally acclaimed author. Rape of women is a heinous reality. Many literary texts draw attention to it and some English, European and American narratives of rape are included in the syllabus. Are we to turn a blind eye to its empathetic articulation by Indian authors," it said.

The university, in a statement on August 26, had said that a careful perusal of the present syllabus brings out the "inclusive nature of the syllabus" under reference in terms of its diversity of content and inclusion of pioneering works of renowned scholars of both national and international fame, without consideration of their religion, caste and creed.

"The university sub-

scribes to the idea that the literary content forming part of the text in a language course of study should contain materials which do not hurt the sentiments of any individual and are inclusive in nature to portray a true picture of our society, both past and present," the statement read.

Stating that three contemporary women authors can be dropped "so easily" from a core paper on women's writing was a sign of deep worry, the letter demanded the reinstatement of the dropped texts.

"The reasons given and not given for the deletions are prejudicial and misogynistic in intent as no sound academic reasons have been provided," they said.

CONTACT

SUMMIT TIMES REPORTERS

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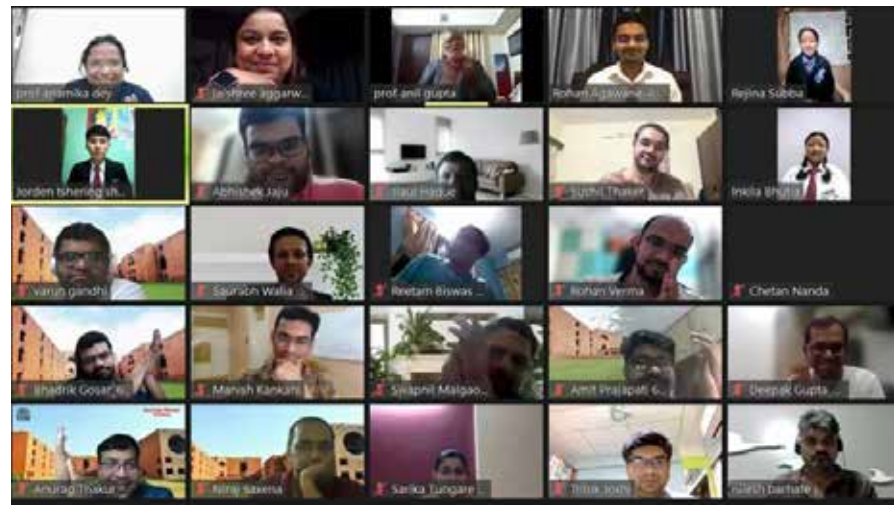
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West Sikkim students invited by IIM-A to share Aatma Nirbhar Sikkim learnings



GYALSHING, 07 SEPT

(IPR):

On Wednesday, 25 August, Additional District Magistrate, Agawane Rohan Ramesh, West Sikkim and three students from West and South districts of Sikkim were invited by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) to present their learning from the initiative 'Aatma Nirbhar Sikkim' taken by Agawane Rohan Ramesh in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK), West Sikkim.

In this virtual presentation, Mr Rohan and the students addressed a class of Executive MBA Program at IIM-A on the subject 'Grassroot Innovations and Entrepreneurship Development'.

'Aatma Nirbhar Sikkim' was launched in the West district from 05 to 07 Mar, 2021 in which a total 18 schools from all across the district participated. The program aims to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among the students to make them self-reliant and capable of creating jobs

which is the main theme of government flagship program 'Aatma Nirbar Bharat'.

Each team consisted of ten students from class XI and XII and two nodal teachers to assist the students during the event. The initial investment required to set up the food stall was completely borne by the students with each student contributing Rs.500 from their own pocket and thus each team having initial capital of Rs.5000. These schools then operated the food stalls for three days to generate revenues so as to learn the concept of running a business. At the end of the three days, the team with the maximum profit was declared as the winner.

The total business done in three days by all the schools combined was Rs.3,45,000. The profits earned by each team varied between Rs.25,000 and Rs.2,200 and none of the team made any loss. In continuation with the initiative, an Entrepreneur-

ship Club was formed by District Administration, Gyalshing and NYK, West Sikkim in collaboration to provide hand-holding support to students interested in starting their own business in future. An awareness camp regarding various Government Schemes for encouraging start-up was also conducted in partnership with MSME Department to make the students aware of the funding opportunities. The aim of the club is to make all these business ideas a reality at the earliest.

Similar initiative was undertaken by Mr Rohan in South district when he was posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Namchi. District Administration, Gyalshing and NYK, West Sikkim would like to congratulate Rejina Subba (Namchi GSSS), Jordan Sherpa (Pelling SSS) and Inkila Bhutia (Jorethang SSS) for giving a successful presentation at such an esteemed organization with encouraging feedback

PMMVY week comes to an end in Namchi

BIKASH CHETTRI

NAMCHI, 07 SEPT:

The week-long program of the Prime Minister's MatruVandanaYojana has come to an end in Ravangla under South Sikkim today.

BhaktaBahadurLimbu, Gram Panchayat President of Rayong-Tinkitam, JanukiGurung, Panchayat President of Rabong-Sangmo and SaritaThatal, Panchayat President of Barfung-Jarong were guests at the event organized by the Department of Social Justice and Welfare (Department of Women and Child Development).

It is to be mentioned that a rally was also held during the program to highlight the importance of Prime Minister's MatruVandanaYojana and its success.

BhaktaBahadurLimbu, while addressing the program, highlighted various prob-



lems faced by pregnant mothers and expressed his views on the possible solutions.

Speaking on the occasion, CDPO, Narbu Lepcha informed about the various benefits that pregnant mothers can get under the PMMVY. She informed that pregnant women should register with the ICDS in order to get these benefits.

ICDS Supervisor, Ved Kumar Subba and Anganwadi worker, Tika Rai also spoke on the occasion.

Chhattisgarh CM's father sent to jail over Brahmin remark

NEW DELHI, 07 SEPT

[PTI]: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's father Nand Kumar Baghel was arrested and sent to 15 days in custody by a court in Raipur for allegedly making derogatory remarks against the Brahmin community.

After his father was charged for the comments, the Chief Minister stressed that for his government, no one was above the law.

"Nobody is above the law in my government, even if he is the Chief Minister's 86-year-old father. As Chief Minister, I have the responsibility to maintain harmony among different communities. If he made a remark against a community, I am sorry. Legal action will be taken," Bhupesh Baghel told reporters on Sunday.

"Everyone knows about my ideological differences

with my father. Our political thoughts and beliefs are different. I respect him as his son, but as Chief Minister, I cannot forgive him for such mistakes which disturb public order."

Mr Baghel also underlined that the Chhattisgarh government "respects every religion, caste and community and their sentiment", and gives equal importance to everyone.

He tweeted later: "As a son, I respect my father, but as a Chief Minister, none of his mistakes can be overlooked which disturbs the public order."

Mr Baghel's father, on his recent visit to Uttar Pradesh, had controversially called for a "boycott" of Brahmins and, describing them as foreigners, had urged people not to let them into their village.

"Brahmins will be

sent from the River Ganga to Volga. They are foreigners. They consider us untouchables and are snatching all our rights. I will urge villagers to not let Brahmins enter their village," Nand Kumar Baghel had said.

An FIR was registered in Raipur on the complaint of the Sarv Brahmin Samaj against Baghel senior on Saturday night. The charges on the complaint include "promoting enmity between groups".

For Mr Baghel, the family drama comes days after he apparently triumphed over his minister and in-house rival TK Singh Deo, who had laid claim to his job saying he had been assured of a rotational arrangement for Chief Ministership. Mr Baghel's half term was done, Mr Singh Deo had asserted.

Census Numbers Hold Many Stories

...and some lessons

The population totals of Census 2011 were released some years back, and bits and pieces and more specifics about Sikkim's numbers arrive from time to time. When the first set of numbers are released, there is much interest, sometimes even gasps over how the state is growing. In the current census figures, Sikkim's falling fertility rate has hogged the limelight, convincing the State government to scrap the financial incentives it offered public servants for keeping their families "small". But there are so many more stories that the numbers tell; statistics are not always boring, provided someone dug out the human stories behind them. This should be a study that more people undertake in Sikkim.

Sikkim's population as of March 2011 has been counted at 6,07,688 people, recording a 12.36% growth since 2001. Since 1911, when the first proper Census operation was undertaken in Sikkim, only three decades, the last being 1941-51, have population growths lower than this. The first Census of Sikkim was conducted in 1891 by the Political Officer. A decade later, in 1901 the West Bengal Census authorities of British India were deputed to carry out the task and it was probably only in 1911 that the Directorate of Census Operations brought the detailed methodology by which India does a head-count of all its people. In the decade of 1901-11, Sikkim's population grew by 48.98%, the second-largest population spurt here since such counting was undertaken. In the next decade, 1911-21, the population fell by 7.05%, the only time it has done so. Population growth in Sikkim has shown marked variations, growing by little over 34% in the decade of 1931-41 and then almost grinding to replacement fertility-rate figure of 10.67% in 1931-41, creeping only slightly higher to 13.34% in 1941-51 and reaching 17.76% in 1951-61. It started rising from thereon, recording a nearly 30% population growth in 1961-71 and then hitting the record of 50.77% in 1971-81, dropping to nearly half this growth rate to 28.47% in 1981-91, rising five percentage points to 33.07% population growth in 1991-2001 and then scaling back to its mid-Twentieth Century average of 12.36% growth in 2001-11.

Census findings are important indicators of socioeconomic conditions of the areas they cover. Populations obviously grow beyond the traditional average either due to influx or improvements in health services, both of which are indicative of the quality of life and opportunities. Of course, in the recent past, our country has been working towards containing its population through family planning schemes launched on mission-mode, but the population figures of the past slightly more than a century are untouched by such efforts and should attract closer academic scrutiny. From the pattern of these figures, one could understand the history of Sikkim from the point of view of the lay people, who, although they have lived through Sikkim and its transitions, rarely find mention in the few records of even contemporary events. The nearly 50% growth in population between 1901 to 1911 should make for interesting analysis, coming as it does in a decade when the palace and the Political Office were in direct confrontation and also the time when British India was most interested in Sikkim, using it as the route to open Tibet. The change in how the State was administered must have obviously created new opportunities triggering new arrivals. What can also not be ignored is that if this 1911 exercise was also the first head-count Census and would hence have accounted for population segments not covered in the previous two Census operations carried out the Political Officer who had relied on feedback from the landlords, who could have had their own reasons to under-report the actual number of people in areas under their jurisdiction.

The fall in population in 1911-21 should be even more fascinating for anyone interested in the people's history of Sikkim. The population fell by 7.05% due to the Influenza pandemic which spread through the world in the wake of World War-I. Sikkim did not fight the Great War, but an epidemic which was born from it claimed lives here as well. The pandemic broke out in 1918 and is believed to have killed 50 million people across the world. One still does not know how many died of it in Sikkim. The numbers must have been huge because healthcare services were too rudimentary here to have been able to deal with an alien sickness. Most of these deaths would have taken place in the two years between the outbreak and when the Census was carried out. This 7% fall in population immediately after a 50% growth must have scarred an entire generation. It deserves to be researched because it could explain many things about how Sikkim lived in those times. As an aside, there are also references to how the Younghusband Mission of 1904-05 brought the Foot & Mouth disease to Sikkim. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the only occupations in Sikkim at that time. Isn't it important to research into how Sikkim resuscitated itself from that calamity? These exercises are important for Sikkim to understand its past better and may be even understand issues which attract passionate opinions in a different light.

WRITE US:

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

Abba: Who Actually Likes Them?

SHANIKA RANASINGHE
theconversation.com

It may have been almost 40 years since their last single, but Abba are now back in the charts with two new songs – I Still Have Faith in You and Don't Shut Me Down. The new songs form part of a ten-track album that will be released in November.

The band went on what they called a "short break" at the end of 1982. But despite the amount of time it has taken the group to release new songs, Abba are more popular than ever, largely due to the success of the compilation Abba Gold (1992) and the Mamma Mia! films (2008, 2018). The numbers speak for themselves – Abba have sold around 400 million records worldwide, with Abba Gold spending more time in the top 100 chart than any other album. So what's behind Abba's staying power?

My ongoing PhD research looks at Abba fandom in the 21st-century, specifically Abba's long-term fans. I look beyond typical media or even academic portrayals that present them as a monolithic tribe, or pathologise them as obsessive, crazy youths. I focus on the differing yet bonded make-up of Abba fans and explore how their fandom can be understood as a mutually affectionate relationship between band and fan.

Indeed, Abba's most devoted fans have helped them remain in the public consciousness, sometimes, under difficult circumstances – and I believe Abba's "comeback" would not have been possible without their support.

OLDIES, GOLDIES AND MOULDIES

One of the complexities of Abba fandom is its different waves. There are the long-standing fans from the 1970s and early 1980s – often referred to as the "Oldies" within fan circles – who knew and loved Abba during their original active period (1972-1982). Then more recently, Abba Gold and the Mamma Mia! franchise introduced younger generations – sometimes referred to as "Goldies" and "Mouldies" – to Abba's music.

Goldies and Mouldies have found their own ways of expressing Abba fandom. Abba's popularity on social media platforms is testament to this – the videos on their official TikTok page already had almost 30 million views in five days.

Oldies have had a rather different journey to today's younger fans. The 1980s are often called

the "dark days" of Abba fandom. As the decade changed, so too did popular music tastes, and Abba struggled to do as well as they had done previously.

As the band fell from public favour, many Oldies were bullied, sometimes even beaten up. It was no longer socially acceptable to be an Abba fan. Despite these pressures, the Oldies remained extremely loyal, waiting patiently for new music for years.



Many of them supported the individual band members' new music, as well as buying Abba releases and compilation albums. In 1986, even as many Abba fan clubs began disbanding, two Dutch fans started a new one. This later became the Official International Abba Fan Club, which still exists today.

This fan club publishes four magazines a year and holds an annual Abba Day (outside of pandemic times). Fans from across the world gather on Abba Day to share friendship and the latest Abba news, culminating in a four-hour Abba disco.

NEW SONGS

It's easy to assume the Oldies would be thrilled by the recent announcement of two new Abba songs. But the reality is more complex.

Most fans rejoiced on social media, posting about their excitement and delight. Yet for some Oldies, Abba's 2018 announcement that new music would be on the way felt like too little, too late.

One fan who I worked with as part of my proj-

ect, wrote at the time on Facebook: "We've been told so many times this would NEVER happen, and fans have died waiting for it to happen ... I should feel very excited by this but I'm not."

This disappointment is understandable if you think about fandom as a reciprocal relationship. Oldies kept on giving to Abba emotionally and financially over several decades. Such investment is not to be underestimated: one fan estimates he has

spent over £50,000 on Abba-related purchases. Yet during this time, Oldies were not receiving new music from Abba. Some Oldies felt they had given a lot to Abba over the years, but not received anything much in return during their hiatus.

All Abba fans, but particularly the Oldies drank from an empty cup for decades. Finally, loyalty and hopes have been rewarded: the band's promise of "two new songs" became a whole album, to be followed by a virtual "Abba Voyage" show in London in spring 2022.

Most fan reaction has been positive so far. People have different opinions as to how "Abba-Esque" these new songs are, but overall Abba fans are effectively singing "Thank You for the Music" back to the band now, as they eagerly listen to new Abba songs for the first time since 1982.

[the writer is Postgraduate Researcher in the Department of Music, Royal Holloway University of London]



The 'New' Taliban Regime in Afghanistan: Different Methods but the Same Political Goal

NIELS TERPSTRA
theconversation.com

In the press conferences that have followed the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, the group has projected a changed image. Its spokesmen have attempted to distance this Taliban from the legacy of brutal force and violent oppression of women and ethnic minorities that characterised their 1990s regime, instead emphasising their concern for the safety and security of all Afghans.

In an uncertain period, it has been difficult to assess whether to take this image at face value. I argue that the Taliban's ideology has not changed substantially, but that some aspects of the broader political and social environment have. Their ultimate political aim of establishing their version of an "Islamic government" remains, but the political methods they envisage using to achieve it have become more pragmatic.

This is the second time the Taliban have been put to the test of governing most of the country's territory. Successfully taking over a country militarily is certainly not the same task as governing it. This was already clear in the 1990s. Coercion strongly underpinned the Taliban's rule back then, since their extreme interpreta-

tions of religious sources did not attract much approval from the broader population. Basic services, such as healthcare, education and food distribution were limited.

Over the past two decades, the Taliban have worked to build their legitimacy, notably by presenting themselves as a viable political alternative to the Kabul government. That has included providing dispute resolution. Setting up a parallel court system has been a priority for the Taliban insurgency. In the areas they controlled, they barred people from attending government courts and channelled them towards their Taliban judges. This granted the group some level of authority.

But now that the Taliban completely oversees the state apparatus, they will have to prove that they are capable of delivering basic public services too. They must provide education and healthcare but also, simply, electricity and water to the population. Public services are currently heavily dependent on foreign aid programs and foreign assistance so there is an immediate challenge, even just in terms of how to pay for everything.

Part of their solution seems to be to incorporate elements of the existing civil service into their adminis-

tration. A majority of public sector employees have been asked to return to their duties in the wake of the takeover.

Over the past decades, the expectations of the Afghan population have changed. A recent study shows how particularly women, regardless of their political stance and level of conservatism, have longed for greater freedom of movement, education for their children (and sometimes themselves) and a larger role in their families and wider social circles. Even under repression, the expectations the regime will meet from its civilians, will be more demanding than the 1990s.

TALIBAN 'DIPLOMACY'

During the 1990s, the Taliban were less capable – and perhaps less interested – in establishing broader international relations or engaging in diplomacy with other nations. Only three countries recognised the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan of 1996 to 2001 – Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Internationally, it was essentially a pariah state.

This time the Taliban seem better capable of managing their relations with the west, Russia, and neighbours such as Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and China, each of which have their respective agendas. To improve their chances of

international recognition, and to ensure various types of foreign material and moral support, the new Taliban regime will have to show some restraint at least.

But public announcements of restraint are no guarantee for what the general population on the ground will actually experience. The political pragmatism that the Taliban's central leadership displays is not the same as moderation. Even if the central leadership is willing to show some restraint, the question remains if the same can be said of Taliban representatives around the country. Local differences in the group's approach are likely to endure.

The Taliban's ideology has not changed, nor has their ultimate political goal of establishing their version of an "Islamic government". The post-2001 Taliban have, however, shown themselves to be pragmatic and open to the influence of external actors. A few strategic incentives, such as conditional foreign aid and investments, may induce the Taliban to show some restraint, at least in their public outlook. However, their current political pragmatism should not be confused with ideological moderation.

[the writer is Assistant Professor, Law, Economics and Governance, Utrecht University]



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
GANGTOK

NIT No: 01 AE(E-I) EW/EDN/GOS

Dated: 2.09.2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer (East –I), Education Department, Gangtok, East Sikkim invites sealed tenders from the eligible contractors of appropriate class for the work as below:

Sl No.	Name of work	Work Value put to tender	Comple- tion time in months	Bank receipts towards cost of tender documents	Earnest money @2.5% for issue of tender form
1	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Lt.C.S.Rai Memorial Govt. Secondary School, Arithang	Civil Work = Rs.60,92,405/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.64,13, 062/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,60,327.00
2	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Ling- ding Junior High School, Gangtok	Civil Work = Rs.66,63,612/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.69,84,269/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,74,607.00
3.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Govt Senior Secondary School, Ranka	Civil Work = Rs.55,39,485/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.58,60,142/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,46,504.00
4.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Govt Senior Secondary School, Bojoghari	Civil Work = Rs.57,92,590/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.61,13,247/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,52,831.00
5	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Govt Pri- mary School at Pangthang	Civil Work = Rs.52,01,431/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.55,22,088/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,38,052.00
6	Construction of 4/R/SB at Pangthang Junior High School	Civil Work = Rs.56,89,382/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.60,10,039/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,50,251.00

A. (1) DATES

- Dates for submission of application with bank receipt/challan for issue of tender document : 21.09.2021
- Date for submission of T.D.R. for issue of tender forms: 22.09.2021.
- Date and time for submission of tender : 23.09.2021 (up to 12:30 P.M)
- Date and time for opening of tender : 23.09.2021 (1:30 P.M.)

Sl No.	Name of work	Work Value put to tender	Comple- tion time in months	Bank receipts towards cost of tender documents	Earnest money @2.5% for issue of tender form
7	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Sub- hithang Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.55,89,375/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.59,10,032/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,47,751.00
8.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Dong- eythang Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.56,82,578/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.60,03,235/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,50,081.00
9	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Sakyong Chisopani Junior High School	Civil Work = Rs.58,03,635/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.61,24,292/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,53,107.00
10	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Tintek Chuba Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.56,16,239/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.59,36,896/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,48,422.00
11	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Lax- miniketan Vidhya Mandir Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.53,79,455/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.57,00,112/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,42,503.00
12.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Machey- lakha Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.56,65,018/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.59,85,675/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,49,642.00

A. (2) DATES

- Dates for submission of application with bank receipt/challan for issue of tender document : 21.09.2021
- Date for submission of T.D.R. for issue of tender forms: 22.09.2021.
- Date and time for submission of tender : 24.09.2021 (up to 12:30 P.M)
- Date and time for opening of tender : 24.09.2021 (1:30 P.M.)

Sl No.	Name of work	Work Value put to tender	Comple- tion time in months	Bank receipts towards cost of tender documents	Earnest money @2.5% for issue of tender form
13	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Biraspati Parsai Senior Second- ary School., Ranipool	Civil Work = Rs.55,97,374/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.59,18,031/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,47,951.00
14	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Martam Secondary School	Civil Work = Rs.69,56,226/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.72,76,883/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,81,922.00
15.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Tirkutam Primary School	Civil Work = Rs.57,46,079/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.60,66,736/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,51,668.00
16.	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building at Adampool Junior High School	Civil Work = Rs.75,78,927/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.78,99,584/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,97,489.00
17	Construction of 4 Roomed School Building with Terra- cotta Roof at Lumsey Junior High School	Civil Work = Rs.61,77,831/- Electrification = Rs.3,20,657/- Total = Rs.64,98,488/-	12 months	Rs.5000.00	Rs.1,62,462.00

A. (3) DATES

- Dates for submission of application with bank receipt/challan for issue of tender document : 21.09.2021
- Date for submission of T.D.R. for issue of tender forms: 22.09.2021.

- Date and time for submission of tender : 27.09.2021 (up to 12:30 P.M)
- Date and time for opening of tender : 27.09.2021 (1:30 P.M.)

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- The intending tenders/ contractors should apply in writing for issue of Tender documents. The application would invariably be signed by the contractor himself/ herself. The tender document will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDERER. The application shall be submitted initially for each work listed above with all required documents.
- The applications should enclose attested copies of the (A) latest GST Clearance Certificate (B) latest In-
come Tax Clearance certificate and (C) Validated / Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along with the application. It is mandatory to produce the Original validated/ Updated Enlistment Certificate during sell/ issue of the Tender Document for verification.
- The prescribed Non- Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtained during the period specified in (A) Above from the office of the Assistant Engineer, Education Department , Gang-
tok on production of requisite Bank Receipt/ Challan duly deposited in the State Bank of Sikkim towards cost of Tender Documents (Non-refundable) under the receipt head 0202-01-101-03 other receipts.
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.5% in State Bank of Sikkim shall be in the form of TDR in favour of the Sr. Ac-
counts Officer, (Works) Education Department, Gangtok East Sikkim. Tender Form shall be issued only to those contractors/firms who have obtained the Tender Documents.
- The Tender Documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the works superscripted on it. Supporting documents listed at Sl.No. 2A, B and C should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of the Assistant Engineer (East-I), Educa-
tion Department , Gangtok, East Sikkim, on the date and within the time indicated above.
- A Tender Opening Committee in the presence of the Tenderes will open Tender on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderer should sign on every page of the tenders documents as Acceptance of the General Direc-
tions and Conditions of Contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of Sales Tax and all other Taxes. Over writing and correction should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/ Conditional tenders shall be rejected.
- In case of any discrepancy in rate (s) printed in the Schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the tender documents, then the rates printed in the Scheduled of Rates as per the approved estimate. Decision of the Chief Engineer or Secretary will be final in this regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of work are subject to change, the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. Claim of this account shall be as per the agreement rates and for extra items which are not included in the Schedule of quantities at the time of tender, the rates of the SOR used in preparation of DPR i.e., the SOR of the year on which the tender is based shall be followed.
- Quality control and testing of material shall be done by the contractors as when required to do so. The contractor shall engage Civil Engineer at project site during the period of execution of the work.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractor shall be at his/her risk and cost. The Department shall not be liable for payment of such damages(if any), including accidents to labourer at site.
- The offer shall remain valid for a period of 90 days. The work should commence within 15 days from the issue of work order.
- The conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to be a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor.
- The contractors are requires to register themselves under Rule 39 or 40(as the case may be) of Sikkim Value Added Tax Rule 2005 with Income and Commercial Tax Division of Finance Revenue & Expenditure Department and obtained the TIN number before settlement of Bill or they must be register companies/ firms registered under the companies Act 1956 having valid PAN/TAN.
- The recoveries of Royalties on Forest produces shall be as per rates applicable on the date of payment notified by the State Government from time to time. In no case, claim of the contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in Analysis of Rates or Schedule of Rates or Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- The Education Department does not accept subcontracting of the project work, however if circumstances warrant such subcontracting, the contractor shall not sub-contract any part of the work without prior consent of the Education Department, Gangtok. Any such consent shall not relieve the contractor from any liability or obligation under the contract and he shall be responsible for the acts, defaults and ne-
glects of any sub-contractor, his agents or workmen as fully as if they were acts, defaults or neglects of the contractor.
- In case the man powers are required to be imported from out of State or the neighboring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to get them registered through the Labour Department, Gov-
ernment of Sikkim as per the relevant Central and State Legislation.
- Liquidated Damages: If the contractor fails to achieve the target or milestones fixed for the various activi-
ties (As per the work plan), the contractor shall pay liquidated damages to the Department at the rate the Chief Engineer/ competent authority finds suitable, which shall not be more than 5% of the contract value.
- The contractor shall do photography/video photography of the site firstly before the start of the work, secondly mid-way in the execution of different stages of the work and lastly after the completion of the work but he/she shall not disclose details of drawings furnished to him and works on which he is engaged without the prior approval of the Department/Engineer in writing . No separate payment will be made to the contractor on account of the photography/videography. The contractor shall not publish otherwise circulate without the approval of the Department which shall be treated as breach of contract.
- The contractor shall confine all his activities inside the allocated project area. The allocated project area implies the identified quarry, identified debris disposal site and land acquired for the project.
- All specification, dimension and geometries shall be verified by the contractor on the site and he shall be responsible for accuracy AND MAINTENANCE OF ALL DIMENSIONS AND LEVELS. Process quality control as well as End Product control both implies for achieving quality work at site.
- No unauthorized persons shall be allowed on the site. The contractor shall instruct all such person to keep out and shall take steps to prevent tress pass.
- In case of difference between other Clauses of the Agreement (and its sub-clauses) then additional conditions incorporated in the General Directions and Conditions of Contract shall supersede all other clauses.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof.
- Expenditure involved for material testing viz., Cube strength of concrete, crushing strength of metals etc. at site or in laboratories shall be borne by the contractor. The contractor shall make necessary arrange-
ment accordingly as and when instructed to do so.
- It is expected for the tenderer to have reconnoitered/ inspected the site before submitting his bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The contractor will have to pay all taxes and duties as applicable and notified by the State/Central govt. and no claim will be entertained in this regards whatsoever.
- The cost of Stock materials and equipments supplied by the Department will be deducted from contra-
cotr's bill as per rules.
- In case the tender date as included is declared the Govt. Holiday, the process shall continue in the subse-
quent working days.
In case the quantum of works and specifications as prescribed in schedule of quantities or included in the work value at the time of tender deviates due to limitation of funds or otherwise this are subject to change for which decision of the Head of the Department shall be final and conclusive.
- In case of difference between other cases of the agreement (and its sub-clause) then additional conditions incorporated in the General Direction and Condition of Contract shall supersede all othe clauses.
- The rate of the earnest money which a contractor should deposit before issue of tender form is 2.50% of the estimated cost put to tender. However, all enlisted women Contractors will be exempted from TDR for participation in any contract work up to an amount of Rs. 5.00 Crore. In case of such tender being ac-
cepted, the lowest bidder (Enlisted Women Contractor) has to deposit Earnest Money @2.5% of the es-
timated cost put to tender before the issue os work order. Further, if the tenderer of the above-mentioned exempted category withdraws her tender within the validity period, then the government shall without prejudice to any right or remedy, be at the liberty to debar such tenderer for participation in any future tender for a period of 01(one) year.
- Reference to notification no. 584/RNB/PWD/Secy. Dated: 08/10/2018 the competitive bidding amongst all class IV contractors enlisted with the Sikkim Publicn Work Department should be within the territorial jurisdiction of the Concerned Ward of the GPU/ULB where the work is to be executed.
- Reference to notification no. 66/R&B/PWD/Secy dated 08.01.2021 the tendering is to be conducted in the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-
Assistant Engineer (East-I)
Education Department
Gangtok, East Sikkim

R.O. No. 173/IPR/Pub/Classi./21-22
Dated 06.09.2021

Jaiswal says having played in UAE-like conditions in Oman will help in IPL

DUBAI, SEP 7 (PTI): Rajasthan Royals opener Yashasvi Jaiswal reckons that having played in similar conditions to the UAE during Mumbai's tour of Oman recently will help him during the upcoming second phase of the IPL.

The 19-year-old was a part of the Mumbai team that defeated Oman in the One-Day series in Muscat.

"I had a very good series against Oman and in similar conditions to the UAE. I'm really happy with the way I'm playing my cricket at the moment, and I can't wait to replicate these performances in the IPL against much stronger line-ups, the youngster was quoted as saying in a media release.

Jaiswal, who had a tally of close to 300 runs in the one-day and T20 series combined, said it's always better to have some cricket under the belt.

"It was good practice for me before the big matches in the IPL. It had been a while I had played competitive cricket, and to play against an international team like Oman is certainly good preparation. I'm happy I could score some runs and win some matches for my team."

Jaiswal also got the chance to have a one-on-one session with his idol, batting great Sachin Tendulkar.

Speaking after joining up with the Royals' squad ahead of the IPL, as he quarantines in his hotel room in Dubai, he said, "My idol has always been Sachin Tendulkar, and I was really fortunate to have a conversation with him before the Oman tour. I was glad that Mumbai Cricket Association invited him for a session before we left from Mumbai to play against Oman."

"I was over the moon when I first heard he was going to be present there, and when I had the chance to speak to him at length, he was really humble and helped me on some skills where he thought I could improve on. "It was good to see that a legend like him was aware of my game, and it was certainly a very happy moment for me. I can't wait to keep implementing those things in my game and express myself better on the field," he added.

Jaiswal also revealed the chats he had with another legend Kumar Sangakkara, who is the Royals director of cricket, earlier this year.

"We have had so many chats on what I can do during the game - how I should think, what my approach will be against which bowler, how I can change the tempo of the game, etc. "I'm really fortunate to have a mentor like him. I also feel the best thing about him is that he's always willing to listen and give his time to the players," the youngster said.

Djokovic extends Slam bid; 1st time no US players in Open QF

NEW YORK, SEP 7 (AP): For 1 1/2 sets, including one particularly compelling and competitive 24-point game, Novak Djokovic's fourth-round opponent at the U.S. Open Jenson Brooksby, the last American left in singles gave him fits amid a raucous atmosphere at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

That let Djokovic, above all, and everyone else, know that Brooksby a 20-year-old wild-card entry from California who is ranked 99th and never before had been on this sort of stage belonged.

And then, not surprisingly, Djokovic showed why he is who he is and how he's managed to move within three victories of the first calendar-year Grand Slam in men's tennis in 52 years.

Settling in and sending messages, to the fans with roars and to Brooksby with some staredowns, the No. 1-ranked Djokovic improved to 25-0 in majors this year by winning 1-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 on Monday night.

He extended his pursuit of a true Grand Slam and a record-breaking 21st major championship, while also making this the first time in the history of the U.S. Open, an event that dates to the 1880s, with zero men or women from the host country in the quarterfinals.

Was a good finish. It wasn't a good tart, said Djokovic, who hopes to add a fourth U.S. Open title to a collection that's been boosted by his ninth at the Australian Open in February, second at the French Open in June and sixth at Wimbledon in July.

He next meets No. 6 Matteo Berrettini of Italy in a rematch of the final at the All England Club.

One key to Monday's turnaround: Djokovic broke



in Brooksby's initial service game in each of the last three sets. I wanted to wear him down, Djokovic said, and it worked.

Affected by a left hip that bothered him earlier in the tournament, Brooksby was visited by a trainer after the second set and again after the third. Still, for someone who never had set foot on Ashe's blue court until about two hours before the match, when he got a chance to practice there, Brooksby never seemed overwhelmed by the setting or the circumstances.

We're going to see a lot of him in the future, said Djokovic, who would be the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Slam trophies in one year.

I mean, he has the means. Now, obviously a lot of things

have to come together. But he has a bit of an unorthodox game. Does a lot with the feel. He's smart. He knows how to win points.

Brooksby's 6-foot-4 strides and reach, his anticipation, his variety that includes a well-disguised two-handed backhand slice, his think-steps-ahead point construction, his commitment to patterns drawn up by his coach at home in Sacramento since age 7, Joe Gilbert all left Djokovic a tad discombobulated early.

I knew it would be important to start strong, to impose my mindset and my strategy, my game out there, Brooksby said.

I could see it working. I really did have a lot of confidence in myself out there that I can beat him, I can beat any-

body. In the first set, Brooksby made one unforced error, Djokovic 11. And Brooksby won 14 of the points that lasted five strokes or more, Djokovic four.

When Djokovic netted an overhead to move Brooksby two points from the set, most of the spectators in the 23,000-plus-capacity arena excited to be back after last year's ban on audiences amid the pandemic rose, clapping and screaming.

When Djokovic missed a return to cede that set to his foe, Brooksby waved both arms and heard more loud support.

Electric. Awesome. I enjoyed it. I truly did, said Djokovic, who soon would be hearing his own cheers.

You guys gave both of the players a lot of energy. He

broke to go up 2-0 in the second set and punched the air and shouted. At 3-1 arrived an epic game: six break chances, nice deuces, 24 points in all, spread out over nearly 20 minutes. Djokovic pushed the ball into the net to end that game and make it 3-2, prompting Brooksby to hop and jump and windmill his arm and cry, Let's go!

And then, quick as can be, Djokovic regrouped. With Brooksby gasping for air, Djokovic broke right back and, soon enough, the outcome was clear.

The momentum, declared Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, was changed.

The other quarterfinals on the men's side: No. 4 Alexander Zverev of Germany vs. Lloyd Harris of South Africa, No. 12 Felix Auger-Aliassime

of Canada vs. 18-year-old Carlos Alcaraz of Spain, and No. 2 Daniil Medvedev of Russia vs. qualifier Botic van de Zandschulp of the Netherlands.

The women's round-of-eight matchups: No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus vs. No. 8 Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic, No. 5 Elina Svitolina of Ukraine vs. 19-year-old Leylah Fernandez of Canada, No. 11 Belinda Bencic of Switzerland vs. 18-year-old qualifier Emma Raducanu of Britain, and No. 4 Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic against No. 17 Maria Sakkari of Greece.

Sakkari beat 2019 champion Bianca Andreescu 6-7 (2), 7-6 (6), 6-3 in a match that ended at 2:13 a.m., making it the latest-finishing women's match in tournament history.

I hope you will not be late for work tomorrow, Sakkari told those fans who stayed until the end. Go get some sleep and I'll see you in two days.

Brooksby's exit certainly no shame in losing to Djokovic, of course followed the fourth-round departures earlier Monday by No. 22 seed Reilly Opelka from the men's draw with a 6-7 (6), 6-4, 6-1, 6-3 loss to Harris, and by unseeded Shelby Rogers from the women's draw with a 6-2, 6-1 loss to Raducanu.

Rogers upset Ash Barty, a two-time major champion who is ranked No. 1, in the third round, but was unable to produce the same level of tennis in what she termed a pretty embarrassing performance Monday.

The brackets began with 43 Americans in the singles fields.

We've got a huge group of guys there, Opelka said.

We just don't have the world-beaters.

Performance in Tokyo will help us produce better results in future: Salima Tete

NEW DELHI, SEP 7 (PTI): The Indian women's hockey team has gained a lot of confidence from its stellar display at the Tokyo Olympics, according to midfielder Salima Tete, who feels the side showed signs of a bright future despite not ending on the podium.

The Indian women's team fought tooth and nail against some of the top teams in the world at the Tokyo Games. The Rani Rampal-led side made history when it defeated the three-time Olympic gold medalists Australia 1-0 in the quarterfinal and played in its first-ever Olympic semifinal against Argentina.

"Our performance in Tokyo is slowly starting to sink in now. We were really dejected when we lost to Great Britain in the bronze medal match, but now we are seeing the positives from the tournament," Tete was quoted as saying in a Hockey India media release.

"We may not have won a medal, but we have certainly gained a lot of confidence from the way we played in Tokyo and it's definitely going to help us to grow as a team and produce much better

results in the future," she added.

When asked about the most important things that helped India perform exceedingly well at the Olympics, Tete said, "We always found a way to push the ball forward and attack our opponents in the Olympics. We created many goal-scoring opportunities and ensured that we utilized our Penalty Corners well.

"And also we gave everything we had on the pitch and never gave up, no matter what the situation was."

The 19-year-old, who played an integral role in India's brilliant performance at the Tokyo Games, added that she feels blessed to have received an opportunity to play in the Olympics at a very young age.

"I have learned a lot by playing in high-pressure situations and I am certainly going to use my learnings in the upcoming competitions.

"One learns a lot when one is against the best and we are very happy with the way we gave a tough fight to each of our opponents in the knock-out stage of the Tokyo Games," said the midfielder.

Time to focus on winning Asian Games to earn automatic qualification for Paris: Manpreet

NEW DELHI, SEPT 7 (PTI): India men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh said it's time to stop basking in the glory of their historic bronze medal at the Tokyo Games and start focusing on qualifying for the Paris Olympics by winning next year's Asian Games.

The Indian team has been showered with accolades since returning home following a bronze medal winning feat at Tokyo, a medal that broke India's 41-year-old jinx at the Olympics.

It's been a month since the Indian men's team beat Germany 5-4 in the third place play off and Manpreet said it's time to start planning for a busy 2022 calendar.

"I think these past few weeks have been great with people showering us with all their love and praises. Now, I feel it's time we rest our bodies and mind," the India skipper said in a release issued by Hockey India.

"We have enjoyed all the felicitations, the honour and ac-



colades we received has been overwhelming but now we must start thinking about how to better ourselves for the 2022 calendar."

With the all-important Asian Games scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China from September 10 to 25 next year, the team's top priority will be to qualify for the Paris Olympics

by winning the gold at the continental tournament.

"Last time, we ended up with a Bronze and lost out on winning the automatic qualification. We were lucky to have the FIH Olympic qualifying matches in India. But we can't depend on the same again," he said.

"The best would be for us to qualify by winning the Asian

Games, so it gives us right amount of time to prepare for 2024 Olympics."

While the men's team won the bronze, the women's side also finished at a creditable fourth place at Tokyo and Manpreet believes their Olympic performance will only increase the popularity of the sport.

"I truly feel this is a new beginning for Indian hockey. With the women's team too doing so well at the Olympics, hockey is witnessing the same kind of support it once had.

"I was told many people from different professions woke up early to see our matches just like they would back in the glory days when Indian hockey fans would stay glued to the radio to hear the commentary."

"I feel this fanbase we have earned after the Olympics is great for the sport in general and now it is on us to give these fans bigger and better feats to ensure their supports continues and the popularity of hockey grows further.

Chennaiyin FC ropes in Indian midfielder Ninthoi Meetei

CHENNAI, SEP 7 (PTI): Two-time Indian Super League champions Chennaiyin FC on Tuesday signed young Indian midfielder Ninthoi Meetei for a three-year deal.

"I am really feeling very happy to be a part of this club (CFC). This team has that energy and spirit through all these years. I am looking forward to giving the team my best and I am very much excited to kick off with Chennaiyin FC," the 20-year-old was quoted as saying in a press release.

The Imphal-born footballer was part of

the Indian team that participated in the FIFA U-17 World Cup hosted by India in 2017. In 2019, Meetei won the Best Player Award as India bagged its maiden SAFF U-18 Championship title.

CFC co-owner Vita Dani said, "We are very happy to bring in someone like Ninthoi. He is young but already has 24 ISL appearances under his belt and should help the team for years to come."

A product of the AIFF Elite Academy, the right-winger started his professional

career with Indian Arrows FC in 2017 and spent two years with the I-League club, making 27 appearances including two in the Super Cup.

Meetei made his ISL debut with North-East United FC and has 24 appearances for The Highlanders in a two-year spell.

CFC head coach Bozidar Bandovic said, "Ninthoi is a quality young player with space to improve. Our target is to build, work and improve young domestic players because they are the future.

Israeli army says it launched strikes on Hamas site in Gaza

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL (AP): Israel launched airstrikes on what it said was a Hamas military site in the Gaza Strip early on Tuesday, after incendiary balloons were sent into Israeli territory, the army said. Israeli forces, meanwhile, searched for six Palestinian prisoners who had escaped from a high-security facility in the biggest prison break of its kind in decades.

Fighter jets struck a Hamas rocket manufacturing workshop as well as a Hamas military compound in Khan Yunis, a city in southern Gaza, according to the army statement. The army said the compound houses a cement factory used for building tunnels used for terror attacks “and is purposefully located in a civilian area adjacent to a mosque and a water treatment site.”

The strikes came in response to incendiary balloons launched by Hamas into Israeli territory, the army said. The devices were a show of support for the six escapees, which Hamas and other Palestinian militants hailed as a heroic victory.

For Israel, the escape — through a secret tunnel, likely with outside help — marks an embarrassing security breach. The massive manhunt through Israel’s north and the occupied West Bank continued on Tuesday as Jews celebrated Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year.

The prisoners appear to have gone into hiding and there was no indication Israeli authorities view them as an immediate threat.

The developments marked an awkward moment for Israel’s new coalition government as it seeks to maintain calm after the deadly 11-day war with Hamas in May and amid a surge in coronavirus



infections.

Palestinians consider prisoners held by Israel to be heroes of their national cause, and many celebrated the escape on social media. Efforts to capture the six will likely draw attention to the Palestinian Authority’s security coordination with Israel, which is deeply unpopular among Palestinians. There was no immediate comment from the PA, but President Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah party praised the escape.

A photo released by the prison service showed a narrow hole in the floor of a cell, and Israeli security forces could be seen examining a similar hole on a stretch of gravel just outside the walls of the prison.

Israeli officials said they have erected roadblocks and are conducting patrols in the area. Israel’s Army Radio said 400 prisoners are being moved as a protective measure against any additional escape attempts. The radio

said the prisoners escaped through a tunnel from the Gilboa prison, just north of the West Bank, one of Israel’s most secure facilities.

It was the biggest Palestinian escape from an Israeli prison since 1987, when six militants from the Islamic Jihad group broke out of a heavily guarded prison in Gaza months before the outbreak of the first intifada, or Palestinian uprising against Israel.

The six who escaped overnight on Sunday are believed to have headed back to their hometown of Jenin, in the occupied West Bank, about 25 kilometers (15 miles) away. The internationally recognized Palestinian Authority wields little control in the town, where militants in recent weeks have clashed with Israeli forces.

The Palestinian Prisoners’ Club, which represents both former and current prisoners, identified the men as ranging in age from 26 to 49 years old.

The most well-known

among them is Zakaria Zubeidi, 46, who was a prominent leader in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed group affiliated with Fatah, during the second intifada from 2000-2005. He was later granted amnesty along with other Fatah-affiliated militants, but was arrested again in 2019 on what Israeli authorities said were new terror suspicions.

As a child, Zubeidi had been part of a children’s theater troupe in Jenin established by ArnaMer-Khamis, an Israeli rights activist, that was the subject of a 2004 documentary.

The other five prisoners were members of Islamic Jihad, and the prisoners’ group said four were serving life sentences.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett called the breakout a “grave incident” that required maximum effort by Israel’s various security branches.

The escape poses a dilemma for Abbas, who met

with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz a week ago in the first high-level meeting between the two sides in years. The Palestinian president has said he hopes to revive the peace process after more than a decade-long hiatus under former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But Abbas’ Palestinian Authority is deeply unpopular. He canceled the first elections in 15 years in April when it appeared his Fatah party would suffer an embarrassing defeat. The PA was largely sidelined during the Gaza war in May, and it has cracked down on a wave of protests following the death of an activist in its custody in June.

PA security forces coordinate with Israel to target Hamas and other militants that both view as a threat. But any effort to help Israel re-arrest the escaped prisoners risks further undermining the PA in the eyes of Palestinians.

Myanmar resistance movement calls for nationwide uprising

BANGKOK (AP): The main underground group coordinating resistance to Myanmar’s military government called for a nationwide uprising on Tuesday.

The National Unity Government views itself as a shadow government composed of elected legislators who were barred from taking their seats when the military seized power in February.

The group’s acting president DuwaLashi La called for revolt “in every village, town and city in the entire country at the same time” and declared what he called a “state of emergency.” A video of his speech was posted on Facebook.

The country has been wracked by unrest since the military ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, with a low-level insurrection in many urban areas. There has been more serious combat in rural areas, especially in border regions where ethnic minority militias have been engaging in serious clashes with the government’s troops.

The shadow government’s prime minister, Mahn Winn KhaingThann, said in a separate statement posted online that the move was taken due to “changing circumstances” that required the complete abolition

of the ruling military government. He did not elaborate.

There were no immediate signs of heightened resistance activity, although some student groups and ethnic armed organizations expressed solidarity.

The National Unity Government is popular inside Myanmar, but its actual power and influence is hard to measure. It has frequently issued sweeping proclamations and policy statements declaring the military government and its actions invalid and illegal, but they’ve had little real-world effect. It controls no territory, does not directly control any armed force and has won no diplomatic recognition from foreign countries. Members of its shadow Cabinet are in hiding inside Myanmar and in exile.

DuwaLashi La called on the ethnic militias, some of whom have declared themselves in alliance with the resistance, to “immediately attack” government forces and “fully control your lands.” The ethnic armed forces, which have been fighting for decades for greater autonomy from Myanmar’s central government, operate independently of the National Unity Government.

South Korea monitoring the North over military parade signs

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (AP): South Korea’s military on Tuesday was closely watching North Korea amid signs the country was preparing to hold a new military parade to showcase its growing nuclear and missile capabilities.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries were “thoroughly following and monitoring North Korean preparations for large-scale events such as a military parade in connection with the North’s internal schedule,” said Col. Kim Jun-rak, a spokesman for South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff. He didn’t specify in the news conference what the allied militaries have seen or when they expect the parade to take place.

North Korea often celebrates major state anniversaries by rolling out thousands of goose-stepping troops and its most advanced military hardware at a square in the capital, Pyongyang.

There’s speculation its next military parade could come as early as Thursday when it celebrates the 73rd anniversary of the country’s founding. Another big date is Oct. 10, the 76th anniversary of the ruling Workers’ Party.

During a military last parade in January, North Korea showcased new missiles being developed



to be fired from submarines as it celebrated the closure of a rare Workers’ Party congress. There, leader Kim Jong Un vowed to expand his nuclear weapons program in the face of what he described as U.S. hostility.

Meanwhile, the Workers’ Party’s Politburo on Tuesday elected an army general, seen as an influential figure in shaping the country’s ballistic missile program, as the newest member of its powerful presidium, which consists of Kim and four other top officials, North Korean state media said.

Pak Jong Chon appears to be replacing Ri PyongChol, another senior military official who experts believe was sacked from the presidium after being held responsible for unspecified lapses in the country’s pandemic response.

Kim in July had accused officials of causing

a “great crisis” in national anti-virus efforts, but the North never revealed what those problems were and has yet to report a single coronavirus infection.

Last October, the North unveiled its biggest-yet intercontinental ballistic missile at a parade marking the party’s 75th anniversary. The North’s previous ICBMs demonstrated the potential to reach the U.S. mainland during flight tests in 2017.

Any new North Korean parade will likely feature its latest weapons systems that threaten U.S. allies in Asia and the American homeland, and such displays would be seen as an attempt to pressure Washington over the stalled nuclear diplomacy.

Washington and Pyongyang have yet to recover from the collapse of a summit between Kim and former President Donald Trump in 2019, when the Americans rejected

the North’s demand for a major easing of economic sanctions in exchange for a partial reduction of its nuclear capabilities.

Kim has since pledged to bolster his country’s nuclear deterrent and has so far rejected the Biden administration’s overtures for talks, demanding that Washington abandon its “hostile” policies first.

Kim’s powerful sister and other North Korean senior officials issued statements last month berating the U.S. and South Korea for continuing their combined military exercises, which the North insists are invasion rehearsals, and threatened unspecified countermeasures that would leave the allies facing a “security crisis.” The allies say the drills are defensive in nature but have canceled or downsized them in recent years to create space for diplomacy or in response to COVID-19.

G20 health ministers agree vaccine confidence measures

LONDON, SEP 7 (PTI): The Health Ministers from G20 countries, including India, have united to pledge global action to improve future health security, increase vaccine confidence and tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in a Health Declaration agreed in Rome.

The G20 Health Ministers’ Meeting in Italy this week is focused on building on strong cooperation and collaboration to end the COVID-19 pandemic and support recovery around the world. The Health Declaration was agreed on Monday.

The member nations India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey and the European Union agreed to work together to enhance timely global access to safe, affordable and effective COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

These G20 Health meetings have been an excellent opportunity to work together to strengthen our collaboration in combating COVID-19, through rooting out dangerous misinformation, boosting vaccine confidence and protecting the rights of clinical trials volunteers who have saved lives by taking part in vital medical research, said UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid.

By working together, harnessing scientific progress and industry innovation, we can help protect people in every corner of the planet from future health emergencies, including the silent pandemic of AMR, which threatens the fabric of

modern medicine, he said.

Meeting counterparts on his first international visit as Health and Social Care Secretary, Javid highlighted the UK’s position on the need for COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial participants to have their vaccination status recognised globally.

To promote vaccine confidence, G20 health ministers agreed to implement the most effective, culturally appropriate, and science-based public communication.

This will help tailor reliable information to specific communities, combat misinformation and improve vaccine uptake, the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said. The DHSC said over 91 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered across the UK, with nearly 80 per cent of everyone aged over 16 receiving both doses, including more than 50 per cent of those aged 18-29 being double jabbed. To protect one of the pillars of medicine, antimicrobials that protect against infection, the G20 committed to building capacity for surveillance of antimicrobial use and resistance.

A key focus of future action will be on support for the development of new safe and effective antimicrobials, in particular antibiotics, and incentivising the production of low-cost, affordable generic antimicrobials to safeguard the ability to fight infections for future generations.

The G20 also recognised the importance of recognising gender when designing and implementing health policies, considering the specific needs of women and girls, with a view to achieving gender equality in healthcare delivery.



French Actor Jean-Paul Belmondo, The Face Of New Wave Cinema, Dies At 88

PARIS: Actor Jean-Paul Belmondo, one of postwar French cinema's biggest stars whose charismatic smile lit up the screen for half a century, has died aged 88 at his Paris home, his family announced Monday. Belmondo, who first came to fame as part of the French New Wave cinema movement with films like *Breathless* by Jean-Luc Godard, went on to become a household name, acting in 80 films covering a multitude of genres, including comedies and thrillers. "He had been very tired for some time. He died peacefully," the family said in a statement sent to AFP by Belmondo's lawyer, Michel Godest.

Belmondo, who was born on April 9, 1933 in the wealthy Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, grew up in a family of artists. His father was a well-known sculptor. Belmondo, who was bad at school but good at boxing, started his acting career in theatre before embarking on a film career that was to span half a century, with 130 million cinema tickets to his films sold. Known in France as "Bebel", Belmondo was also often called "Le Magnifique" (The Magnificent), after a 1970s secret agent satire in which he starred. "He will always be The Magnificent," President Emmanuel Macron tweeted. Calling Belmondo "a national treasure", Macron added: "We all recognised ourselves in him".

- 'Solar, talented... and so French' -
Former president Francois Hollande said that "everybody would have loved to be friends with him", while ex-premier Manuel Valls called Belmondo "magnifi-

cent, solar, talented ... and so French". Fellow iconic French actor Alain Delon -- both a friend and a rival of Belmondo -- said he was "completely crushed" by the news of Belmondo's death. French director Bertrand Blier said "it was so easy to film with Belmondo. It's always easy with great actors." French actor Richard Berry said of Belmondo that

worked with famous French directors Francois Truffaut, Alain Resnais, Louis Malle and Jean-Pierre Melville. He later turned to film production, and returned to his first love, theatre.

Belmondo's acting career was cut short in 2001 when a stroke he suffered while on set left him handicapped. He won France's highest film prize, the Ce-



"he was everybody's friend" and Michel Boujenah, also a French actor, called him "our very own Eiffel Tower".

Spanish actor Antonio Banderas said that "this is a sad day for culture. A great actor and an icon of French and European cinema has left us". Many others, including politicians, the French Foreign Legion and film fans the world over also paid homage to Belmondo on social media. "It's impossible not to feel that this is the end of an era," tweeted Uruguay's national film library. "The world is mourning a monument of film," wrote a fan in Italy, Peter Patti, also on Twitter. Apart from Godard, Belmondo also

sar, in 1988 for his role in "Itinerary of a Spoiled Child" -- which he didn't accept -- and an honorary Cesar in 2017. Many of his films became international hits, and Time magazine in 1964 even declared Belmondo the face of modern France.

He won several lifetime achievement awards, in 2010 from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, in 2011 at the Cannes film festival, and in 2016 at the Venice festival. "His generosity, both as a man and as an actor, created some of film history's greatest moments," Cannes festival director Thierry Fremaux tweeted on Monday. "Thank you, Jean-Paul."

'Bhoot Police' to release one week early on Sept 10 on Disney+ Hotstar

MUMBAI, SEP 7 (PTI): The release of Saif Ali Khan and Arjun Kapoor-starrer "Bhoot Police" has been pushed ahead and the film will now make its debut on Disney+ Hotstar on September 10, the streaming service announced on Tuesday.

The adventure horror-comedy film, also starring Jacqueline Fernandez and Yami Gautam, was earlier announced to release on September 17.

The official account of Disney+ Hotstar took to social media and shared the new release date for the movie.

"Good news for your

weekend! Bad news for Bhoots. 'Bhoot Police' is releasing 7 days early! Streaming from 10th September," the post, which was also shared by the film's cast, read.

Directed by Pavan Kirpalani of "Phobia" and "Ragini MMS" fame, the film is produced by Ramesh Taurani and Akshai Puri.

Jaya Taurani is attached as a co-producer.

The team started filming in November last year in Himachal Pradesh and finished the production in February.

"Bhoot Police" is presented by Tips Industries Ltd in association with 12th Street Entertainment.

Cardi B and Offset welcome second child together

LOS ANGELES, SEP 7 (PTI): Rapper couple Cardi B and Offset have become parents for the second time.

In an Instagram post on Monday morning, Cardi revealed that she gave birth to their son on September 4.

"9/4/21," she captioned a photo of herself and her husband with the newborn under a blanket at a hospital.

Cardi announced her pregnancy back in June with a surprise baby bump reveal at the 2021 BET Awards,

where she won video of the year and best collaboration for the smash hit "WAP", featuring Megan Thee Stallion.

The couple are already parents to three-year-old daughter KultureKiari. Offset, 29, also has daughter Kalea, six, and sons Kody, six, and Jordan, 11, from previous relationships.

Cardi and Offset, who married in 2017, were headed for divorce late last year but reconciled by November 2020.

Porn films case: HC rejects actor Gehana Vasisht's pre-arrest bail plea



MUMBAI, SEP 7 (PTI): The Bombay High Court on Tuesday rejected the pre-arrest bail plea filed by actor Gehana Vasisht accused in a case related to pornographic films. Vasisht is accused of threatening, coercing and luring women with money to act in pornographic films.

Justice S K Shinde refused to grant anticipatory bail to the actor on Tuesday. Vasisht filed the plea last month, apprehending arrest in the case.

She has been booked under Sections 354-C (outraging modesty of woman), 292 and 293 (sale of obscene material) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Sections 66E, 67, 67A (transmission of sexually explicit material) of the Information Technology Act, and provisions of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act.

The city police had registered three FIRs in the porn films racket case against

several persons. Businessman Raj Kundra, the husband of Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty, is an accused in one of the FIRs.

He was arrested on July 19 this year and is currently in judicial custody.

The police's case against Vasisht is that she had lured women with the promise of small acting jobs and forced them to act in obscene movies. These movies were then uploaded on the mobile app Hotshots, allegedly owned by Kundra.

The police subsequently also filed an application before a lower court to add another charge against Vasisht under section 370 (detaining a person against their will) of the IPC.

Vasisht's advocate Abhishek Yende had earlier argued that the actor's arrest was not required as the police have already recovered evidence from her.



GET INTO IT! The singer, Doja Cat performs at the 10th Anniversary of Made in America Music Festival in Philadelphia.

Yami Gautam on private wedding with Aditya Dhar: Both of us don't believe in pomp and show

MUMBAI, SEP 7 (PTI): Actor Yami Gautam, who tied the knot with filmmaker Aditya Dhar in an intimate wedding ceremony in June, says even if there were no restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic the couple would have opted for a low-key affair.

Gautam, 32, and Dhar got married in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh in the presence of 20 guests. Dhar, 38, had directed Gautam in the 2019 blockbuster "Uri - The Surgical Strike".

Their wedding announcement -- posted on Instagram by the couple -- came as a surprise for many. But Gautam said keeping the most special day of their life private was ideal for them. "It was as simple as possible. Aditya and I are simple people and we like to keep it like that. We are private and reserved and only wanted to share it with the world when the time was right. Even if there was no pandemic, I assure you it would have been the same wedding. Nothing would have been different," Gautam told PTI.

For the wedding, the "Bala" actor wore her mother's sari, a nose ring and dupatta given by her grandmother. Gautam did her own make-up and had her sister, Surilie, do her hair. She said the couple didn't feel any obligation for "pomp and show" and hence were comfortable with a traditional and intimate ceremony.



"It is just about those moments, you don't have to prove anything to anyone. It's your day, your family and it's best when you can celebrate it without making it an obligation. Both of us don't believe in pomp and show. To each his own, it's your big day, whatever makes you happy.

"But we don't like wastage of food, and never wanted a DJ wedding. We are both traditional, we did our rituals which we loved. We played traditional Pahadi and Kashmiri songs, Punjabi folk tracks... There were just 20 people but it was really memorable," the actor added.

Gautam is currently gearing up for her latest adventure-horror-comedy "Bhoot Police", scheduled to be released on the streaming platform Disney+ Hotstar VIP on September 17. Directed by Pavan Kirpalani, the film features actors Saif Ali Khan, Arjun Kapoor and Jacqueline Fernandez.

Aries:

You know that thing that you've been avoiding the most? Get that out of the way first thing in the morning today. You'll be so much more at ease once you do. As a result, your productivity will improve too. This is a wonderful time for rams who are working in the field of publishing, marketing, PR and entertainment. Turn your attention to the inner world. Sit down with the creative forces and allow some of the best ideas to come through to you. Yes, you are a changemaker who is being called to plant the seeds for change in the collection consciousness.

Tip: Pay attention to the ideas that are coming through to you.

Taurus:

So what if you have been broken and bruised, Taurus? So what if you have failed many times before? Don't make this failure a part of your narrative, especially when you have a parallel reality available to you. What the cards want you to do: fix your gaze on the given destination as you vow to move forward and onwards. You have mountains to move on this journey, and the time to start taking action is now.

Tip: Don't let your failures define you.

Gemini:

Life is unpredictable and so are you, Gemini. When the opportunity to pack your bags and hop on to a plane arises, just say yes. A one-of-a-kind adventure is on the cards for you

this week, beautiful. It's a good idea to follow your instincts—and to let your heart lead the way even when your head tries to interfere with the process. In doing so, you will find true liberation. PS: Some of you could be making space for a whirlwind romance too!

Tip: Say yes to life!

Cancer:

This is a time of hope and healing. Cancer. Of shedding old skin and becoming who you were all along. Nothing will liberate you like embodying your truth, beautiful. Remember, there is no shift in the inner landscape that will not create a vibrational shift in the outside world. Pay attention to what the physical is mirroring back at you. Something tells us that balance and harmony is being restored in your interpersonal relationships too.

Tip: It's time to embody your truth.

Leo:

The week ahead sees you reclaiming the reins of your life, Leo. You are actively working with the law of attraction and calling in one-of-a-kind opportunities in the realm of your career. Something tells us you're about to have a ka-ching moment on the financial front too. What's more, you're entering a committed relationship with self-growth, bringing light to the dark parts and transmuting the shadows. Learning to embody your truth is a lifelong process, but who says you cannot begin now?

Tip: You're calling in one-of-a-kind opportunities on the professional front.

Virgo:

This phase of your life is about the hustle. You're putting in your best efforts without being attached to a specific outcome, which in turn is propelling your career in the right direction. Pay attention to the opportunities that are coming your way at this point or the projects you're being called to invest in. The energy of the new moon is supporting growth and mindful expansion. Some of you may be thinking about growing your team as well.

Tip: What are the projects that you're being called to invest in now?

Libra:

It's a work-hard-play-hard kind of week for you, Libra. You're feeling motivated to put your best foot forward and say yes to the kind of opportunities that you didn't feel confident about in the past. Trust that this shift in your vibration will make you a magnet for the good stuff. What's more, your adventurous side is coming to the fore too. So, pay attention to what your inner compass is pointing towards. If and when the chance to visit an unknown destination comes knocking, say yes!

Tip: Here's to a one-of-a-kind adventure!

Scorpio:

The thing is, we tend to wear our bruises like badges of honor, Scorpio. We keep RSVPing to that party party for one,

and repeating the story of rejection and failure. But, what if the pain was meant to serve as a catalyst for growth and evolution? View your situation from a higher perspective, beautiful. In doing so, you will find the courage to march forward "and" realise that the Universe has been playing for your team all along.

Tip: It's time to stop wearing those bruises like badges of honour.

Sagittarius:

Each thought, word and action is charged with energy, and this energy has the potential to create your reality as you go along. The real question is: what do you want to affirm today? Do you want to repeat the narrative of pain and rejection or focus on the parallel reality that is available to you in each moment? Remember, you are an alchemist, Sagittarius, and the power to turn pain into a sweet elixir has always been within you.

Tip: What are you affirming today?

Capricorn:

Love it or hate it, you can't live without it. Yes, we're talking about your complex relationship with social media, Capricorn. But, the good news is, you can engage as much as you want to, and share the kind of information that inspires change and plants the seeds for home. Yes, this also means having certain boundaries in place so you don't indulge any more than you're meant to. For those

seeking love, a virtual romance may be on the cards. While the suitor's got game, are they worth investing in? Only time will tell, beautiful.

Tip: You have the opportunity to inspire change with the kind of information you put out there.

Aquarius:

Birth, growth, degeneration, death, and decay—so goes the cycle of life. But is death really the end, or simply a portal to the new? The metamorphosis you are experiencing is a testimony to the light that follows the darkest of night. So, take a moment to look back—at the good, the bad, and the ugly. They all helped transform you and make you the person you are today.

Tip: Some cycles need to end, so you can free yourself from the old, beautiful.

Pisces:

The new moon cycle is bringing with itself hope, harmony and togetherness. Spending time with the soul family is going to be a big theme this week. We're talking about the kind of people who make you feel nourished on a mind, body, and soul level. Things on the financial front may not be so great, though. The sudden increase in your profits that you've been manifesting are unlikely to fructify soon. Word for the wise: saving mode on.

Tip: You're spending time with the kind of people who make you feel nourished on a mind, body, and soul level.