



DANIEL CRAIG VS RAMI MALEK WON'T LET YOU BLINK FOR A SECOND
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REMOTE WORKING IS HERE TO STAY - BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE END OF OFFICES OR CITY CENTRES
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Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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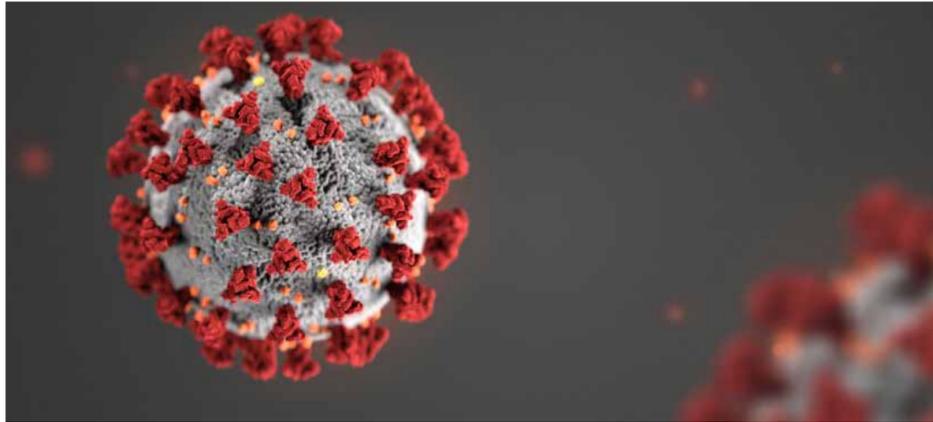
34 fresh cases and 35 discharges bring Sikkim's active COVID count down to 430

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

With 34 fresh cases of novel coronavirus, Sikkim's cumulative total of COVID-19 cases detected thus far climbed to 1,738 on Thursday. The State currently has 430 active cases. In the meantime, 35 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Wednesday after winning their battles against the novel coronavirus.

The total number of cured & discharged COVID-19 patients in the State now stands at 1,304. Among the 35 discharged on Wednesday, six were from STNM Hospital, 23 from the SICUN centre at Assam Lingzey and six from Himalayan Pharmacy Institute, Rangpo.

In the daily health bulletin on Thursday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that 30



out of the 275 samples tested by RT-PCR here at the VRD Lab yesterday returned positive.

Likewise, one more person was found positive in testing of 21 samples by TrueNat and three persons were detected with COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 16 samples.

In the break-up of 30 new cases found via RT-

PCR, the State IEC Officer informed that two cases were detected from below Power Station at 5th Mile [Gangtok], six from Setipool, one from Ranipool, three primary contacts from the containment zone in Lal Bazaar, two from the containment zone near ICAI University, Sichey, and four from below Holy Cross School at 6th Mile.

He added that two persons from near Working Women's Hostel on Deorali School Road, one from Pakyong, one person from Lingee in South Sikkim but was presently residing in a government quarter in Syari and one from below GMC quarter in Arithang also tested positive in RT-PCR testing.

He further mentioned that four primary con-

tacts from a containment zone in Sichey, one from Transit Camp in Jorethang, one from the containment zone in Singtam and an attendant of a dialysis patient in Gyalshing who was also already in quarantine were also found positive for COVID-19.

While giving details of three new cases detected

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Do you need mask if driving or cycling alone? Health Ministry official says no such guidelines

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI): The Union Health Ministry has not issued any guidelines recommending wearing of a mask if someone is driving a car or cycling alone, a top government official said on Thursday.

However, if someone is exercising, cycling or jogging in a group, they should wear masks and maintain social distancing so as not to infect each other, Secretary in the Union Health Ministry Rajesh Bhushan said at a press briefing.

A large number of people have complained of late about being chided for not wearing a mask while being inside in their cars as the COVID-19 cases soared in the country.

Responding to a question if it is necessary to wear a mask while driving a car or cycling alone, Bhushan clarified, "There are no guidelines from the Health Ministry on wearing a mask if a person is driving a car or riding a cycle alone."

"Of late there is an



increased awareness among people about physical activity and you must have seen people cycling or jogging in groups of two or three. If you are cycling or jogging in a group you need to wear a mask and maintain social distancing so

as not to infect each other," Bhushan said.

With a record single-day spike of 83,883 infections, India's COVID-19 caseload mounted to 38,53,406, while the death toll climbed to 67,376 with 1,043 people succumbing to the disease in a day, the Health Ministry's data updated at 8 am showed.

Sikkim COVID death toll rises to 5

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Sikkim recorded its 5th COVID casualty today with a 65-year-old man breathing his last at STNM Hospital, Gangtok.

The deceased was a vegetable vendor at Lal Bazaar, Gangtok, residing in Namnang. He had tested positive for COVID-19 on 01 Sept and had been admitted at STNM Hospital.

He had comorbidities of asthma and diabetes.

Children can have both COVID-19 antibodies, virus in their system simultaneously: Study

WASHINGTON, SEPT 03

[PTI]: Children may still have the potential to transmit the novel coronavirus even if they have a measurable immune response, according to a new study which says the virus and antibodies can coexist in young patients.

The study, published in the Journal of Pediatrics, used a retrospective analysis of 6,369 children tested for the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, and 215 patients who underwent antibody testing at the Children's National Hospital in the US between March 13 and June 21.

According to the scientists, including those from the hospital, 33 of the 215 patients had co-testing for both the virus and antibodies during their COVID-19 disease course, with nine of the 33 showing presence in their blood while also later testing positive for the virus.

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India's COVID-19 tally crosses 38-lakh mark with record single-day jump of 83,883 cases

NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI):

India's COVID-19 tally raced past the 38-lakh mark on Thursday with the sharpest single-day spike of 83,883 fresh cases, while the number of recoveries surged to 29,70,492, pushing the recovery rate to over 77 per cent, Union health ministry data showed.

The total number of coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 38,53,406, while the death toll climbed to 67,376 as 1,043 people succumbed to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The national COVID-19 recovery rate has risen to 77.09 per cent and the case fatality rate due to the infection has further de-



clined to 1.75 per cent.

There are 8,15,538 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprise 21.16 per cent of the total caseload, the data

stated. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 and went past 30 lakh on August 23.

According to the Indian Council of Medical

Research, a cumulative total of 4,55,09,380 samples have been tested up to September 2 with 11,72,179 samples being tested on Wednesday -- the highest in a day so far.

Family raises suspicion over death of woman in West Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT
GYALSHING, 03 SEPT:

The family of a woman, Ongmit Lepcha, who died on 03 Sept in Gangyap, West Sikkim, have raised suspicions over her death, which the husband and his family claim was a suicide. The woman's family has demanded proper investigation of the case.

According to the woman's family, the deceased's husband, Lako Tshering Lepcha informed them about her death on the evening of 03 Sept and said that the cause of death was illness. However, when they inspected the dead body, they discovered ligature marks around her neck and the husband then claimed that he had found her hanging by a rope in her room when he arrived home late in the evening. Hoping to save her life,

he cut the rope and placed the body down on the floor.

The woman's family has also alleged that the husband keeps changing his statement about where he found her, from their bedroom to a tree located near the house.

They further allege that their daughter's in-laws were preparing for the cremation without informing them. Later, they asked them not to come to their house citing the risk of COVID-19.

"There are many points those appear to be suspicious regarding the sudden death of our sister. Our brother-in-law should not have lied to us if our sister had taken such an extreme step to end her life. Changing statements regarding cause of death,

turn to pg 02

Corona's Cakewalk over Ceremonial Culture

JIWAN RAI

Curiously enough, as though the world was ushering in a utopia of sorts by the end of the second decade of the new millennium, there were hundreds of grand visions suffixed with the famous year, 2020. In a tragic turn of events, the world, pregnant with 2020 visions had a sore miscarriage ushering humanity into an apocalyptic grimness. All due to the 2019-born coronavirus. The strongest of countries have been exposed to its lethal attack. Under the severe attack of the novel virus, our clueless world came up with guidelines for people to follow. Washing hands with soap, using sanitizer, social distancing and later on, using masks became the basic guidelines. Self-isolation and quarantine became the most common phrases.

In its truest sense, these guidelines were a farce for a huge chunk of the Indian population for obvious reasons. Over 160 million Indians do not have access to clean water. This is more than the entire population of Russia. Soap is a luxury for millions of our fellow citizens. What percentage of Indians had even heard of sanitizer before 2020? In fact, washing hands with soap and using sanitizer were common practices in the advanced world even before the Covid-19

pandemic. Every hospital ward has sanitizer at the door and soap in the washrooms. But for us - we have to be awfully lucky to ever find a piece of soap in Indian hospital washrooms.

Social distancing in India is joke. The only effective social distancing takes place when a babu or an influential neta walks the corridor of their office as their subordinates, chamchas and common people back off, making way for them. In many Indian villages, genuine social distancing still happens when a low caste fellow encounters a high caste bully. In Sikkim, social distancing is a surety when SKM and

SDF guys bump into each other, unless they are meeting for 'joining'. In Indian cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and so on, joint families of 5-10 live in one bedroom apartments. They are actually the ones with a fairly good income. Hundreds of them live on streets, under flyovers, beside railway tracks and railway stations, etc. In our own Gangtok, rental apartments are generally congested, dingy and unsanctioned constructed with a limited water supply. Washing hands with soap frequently when tap water runs once a day for barely

20 minutes involves a miracle. Storing water in big buckets means 60% of the bathroom is wasted. Many of the bathrooms are puny constructions, housed under the stairs. Many of these apartments have either no or poor lighting and aeration. In keeping with our tradition of joint families, a large number of people rent these tiny apartments for an entire joint family. Washing masks and clothes after every use would be another level of the miraculous.

What do we think those less fortunate Indians are thinking or doing when they have been repeatedly reminded to wash their hands with

soap frequently and other guidelines? They take these guidelines in the exact same spirit as they listen to their religious priests who tell them to perform certain rituals. They think that these guidelines are just as ceremonial as their religious rituals are and they have to perform them ceremonially.

That is, perhaps, why our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, so seamlessly plugged in ceremonial gestures like clapping, beating thalis and lighting diyas. Did you notice how 'religiously and passionately' our fellow citizens

performed those ceremonies? Indians showed much more passion and purpose in clapping, beating thalis and lighting diyas than they have in social distancing. They even went out of their way to take their ceremonial commitment to newer heights. Our overtly obedient people followed the PM's call for a Janata curfew with street marches, chanting 'go corona go'. Where else will we find such public love and solidarity with leadership? The scenes of celebrities standing on elevated platforms, balconies and public places and beating thalis insensibly were aired by mainstream media as heroic acts. Mega-star Amitabh Bachchan went so far as to tweet that the vibrations from clapping and blowing conch shells would have destroyed the potency of coronavirus as it was 'Amavasya', the darkest day of the month.

People wearing masks on their chins, neck or even forehead is just an extension of our ceremonial mindset.

What is more worrisome, though, is the reaction of some semi-educated, educated and even some responsibly positioned government officials to any criticism against ourselves. They blurt out, "Compare our low fatality rate with that of the US or Italy or Spain" not knowing

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VIEWPOINT

Mid-Day Meal distribution

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT (IPR): The Mid-Day Meal scheme under Education Department, Government of Sikkim is distributing free dry ration like rice and edibles viz: Dal, Oil, Onion, nutrela (soya), salt and vegetables to the students upto Class-VIII during the lockdown period under the provision of Food Security Allowance in

all four districts. As a supportive measure, few schools have contributed from their own fund also to add extra food items and face mask to the children.

Distribution process is being carried out under the supervision of BDO, Panchayat, SMCs, Parents and School heads following social distance and SOP.

Namchi prison staff accused of sexual harassment

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

A Sub Inspector posted at District Prison Namchi, Boomtar has been accused of sexually harassing a junior.

The woman submitted a written complaint at Namchi Police Station on 01 Sept. She has accused the SI of sexually harassing her for the past three years, making inappropriate remarks and asking for sexual favors several times in these three years.

The woman has also alleged that on refusing his overtures, the man took to threatening her. After she disclosed the ordeal to her family, she decided to approach the police seeking legal action against the accused.

Following her complaint, a case was registered at Namchi Police Station against the accused person. The case is under investigation.

Mega camp organized by Blood Warriors Siliguri

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Blood Warriors Siliguri in association with Data Malang Shah Data Samim Shah public charitable trust organized a mega blood donation camp at Dargha near Jhankar More, Burdwan Road, Siliguri today, a press release informs.

Two teams from blood banks fully supported the camp wherein 127 units of blood was collected. The blood was later given to Lions Terai blood bank [58 units] and Paul P Harris Rotary blood bank [69 units].

Minister Gautam Deb inaugurated the ceremony and congratulated the whole team for coming forward in order to fulfill the demand for blood in different blood banks of Siliguri.

Hyderabad FC rope in Australian forward Joel Chianese

HYDERABAD, SEP 3 (PTI): Indian Super League side Hyderabad FC on Thursday announced the signing of Australian forward Joel Chianese for the upcoming season of the tournament.

The 30-year-old Australian signs from A-League side Perth Glory after helping them to the semifinals in the recently-concluded play-offs of the 2019-20 season.

"I'm super excited to join Hyderabad FC. I'm most looking forward to meeting my teammates and working together with everyone at the club. All the messages I have received have been so positive, and so I feel welcome already," Chianese said in a release.

Chianese began his professional career with Blacktown City FC before moving up to A-League with Sydney FC in 2011.

Following a three-year stint with Sydney FC, he turned out for Sydney United and Bonnyrigg White Eagles in the National Premier Leagues before making going abroad.

Children can...

"With most viruses, when you start to detect antibodies, you won't detect the virus anymore. But with COVID-19, we're seeing both," said Burak Bahar, lead author of the study from the Children's National Hospital.

According to Bahar, the next phase of research will be to test if the virus that is present alongside the antibodies can be transmitted to other people.

She added that it also remains unknown if the antibodies detected in the children correlate with immunity, and how long antibodies and potential protection from reinfection last.

When the scientists assessed the timing of viral clearance and immunologic response, they found the average time from viral positivity to negativity, when the virus can no longer be detected, was 25 days.

The median time to seropositivity, or the presence of antibodies in the blood, was 18 days, while the median time to reach adequate levels of neutralising antibodies was 36 days.

Neutralising antibodies are important in potentially protecting a person from re-infection of the same virus.

The scientists also found that patients six through 15 years old took a longer time to clear the virus compared to patients 16 through 22 years old.

Females in the 6-15 age group also took longer to clear the virus than males, they added.

While there is emerging data regarding this timing in adults with COVID-19, the researchers said there is far less data when it comes to the pediatric population.

"The takeaway here is that we can't let our guard down just because a child has antibodies or is no longer showing symptoms," Bahar said, adding that the continued role of good hygiene and social distancing "remains critical."

SC order protects accounts which were not declared NPA till Aug 31



NEW DELHI, SEP 3 (PTI): The Supreme Court Thursday directed that accounts, which were not declared as non-performing asset till August 31 this year, shall not be declared NPA till further orders.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said this while hearing a batch of pleas which have raised the issue of interest being charged on instalments which were deferred under moratorium period due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The apex court passed the order while noting the submissions of senior lawyer Harish Salve, who appeared for

banks' association and said that no account shall become NPA at least for a period of two months.

In view of the above, the accounts which were not declared NPA till August 31, 2020 shall not be declared NPA till further orders, said the bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), said that banking sector is the backbone of the economy and every sector is under stress due to the pandemic.

Mehta said it is an accepted position

worldwide that waiving off interest is not a good option for revival of economy.

While referring to the grievance raised by the petitioners, the bench said, We are concerned with interest on the interest.

The arguments in the matter remained inconclusive and would continue on September 10.

The Centre had recently told the apex court that waiver of interest on deferred EMIs during the moratorium period would be against the basic canons of finance and unfair to those who repaid loans as per schedule.

Reserve Bank of In-

dia has however come out with a scheme which provides for extension of moratorium for two years to certain stressed borrowers, the Centre had informed the top court.

The Ministry of Finance had filed an affidavit before the apex court, which had earlier asked the Centre and the RBI to review the move to charge interest on EMIs and interest on the interest during the moratorium period introduced under the scheme due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The solicitor general had told the bench that moratorium period on repayment of loans amid the pandemic is extendable by two years.

The pleas filed in the apex court have raised issue pertaining to validity of March 27 circular of the RBI which allowed lending institutions to grant moratorium on payment of instalments of term loans falling due between March 1, 2020 and May 31 this year due to the pandemic. Later, the period of moratorium was extended till August 31.

YT Lepcha takes charge as Tourism Dept Advisor



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Gangtok MLA, Y.T. Lepcha took charge as Advisor, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim on 03 Sept in a

formal ceremony held at the Department, a press release informs.

Tourism Minister, BS Panth and BJP Sikkim State president/Advisor to Forest Department, DB Chauhan and Depart-

mental heads were present on the occasion.

Mr Lepcha has thanked the Department, well-wishers and Chief Minister of Sikkim, PS Tamang for appointing him to the post.

RDD Minister inspects Gausghala project in Mamring

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Rural Development Minister, Sonam Lama inspected the ongoing project of Gausghala in Mamring, East Sikkim to enquire about the site and ongoing work today.

The main motive of the inspection is to enquire about ongoing project of Gausghala (which commenced from 2018) and its progress.

Meanwhile, the department officials briefed about project details, estimated cost of the project, date of commencement and completion. Concerned contractor also apprised about construction of project and its detailed report.

Lastly, the RDD Minister directed officials to carry out quality work as per DPR.

Also present were

Advisor, Inchung Bhutia, Chairman, Sonam Sherpa, concerned department officials, ADC (Dev), Tenzing Denzongpa, BDO/Pakyong, Nilkantha Bhandari, SKM Party General Secretary Press & Media, Bum Tshering Yonzon, Nari Vice-Convener, Prabha Pradhan, East District Organisation Secretary, Angdup Yonzon and other dignitaries.

Zilla panchayat distributes benefits in Yuksam

PRITAM LAMA

SUMMIT REPORT

YUKSAM, 03 SEPT:

Zilla Panchayat member, Budha Hang Subba visited different panchayat wards and GPUs under his territorial constituency of Yuksam-Khechuperi on Thursday and provided various items to a number of organisations.

Mr Subba presented a sound system set to Samjick Pobon, a registered NGO of Pakchuk Village

under Thingling-Khechuperi GPU, 40 plastic chairs to Kirat Samaj of 13 mile Panchayat ward, 50 plastic chairs and utensils to Christian Society and 50 plastic chairs to Women's SHGs Federation of Thingling-Khechuperi GPU.

The items were bought using the Zilla Fund, said Zilla Panchayat, Budha Hang Subba.

Members of these organisations thanked the Zilla Panchayat for

the initiative.

"We were unaware about these benefits. This is the first time that we are receiving such items from the Zilla Panchayat fund. We really appreciate our Zilla Panchayat's initiative," said Aita Hang Limboo, member of NGO Samajik Pobon.

Earlier, Mr Subba had provided a set of computers along with printer to a registered NGO, Nava Deep Club of Lungsum village.

Cleanliness drive conducted at Rorathang School



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

The members of Rorathang Social Welfare Association along with the workers of MGNREGA conducted a cleanliness drive at the school premises of Rorathang Secondary School under

Rhenock Constituency in East Sikkim today.

The drive commenced in the presence of Ward Panchayat, Anju Gajmer and President RSWA, Kishore Thapa. RSWA thanked the workers of MGNREGA and all those who voluntarily participated in the drive.

34 fresh cases...

in RAT, Mr Bhutia informed that one person from Nimtar, one from Upper Burtuk and one from Animal Husbandry quarters in Rumtek were found positive via rapid antigen testing at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

He added that one person from Chongay was also found positive in TrueNat testing.

Family raises...

preparing for cremation without waiting for family members and other points in the case raise suspicions," said Gaychung Lepcha, younger brother of the deceased.

Another brother said that his sister was not someone who would take her own life.

Meanwhile, the husband of the deceased agreed that he had made a mistake when he told his wife's family that she had died due to an illness. He said he was scared to tell them that she had committed suicide.

According to him, on 03 Sept when he reached home in the evening at around 6:30 pm, he found the door of their room locked from inside. When he managed to get in, he found his wife hanging from a rope. He then cut the rope and brought her body down in the hope that she could be saved.

He added that his wife had attempted suicide many times in the past as well.

"I made a big mistake by not telling my in laws what had happened. But I was so nervous. I had lost my wife," said Lako Tshering Lepcha.

The body of the deceased was brought today to the mortuary of district hospital, Gyalshing and has been forwarded to STNM hospital of Gangtok for autopsy.

Gyalshing police has been investigating the case and it was informed that all angles in the case would be explored based on medical reports.

"Each and every aspect related to the case will be investigated when the autopsy report comes. We have registered the case of unnatural death and the investigation will follow," said DSP, CP Silal.

Corona's Cakewalk...

that we are young nation and have low life expectancy. India (at 39 lakh cases) is at the cusp of overtaking Brazil (at 40 lakh), the worst hit country. At this pace, we will soon soar past the US to become the number one country in the world. India has also been having the highest number of new cases per day for almost a month. Over 67 thousand people have lost their lives to Covid-19 and counting. Driven by unexampled positivity, a large number of Indians say that we have still done a great job of fighting Covid-19. Maybe they mean 'ceremonially'. If only we understood that Covid-19 is not spreading ceremonially.

A cardinal exposition of 2020 is simply this - a country like India is far from being ready for a pandemic like this on all fronts - healthcare infrastructure, leadership vision, public mentality and even intellectual insight. We are insanely emotional and intensely ceremonial.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available - 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak
Price negotiable
Contact : 6296366498,
9641878315, 9593262407

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Bazaar (Opposite UCO Bank). The building area is 35'x60' appx. in each floor and is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks etc. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General roadside land for sale measuring 30 by 45 square feet near smile land below apica garden. Contact no. 7797885351/9733538899.

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Accounts of high-profile users like Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Barack Obama, Jeff Bezos and others were compromised on July 15.

CRH Medical Superintendent resigns

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Professor and Head of Department, (Dr) Sanjiba Dutta, Psychiatry & Associate Dean-Academics, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS) has been appointed as officiating Medical Superintendent of Central Referral Hospital (CRH). He will hold the post of officiating Medical Superintendent in addition to his current portfolios.

Similarly, Professor, (Dr) Mingma Lhamu Sherpa, Department of Biochemistry & Head-Operations, CRH, has been appointed as Additional Medical Superintendent, CRH in addition to the current portfolios she holds.

This follows the resignation of incumbent Medical Superintendent, CRH, Dr Gautam Dey.

World Cup host Qatar set to play in Gold Cup in 2021 and '23

KUALA LUMPUR, SEP 3 (AP): World Cup host Qatar is set to play in the Gold Cup next year in the United States after accepting an invitation from soccer's governing body for North and Central America and the Caribbean.

The Asian Football Confederation issued a statement Thursday saying the Asian Cup champion will participate in the 2021 and 2023 Gold Cup tournaments as a guest under a memorandum of understanding signed in Bahrain in 2017.

"We saw the obvious opportunities for both confederations to help and improve each other both in terms of performances and match officials as well as operations staff and, just as importantly, the continued development of the game across our continents," AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al-Khaleifa said in a statement.

"Qatar ... can continue to grow their own knowledge of international football following on from last year's AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 as well as the Copa America. We are sure everyone will benefit from Qatar's presence in the competition."

Qatar is the second team from Asia to play in the Gold Cup after South Korea, which participated in 2000 and 2002 before co-hosting the World Cup with Japan. Qatar won its first Asian Cup title last year with a 3-1 win over Japan in the final in the United Arab Emirates. The Qatar national team is No 55 in the FIFA world rankings, and is Asia's fifth-highest ranked team behind Japan, Iran, South Korea and Australia.

The Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia-based AFC said the involvement of Qatar in the Gold Cup provided a strong link between the organizing committees of the 2022 World Cup and the 2026 World Cup, which will take place in the CONCACAF region.

Qatar will join the 12 countries that have already secured places at the revamped Gold Cup and three qualifiers from the preliminary stage. The draw will be held Sept. 28.

Governor chairs a conference on NEP at Raj Bhavan

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 SEPT:

Governor, Ganga Prasad chaired a conference on "Role of National Education Policy-2020 in Transforming Higher Education" held at Raj Bhavan today, a press release informs.

The conference was attended by the Minister for Education department, Kunga Nima Lepcha, Additional Chief Secretary, Education department, GP Upadhyaya, Vice-Chancellors of Central Sikkim University (SU), Sikkim State University (SSU), Sikkim Manipal University

(SMU), SRM University. Additional Secretary, Raj Bhavan, BK Lama.

The main objective of the conference was to share ideas, state government, and educational institution's programmes and suggestions on implementation of new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in the State.

The Governor said that the new National Education Policy is a historic reform and regulatory framework for the education sector and it will benefit children of Sikkim for higher education. With the implementation of the new NEP, India's

education sector is going to be effective and it was a positive step forward.

The Governor urged the state education department to apprise the centre government for any assistance. He also assured his support and guidance for better education in the State.

The Governor said, "The new NEP 2020 will bring a paradigm shift in our teaching and learning process and will make holistic and inclusive mode in both school and higher education with more focus for all-round development of the students. It will cre-

ate more opportunities for our children to explore."

Governor said that the new NEP shall play an unprecedented role in the building of a new India.

Minister Lepcha spoke on various policies and mechanisms taken by the State government catering quality and better education to children.

Additional Chief Secretary, Vice Chancellors of different universities appraised the Governor about the digital mode of teaching and progress on virtual teachings. They also put forth their ideas and visions.

Online admission portal for D.El.Ed Course launched



GANGTOK, 03 SEPT (IPR): The Department of Education has launched the online Registration for Admission in 2-Year Diploma in Elementary Education (D. El. Ed) Course in District Institutes of Education and Training DIETs for East, West and South Districts.

The online admissions commence from September 4, 2020. The website for online registration for the course www.dietsikkim.in was launched by Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya, Education Department today

in the presence of Director, Dr Rabin Chhetri, SCERT and Joint Director, Dr Shanti Ram Adhikari, SCERT. The candidates seeking admission in the course shall apply online by login in www.dietsikkim.in.

The details of admission procedure are given in the prospectus which can be downloaded from the given website.

The candidates can call 8768468598 / 8327467816/9564994956 (Time 10 AM-6 PM) for help in filling up the registration form.

Sushant case probe: HC asks media to exercise restraint

MUMBAI, SEP 3 (PTI): The Bombay High Court on Thursday said it expects media organisations to exercise restraint while publishing or reporting any details about investigation in the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

A division bench of Justices A A Sayed and S P Tavaade said the media should report in such a manner that it does not hamper the investigation.

The court was hearing two petitions which claimed a "media trial" was going on in the case of Rajput's death and sought for it to be stopped.

One of the petitions was filed by eight former IPS officers against the "unfair, malicious and false media campaign" against Mumbai Police.

The petitioners include former director generals of police M N Singh, P S Pasricha, K Subramanyam, D Sivnandan, Sanjeev Dayal and Satish Mathur, former additional DGP K P Raghuvanshi and former Mumbai police commissioner D N Jadhav.

The other petition was filed by filmmaker Nilesh Navlakha and two others who claim to be social activists, seeking direction to media organisations not to sen-

sationalise reportage in the case. "We urge and expect the media to exercise restraint before publishing or reporting on details of the investigation, and report in such a manner that it does not hamper the investigation," the court said.

The bench said before hearing the matter further, it would like to first see what the Union government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the case, have to say in response to the pleas.

The high court posted the petitions for further hearing on September 10. The court also said Navlakha shall once again serve copies of his petition to news media channels that are respondents in the petition.

Navlakha's advocate Devadatt Kamat told the court that they are not demanding a prohibition on reporting in the case, but only seeking the media to adhere to journalistic standards and ethics.

The plea filed by the retired IPS officers said a section of TV channels has been trying to influence the course of investigation being carried out by central agencies like the CBI, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), and is running a false propaganda against

the Mumbai Police.

Senior counsel Milind Sathe, appearing for the retired police officers, on Thursday argued that the media was running a "parallel investigation and the reporting is completely defamatory towards the city police".

"We (petitioners) are not concerned about which agency is probing the case or who the accused persons are...we are only concerned about the media trial being conducted," Sathe said.

The retired IPS officers have sought a direction to news media organisations to refrain from publishing or circulating any false, derogatory and scandalous comments which may jeopardise the reputation of the city police.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging in his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14 following which the Mumbai Police registered an Accidental Death Report and recorded statements of over 50 people, including some of his family members and Bollywood personalities.

The late actor's father on July 25 lodged a complaint with Patna Police, accusing Rajput's girlfriend and actress Rhea Chakraborty and her family members of abetting his suicide and misappropriating his money.

EU unveils plan to secure raw materials, cut dependency

BRUSSELS, SEP 3 (AP): Worried by an increasing dependency on the raw materials used to make smart phones, televisions and energy-saving lights, the European Union on Thursday launched a new strategy to secure access to rare earth minerals and to reduce reliance on suppliers like Chile, China and South Africa.

The EU is predicted to need around 60 times more lithium and 15 times more cobalt for electric vehicle batteries and energy storage by 2050. Its demand for rare earth materials in permanent magnets used in several technologies could increase 10-fold over the same period.

The coronavirus pandemic is highlighting the world's increasing reliance on electronics and technology for remote work, education and communication, and the 27-nation EU enters a widening race to secure supplies for its communications, health, defense and space sectors along with the United States, China and Japan.

We have to drastically change our approach, European Commission Vice-President Maros Sefcovic said. We are largely dependent on unsustainable raw materials from countries with much lower environmental and social standards, less freedoms, (and) poor, unsustainable economies. The EU gets around 98% of its rare earth minerals from China. Turkey supplies 98% of its borate, while Chile meets 78% of Europe's lithium needs. South Africa provides 71% of its platinum. The European Commission believes that the EU's mining potential is underused.

We need to diversify supply and make better use of the resources within the European Union, where we would apply the highest environmental and social standards to that effect, Sefcovic told reporters in Brussels.

The strategy aims to set up a European Raw Materials Alliance with industry, investors, the European Investment Bank, EU member countries and others to help secure raw mineral supply chains. The commission wants to start a partnership with Canada and interested African countries starting next year.

Agri Dept meeting reviews challenges of dairy farmers



GANGTOK, 03 SEPT (IPR): Agriculture Minister, Lok Nath Sharma chaired a meeting to review the status and challenges of farmers associated with Sikkim Dairy Production Private Limited (SDPPL), Dentam, at his chamber, Tashiling Secretariat, today.

The meeting was attended by the Vice Chairman Sikkim Milk Union (SMU), MJ Rai, Managing Director (SMU), Dr AB Karki, Director (Cattle & Dairy), Dr BM Chhetri, AH&VS, Additional Registrar Cooperation Department, Jabi Thapa, Board of Director (SDPPL), PL Dahal, Assistant Manager (SDPPL), Kamal Pradhan.

After lending a patient hearing to the grievances placed by the SDPPL, the Minister assured to look into the matter

and take appropriate action at the earliest. He also said that the Department would provide support for strengthening and functioning of the dairy production centre. He also advised to constitute a committee to look into the existing issues of the farmers associated with SDPPL and growth of the Cheese plant that has earned recognition, globally.

He also welcomed a suggestion to form Milk Federation for farmers of both organised and unorganised Dairy sector in Sikkim so that they can avail Centrally Sponsored Schemes and additional benefits.

During the meeting, Vice Chairman SMU, MJ Rai stressed on the need for formation of Milk Federation. He also elab-

orated the current scenario and challenges being faced by SDPPL.

Managing Director SMU, Dr AB Karki highlighted the role of Sikkim Milk Union and also put forth few suggestions for the growth of SDPPL.

Earlier, Board of Director, SDPPL, PL Dahal threw light on the history of Cheese Plant Dentam. Assistant Manager (SDPPL, Dentam), Kamal Pradhan also presented a brief report about the current challenges of the SDPPL.

The meeting began with the welcome address presented by the Director,(Cattle & Dairy), AH&VS, Dr BM Chhetri and concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Joint Director, AH&VS, Department, Dr Thinley N Bhutia.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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

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District surveillance Officer
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WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Hold Us Accountable, Please

News requires reader-engagement to stay the course

Journalists live a charmed life. Those outside the clique have an inflated perception of our effectiveness and readers in general believe media persons to be much better informed than they actually are. This fiction, when it circulates too widely and for too long, can start convincing those who wield the pen [hammer keyboards nowadays] that they are indispensable, and with that comes the arrogance which, at least in our country, has also caused substantial damage to politics and administration. There is a fine line dividing standing up for something and becoming overbearing, but it is an important marker still, and over-stepping it can compromise the best of intentions. If the news-media is indeed seen as the fourth estate/ pillar in a democracy, then hollowing it out weakens the overall structure, so, as much as it needs to be supported and backed, it also needs to be held accountable. A free press, after all, is a necessity to ensure real progress.

It goes without saying that the right environment needs to be created for press to be free, and this is provided by institutional and civil-society support systems. It is also obvious that such an environment is always under constant pollutions by agencies which are threatened if journalists are allowed genuine freedoms. But new-media cannot be shackled only by a repressive systems, it can also be compromised by unethical practitioners. It is always a bad idea to pass the correctional cane into the hands of the powers-that-be, because they will definitely misuse it, so, it becomes important for every person with a stake in world affairs or national developments and also Sikkim to start reading newspapers [because more readers will mean more power, more independence for newspapers] and more importantly, start sending in more letters. At present, most letter writers are inspired by personal reasons to write. What is required for a more accountable media is to have a wider response base. Not eulogies, please write in hate mail, letters that point out errors, letters that demand clarifications, letters that complain of half-truths and incomplete reportage, letters that mention that readers notice the personal agendas of editors, publishers and reporters being packaged as news. The media needs feedback to stay on course, battle somnolence, remain relevant, and most importantly, remain accurate. The willingness to admit mistakes is an important part of being accurate. This has become even more significant in the age of online archives, although it has always been the case that mistakes in old newspaper cuttings could be repeated and result in an inaccurate report being circulated again years later. Accuracy, it needs no further stressing, is essential if journalism is to inform the public debate. And if public wishes to be served well with accurate information, significant perspectives and intelligent opinions, they need to engage, maintain a pressure which inspire excellence. Do that often enough, and even if newspapers do not publish them, the editors will be forced to read them and soon, the guilt will lead to more responsible, more accountable journalism.

This, in case you have forgotten how media peddled outright lies in how the Kanhaiya episode at JNU was reported, or how a Hindi news channel dredged the bottom of the ignorance barrel to claim and explain the nano-microchips they believed to be embedded in the new currency notes, or the comatose disinterest with which the northeast continues to be reported, or how when a certain national party wins state elections it becomes about local issues but when another national party wins in states it is credited to the charisma of The Leader... all of these should convince any consumer of "news" of how the sector requires more professionalism. In Sikkim's case, the news-media admittedly needs to evolve beyond the incident-based reportage and press release/ press conference-driven political reporting that currently pack our pages, in colour. These happen because the readers remain aloof consumers. Much more and much better will arrive if readers became more engaged and started demanding better.

WRITE US:

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

Remote working is here to stay – but that doesn't mean the end of offices or city centres

JANE PARRY
theconversation.com

When coronavirus lockdowns were introduced, the shift to remote working was sudden and sweeping. Now the British government is hoping the return to the office will be just as swift – to help the economy “get back to normal”. But pushing everyone back to the office full time fails to recognise the many benefits that working from home has brought. It also fails to capitalise on this moment of change.

The mass homeworking experiment in the middle of a pandemic presented some of the most challenging circumstances possible. Yet, coming out the other side of it, there's likely to be considerable resistance to simply readopting old ways of working. This is already evident at the start of a new research project I'm leading at Southampton Business School into the effects of COVID-19 on the workplace, called Work After Lockdown, with partners the Institute for Employment Studies and work consultancy Half the Sky.

Coronavirus lockdowns accelerated the shift to flexible working in a way that had previously seemed impossible. They also provide hard evidence of how work can be done differently – and successfully. Most crucially, they have provided vivid illustration of this to resistant managers, who were previously the key block to flexible working.

By mid-lockdown in April, the Office for National Statistics estimated that nearly half of people in employment were working from home in some way. These were predominantly white-collar office workers. Considering that, prior to the pandemic, less than 30% of people had ever worked from home, this marks a significant shift.

Some organisations were much better prepared for this switch than others. Those who had already mobilised the necessary remote-working technology adapted more easily, as often did multinational companies already used to managing virtual teams with diverse needs.

But lockdown was nevertheless a shock for most employees. Few were ready to start perform-

ing all of their work from home, let alone manage this under far from ideal circumstances – such as children to care for and educate, or shielding relatives to support, not to mention health concerns to manage. Unsurprisingly, this was often a struggle. What has been more unexpected in our research so far was how quickly people adapted, often finding more efficient ways of organising their time.

So far there seems to be little evidence of a drop in productivity. This is very difficult to measure due to the economic effects of the pandemic. The OECD think tank pointed to an initial drop, followed by

reporters of an upsurge in productivity, and argued strongly that the wellbeing of remote workers is central to sustaining productivity gains. This is a key message for employers – that well-managed working from home that is chosen and not forced upon people will make work more efficient and productive.

Alongside the radical thinking that employers are doing, is a shift in how employees feel about their work. Recent analysis of attitudes around homeworking at Cardiff and Southampton universities reveals that 88% of those who worked at home during lockdown want to continue doing so in some respect.

In our own research, benefits are emerging around family wellbeing and better use of time, with knock-on effects as workers become more conscious and proactive about their physical health. Many people we've spoken to feel that the adversity of lockdown gave them insight and understanding into the lives of their colleagues, and the length of lockdown gave them the time to work out better ways of organising their work tasks remotely.

Of course, lockdown experiences have been diverse. Employers told us they became more aware of staff who found enforced working from home to be a lonely or more challenging time, including those living alone or in small or cramped living conditions, as well as those with more outside responsibilities, such as caring commitments, whose intensity was heightened by lockdown. This improved awareness of workforce diversity might yet have more positive consequences for future management.

Much of the recent government narrative has been one of calamity about what deserted offices will do to cities and jobs. But only a few companies are suggesting abandoning their offices completely. Quite the reverse, they could become more pleasant spaces in which we still socialise and buy coffee.

As we rethink the office, this provides an opportunity to consider what we want our cities to look like – and how they might become more inclusive, safer and greener spaces. Crucially, we can do this while making them spaces where work is organised more efficiently. This could be a once in a generation moment to make these positive changes.

[the writer is Lecturer in Organisational Studies and HRM, University of Southampton]



Do celebrity endorsements really help environmental campaigns? We found no evidence

ALEGRIA OLMEDO, DAN CHALLENGER & DIOGO VERÍSSIMO
theconversation.com

Arsenal footballer Hector Bellerin recently partnered with a reforestation charity and pledged to plant 3,000 trees every time his team won. This is just one example of the now widespread use of celebrities like him in environmental conservation marketing campaigns.

But are such endorsements actually effective? We're not so sure. For a recent academic study we explored whether the campaigns evaluated the success of these endorsements, and looked for evidence that celebrities helped to achieve campaign objectives.

To give us a more global view we searched in six different languages for publications on celebrity-endorsed environment campaigns: English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Vietnamese. We found 79 campaigns implemented in nine countries between 1976 and 2018. In total 181 celebrities endorsed these campaigns. They included actors, musicians, athletes, experts in a particular topic, TV presenters, writers, artists, models, comedians and politicians. Most campaigns focused on sustainable lifestyles and wildlife conservation, while pollution and climate change received limited attention.

To analyse the campaigns, we compared them against an eight-step framework for implementing a celebrity-based intervention that one of us developed in previous research which included elements from the conservation, business and behavioural science literature. The eight steps include ensuring an intervention is informed by research, that it has a clear pathway to its desired objective(s), an evidence-based

rationale behind campaign components such as celebrity selection or overall campaign concept, and that it is tested before implementation. These elements allow the campaign organisers – and later researchers like us – to measure its success.

Among the campaigns studied we found a dearth of measurable objectives, theories of

celebrity choice. In the marketing field, guiding principles are used to select celebrity messengers. For example, selecting celebrities who are perceived as attractive, trustworthy, or to whom the target audience can relate. Our results indicate these principles are not being applied in environmental campaigns.

The only campaign that reported research into celebrity selection was the United Nations Environmental Program's (UNEP) #WildforLife campaign. It sought to raise awareness of the illegal wildlife trade in key countries. Relevant demographic groups were identified and local celebrities who the target audience followed on social media were engaged as influencers. The remainder of the campaigns we looked at did not specify why celebrities were enlisted or why their endorsement would contribute to achieving campaign objectives.

Of the 79 campaigns we looked at, only four were evaluated. And these assessments do not show evidence that celebrity endorsement specifically contributed to achieving campaign results. For example, The Target 140 campaign set out to reduce daily water consumption by 20% in Brisbane, Australia. Yes, a 22% reduction in water consumption was achieved. But the evaluation did not provide any insight into whether the celebrities involved contributed to this success.

Despite the lack of evaluation, 11 claims of campaign effectiveness were made and of these, three claimed celebrity endorsement was effective. In one of them, Chinese writers Zhao Danian and Shu Yi encouraged chefs to pledge to abstain from cooking with endangered wildlife. While some pledges were made, there was no information on how many chefs had been approached or how many had accepted or declined to take part. Further, no follow-up on

the chefs' behaviour was reported.

In the #WildforLife campaign, the objectives were to raise awareness of the illegal wildlife trade and mobilise people to protect endangered species and end the trade. While sharing campaign messages through celebrities' social media accounts achieved the desired reach, it should not be assumed that reach is equivalent to raising awareness and mobilising action. The quality and content of social media reactions to the campaign could have indicated if the audience was responding to the message or to the celebrity, or both, but this was not evaluated.

The lack of measurable objectives, theories of change, outcome indicators, and critical evaluation renders it impossible to determine whether the outcomes achieved by the campaigns found can be attributed to celebrity endorsement. It therefore remains unclear whether celebrity endorsement of environmental campaigns can contribute to environmental protection and conservation efforts.

We found only 79 campaigns in the literature searched for in this scoping review despite searching in six languages from the earliest records available up to January 2019. It is possible, even likely, that data and information demonstrating the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement does exist within campaigning organisations that use celebrities. If so, this is problematic for conservationists because lessons learned cannot be used more widely. Organisations should be encouraged to report the success – or failures – of celebrity endorsements, to ensure that their future use in environmental campaigns is based on evidence.

[Alegría Olmedo is PhD Candidate, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford; Dan Challenger is Research Fellow, University of Oxford; Diogo Veríssimo is Research Fellow in Conservation Marketing, University of Oxford]



change, research into celebrity selection, and evaluation of success. Just 40% of campaigns reported their objectives for enlisting celebrities, and most said it was to get more media coverage.

But campaign visibility should not be an end in itself. Visibility indicates delivery, not whether the messages delivered had the desired impact. A recent example of this was seen when a group of celebrities sang the John Lennon song “Imagine” from their homes during the pandemic. The video had hundreds of thousands of views, but a lot of the comments and reactions the video received were negative.

Only one campaign had a theory of change that guided the development of objectives, target audience selection, campaign design, and ce-

75 per cent of students of Bengal couldn't appear for JEE : Mamata

KOLKATA, SEPT 2 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said 75 per cent of JEE-Main candidates in the state could not appear for the exam held on September 1 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and blamed the Centre's "ego" for it.

In other states, only half of the examinees managed to turn up due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, she claimed.

Banerjee, who has been against the Centre's decision to hold JEE-Main and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) undergraduate exams urged the Centre to rethink about those who could not manage to appear for the crucial test.

"Our students are in great trouble. So many of them were not able to attempt JEE. That's why we had requested the central government to appeal to the Supreme Court or review the matter again so that students are not deprived," she told reporters.

"Yesterday, out of 4,652 candidates for JEE in West Bengal only 1,167 could appear for it despite all arrangements by the state government for them. This means only 25 per cent could attempt to write the examinations and the rest 75 per cent could not



in West Bengal. We had made the arrangements as per the instructions (of the central government)," she added.

Banerjee expressed her displeasure with the BJP-led Central government for its stand on holding JEE/NEET despite several appeals. "Who will be held responsible for those who could not sit for the examinations due to the COVID-19 pandemic?" she asked.

"What would have gone wrong if the examinations were deferred by another few days? Why is there so much of ego? Why are you (central government) so stubborn? ... Who gave you the right to spoil the future of the students," the TMC supremo hit out. She said the students

didn't refuse to sit for the exams and had only requested to defer them by a few more days during the pandemic due to concerns about their health.

The parents of the JEE (Main) candidates PTI spoke to said they had to shell out steep fares to take their children to various test centres from their home districts.

The father of candidate Ayan Roy Mahapatra said he had to cough up Rs 25,000 to cover a distance of 365 km from Malda to Kolkata for hiring a SUV.

Ayan had appeared for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Mains from a test centre in Salt Lake area here on Tuesday.

Another candidate Biltu Dey who travelled in a private luxury bus from Malda to Kolkata

spent Rs 800 on one-way fare as he did not want to board crowded public transport.

Vivekananda Kundu, father of candidate Rohan Kundu, did not divulge the fare he had to pay for the journey from Midnapore town to Esplanade here. The journey on a crowded bus made him jittery about the possibility of getting infected by coronavirus.

"We had to pay thrice the regular fare but the conductor still kept on picking up passengers without thinking for our safety. We couldn't afford to pay Rs 25,000 for a car so we chose the public transport," he said.

They will come back to the city again on September 13 for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) but

are apprehensive.

Stating that she felt sad for those students who could not appear for the examinations, the chief minister said, "I am pained and I am shocked. I will again ask the Centre to review how many students could sit for the tests and how many could not in different states".

Banerjee had written two letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week seeking postponement of the entrance examinations.

Supporting her demand, chief ministers of seven non-BJP ruled states had jointly moved the Supreme Court on the issue.

Another plea was filed by 11 students from as many different states seeking quashing of the July 3 notices issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on the holding of JEE and NEET in September.

The Supreme Court had on Monday dismissed a plea seeking postponement of the JEE-Main and NEET undergraduate examinations saying a "precious year" of students cannot be wasted and life has to go on.

The JEE-Main is scheduled to be held from September 1-6, while the NEET UG 2020 exam is scheduled for September 13.

Another Odisha minister tests positive for COVID-19

BHUBANESWAR, SEP 3 (PTI): Odisha minister of textile and handicrafts, Padmini Dian, on Thursday said she has tested positive for COVID-19, and was undergoing home isolation.

Dian is the third minister in the state to have contracted the disease. Earlier, higher education minister Arun Kumar Sahoo, and labour minister Susant Singh were diagnosed with the infection.

"I undertook sample tests after developing mild fever and came to know that I have contracted COVID-19 on

Thursday morning. I am currently undergoing home isolation," the Kotpad MLA told PTI over phone. She requested people who have come in contact with her recently to isolate themselves and undertake the test.

More than a dozen legislators in the state have so far contracted the infection.

In July, BJP MLA from Nilgiri, Sukanta Kumar Nayak, became the first legislator in the coastal state to test positive for the disease.

Two Lok Sabha MPs -- BJP's Suresh Pujari

from Bargarh and BJD's Manjulata Mandal from Bhadrak -- were diagnosed with the disease last month.

Leader of Opposition and senior BJP leader Pradipta Kumar Naik has appealed to all MLAs and MPs to strictly adhere to COVID-19 protocols during the course of their work.

"The MLAs and MPs should take necessary precautions to guard against COVID-19 as people might need their help, in the midst of the pandemic and floods," he said.

148 fresh cases take Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 4,360

ITANAGAR, SEP 3 (PTI): The total number of COVID-19 cases in Arunachal Pradesh rose to 4,360 as 148 more people, including 47 security personnel and two health workers, tested positive for the disease on Thursday, an official said.

Of the fresh cases, 31 were reported from the Capital Complex region, 28 from Tirap, 20 from Leparada, 18 from West Siang, 14 from Tawang, six each from Papumpare and West Kameng districts, State Surveillance Officer Dr L Jampa said.

Five new cases were also detected in Upper Subansiri, four in Changlang, three in East Siang, two each in Namsai, Lower Dibang Valley, Longding, Kurung Kumey

and Lohit and one each in Upper Siang, Lower Subansiri and Lower Siang districts, he said.

Barring five, all of them are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID Care Centres, he said.

"Forty-seven security personnel, 26 Border Roads Organisation employees and two health workers are among the new patients," Jampa said. Ninety-six people were cured of the disease and discharged from hospitals on Wednesday, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 1,278 active cases, while 3,075 people have recovered from the disease and seven died.

A total of 2,248 patients have been cured

of the disease in August, while 2,757 people, including 1,036 security personnel, have been diagnosed with the infection during this month, the official said.

The recovery rate among COVID-19 patients in the state stands at 70.52 per cent, he said.

The Capital Complex region has reported the highest number of active cases at 223, followed by West Kameng at 152, East Siang at 131, Changlang at 119 and West Siang at 98, Jampa said.

The Capital Complex region comprises Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas.

Arunachal Pradesh has so far tested 1,73,469 samples for the infection, including 3,016 on Thursday, he added.

Assam Assembly passes bill to protect tangible heritage

GUWAHATI, SEP 2 (PTI): The Assam Assembly on Wednesday passed a bill to protect, preserve and restore tangible heritage, which are currently not covered under any national or state law.

The passage of the Assam Heritage (Tangible) Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Maintenance Bill, 2020 was termed as historic by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who said it is a step towards implementing the Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

As per the clause, constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the culture, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the

Assamese people. "The bill seeks to include museum objects like coins, sculptures, manuscripts, epigraphs or other work of art and craftsmanship and all cultural artifacts of indigenous people.

"It seeks to protect, preserve, conserve, maintain and restore the tangible heritage of Assam," Cultural Affairs (Archeology) Minister Keshab Mahanta said in the statement of objects and reasons.

The act will cover all those heritage that have been in existence for at least 75 years, and will be other than those declared as national importance by Parliament or those covered under the Assam Ancient Monuments and Records Act, 1959. The assembly also

passed a bill to set up a unitary, non-affiliating, residential and state university -- Sati Sadhani Rajyik Vishwavidyalaya in Golaghat district.

Education Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the Council of Ministers in 2019 had decided to set up the varsity in memory of Sati Sadhani, who was the last queen of the Chutia dynasty and played a prominent part in the fight against the Ahoms.

Further, the House passed the Assam College Employees (Provincialisation) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 for extending the period to refund the government's share of contributory provident fund in case of retired or expired employees of the provincialised colleges.

Odisha reports 3,219 new COVID-19 cases, 11 more deaths

BHUBANESWAR, SEP 2 (PTI): Odisha on Wednesday reported 3,219 new COVID-19 cases, taking the state's tally to 1,09,780, a health official said. The death toll rose to 514 with 11 fresh fatalities, he said. As many as 3,303 more people were cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries to 84,073, the official said.

The recovery rate among the COVID-19 patients in the state has improved to 76.58 per cent, he said. The state's fatality rate also declined to 0.46 per cent despite 11 more patients succumbing to the infection, the official said.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, has reported the highest number of fresh infections at 731, followed by Cuttack (400), Puri (217) and Balasore (194), he said.

Three fresh fatalities were reported in Ganjam, two in Khurda and one each in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Rayagada and Sambalpur districts, the official said.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in the state now stands at 25,140, he said. The state has so far tested over 18.19 lakh samples for COVID-19, including 51,245 on Tuesday, the official said.

Khurda, which has reported 18,159 COVID-19 cases so far and has been adding more than 500 fresh infections daily since the last three days, is set to surpass Ganjam's tally of 18,238 cases to become the worst-affected district. Bhubaneswar now has 4,282 active COVID-19 cases, the highest in the state, followed by 2,855 in Cuttack district.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik called up several infected legislators and the government's media advisor Manas Mangaraj and wished them speedy recovery.

Poacher arrested in Odisha, leopard skin seized

BARIPADA (ODISHA), SEP 3 (PTI): A 40-year-old man was arrested in Mayurbhanj district on Thursday for allegedly poaching wildlife inside Similipal National Park and a leopard skin was seized from him, a forest official said. Acting on a tip-off forest department officials, posing as traders, had contacted the person, the official said.

The man, identified as Laxman Naik, was arrested during a raid by the forest department officials in Katasa village under Rairangpur forest division, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Arun Kumar Mishra said. The leopard was killed about three months ago inside the Similipal National Park, the DFO said.

The seized leopard skin was 153 cm long and 31 cm wide, he said. Leopard skins are used for home decoration or in the creation of luxury carpets. A case has been registered against Naik under relevant provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, Mishra said. A motorcycle was also seized from the accused.

Kolkata Metro resumption: Officials discuss COVID-19 protocols, crowd management

KOLKATA, SEP 3 (PTI): Senior officials of the Metro Railway and West Bengal government met on Thursday to discuss the modalities of putting in place social distancing norms and crowd management for resumption of services.

Describing the meeting as "very good", Metro Railway spokesperson Indrani Banerjee said another round of discussion might take place on Friday.

"The state government and the Metro authorities will have further discussion with the focus being on finding better solutions to manage crowds at the gates of the stations," she said.

Representing the Kolkata Metro in the meeting at the state secretariat



were the chief signal and telecom engineer, who is also its additional general manager, the principal chief operations manager and the chief security commissioner, Banerjee said. "We have assured the Metro authorities of all forms of assistance to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are followed while passengers avail the services," an official at the

state secretariat said.

The Union Home Ministry, in its Unlock 4 guidelines, has allowed Metro Railway services in cities to resume from September 7 in a graded manner.

The West Bengal government has also issued an order to allow commencement of services in Kolkata in a graded manner from September 8.

49 new COVID-19 cases in Nagaland, tally rises to 4,066

KOHIMA, SEP 3 (PTI): Forty-nine more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Nagaland, taking the state's Coronavirus caseload to 4,066, Health and Family Welfare Minister S Pangnyu Phom said. Of the 49 new cases, 24 each were reported from Dimapur and Kohima districts and one from Mon district, he said.

"49 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported out of 708 samples tested - 24 each in Dimapur and Kohima districts and one in Mon district," the minister said in a tweet. With the 49 new infections, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the state rose to 732. Among the active patients, six are with mild symptoms while 726 are asymptomatic patients



All precautionary measures to contain the spread have been initiated, he asserted. A Health department official said 101 COVID-19 patients have tested negative for the virus during the day, taking the total number of recoveries in the state to 3,314. The COVID-19 recovery rate in the state has increased to 81.51 per cent, he said.

3,314 people have recovered from the disease, 10 have died and 10 have migrated to other states.

A total of 1,726 armed forces personnel have been detected with COVID-19 in the state along with 1,278 returnees from other states, 765 traced contacts and 297 frontline workers, the official said.

Dimapur district has the highest number of COVID-19 cases at 1,933.

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Christian Malcolm named as British Athletics' first black head coach for Olympics

SEAN INGLE

LONDON, 03 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: Christian Malcolm has been confirmed as the new Olympic programme head coach for British Athletics. The 41-year-old, who was head of performance at Australia Athletics, will join the troubled organisation later this year and become the first black coach to take the role.

Malcolm, who is a former world, European and Commonwealth Games medallist and competed at two Olympics, said he was delighted at the news.

"Words can't describe how excited I am to have the opportunity to take this role on and be part of a new start for British Athletics. As an athlete I knew I wanted to give back to the sport when I finished competing.

"In all my coaching and advisory roles so far, I have wanted to help athletes avoid the errors I made and support them and their coaches to get the best out of themselves. I've worked with some world class coaches throughout my career whilst competing, as part of the GB relay set up and whilst at Athletics Australia. They've all helped me to grow in various ways, but I know my first coach Jock Anderson would have been the most pleased to see me take this role and use all that he taught me about helping athletes prepare."

Joanna Coates, CEO at British Athletics, added: "I am really pleased to appoint Christian to this role. His credentials are numerous but most impressive was the energy and vision he had for the Head Coach role during the recruitment process.

"The panel were incredibly impressed by both his technical knowledge and approach to high performance - putting the athlete first, championing welfare and also a change in culture that will really enhance the World Class programme.

"Christian will bring a fresh new approach to the performance team as we head towards Tokyo and future Olympic cycles."

Gareth Bale open to Premier League move as he seeks Real Madrid exit



LONDON, 03 SEPT [PA MEDIA]: Gareth Bale has accused Real Madrid of making things "very difficult" for him by blocking his departure from the Bernabéu and has said he would be open to a Premier League return.

Bale, who is contracted to Real until June 2022, has fallen out of favour under Zinedine Zidane and played only 48 minutes of Madrid's 12 games when the Spanish season resumed after lockdown. The former Tottenham and Southampton forward said coming back to the Premier League, which he left in 2013 for a then world record fee of £85.3m, would be a possibility. "If those options arise then I'd look at it for sure," he told Sky Sports. "We have plenty of time in this transfer window and I guess a couple of others as well. Time will tell."

Zidane accused Bale of not wanting to play in the Champions League last-16 second leg against Manchester City, but the Wales international has hit back by saying Real have stopped him leaving on various occasions. Bale, who almost joined the Chinese Super League club Jiangsu Suning on a £1m-a-week three-year deal in 2019, said: "I think the club needs to answer that question because I tried to leave last year. They blocked everything at the last second.

"It was a project I was excited for last year but it didn't materialise. There's been other instances where we've tried to go but the club won't allow it or done something. So it's on the club, I can't really do anything. I have a contract.

"All I can do is carry on what I'm doing and hopefully something comes up. But as I said, it's in the club's hands. They make things very difficult, to be honest."

Bale often looked an uninterested spectator on the sidelines when Spanish football returned in June. He was pictured pretending to sleep in the stands and using a roll of wrist tape as a telescope when he found out he was going to be an unused substitute. But he said: "I want to play football and I'm still motivated to play football. I'm only 31 and feel I'm in great shape still."

Bale is with the Wales squad on Nations League duty and will captain Ryan Giggs's side against Finland in Helsinki on Thursday. "Whenever I come here I feel very happy, I feel very comfortable and welcomed," he said. "Whatever goes on at Madrid goes on at Madrid. "It doesn't really affect me."

Football transfer rumours: Lionel Messi to make Barcelona U-turn?

BARRY GLENDENNING

LONDON, 03 SEPT

[THEGUARDIAN]:

Nobody has the foggiest idea what the future holds for Lionel Messi, but that hasn't stopped countless self-proclaimed "in the know" folk, including the Mill, engaging in wild speculation. The Mirror has got wind of tittle-tattle from Argentina that suggests the player may be pondering a Tory-style U-turn despite his recent announcement that he wants to leave Barcelona with extreme prejudice.

Despite reports that Wednesday's meeting between Messi's father and agent Jorge, and club president Josep Bartomeu ended in a stalemate, TyC Sports say Barcelona are ready to offer the player a new two-year deal and claim he is "90% certain" to stay at Camp Nou. While this doesn't exactly tally with previous reports that he is ready to reunite with Pep Guardiola at Manchester City, it may give the player's representatives and his current employers additional



bargaining power when it comes to negotiations over any potential move.

On international duty with Wales, who may actually give him a game, Gareth Bale has revealed he would be open to leaving for a Premier League club but says Real Madrid are placing obstacles in his way. "It is something I'd look at for sure," he told Sky Sports. "Time will tell but mainly

I think the reason is that the decision is in Real Madrid's hands. I tried to leave last year but they blocked everything at the last second. We will see what happens. It's in the club's hands but they make things very difficult."

Speaking about Bale on TalkSport's breakfast show on Thursday, the former Madrid president Ramón Calderón said the winger would need

to take a substantial pay cut to leave the Bernabéu and also revealed an unspecified Premier League club made an unsuccessful £100m bid to bring him back to England last summer.

Segueing neatly into talk of Manchester United, Bild claim club officials have initiated contact with the representatives of long-time Liverpool target Thiago

Alcántara, even if their acquisition of Donny van de Beek suggests they don't need the Spanish midfielder, who is intent on leaving Bayern Munich. Thiago has an ardent admirer in Jürgen Klopp, who could sell Gini Wijnaldum to Barcelona and free up a dressing-room peg and training-ground car park space for the 29-year-old.

Having been previ-

ously linked with a move to Arsenal, the former Bournemouth winger and free agent Ryan Fraser is reported to be in talks with Steve Bruce about a move to Newcastle. In need of a more prolific striker than Andy Carroll, Joelinton, Yoshinori Muto and the injured Dwight Gayle, who is about to undergo knee surgery, Bruce is also hoping to lure Fraser's former teammate Callum Wilson to St James' Park in what would represent quite the coup.

And finally, with James Rodríguez due to undergo a medical at Everton before his mooted £20m move from Real Madrid, Gylfi Sigurdsson's time at the Merseyside club and long association with the Premier League could be drawing to a close. Now that Allan is also believed to be joining from Napoli, the Icelandic international is beginning to look surplus to requirements at Goodison Park and is reported to be the subject of interest from MLS side DC United.

Tour reaches end of season, embarks on plan toward diversity

ATLANTA, SEP 3 (AP): What started as the "Return to Golf" has yielded to "Crossing the Finish Line."

Twelve weeks after the PGA Tour ended its longest stoppage since World War II because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it marked progress with two slogans that brought equal measures of satisfaction and a sigh of relief. "I was confident that we had the right plan," Commissioner Jay Monahan said Wednesday.

"But I was uncertain as to whether or not, like everybody else, you'd be able to get to this point."

That point would be the Tour Championship for the top 30 players who made it through two FedEx Cup postseason events to reach East Lake and chase the USD 15 million bonus that goes to the winner.

Monahan also brought up another monetary figure a projected USD 100 million over the next 10 years for tournaments to donate to racial and social justice causes in their markets.

"In essence, how do we use the platform that we've established over the past 80 years to make deeper and more specific commitments around social justice efforts in our communities?" he said.

"The work may never be complete, but as we close out this season of change, I felt it important to reinforce our commitment." And what a season it has been.

The week the PGA Tour signed a new media rights deal said to be worth more than 7 billion over nine years, the coronavirus led to golf shutting down for three months.

Tiger Woods, who won his record-tying 82nd tournament last fall, played only twice before the shutdown,



four times after. He did not make it to the Tour Championship.

A record five players already have taken turns at No. 1 in the world.

Dustin Johnson is the No. 1 seed at East Lake with two victories since the return, along with runner-up finishes in the PGA Championship and last week at the BMW Championship.

He starts with a two-shot lead over Jon Rahm, who made a 65-foot bending birdie putt in a playoff to beat Johnson last week. No one should be surprised. They are Nos. 1 and 2 in the world ranking. Rahm was more surprised the tour reached its season-ending event without having to stop because of the coronavirus.

Only seven players and three caddies tested positive in the 13 tournaments held in 12 weeks in 11 states.

"I'm not going to lie, when I saw ... pretty much 20% of the tests were positive country-wide, almost worldwide, and with how many other sports were having trouble ... nobody should be surprised if one week we show up and there'd 30 positives," Rahm said.

"We can congratulate each other and everybody else for the good job we've done, because I

am surprised we've been able to go on without any single problems."

The Tour Championship is the end of the season, but not the end of the year, or the concern.

Spectators still have not been allowed to return, with no indication when that would happen. Monahan said the plan was for pro-ams a big part of a tournament's revenue to resume in the Dominican Republic in three weeks. Pro-ams already are in place on the PGA Tour Champions and the Korn Ferry Tour.

Monahan thought back to Friday the 13th in March when he announced the next four tournaments had been canceled, starting with The Players Championship. "As gut-wrenching as that day and the weeks to follow were, as we ultimately canceled or postponed nearly 30% of our season, the adaptability, innovation, and collaboration that has brought us to this week is incredibly gratifying," he said.

That includes the charity component, which has carried on without spectators, programs or corporate hospitality. Monahan said supporting sponsors of the Tour Championship Coca-Cola and the Southern Company were enabling at least a 3.5 million contribution to local chari-

ties this week. Monahan also said local tournaments and their charitable donations would be the backbone of the tour's pledge toward supporting diversity in a summer of intensified racial and social unrest. PGA Tour events have raised more than 3 billion for charity since 1938, and that money 200 million last year goes mainly to local organizations.

"All of our tournaments are going to be identifying racial and social injustice causes in their local markets going forward," Monahan said.

"I think it's a big statement that with the number of tournaments we have they all quickly have responded and said that they are excited for this opportunity, excited for this challenge." He said the tour expects to raise at least 10 million a year for those causes for the next decade, "and that's something that we're going to hold ourselves accountable to."

He also said the tour would work toward attracting more minorities to golf through The First Tee, which currently has a great emphasis on education than the game, and with support of the Advocates Pro Golf Association Tour, created a decade ago to provide playing opportunities to minority players.

Inaugural Lanka Premier League to start on Nov 14

COLOMBO, SEP 3 (PTI): The inaugural edition of the Sri Lanka Premier League (SLPL) T20 tournament will be held from November 14 to December 6 this year, the island nation's cricket board (SLC) said.

The SLPL was initially scheduled to take place between August 28 to September 20, but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Sri Lanka Cricket expects to officially launch the eagerly awaited Sri Lanka Premier League T20 cricket tournament in early November," the SLC said in a statement.

The tournament will be played at three international venues -- Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium, Pallekele International Cricket Stadium and Suriyawewa Mahinda Rajapakse International Cricket Stadium.

Five teams will compete in 23 matches over a 15-day period.

The five teams are named after Colombo, Kandy, Galle, Dambulla and Jaffna districts.

"The tournament will not only create a platform for local players to develop their skills by playing side by side with world-class players, but will also provide an opportunity for Sri Lankan cricket fans to watch a quality cricket tournament," the organisers said.

Kristina Mladenovic fumes at 'abominable' treatment under US Open Covid protocols

NEW YORK, 03 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: France's Kristina Mladenovic complained of living a "nightmare" due to the Covid-19 health protocols at the US Open after suffering a spectacular meltdown to lose to Russian Varvara Gracheva in her second-round match.

Against an opponent ranked outside the top 100 and playing her first grand slam, Mladenovic looked set for a breezy win while serving at 6-1, 5-1 but things went downhill for her abruptly and she ended up losing 1-6, 7-6(2), 6-0.

Mladenovic was one of several athletes placed under an "enhanced protocol plan" for being in contact with compatriot Benoît Paire, who tested positive for the coronavirus and was withdrawn ahead of the grand slam.

"We're living a nightmare here. I have only one desire and that is to regain my freedom," the 44th-ranked Mladenovic said. "We have to fight to have our freedom and even that we don't have yet."

The United States Tennis Association's protocols have meant that players in contact with Paire are being tested for Covid-19 every day rather than once in four days and are confined to hotel rooms.

Mladenovic, who along with partner Timea Babos are the top seeds for women's doubles, earlier said she felt like being stuck inside a "bubble within a bubble".

She was lost for words to explain her loss after having four match points on Gracheva's serve at 5-2 in the second set.

"At 5-2, I just collapsed. I have nothing more to say, I'm completely devastated," she said. "It's absolutely abominable how they are treating us, but I don't want that to be an excuse for my defeat."

US urges India to enhance its position in global supply chain

WASHINGTON, SEP 3 (PTI): The United States has urged India to create an environment that will foster its position in the global supply chain and said that the country continues to face challenges on the market access front despite improvement in the ease of doing business.

Observing that the coronavirus pandemic may give rise to self-sufficiency and self-reliance sentiments among struggling economies, Joseph Semsar, Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, said that India with its Atmanirbhar Bharat Initiative has put forward a programme that puts a question mark on the notion of self-reliance.

Our thought is that isolationist policies can also cause a decrease in exchange between businesses and economies, less technology and best practice sharing, fewer joint research and development projects and stifled innovation, Semsar said at the third India-US Leadership Summit organised virtually by the US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF).

So we urge the government of India to focus on creating an environment, fostering an environment that will enhance India's position in the global supply chain, he said in response to a question from Anish Shah, deputy managing director and group CFO, the Mahindra group, who is also a USISPF board member.

India has improved its ease of doing business index, but challenges remain on the market access front, he said.

There are concerning issues regarding data localisation, intellectual property rights, high tariffs, duplicative safety and security testing, price controls, and FTI restrictions in sectors like insurance, he added.

These are the challenges that India and the United States have to work together to resolve, Semsar said.

Noting that the Trump administration has long recognised the need to diversify supply chains for both economic and national security of the US, he said that business leaders are finally realising that they cannot rely on unsuitable sources for their production.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown how easily supply chains can weaken and in some cases, even break down entirely.

On this front, India has the potential to become a global supply chain leader in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, Semsar said.

Stating that supply chains are not easily mobile and market research and investments take a very long time, he recommended that India take a long term approach to attracting business.

Semsar urged India to avoid the bait and switch tactic of attracting companies by implementing good policies only to later change course by adopting regulations that are inhibiting and costly to business.

COVID-19 pandemic will push 47 million more women, girls into extreme poverty by 2021: UN

UNITED NATIONS, SEP 3 (PTI): The COVID-19 pandemic will disproportionately affect women and push 47 million more women and girls into extreme poverty by 2021, reversing decades of progress to lift this demographic above the poverty line, according to new data released by the UN.

The new analysis by the UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said the COVID-19 crisis will dramatically increase the poverty rate for women and widen the gap between men and women who live in poverty.

The poverty rate for women was expected to decrease by 2.7 per cent between 2019 and 2021, but projections now point to an increase of 9.1 per cent due to the pandemic and its fallout.

The pandemic will push 96 million people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 million of whom are women and girls. This will increase the total number of women and girls living in extreme poverty to 435 million, with projections showing that this number will not revert to pre-pandemic levels until 2030, the UN agencies said.

The projections show that while the pandemic will impact global poverty generally, women will be disproportionately affected, especially women of reproductive age. By 2021, for every 100 men



aged 25 to 34 living in extreme poverty (living on USD 1.90 a day or less), there will be 118 women, a gap that is expected to increase to 121 women per 100 men by 2030.

The increases in women's extreme poverty are a stark indictment of deep flaws in the ways we have constructed our societies and economies, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said. We know that women take most of the responsibility for caring for the family; they earn less, save less and hold much less secure jobs in fact, overall, women's employment is 19 per cent more at risk than men's, Mlambo-Ngcuka added.

She said that the evidence of multiple inequalities

is critical to driving swift, restorative policy action that puts women at the heart of pandemic recovery.

While the pandemic has posed a serious threat to the prospects of eradicating extreme poverty by the end of this decade, the reality is even grimmer as these projections of increased poverty rates for women and girls only account for the downward revision of the gross domestic product (GDP), excluding other factors such as women leaving the workforce due to child-care responsibilities that may also affect the sex distribution of poverty. More than 100 million women and girls could be lifted out

of poverty if governments implement a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving access to education and family planning, fair and equal wages, and expanding social transfers, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said.

He noted with concern that women are bearing the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis as they are more likely to lose their source of income and less likely to be covered by social protection measures.

Investing in reducing gender inequality is not only smart and affordable but also an urgent choice that governments can make to reverse the impact of the pandemic on poverty reduction, he added.

The fallout of the pandemic will shift forecasts of extreme poverty across regions.

The report said that Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (where 87 per cent of the world's extreme poor live) will see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 54 million and 24 million people, respectively, living below the international poverty line as a result of the pandemic.

The expected rise of poverty in South Asia as a result of the pandemic showcases the vulnerability of women and girls living in households that have only recently been able to escape poverty, it said.

The pre-pandemic female

poverty rate in South Asia was projected to be 10 per cent in 2021 but is now expected to reach 13 per cent. Moreover, before the pandemic, projections for the region suggested that by 2030 only 15.8 per cent of the world's poor women and girls would be living in South Asia. The revised projections now put that figure at 18.6 per cent.

Significantly more women than men in South Asia will be affected. In the 25-34 age group, there will be 118 poor women for every 100 poor men in that region, and that ratio will increase to 129 women for every 100 men by 2030, the data said.

The report noted that while these figures are alarming, the study estimates it would take just 0.14 per cent of global GDP - USD 2 trillion - to lift the world out of extreme poverty by 2030; and USD 48 billion to close the gender poverty gap. However, the real number could end up being much higher, especially if governments fail to act or act too late.

The unabated rise of other pre-existing gender inequalities will also impact these figures. Women are employed in some of the most affected sectors, like accommodation, food services, and domestic work. They have been particularly vulnerable to layoffs and loss of livelihood.

UN chief urges Japan, others to meet goals on climate change

UNITED NATIONS, SEP 3 (AP): The United Nations chief urged Japan and other wealthy nations on Thursday to give up their reliance on coal and other fossil fuels and commit to investments in green energy as they recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made the appeal in an address to an online climate conference hosted by Japan.

Guterres noted that many countries are using the opportunity of the pandemic to double down on green energy and other initiatives, aiming to attain a goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above the pre-industrial average.

We are facing two critical crises, COVID and climate change," he said in pre-recorded remarks. He said he hoped the meeting would leave future generations with the hope that this moment is the true turning point for people and the planet."

A major U.N. Climate Change Conference due to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, this November was postponed due to the pandemic. Dubbed



COP26, it is to be held there in early November 2021. Japan's Environment Ministry has led an initiative called the Online Platform for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19, or Platform for Redesign 2020.

Its website says it is a hub that collates countries' climate and other environmental policies and actions that are planned and implemented in the context of recovery from COVID-19.

Guterres noted that Japan's advanced technology in many fields should make it a leader in shifting to renewable energy and urged it to stop financing construction of coal-fired power plants.

The top priorities, he said, are prioritizing green" jobs, ending subsidies for use of fossil

fuels and taking energy and climate change issues into account in all decisions. Clean energy delivers more jobs, cleaner air, better health and stronger economic growth," Guterres said.

It makes no sense economically to burn money on coal plants that will soon become stranded assets," he added. There is simply no rational case for coal power in any investment plan."

Japan scaled back its ambitions for shifting to renewable energy after the massive March 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown disasters in the northeastern Tohoku region led it to close down its nuclear power plants for safety overhauls.

Some have restarted but most have not. In the meantime, the country has made up for lost

power generating capacity by boosting use of coal, oil and gas, ramping up use of solar power and reducing waste.

The government also has sought to export its expertise and technology by helping to finance construction of coal-fired power plants.

Guterres said the goals of halving global emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality" by 2050 key to limiting global warming were achievable, but we are currently off track."

He urged countries participating in the conference to come up with more ambitious plans and long-term strategies before COP26 next year.

In comments delivered on the website Platform for Redesign 2020, Japan's environment minister, Shinjiro Koizumi, said the endeavor aims to help countries redesign their economic and social systems in this time of dual crises."

The pandemic has slowed most activities, he noted, but climate change gives us no time to waste."

Our task is not to return to the pre-pandemic world, but to build back better," he said.

Amazon adds 7,000 more UK jobs as pandemic e-commerce booms

LONDON, SEP 3 (AP): E-commerce giant Amazon is adding 7,000 more permanent jobs in the U.K. by the end of the year, in the latest sign that demand for online shopping and services is booming amid the pandemic.

The company said Thursday that the jobs will be created at Amazon warehouses, sorting centers and delivery stations across the United Kingdom as well as its corporate offices.

That's on top of 3,000 new employees it has already added this year. The extra staff will raise its permanent British workforce to more than 40,000 by the end of 2020.

Retailers and other traditional industries in Britain affected by the coronavirus crisis have

been forced to lay off workers, and there are fears unemployment could spike as the government phases out a salary support package.

On the other hand, surging demand for deliveries means e-commerce is a bright spot for hiring.

"This huge expansion announced in the U.K. by Amazon comes as little surprise, given the massive surge in sales the tech giant has experienced, as the e-commerce sector boomed during the pandemic," said Susannah Streeter, an analyst at financial services firm Hargreaves Lansdown.

More than 50 Amazon sites in the U.K. will take on the new staff. A new warehouse that opened in May and two more scheduled to open

in the autumn will each hire more than 1,000 new workers.

The warehouses, in northeast and central England, are outfitted with state-of-the-art robotic technology.

The new roles include engineers, graduates, human resources and technology professionals, and health and safety and finance specialists.

They also include teams that will pick, pack and ship customer orders, which will help Amazon meet growing customer demand and enable small and medium-sized enterprises selling on Amazon to scale their businesses, the company said in a statement.

It's also creating more than 20,000 temporary jobs ahead of the Christmas shopping season.

Former UN official charged with lying about rape in Iraq

NEW YORK, SEP 3 (AP): A former United Nations official accused of drugging and sexually assaulting several women has been charged with lying to the FBI. Karim Elkorany, who worked as a telecommunications specialist in Iraq, was arrested Wednesday on two counts of making false statements to federal law enforcement agents.

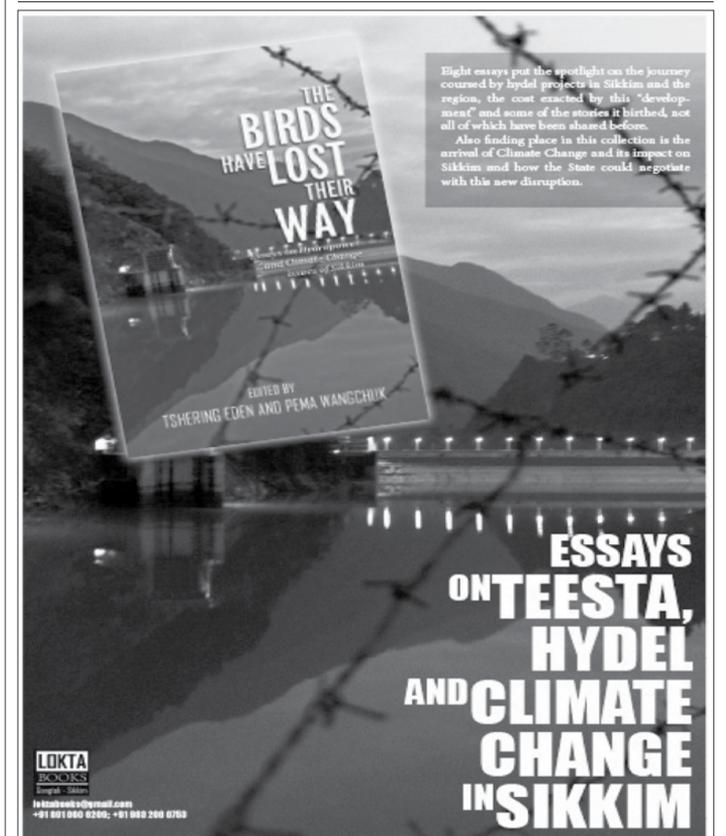
Elkorany's defense attorney, Dawn Cardi, denied the charges and said her client plans to vigorously fight them in Manhattan federal court. Elkorany, 37,

of West Orange, New Jersey, resigned from the UN in early 2018, a few months after FBI agents questioned him outside his home about a woman who accused Elkorany of drugging and raping her in Iraq in 2016.

Elkorany expressed familiarity with the woman's claims, authorities said, but falsely denied drugging and raping her. An indictment unsealed Wednesday alleges Elkorany engaged in a pattern of similar conduct involving at least five women since 2009.

All of the women had been rendered unconscious after drinking alcoholic drinks prepared by Elkorany, the authorities said. Elkorany worked in international aid, development and foreign relations for the UN.

He had also previously worked for the UN Children's Fund in Iraq, officials said. A spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the UN referred the criminal allegations to US authorities and cooperated extensively with the investigation.



Daniel Craig Vs Rami Malek Won't Let You Blink For A Second

The brand new trailer of Daniel Craig's *No Time To Die* released on Thursday and it turned out to be treasure box of secrets, plot twists and unpredictable turns. The new trailer is basically an elaborated version of the first one - offering frequent glimpses of Dr. Madeleine Swann (Lea Seydoux), Bond's love interest. The new trailer hints that Bond quit his service at MI6 (UK's secret intelligence service) for Swann and now her resurfaced "secret" has forced him to "come back to play." One of the most interesting bits about *No Time To Die* is the villain - a scar faced Safin - played by Oscar-winning actor Rami Malek. He's seriously got no chill because all he wants his "revenge" and the woman Bond is in love with. "When her secret finds its way out, that's gonna be the end of you," James Bond is told in the trailer.

Unlike the first trailer, Rami Malek gets a dialogue in this one, the weight of which is felt by Bond and the viewers: "We both eradicate people to make the world a better place. I just want to be little tidier," he tells James Bond.

Actress Lashana Lynch (Captain Marvel star), who has been assigned the 007 licence to kill after James Bond quit

active service, dominates a number of significant sequences in the trailer. In the action packed trailer, she fights side by side with James Bond on his mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist, and also have a few sharp exchanges with each

tizzy back when it released in December last year. Twitter particularly obsessed over Rami Malek's appearance and we totally get it.

Last year, an explosion at Britain's Pinewood Studios in June had dam-



aged the film's sets, causing one minor injury, news agency AFP reported earlier. Sometime during the film's shoot, even Daniel Craig had to opt for an ankle surgery due an on-set injury in Jamaica. *No Time To Die* was initially slated to hit screens in April this year but the new release date now falls in November.

Here's the first trailer of *No Time To Die*, which had sent the Internet into a

other. The trailer also has glimpses of actors Ralph Fiennes as MI6 head M; Ana de Armas, cast as a new MI6 agent; Christoph Waltz, who resumes the role of Bond's old villain Ernst Stavro Blofeld, and Jeffrey Wright as Felix Leiter, one of Bond's trusted accomplices.



JOYFUL JOG! TV Star, Farrah Abraham went for an evening hike at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles.

'Hostages' season two more intriguing, emotional: Ronit Roy

MUMBAI, SEP 3 (PTI): Actor Ronit Roy on Thursday said he was "excited" to shoot for season two of "Hostages" as he found there were more layers in his character that he could explore. The first season of the Hotstar Special featured Roy as SP Prithvi Singh opposite Tisca Chopra's Dr. Mira Anand. It centred around a doctor who is forced to make a critical decision after her family is taken hostages.

The 54-year-old actor said the stakes are much higher in the show's second season, which set to premiere on September 9. "Considering season one and two, I would safely say I found playing (my character) in season two infinitely more interesting and exciting. Not to say the first one was not, but season two is definitely much more intriguing and emotional," the actor told reporters. Roy was speaking at the virtual trailer launch of the second season of "Hostages".

The "Udaan" actor said the show navigates several parallel tracks in the backdrop of its larger theme. "It has a track of a friendship brewing, a love story happening with his wife, situational battles and going head to head with a villain who he didn't expect to be around..." "On this show, everything is not

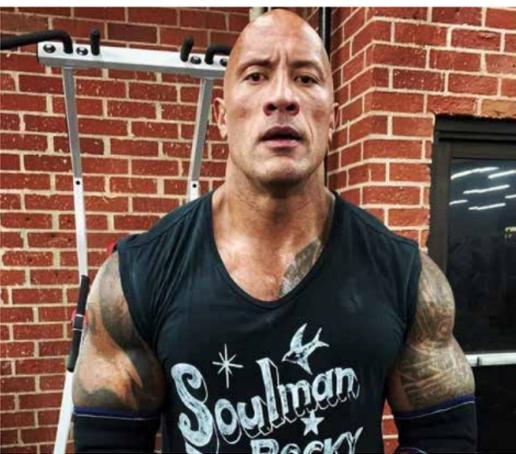
what it seems to be. Every event, occurrence and character has a deeper meaning and a link attached to it, hence making the show extremely progressive also." "Hostages" season two also features newcomers Divya Dutta, Dino Morea, Shibani Dandekar and Shweta Basu. The first season was helmed by Sudhir Mishra, who now serves as showrunner for the sophomore installment. Sachin Kumar Krishnan has directed the second season. "Work began two years back when we set the ball rolling for season one, which had inherent layers and edge of the seat thriller. I felt everything happening on season one was leading up to a season two.

"When we finished season one, I sensed that we lit the wick of a bomb but cut it just before it exploded. From the first episode itself of this season, the bomb will explode," Krishnan said.

Mishra said the decision to pass on the director's chair to Krishnan was apt as he wanted the "same visual style to continue" in the second season. "My job becomes easier now. He has done most of the directing. The thing with 'Hostages' is it has plot within plots, it's an intricate story. It's quite a ride. It's bigger, spectacular," the filmmaker said.



Dwayne Johnson says he and family had COVID-19



LOS ANGELES, SEP 3 (PTI): Hollywood star Dwayne Johnson has revealed he and his family had contracted coronavirus about two-and-a-half weeks ago, despite following a "disciplined" health routine. The professional wrestler-turned-actor, who made the announcement on Instagram, also said they were "no longer contagious".

Johnson, 48, said he, his wife Lauren, 35, and their daughters Jasmine (four) and Tiana (two) caught the disease from "very close family friends".

"We're on the other end of it and no longer contagious. Thank God, we're healthy," he said in a video posted on Wednesday.

"I can tell you that this has been one of the most challenging and difficult things we have ever had to endure as a family," he added.

Johnson, who as 'The Rock' had a long wrestling career in the WWE before heading to Hollywood, said testing positive for COVID-19 is "much different than overcoming nasty injuries, or being evicted or even being broke, which I have been more than a few times".

"My number one priority is to always protect my family. We are counting our blessings right now because we're well aware that it isn't always the case that you get on the other end of Covid-19 stronger and healthier," he said.

The actor, known for actioners like "The Scorpion King", "Journey" films, and "Jumanji" franchise, also urged people to wear masks.

"(Wearing a mask) has nothing to do with politics. Wear your mask. It is a fact. And it is the right thing to do," said Johnson.

Salli Richardson-Whitfield signs overall deal with HBO

LOS ANGELES, SEP 3 (PTI): Actor-director Salli Richardson-Whitfield has inked an overall deal with HBO.

Richardson-Whitfield is best known for her role as Angela in the action comedy "A Low Down Dirty Shame" and as Dr Allison Blake on the Syfy comedy-drama series "Eureka".

As part of her two-year deal with HBO, the actor-director will be developing new projects for the premium cable network, reported Deadline.

Richardson-Whitfield has also come on board to direct and executive produce a handful of major titles for the WarnerMedia-owned company.

She will helm four episodes of historical drama series "The Gilded Age". Created by Julian Fellowes of "Downton Abbey" fame, the show will feature powerhouse performers like Christine Baranski, Cynthia Nixon, Carrie Coon and Morgan Spector.

Richardson-Whitfield will also direct two episodes of Adam McKay's upcoming untitled Lakers project, which is based on Jeff Pearlman's book "Showtime: Magic, Kareem, Riley, and the Los Angeles Lakers Dynasty of the 1980s".

'Grey's Anatomy' S17 to start filming soon



LOS ANGELES, SEP 3 (PTI): Long-running medical drama "Grey's Anatomy" will start shooting for its season 17 soon. According to Variety, the first two episodes of the new season could commence filming as early as next week.

However, there is no news as to when the 17th season will air on ABC.

The chapter 16 of the acclaimed series, created by Shonda Rhimes, was cut short due to the coronavirus

pandemic and wrapped up with its episode 21, which aired on April 9. The show's writer Krista Vernoff had recently said "Grey's Anatomy" will tackle the pandemic in the upcoming season.

"We're going to address this pandemic for sure. There's no way to be a long-running medical show and not do the medical story of our lifetimes," she had said during an online panel discussion.

ARIES:

You'll find that this full moon is making everything around you volatile. Tempers are flaring and there is nowhere to run and hide. You have two options, Aries: to succumb to the drama or face your inner demons. Challenging as it is, you're being asked to choose the latter today. This will help you move forward on the path of liberation. PS: Remembering the Polish proverb 'Not my circus, not my monkeys' will come in handy. Tip: Rise above the drama.

TAURUS:

What you share with them is truly special, Taurus. Why are you doubting the sanctity of this relationship? If you've chanced upon something that's making you uncomfortable, it's better to address it, rather than going down that rabbit hole of emotions "or" looking for more evidence behind their back. What you will realise in the process is that not all of your fears have their basis in reality. Tip: Address your fears.

GEMINI:

We have all had unpleasant childhood experiences that we've carried into adulthood. What's your story, Gemini? What are the demons you've fought privately? The cards are letting you know that these memories have served their purpose in your existence. It's time to release them with a prayer of gratitude and love. As far as your parents/guardians are concerned, they didn't know better. Understanding that they were figuring out their place in the world will assist you in transmuted the pain you have been carrying for some time now. Tip: It's time to release the old story with gratitude and love.

CANCER:

The project you are working on is still in the nascent stages.

There's a lot you're yet to figure out about the way forward. Word for the wise: keep things private until you have clearly defined the plan of action. If the territory you're venturing into is unknown, it's but natural to feel a sense of trepidation. What you need to keep in mind is that the road is a lot easier than you imagine. Lay your trust in the mysterious forces above and know that everything will turn out for the better. Tip: Keep things private for now.

LEO:

The cards are urging you to assess your relationships, both romantic and platonic. How do you feel about the exchange of energy in each of the cases? Do you find yourself bending backwards for some people? The full moon is helping you find a balance, and sometimes that can only be achieved by making drastic changes. When you remember who you are and what you're worth, you stop giving others the power to walk all over you. Tip: It's time to restore balance in your relationships.

VIRGO:

When our sacral chakra (or womb space) is unbalanced, we wear guilt and shame like a badge of honour and sometimes experience physical pain. We tend to think we're unworthy of life's many pleasures and avoid joy like the plague. If this is something you have been struggling with, it's time to bring your attention to this energy centre. Practicing sun salutations, eating wholesome foods that are orange in colour (such as mangoes), and meditating with a citrine stone, are some of the ways in which you can heal this chakra. Expressing yourself through dance and music promises to be just as therapeutic. What you need to remember is that healing is not an overnight journey. Commit to staying present. Tip: The cards are urging you to bring your sacral chakra in

balance.

LIBRA:

Libra, you've got the kind of wit and charm that makes you the most attractive person in the room. So what's keeping you from bringing your A-game on? Whatever it is that you're worked up about, whether it's an interview or standing up to your boss, the cards want you to know you've got this. Libras who have found themselves in a less-than-perfect relationship are being encouraged to check in with themselves. Do you not believe you are worthy of the love you both desire and deserve? Don't shy away from doing what's right for you. Tip: 'Settling' is a dirty word.

SCORPIO:

The Universe has been showing you one red flag after another. What's keeping you from listening to your inner guidance, Scorpio? Is there a reason you are repeating the old, toxic patterns? Just because you've been doing things a certain way for so long does not mean you have to continue to. This is the point where you get to change the script. Act with awareness, wild one. Tip: The Universe is giving you a chance to change the script.

SAGITTARIUS:

Anger is seldom about what the other person is doing or saying. It's about what these words are stirring up within us. So, instead of playing the blame game, ask your higher self what needs to be healed within. In moments of silence, you will find the answer. On the upside, you will find that you are stepping into a time of transition. A time when you will leave the past—and all the pain associated with it—behind. Let optimism become your intoxicant of choice, Sagittarius.

Tip: Ask your higher self what needs to be healed within.

CAPRICORN:

Just because you've been doing things a certain way does not mean you have to continue to. Change has been stirred up, Capricorn, and it's all for the better. The only question you need to ask yourself is: 'How can I reinvent the game?' It's time to tap into your inner shapeshifter. What the Universe wants you to know: you are on the right track. Trust. Take a great risk and know you will receive magnificent rewards. Tip: Forget about the rulebook.

AQUARIUS:

So what if you've never done this in the past, Aquarius? That doesn't mean you won't be able to. This phase of your life is all about the new, new, new. So, push your limits and allow yourself to venture into territories you have never ventured into before. Trust that you will discover new things about your own personality in the process. Remember, life is the best teacher. Being present to each moment will teach you things that no manual ever will. Tip: You're about to discover new aspects of your personality.

PISCES:

You're still floating in that in-between state, somewhere at the intersection of dream and reality—the source of all ideas and inspiration. How would you like to translate these revelations into your work? Trust that you will find the clarity you seek over the next few days. Those who are in a business or creative partnership will find that this is a blessed time. You're vibing at each other's frequency like never before, which in turn is bringing the qualities of joy and harmony into all of your creations. Tip: This is a blessed time in the Pisces HQ!