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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Sikkim to host India's biggest MMA event on 17 Apr

**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 16 MAR:**

Sikkim is gearing up to host a mega open-air Mixed Martial Arts event of the Indian Fight Night [IFN] on 17 April here at the Paljor Stadium complex. The event, being promoted as 'Battle of Warriors- Sikkim MMA', is being organized by FITB 27 in association with Alpha Tribe.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, FITB 27 and Battle of Warriors founder, Bishal Chettri, said that this will be the biggest international MMA event of the country and, for the first time ever, will feature professional fighters from India and other countries competing in Sikkim.

"The main objective behind bringing such a major international event to my home state is to promote MMA in Sikkim and motivate local youth to enter MMA sports professionally. My ultimate hope is to see our local youth participating in the UFC," he shared.

He informed that 19 professional fighters have confirmed participation in the event, of whom 10 are from Australia, Germany, the United States and Afghanistan and the rest from different parts of India.



Mr Chettri added that the event will also feature the special presence of WWE star, the Great Khali, and Fitness Icon of India, Sahil Khan, and a performance by popular rapper, Badshah and other nationally and internationally famed artists.

He assured that the event will follow the COVID-19 protocol strictly.

"Such international level events with eminent personalities will also help to further promote Sikkim tourism. We will continuously work to promote Sikkim on the international map through such activities and motivate our youth towards healthy and sporting activities,"

he added.

He informed that the people from Dubai, Singapore and some other countries and different parts of India have already booked tickets for the event, adding that a ticket counter will also be set up at MG Marg for local spectators.

What local fans of the sport can also look forward to is the participation of MMA fighter from Sikkim, Passang Lepcha, who hails from Tashiding, West Sikkim and had won the champion's belt in feather weight category at the 7th MMA championship held in Delhi in 2019.

Mr Lepcha expressed his happiness on getting to compete

at such a mega event in his home state.

"MMA is already in Sikkim having debuted here two years back. That said, it like other sports but has still not gained popularity in the State so such an event will definitely help promote MMA among local youths," he highlighted.

Arjuna Awardee, Jasral Pradhan, who is the brand ambassador of the event, congratulated the organizing committee for bringing such a big event to Sikkim. He expressed excitement on being part of the event and expressed hope that the event motivates youth here towards MMA.

7 new cases take Sikkim's Covid count to 6,191

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 MAR:**

After going two days without any fresh cases, Sikkim reported what can only be called a "rash" of new infections today when news arrived that seven new cases of novel coronavirus have been detected here in the last 24 hours. Before the no new cases days, Sikkim had spent nearly a month with daily cases remaining below five with only a few days when this sub-5 figure was crossed.

All the new cases are from Gangtok and a person each has tested positive for nCoV from Mangar Colony near Gurung Gumpa, Helipad, Sai Mandir- Vajra, Tadong, near Rey Khola, near the Machong PHC, and two

primary contacts from Tintek, Chuba.

Meanwhile, four more patients were discharged from isolation facilities to further improve the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim to 5,915.

Sikkim's tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported so far has now reached 6,191, of which only 44 are active cases.

Only two of the seven new infections required hospitalisation and there are currently only 5 Covid patients in hospital in Sikkim.

In his daily health bulletin on Tuesday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia detailed that the seven new cases were detected in the test-

ing of 237 samples on Monday.

While giving details of the COVID vaccination drive, Mr Bhutia informed 2,995 people received COVID-19 vaccination shots at different vaccination sites across the State today. He informed that of these, 2,703 people received their first dose while 292 others completed their vaccine schedule with the second dose.

Among those vaccinated today, there are 268 healthcare workers [126 first doses and 142 second dose], 387 frontline workers [237 first dose and 150 second dose], 406 persons in age group of 45 to 59 years with comorbidities and 1,934 above-60 year olds.

No conclusive data to form direct link between deaths, air pollution: Centre

NEW DELHI, 16 MAR [PTI]: There is no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death and disease exclusively due to air pollution, Minister of State for Health Ashwini Choubey told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

He was responding to a question on whether the government has undertaken any study about the ill effects caused by pollution on asthma patients, lungs of children and pregnant women in the country during the last three months of year 2019.

In a written reply, Mr Choubey said air pollution is one of the many factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Health is impacted by a number of factors which includes food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity of the individuals apart from the environment, he said.

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Union Cabinet approves Rs 9k crore for T&D strengthening for Sikkim & Arunachal

GANGTOK, 16 MAR (PIB):

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in a major step towards economic development of the States of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim through strengthening of Intra - State Transmission and Distribution systems has approved the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of Comprehensive Scheme for Strengthening of Transmission & Distribution in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim at an estimated cost of Rs. 9129.32 crore.

The scheme is being implemented through POWERGRID, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under Ministry of Power in association with Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and is targeted to be commissioned in phased manner by December 2021 for awarded scope of works and 36 months from RCE approval for un-awarded

packages. After commissioning, the created transmission and distribution system will be owned and maintained by the respective State Utilities.

The main objective of the scheme is Government commitment for the total economic development of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim and to strengthen the Intra-State Transmission & Distribution Infrastructure in the states by providing grid connectivity to remote distant locations.

Implementation of this scheme will create a reliable power grid and improve States' connectivity to the upcoming load centers, and thus extend the benefits of the grid connected power to the villages and towns including the remote and border areas and all categories of consumers of beneficiaries in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.

The scheme shall also

increase the per capita power consumption of these States and shall contribute to the total economic development.

Implementing agencies are hiring a considerable number of local manpower during their construction works, generating a lot of employment for skilled and unskilled local manpower.

Further after Completion, since the assets are new establishments, additional local manpower will be required for Operation & Maintenance as per standard norms, generating considerable additional local employment opportunities for States.

Background:

The scheme was initially approved in December 2014 as a Central Sector Plan Scheme of Ministry of Power and the entire cost of the scheme will be borne by the Government of India through the Plan Scheme of Ministry of Power.

Sikkim girls beats Bihar by 2 wickets in One-Day League



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 MAR:**

The second win for Sikkim in the Senior Women's One Day League came in a nail-biting match today at Alur Cricket Stadium II at Bengaluru, which was won by 2 wickets in the last ball of the innings, a press release informs.

Sikkim won the toss and chose to field first. In the first innings, Bihar was all-out for 186 runs in 47.5 overs. Apurva Kumari scored the highest of 81 runs for the side. Sikkim built the pressure from the beginning and the opponent lost early wickets to Purni Maya Gurung, who took 2 important wickets in the first over of the innings. Captain Sarika-Koli took 3 wickets for the side, TabitaSubba 2 wickets, PranitaChettri and ShristiRai 1 wicket each.

In the second innings, though Sikkim lost its opening batter early, the situation was controlled with the brilliant batting by RankiRajak, who scored 74 runs, followed by SarikaKoli scoring 45 runs, Purni

Maya Gurung 21 runs, TabitaSubba 14 runs (not-out), SongkitLhamu Lepcha 7 runs, NandikaKumari 6 runs, PranitaChettri 4 runs, TsheringOngmu Lepcha 2 runs, and ShristiRai was 1 run (not-out).

At the end of the game the players showed a matured game sense and gave the strike to Tabita-Subba who was a set batter at that moment and a complete team game was showcased, converting it to a win.

"One of the biggest wins by Sikkim in the history of SICA. A job well done by the resolute players of the senior women team. Good guidance by the support staff led to a convincing victory. SICA family is proud of their achievement thus far," said president, Lobzang G Tenzing.

Sikkim has earned 8 Point(s) so far in the tournament. The next match will be played against Mizoram on 17 March at Alur Cricket Stadium III, Bengaluru.

Athletic club from Thami Dara churning out medal winners

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 MAR:**

Members of Bright Future Athletic Club at Thami Dara, Reshithang in East District gave impressive performances in the athletic events of the recently concluded district-level 1st Inter School Junior Olympic Games 2020-21 under 'Sports for Peace and Development' Vertical of Khelo India for East District.

While representing their respective schools in the district-level com-



petition, young members of the club have won nine gold medals in running events of the competition. In different running events, Sapana Khanal and Sabina Rai bagged two gold medals each,

while Jharna Thatal, Subash Rai, Divya Pandey, Buddha Sherpa and Aditya Thatal won a gold medal each.

Speaking to Summit Times,

turn to pg02

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MRO North briefs candidates

MANGAN, 16 MAR (IPR): The Municipal Returning Officer (North), Tenzing T Kaleon convened a meeting in his chamber at Mangan today.

The meeting was conducted to brief the contesting candidates on rules and regulations, the Model Code of Conduct and the process related to the Municipal Elections.

The objective of the meeting was to create a cordial and affable atmosphere among the candidates and the District Administration, which will in turn lead to a smooth and transparent election.

SP (North) Ongmu Bhutia elaborated on the Law and Order, deployment of forces and the roles and responsibilities of the police



during the elections. She was accompanied by SDPO (Mangan), Tseten Palzor Bhutia.

Additionally, the 1st round of training for Presiding Officers for the upcoming Municipal Election, 2021 was held in Confer-

ence hall. The Municipal Returning Officer oversaw the training procedure, where the Presiding Officers were shown how to operate EVM machines and were given instructions on conducting the elections.

For any information and queries regarding the Municipal Elections 2021, the following officers can be contacted:

Sector Magistrate (SDM, Mangan): 9609865736

Sector Officer (SHO, Mangan): 8145891946.

Four-day training on mushroom cultivation

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

Four-day Residential Training Program on Organic Cultivation of Oyster Mushroom was completed at Chujachen village under Reghu Block, East Sikkim, on 15 March, a press release informs.

The program was organized by Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) East, Agriculture Department in the presence of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Area In-charge, Chujachen Constituency, Damber Kumar Pradhan, Joint Director cum Deputy Project Director, ATMA East, Agriculture, Rachna Gurung, Joint Director Horticulture, Rongli Sub-Division, T Chopel Bhutia, and other officials.

Women members representing from Women Catering Group and other SHGs under Chujachen also attended the program which was co-ordinated by Block



Technology Manager, Reghu Block, Dhanraj Chettri.

The chief guest during his address lauded ATMA for conducting the four-day training for women members and congratulated the participants for attending the training.

Similarly, Joint Director cum Deputy Project Director, Rachna Gurung urged the trainees to make use of the training

and also highlighted the ATMA scheme and other ongoing Agricultural schemes.

Joint Director, Horticulture Rongli, T Chopel Bhutia congratulated the participants and encouraged the trainees for local production and assured departmental support.

The chief guest along with officials distributed certificates to all the participants, mushroom

blocks to best performing trainees and an incentive of Rs.10,000 as Seed Money under ATMA was provided to the Women's Catering Group.

The program concluded with vote of thanks by Agriculture Inspector, Agriculture, Lalit Koirala.

The overall program was organized by ATMA, East Agriculture and reported by BTM Reghu.

United Sporting Club announces 1st TR Rana Memorial TT C'ship

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

United Sporting Club, Singtam, convened a meeting here at the Singtam indoor sports complex on Tuesday to discuss various issues and preparations for the 1st TR Rana Memorial Table Tennis Championship scheduled for 23 and 24 April.

The meeting was attended by president, Sundar Kumar Rai, advisor CL Rai and joint sec-



retary Jinod Tamang of United SC, Singtam, and members of the technical team of the championship.

A press release informs that the meeting distributed various tasks

of the team to Pritam Silal, Ranjan Tamang, Lhamu Tamang, Soni Subba, Cyril Lepcha, Rohan Pradhan, Rahul Subba and Zarina Rana, all of whom are members of technical

committee.

The championship will feature categories for cadet [boys & girls], sub-junior [boys & girls], junior [boys & girls], open men's & women's for 18 to 39 years age group and veterans' men & women for 40 years and above.

The meeting has also decided to arrange accommodation for participants at Nepali Dhar-masala, Singtam. The last date to register for the tournament is 17 April.

Athletic club from Thami...

Bright Future Athletic Club coach-cum-general secretary, RB Subba expressed his immense happiness on the outstanding performance of his students. He expressed his confidence that the students will better their performance in the upcoming state-level competition.

"These achievements prove that if we provide better support and proper training then children from this region can also do well in athletics. The objective of the club is also to provide the best training and facility and bigger exposure to students," he said.

He mentioned that if local athletes perform in the national level then it would also open doors for them for employment in army, police and para-military forces.

Mr Subba mentioned that Bright Future Athletic Club is also working to encourage young children of Sikkim to enter the field of athletics and to stay away from unproductive activities. He added that the club aims to send local athletes to national and international level competitions.

RB Subba is a former international athlete of the country, who has represented the country six times in long distance running and won bronze in South Asian Games. He is from Uttarey in West Sikkim and took voluntary retirement from BSF to guide young athletes of Sikkim. Bright Future Athletic Club was started one and a half years ago at Thami Dara, Reshithang.

Delivery men steal mobiles, replace them with soap bars: ghaziabad police

GHAZIABAD, 16 MAR

[PTI]: Seven delivery boys of e-commerce portals were arrested in Ghaziabad's Indirapuram for allegedly stealing mobile phones purchased by customers online, the police said on Tuesday.

The gang was busted after they were found to be stealing new mobile phones from a dealer. The gang was replacing the mobile phones with soap bars to dupe the customers upon delivery.

The action was initiated based upon a complaint by the dealer who sells the mobile phones through Amazon and Flipkart.

The accused have been identified as Shivam, Karan, Aman, Vijay, Ashok, Nagen-dar and Shivam alias Raju,

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) (Indirapuram) Anshu Jain told news agency PTI. The gang was arrested from Ghaziabad's Vasundhara Colony, Sector 15, she added.

As part of the gang's modus operandi, they would cut open the new packets and repackaged them on the same pattern with soap bars. They were also providing fake bills of the mobile manufacturing companies to dupe the buyers and were also giving them a discount on the cost of the new mobile phones.

Eleven mobile phones, fake bill books, packing material, tape cutters and soap bars have been recovered from their possession, the DSP added.

Governor calls on his Rajasthan counterpart

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

Governor Ganga Prasad met his Rajasthan counterpart, Kalraj Mishra, at the Jaipur Raj Bhawan today, a press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs.

This was a courtesy call as part of the Governor's Jaipur visit.

The Governors exchanged pleasantries and shared various developmental activities of their respec-



tive States, the release adds. Governor Prasad also

extended an invitation to his counterpart to visit

Sikkim and wished him happiness and well-being.

SSB Rhenock launches Civic Action Programme

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

69th Bn Sashastra Seema Bal Rhenock launched the Civic Action Programme in the North East Region in community hall Rongli on 16 Mar, a press release informs. The programme was inaugurated by chief guest Deputy Inspector General SHQ SSB, BK Pal.

During the opening ceremony of Civic Action Programme, chief guest Deputy Inspector General, BK Pal gave thanks to all beneficiaries and



distributed solar streetlights, sports equipments, and water tanks to the public of the area.

After that a medical

civic camp was also organized by a Medical officer of 69th Bn SSB at Rongli and distributed lifesaving medicines to the peo-

ple. The programme was attended by SSB officials and State government officials.

South holds District Task Force meeting on COVID-19

NAMCHI, 16 MAR (IPR):

A meeting on District Task Force was held at District Administrative Centre today.

The meeting was chaired by DC (South), M Bharani Kumar also present amongst others were CMO (South) Dr DC Sharma, DSO (South) Dr Urgan Sherpa, DRCHO (South) Dr Junita Yonzon along with police personnel and other officials.

DC (South), M Bharani Kumar was updated about the status of COVID-19 vaccine in the district. He further emphasized the health department to ensure full vaccine coverage for polling personnel. He



also underscored the need to receive the complete schedule of the vaccine for protecting oneself against this disease.

DRCHO (South) Dr Junita Yonzon briefed the meeting regarding the COVID-19 vaccination process which is being undertaken at the district. She underlined

the total number of vaccines available at the District Hospital and about other pertinent issues. She added that the beneficiaries of the vaccine can get their second dose between 28 to 42 days.

It was informed that in the category of 60 years and above a total

of 8988 beneficiaries has been covered till date in the district. Similarly, so far 14578 beneficiaries have received COVID-19 vaccination in the South District. It may be mentioned that the second COVID-19 vaccine dosage for frontline workers will commence from 17th March onwards.

Centre dodges responsibility towards Myanmar refugees, says India not signatory to 1951 UN Convention on Refugees

NEW DELHI, 16 MARI:

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday replied on India's stand of giving asylum to Myanmar refugees, saying that the country is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon.

In response to a question from Sugata Ray in Lok Sabha, the Homes Ministry said: "India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon. All foreign nationals (including asylum seekers) are governed by the provisions contained in the Foreigners Act, 1946, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and the Citizenship Act, 1955, and rules and orders made there under."

"However, a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) was issued in 2011 by the central government and amended in 2019 which has to be followed by law enforcement agencies while dealing with foreign nationals who claim to be refugees," it added.

Earlier, the ministry had sent a letter to Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh asking the respective state governments to take action.

KUTSE SHEGU



The 49 days KUTSE SHEGU of Late Doma Bhutia of Tadong Bazar, Gangtok who left for her heavenly abode on 1st February 2021 falls on 21st March 2021.

All relatives, friends & well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence in Tadong Bazar, Gangtok. We also express our sincere gratitude to

all those who extended support during our time of bereavement.

*Dup Tshering Bhutia (Son),
Chezong Bhutia (Daughter in law),
Karden Denzongpa (Daughter),
Sangay Gyatso Bhutia (Grandson),
Dr. Ugen Bhutia (Grandson),
Yangchen Bhutia (Granddaughter)*

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8.00 am And 6.00 pm

VACCINATION CLINIC

Empowered Committee on MSME meets in Gangtok

GANGTOK, 16 MAR (PIB):

The 4th Meeting of EC-MSME was held at the Royal Plaza, Gangtok on 08 Mar, 2021 for the purpose of reviewing and encouraging MSME loan performance of banks and removing impediments.

The meeting was chaired by CGM, Ravindra V Sangvai, RBI, Gangtok and co-chaired by Secretary, HK Sharma, Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Sikkim. Regional Director, Subodhan Sinha, RBI, Kolkata was the chief guest of honour. Other dignitaries viz. GM & O-i-C, Dr Diwakar Hegde, NABARD, Gangtok and Regional Manager, SD Lama, State Bank of India were also present on the dais. Officials from Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC); District Industries Centre (DIC); National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT); Atal Incubation Centre, Sikkim Manipal University (AIC-SMU); Sikkim



Spices Board; Lead Bank and various banks operating in Sikkim attended the meeting.

In his inaugural speech, CGM, RBI Gangtok welcomed all the dignitaries and participants, and stressed upon the importance and revival of the MSME sector in Sikkim which plays a key role in driving economic growth. He highlighted the crucial role of banks for extension of various Government sponsored schemes to the MSMEs.

He explained the importance of various schemes like the MUDRA, PMEGP and Chief Minister's Start-Up Scheme in

Sikkim which can benefit the MSME sector. He also highlighted that with the relaxation of lockdown in Sikkim, the MSME sector is recovering owing to various support schemes extended by the Government. Complementing the banks for achieving the Annual Credit Plan targets, he focussed on reaching out to the entrepreneurs. He pointed out the need of partnering with more agencies like AIC SMU and NIELIT etc.

The chair took up the discussion of the agenda items of the meeting. The progress and growth of bank credit in MSME

sector for the quarters September 2020 and December 2020 were deliberated.

The chair highlighted the change in classification of MSME sector from 01 Jul, 2020 onwards as per the instructions of Ministry of MSME, Government of India. The progress under various schemes like MUDRA, PMEGP and Stand-Up India was also discussed. The chair appreciated the growth under MUDRA in Sikkim. The Regional Director, Kolkata urged the Private Sector Banks to also strengthen the credit flow to the MSME Sector in Sikkim.

GM & O-i-C NABARD explained the importance of financial literacy of the MSME entrepreneurs which leads to financial inclusion. He also explained the role of NABARD in extending support for various financial literacy camps conducted by rural branches of banks as these awareness camps are vital in generating awareness among entrepreneurs about various schemes and benefits available to them.

The Regional Manager, SBI advised the banks to make extension efforts for credit plans and appealed to the youth to take advantage of skill imparting institutions like the RSETI. The Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department urged all the stakeholders to coordinate and work towards a common goal to foster the MSME growth in Sikkim. The programme concluded with an interactive session with the entrepreneurs who shared their success stories.

FCA observes World Consumer Rights Day



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

The Federation of Consumers Association, Sikkim observed and celebrated World Consumer Rights Day today at Tadong Senior Secondary School premises with the theme "Tackling Plastic Pollution" and organised a Consumer Awareness Program in Gangtok on Monday, a press release informs.

The program had the presence of Advisor Food & Consumer Affairs Department, Inchung Bhutia, Chairperson of OBC Commission, Pavitra Bhandari, as guests of honour.

Member of State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, DP Sharma and ADC (East), Radha Pradhan and Principal of Tadong SSS, Sangita Kharka were special guests.

The program was attended by members of many NGOs, like Rotaract Club of Gangtok, Stars of Hope, Ujwal Kala Kendra, Hum Enterprise

and school students and teachers.

The program had skit performance by the students of Tadong & Namthang School, quiz competition, video presentation & cultural shows by the students of both the schools.

The main resource person to the program today was Advocate, High Court of Sikkim, Thupden Bhutia, and PGT (Economics), Namthang SSS, Srijana Kharka, who is also the Vice President of FCAS gave a presentation about the rights of a consumer citing various examples and judgements on consumer cases.

The chief guest, Inchung Bhutia, in his address, urged the audience to exercise their consumer rights and take such programs to the villages also. He applauded the efforts of FCAS for organising such a program.

Guest of honour, Pavitra Bhandari, in her address, stressed that consumers should be responsible and alert.

DP Sharma shared his experiences as a member of SCDRC and suggested better ways to deal with consumer complaints.

Highlighting about the theme of the program (Tackling Plastic Pollution), Radha Pradhan, talked about how best we can tackle plastic pollution including solid waste in the current scenario.

Principal of the school, Sangeeta Kharka also stressed on our shared responsibility as consumers towards the environment alongside exercising our Consumer Rights.

The program began with the welcome address by general secretary, Pravin Pradhan and ended with vote of thanks by coordinator, Rinzing Moktan. The program was hosted by vice president of the federation, Shekhar Khatiwara. Musician cum social worker, Dibya Jyoti Baraily was also present on the occasion.

Rotary Club of Gangtok Smart City installs Charter President

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

Anil Kumar Gupta was installed as the Charter President of Rotary Club of Gangtok Smart City today in a function which also saw the official presentation of the Charter Certificate and Induction of Board of Directors and new members, a press release informs. Suby Kapoor was installed as the charter joint secretary.

The District Governor of District 3240, Subhasish Chatterjee and Assistant Governor, IB Goel were the chief guest and guest of honour, respectively.

During the function,



over 20 members were sworn in as members of the newest Rotary Club in Gangtok, the chief guest DG, Subhasish Chatterjee expressed happiness at the formation of the new Club and urged the new members and vet-

erans to work in unison with an aim to work for the society.

It was pointed out that focus should be to take up projects in remote areas of the state to serve the needy in particular.

Lingee's Smile Tamang selected for Sikkim Kabaddi team



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 MAR:

Smile Tamang from Lingee Senior Secondary School, South Sikkim, has been selected for National Kabaddi competition to be held in Telangana in April.

Smile left home Tuesday morning to join the Sikkim state kabaddi team coaching camp.

His training is being sponsored by the Kabaddi Association of Sikkim and its officials, a press release from his school informs.

The Principal and staff of Lingi SSS feted

him at a function held at the school today and are looking forward to his national debut.

Earlier, Lingi School had organized a week-long Kabaddi Camp with the support of Kabaddi Association of Sikkim which had provided a coach from Bihar for the camp.

Smile was shortlisted following selection trials held at the school on 15 March, it is informed.

Around 50 boys and 50 girls from different schools in the area had joined the camp and selection trials.

Why no female chiefs at Police Stations: Women's panel asks Delhi Police

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has issued a notice to the city police, seeking reasons for the absence of female station house officers (SHO) at any police station. The Delhi Police has been asked to file its reply before the DCW by March 19, the panel said today.

In a statement, the DCW said according to reports, none of the 178 police stations in the national capital has a woman SHO. The reports also state that despite rules guaranteeing a 33 per cent reservation for women in the force, their participation remains particularly low, the statement said.

In order to identify eligible women officers for the role, the commission has sought the details of the male and female officers of the rank of inspector, including their sanctioned and current number of posts, it added.

The DCW has asked the Delhi Police to submit a list of the steps taken to

increase the participation of women officers at the higher level, the statement said.

The commission believes that it is pertinent to increase the participation of women in the police. Also, it is important that women SHOs are appointed at sensitive police stations like Kamla Market, which covers areas such as the GB Road, according to the statement.

"We have been informed that there are no women SHOs in any of the 178 police stations in Delhi. This is very shocking and disappointing at the same time. It is very important to ensure equal participation of women in the force. Further, areas like GB Road must have women SHOs. We have issued a notice to the police in the matter and sought answers to our concerns," DCW chief Swati Maliwal was quoted in the statement as saying.

Stones thrown in BJP protest over Bengal poll tickets, cops use batons

KOLKATA, 16 MAR

[NDTV]: The police had to use batons to disperse

protesters outside the BJP election office in Kolkata today as demonstrators, upset with the party's choice of candidates for some seats, started throwing stones.

Police sources said they had to use a "mild lathi-charge" to control the crowd that allegedly targeted a BJP leader as he emerged from the office at Hastings. Six people have been detained for stone-throwing, according to last reports from police sources.

BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said at a press meet, "It is impossible BJP workers turned violent. This is some kind of conspiracy."

In a video of the incident, a man with a slipper in his hand is seen rushing to a person in a golf cap escorted by security personnel. He is hastily escorted into the building when a stone can be seen thrown at him.

It is not clear if the stone hit him or any of the policemen present.

Immediately, the po-

lice resorted to a lathi-charge, dispersing scores of BJP supporters gathered at the entrance to the building since yesterday.

BJP supporters present at the spot today were from Diamond Harbour seat where its former Trinamool MLA Dipak Halder has been fielded by BJP. Mr Halder joined BJP just weeks ago. Protesters also came in from Joynagar, Kultali, South Habra and Udaynarayanpur.

Hundreds of supporters of the BJP had held angry protests outside the party's election office in Kolkata all day on Monday, even heckling senior leaders Mukul Roy, Arjun Singh and Shiv Prakash, to protest a large number of former Trinamool leaders being given BJP tickets.

The lathi-charge and protests took place on a day Union Minister Amit Shah arrived unexpectedly in Kolkata late last night on his way from Guwahati to Delhi. BJP chief JP Nadda, too, landed last night for a day-long campaign.

Dramatic visuals from

Odisha reports 65 new COVID-19 cases, tally at 3,38,323

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 16 (PTI):

Odisha's COVID-19 tally mounted to 3,38,323 on Tuesday as 65 more people tested positive for the infection, a health department official said.

Of the new cases, 37 were reported from quarantine centres and 28 detected during contact tracing.

Sundargarh district recorded the highest

number of fresh cases at 15, followed by Mayurbhanj at nine, Balasore and Khurda at five each.

Boudh, Kendrapara, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur districts have turned 'coronavirus free' as no active cases exist there, he said.

The death toll remained at 1,918 as no new fatality due to the infection has been reported since March 14.

Fifty-three other COVID-19 patients also died due to comorbidities, he said.

Odisha now has 622 active cases, while 3,35,730 people have recovered from the disease.

The state has so far conducted over 86.61 lakh sample tests for COVID-19, including 19,611 on Monday, and the positivity rate stands at 3.91 per cent.



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
TASHILING, GANGTOK**

Memo No. /RDD/JJM

Dated: 15/03/2021

Notice for Expression of Interest (Eoi)

Detailed Notice Inviting Expression of Interest (EOI) for empanelment of the Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) to support the GP/ VWSCs in the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

The Rural Development Department, Government of Sikkim, on behalf of State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM), intends to empanel implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) to support the GP/VWSx in implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The Government of India has recently launched Jal jeevan Mission (JJM) which aims at providing Functional household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2022. Community ownership and engagement in all phases of program i.e., planning, implementation and O&M is a fulcrum of the mission to ensure long term sustainability.

Enhancing community and village level institutional capacity for efficient planning, execution, monitoring and O&M is an important task. Hand holding of community and village level institutions throughout the project cycle is crucial for achieving desired results.

Interested eligible organizations may submit sealed in prescribed format along with necessary certificates and documents. All eligible organizations are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (Eoi) in a sealed envelope captioned "Empanelment of Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs)" under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to the Project Director, Jal Jeevan Mission, RDD, Gram Vikas Bhawan, Gangtok, East Sikkim – 737101 on or before 24.03.2021. The detailed EOI will be available on the State Government's website- www.sikki.gov.in.

**Project Director, JJM
Rural Development Department
Gangtok.**

Empanelment of Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Sikkim.

**R.O. No. 270/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21
Date: 16.03.2021**

Banking Safe

Deposits need to play back more robustly as credit into the local economy

The past year has been about bad loans and non-performing assets. With the biggies having secured and digested impossibly large loans and not regurgitated anything back into either the economy or towards their EMIs, the banks were delivered a crippling blow; so crippling that even the demonetization-induced flood of cash is unlikely to tide them over. Even though Sikkim is far removed from the mechanizations of real economics and financial realities, living as it does in a bubble which is getting buffeted around but is yet to burst, people here are also suffering. For the past little over a year, the usually laidback banks (yes even banks become laidback when in Sikkim) have been on overdrive, reopening files to chase down missed EMIs and bad loans, serving notices and running from court to lok adalat and back to court to recover dues.

If one looks at the C:D ratio in the State, improved, on paper, in the past three years from an embarrassing 28.6% in 2014-15 to 42.6% in 2016-17. It currently stands at 40.45%. On closer analysis, it transpires that while public sector banks did satisfactory banking by recording a 48.8% credit-deposit ration, private banks, for all their fluff and bling, loaned out only 18.1% of the deposits they secured in Sikkim. SISCO Bank, clearly committed to the local economy, maintained the highest C:D ration at 63.8%. That said, even with this substantial improvement, there is still some distance left to cover. Banking norms advise the CDR to hover at the fifty per cent mark. This means that fifty per cent or more of the deposits made by account-holders should ideally be played back into the economy by way of loans and advances. This is as much to keep the economy buoyant as to trigger economic growth.

Economies, one may add here, do not grow when earnings are saved. Economies boom when investments are risked. But, like with most things in Sikkim, even the euphoria over the loan boom might be misplaced. Agreed, a whole lot of individuals and families have managed to secure loans to build homes/ hotels and purchase vehicles with greater ease in recent years, but fact remains that these loans do not really do anything for the economy by way of creating jobs. And the data bears this preference out as well because the tertiary sector (in which housing and vehicle-purchase loans are counted) have notched up between 51% to 82% of the projected targets for loans in Sikkim. Consuming a lion's share of the loans are the miniscule industries in the State which were so favored in 2014-15 that they received 241% of the target projected for this sector.

At whose cost, one may ask?

The farming community which received only 22% of the loans they were expected to receive that year and in 2016-17, received only 15% of the loans the sector was in need of and expected to receive. In the last fiscal, this was a depressing 14.7%. These numbers continue to remain disappointingly low. Loans to outside agencies emptied out about 40% of the deposits in banks in Sikkim, and that should attract some attention because that was available loans which could not go to local entrepreneurs.

For an economy to benefit from the presence of so many banks in the State – there are 23 banks in Sikkim which have 160 branches between them here – the State needs to hear about more substantial loans being given to new enterprises here. Unfortunately, that has not been the case in Sikkim. The bigger loans in Sikkim continue to be secured by applicants based outside the State. Is it because the branches here do not have the authority or do not enjoy the confidence of the regional offices to process “big” local loans? Experience also shows that banks here are hesitant to take risks. And yes, Sikkim's poor repayment history is also partly to blame for this, after all, as of 30 June 2016, the recovery position of commercial banks in Sikkim had declined to 18.83% from 34.5% as on 30 June 2015. But come on, these things do not seem to stop banks from throwing thousands of crores behind already lost thousands of crores. Even when it comes to bad loans, it is not the banks that really suffer because they have ways of getting their money back, the real loss is suffered by Sikkim because nothing substantial is achieved for the local economy; not when only personal, housing or car loans are released or when loans go bad because none of these create opportunities or more money.

How Men Can be Allies to Women Right Now

STEPHEN BURRELL, NICOLE WESTMARLAND & SANDY RUXTON
THECONVERSATION.COM

Men are primarily responsible for violence against women and girls. All men, including those who are not perpetrating violence or abuse, have a responsibility to play a part in helping to end it.

More men are starting to reflect on their own role in the problem and in tackling it. Our research has explored why some men come to take an active role in improving the situation and what can be learnt from their experience to encourage others.

Often it was the impact of hearing from women in their own lives which initiated a process of awakening. In some cases, it was witnessing other men's violence or learning about the experiences of someone close to them. Sometimes the men felt that they didn't “fit” with dominant expectations of masculinity – “be strong, in control, don't cry” – when growing up. For some, it was the impact of a horrifying high-profile death of a woman, similar to the situation in the UK currently, which finally spurred them to speak out. This moment can be an opportunity for more men to become allies.

If we are going to stop violence against women and girls, we need many, many more men to engage. This must start with an honest examination of men's own attitudes, behaviours and attachments to masculine expectations. Sexist ideas and harmful gender norms are so deeply rooted in institutions and public discourse that no one is untouched by them. This is not about blaming individual men, but recognising that for change to happen, each and every man needs to play a part in it.

REFLECTING ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Men can make a real difference in their daily interactions with family members, friends, peers and colleagues. They can challenge sexism and misogyny when they encounter it. This includes making sure that we are “walking the walk” in terms of equal and respectful relationships with women and girls. At home, that might mean ensuring that tasks such as housework and childcare are equally shared, and prioritising enthusiastic consent and respect in sexual relationships.

Outside of the home, it includes understanding how women's freedom in public spaces can be limited in a way which isn't the case for most

men. We can take into account our own everyday behaviours and the impact they can have. Even if there is no malicious intent, consider that maybe it isn't clear to the woman you are walking behind that you mean her no harm. We don't control how our actions are received and we cannot know the negative experiences that a woman may have pre-

viously had with men.

In their daily lives, men can also be active bystanders; for example, by questioning sexist comments or stereotypes, or talking to a friend whose behaviour towards women doesn't feel right. If you

witness actual or potential abusive behaviour, options include challenging the abuser if it feels safe to do so, trying to distract them, checking with the victim if they need help, and getting the support of others.

Of course, some groups of men have much more power and privilege than others. Men in leadership positions, and in influential institutions such as politics, business, media and the police have a particular responsibility to speak out and work to build gender equality and inclusiveness in their own organisations and wider communities. There are also organisations already engaging with men and boys on these issues in the UK which men can get involved with, such as the White Ribbon campaign.

When men do decide to take action, they should do so sensitively, recognising and supporting women's longstanding leadership in this area. Without this, there can be a risk of men “taking over” by dominating conversations, claiming expertise that they don't have, or taking credit for women's efforts.

These are some examples of why it's essential that male allies act in an accountable way. If you care about this issue, be prepared to receive and act upon critical feedback from women. One of the most important things men can do is really listen to women in their lives, and instigate conversations with other men about what women are saying.

It is vital that men explore what the implications of violence against women are for them, and the role they can play in shifting harmful masculine norms. Men must address these issues honestly and openly, engage with one another, and work towards a society which is free from men's violence against women and girls.

[Stephen Burrell is Assistant Professor (Research) in the Department of Sociology, Durham University; Nicole Westmarland is Professor of Criminology, Durham University; Sandy Ruxton is Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Durham University]



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REFLECTING ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS

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Sarah Everard Vigil Shows the Urgent Need to Protect the Right to Protest

FIONA DE LONDRA & DANIELLA LOCK

THECONVERSATION.COM

As the chaotic scenes in Clapham Common in South London on March 13 show, questions about the protection of rights during the COVID-19 pandemic need urgent attention. Over the past year, parliament has paid insufficient attention to human rights. That includes the right to protest. Now, we are seeing the results.

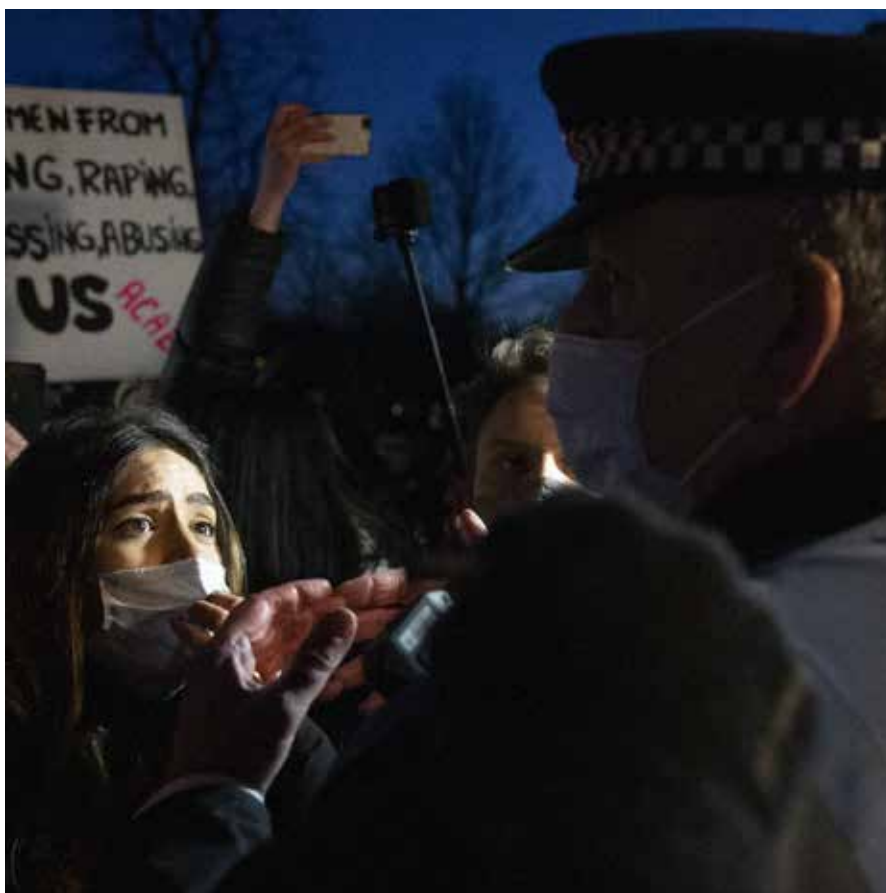
So far in Westminster there has been little resistance to the government as it has moved to react to the pandemic, including through legislation passed quickly which is designed to control the spread of COVID-19. Although the government's response both restricted some rights and arguably failed to protect others (including the right to life and right to health), there has also been almost no rights-based debate of its proportionality or adequacy.

Even everyday parliamentary business, such as PMQs and committee inquiries, has been almost devoid of human rights talk. Of more than 400 COVID-19 related questions asked in Prime Minister's Questions since the end of January 2020 only three related to human rights. Of 60 committee inquiries into the pandemic, only two asked rights-related questions in their terms of reference.

PARLIAMENT AND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

We have now seen the repercussions of this lack of debate around the right to protest specifically. Had there been more clarity over what is and isn't allowed, the events in Clapham may have unfolded very differently.

The first restrictions imposed last year contained exemptions to allow socially distanced protests to go ahead. This exemption was subsequently removed, but nothing was added to the restrictions to explicitly prohibit people from gathering to



protest. This produced a troubling ambiguity regarding the right to protest under the latest lockdown measures.

Ultimately it fell to the courts to determine whether, and if so when and how, protest was permitted under the current restrictions. On the Friday before the Sarah Everard vigil had been planned, the High Court confirmed that we now have an undesirable situation in which protests are not necessarily prohibited under the current restrictions. However, whether any particular protest can go ahead while lockdown persists is to be determined by the police, taking into account their assessment of the public health risk posed.

It is manifestly inappropriate for the police to be the arbiters of proportionality in these cases without clear guidance from parliament.

Legislative inattention to protest led to what seems to have been a widespread misunderstanding that protest was effectively prohibited. In other words, because the new regulations did not expressly allow protests (while it did expressly allow, for example, outdoor gatherings for Armistice Day commemorations), at least some authorities seem to have interpreted this as meaning that protest was prohibited.

Most notably there were reports of protests around the country having been cancelled or policed in ways that suggested that all protests were unlawful. They were not.

Parliament's lack of engagement with the right to protest also meant there were no protections in place to ensure that protests and vigils like those that took place

in response to the disappearance and death of Sarah Everard would be safe. Not only should parliament have intervened to prevent the removal of the protest exemption, it should also have ensured sufficient safeguards were in place to support the right to protest. These could include measures to ensure social distancing, and providing safety training to protest organisers, police and participants.

TIME TO ACT

Parliament's failure to attend to rights protection, including the right to protest, takes place in a broader political context that is currently hostile towards rights, and particularly towards protest. This is clear from the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill now being debated in parliament. If passed, this will create even more powers to disrupt and prevent protest, and give police further discretion to intervene in and shut down protests.

The right to protest is a cornerstone of mature democracies.

As recent events have shown, failure to protect the right to protest can have damaging consequences. There is a real danger that the proposed legislation will transpose coercive and restrictive approaches to assembly, protest and togetherness from the pandemic (where they are motivated by public health concerns) to the post-pandemic era. The effect would be to limit the right to protest at all times.

It is time for parliament to emerge from its pandemic-era reluctance to engage with rights and insist on the right to protest during and after the pandemic.

[Fiona de Londras is Professor of Global Legal Studies, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham; Daniella Lock is Research Fellow, CVRO, University of Birmingham]

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Nepal's drug regulator launches probe into arrival of Covid-19 vaccines in Nepal from Bahrain

ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, 16 MAR [KATHMANDUPOST]: Nepal's drug regulator has deployed a team of drug inspectors to investigate into the import of Covid-19 vaccines to Nepal from Bahrain without fulfilling legal procedures.

Shaikh Mohamed Hamad Mohamed Al Khalifa, a member of the royal family of Kingdom of Bahrain and his team, brought 2,000 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines on Monday. The royal member and his team are in Nepal for an Everest expedition.

"We have deployed a team of drug inspectors to investigate how the vaccines were brought into the country without any prior approval," Bharat Bhattarai, director general of the Department of Drug Administration, told the Post. "We did not know that vaccines were being imported from Bahrain."

Bhattarai said his office is coordinating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of



Health and Population regarding the matter.

According to Bhattarai, anyone importing any medicine or vaccine to Nepal must fulfil necessary legal procedures stipulated by the country. To import any medicine or vaccine to Nepal, relevant documents as well as storage guarantee of cold chain maintenance and expiry dates must be provided to the drug regulator.

Nepal's drug regulator so far has granted emergency use approval to the vaccines developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca and China's Sinopharm.

Nepal has been using

Covishield for its vaccination drive, which is developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca and locally produced by the Serum Institute of India. The Chinese vaccine, BBIBP-CorV, has not arrived in Nepal yet.

According to the Embassy of Nepal in Bahrain, the Bahrain royal team in Nepal for the Everest expedition will "provide the 2,000 doses of vaccine as a gift" to the locals of Samagaun of Chumnubri Rural Municipality in Gorkha district.

It, however, was not immediately clear as to which Nepali authorities the Bahrain team is coordinating with to "pro-

vide" the vaccines to the villagers in Gorkha.

Ever since Nepal launched its vaccination drive on January 27, the government has been inoculating the populations by prioritising the risk groups.

The first round of the second phase of vaccination, which is ending today, was aimed at inoculating people above 65 years of age. The government is now mulling over vaccinating people above 60.

The government two days ago decided to allow private firms to import the vaccine, but for this the Department of Drug Administration has

sought applications from interested companies.

Officials at the Ministry of Health said that a special decision is needed to allow people of all eligible age groups of some particular place to get the vaccine.

Since such a scenario was not envisioned, no discussions have been held as of now, according to officials.

"Even if the vaccine has been brought in good faith, all legal and technical procedures must be followed," an official at the ministry told the Post requesting anonymity as feared drawing unwarranted criticism.

According to the Nepali embassy in Bahrain, the 16-member team of Shaikh Mohamed Hamad Mohamed Al Khalifa that arrived in Kathmandu on Monday using their Air Force's special plane will spend 80 days in Nepal.

The same team had successfully climbed Lobuche and Manaslu mountains in October last year, according to the embassy statement.

TMC govt playing with emotions of Hindus: Adityanath



BALARAMPUR/ RAIPUR/ BELDA (WB), MAR 16 (PTI) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, campaigning in West Bengal for the upcoming assembly polls, on Tuesday alleged that the TMC government here was playing with the emotions of the Hindus by "forcibly opposing" anything associated with Lord Ram.

Advising his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee to refrain from doing so, the BJP's star campaigner said, if she did not do so, people will remove her from power.

In this context, without naming the Samajwadi Party (SP), the UP chief minister said, "there was a government in my state which opposed Lord Ram. It is nowhere now".

Addressing a rally for the upcoming assembly polls, Adityanath said, "In Bengal, there is an attempt of forcible opposition against (Lord) Ram... the state government is playing with the emotions of the Hindus. I will urge Mamata didi not to oppose Ram."

"Those who have opposed Ram have failed to be in power. People have removed them. And that is the reason when there is a kind of restriction to the chanting of 'Jai Shri Ram' in this state, all the people here have it on their lips."

He asserted that 'Jai Shri Ram' is not only used as a slogan by BJP activists, people also invoke Lord Ram's name as a greeting and for other reasons as well.

"Even after a man dies we chant 'Ram naam satya hai' during the last rites. (Lord) Ram is there in our every breath. Nobody can separate us from Ram," he said.

The TMC's rhetoric

opposing Lord Ram will not succeed, the BJP leader said.

The saffron party, he said, has brought about a change in the country after coming to power at the Centre as prior to it, a section of people believed that even visiting temples would pose a threat to their secular credentials.

The change is also compelling Mamata Banerjee to visit temples and do 'Chandi Path' in public now, the UP chief minister said.

"Isn't this a change? This is new India. Each and every person has to go to God," Adityanath said at Balarampur in Purulia district.

The 'Chandi Path' is one of the most ancient and complete systems of mantra worship of the divine mother goddess in the Hindu tradition.

Slamming Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his temple visits at the time of elections, the BJP leader said, "A priest had to tell him to sit in a correct posture when he went there."

Hitting out at the Congress, he said, that by including Article 370 in the Constitution, the "seeds of terrorism were sown in the country".

Article 370 acknowledged the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in terms of autonomy and its ability to formulate laws for its permanent residents.

"In 1952, the Congress forcibly included Article 370 in the Constitution sowing the seeds of terrorism in the country. The BJP government under Narendra Modi(ji) scrapped Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir to take the country forward," Adityanath said.

Describing the BJP as a party which fulfills its

promises, the UP chief minister referred to building of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Highlighting the advantages of having 'double-engine' government at the Centre and state, Adityanath cited successful completion of several projects in Uttar Pradesh.

"In those states where the BJP government is in power, with the help of the central government they are enjoying the advantages of 'double-engine'. You can see that within four years in UP, at least 40 lakh people have got voting rights, over one crore people were supplied with electricity.

"Around 6 crore people have enrolled in Ayushman Bharat scheme, over two crore for PM-KISAN. We have at least 30 new medical colleges in UP in the last four years. UP is leading the country from the front.

"The same thing could have happened in Bengal. The Congress, CPI(M) did nothing, not even the TMC. So people must vote for the BJP and put an end to 'goondagardi', 'tolabaji' and 'cut-money' culture of the TMC," he said.

If voted to power in West Bengal, the BJP will punish those behind the "killing of party activists in the state", Adityanath said.

"This is the land of (Swami) Vivekananda, Rabindranath (Tagore), Syama Prasad (Mookerjee) which has inspired the entire country. But now it is the land of TMC-promoted goons and 'tolabaa' (extortionists).

"I think the days of Mamata didi's government are numbered. The people of the state have made up their mind in voting them out of power. Only 45 days are left for them," he said.

Gritty Indian Arrows beat Aizawl FC 2-1 in I-League

KOLKATA, MAR 16 (PTI): The All India Football Federation's (AIFF) developmental side, Indian Arrows showed great determination to notch up a thrilling 2-1 win over Aizawl FC in an I-League match here on Tuesday.

Parthib Gogoi's (11th) early strike was cancelled out by a wonder goal from Malsawmtluanga (22nd), but the Arrows showcased their never-say-die attitude as Lalchhanhima Sailo's strike in the 36th minute proved to be the difference between the two sides.

Goalkeeper Syed Za-



hid Hussain Bukhari, in inspired form, made some crucial saves in the second half to help the young guns in maintaining their lead.

Coming on the back

of a 1-0 win over NEROCA, Yan Law's team played with confidence and created goal-scoring chances in the opening minutes of the match.

But they fell behind in

the 11th minute, courtesy a beautiful Gogoi goal. A deflected shot found Gogoi inside the box and the nimble-footed forward curled the ball into the back of the net as the Indian Arrows led 1-0.

Aizawl FC kept dominating possession and they were rewarded in the 22nd minute when Malsawmtluanga produced a sensational finish from outside of the box to bring the team back on level terms.

However, Lalchhanhima Sailo put the Arrows ahead when he found an accurate

cross inside the box and smashed it into the top corner with his left foot.

Aizawl FC are mathematically safe from relegation and the Mizoram-based club left no stone unturned to find the equaliser.

In the 68th minute, Zahid Hussain pulled out a blinder of a save to deny Aizawl from close range after substitute Lalremnga's shot from inside the box was parried away.

In the 70th minute, Hussain once again shut the gates for Aizawl as he saved Brandon's attempt from close range.

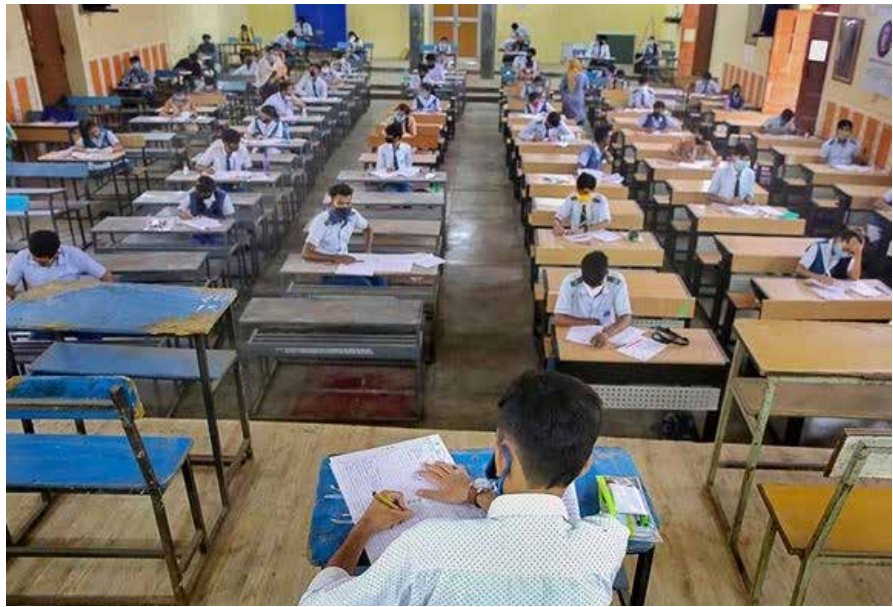
Regular classes for standard 1-5 in Nagaland from Mar 22

KOHIMA, MAR 16 (PTI): The Nagaland government has permitted re-opening of regular session for classes 1 to 5 in the schools across the state from March 22.

In this connection, Principal Secretary (Home) Abhijit Sinha on Tuesday issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), outlining various generic precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to be taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 when schools resume normal functioning.

Schools across the state were closed since March last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and educational institutions had been conducting online classes during the period.

The generic preventive measures include simple public health measures that are to be



followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19, Sinha said.

These measures need to be observed by all including teachers, employees and students at all times.

The government SOP states that physical distancing of at least 6 feet should be followed as far as fea-

sible, while use of face covers/masks would be mandatory.

It has also directed frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty.

Use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers (for at least 20 seconds) can be done

wherever feasible, it said while also emphasising on respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed.

The SOP also prohibits spitting around.

The SOP has also asked the school authorities to specifically ensure seating arrangement to ensure a distance of 6 feet

between chairs, desks etc. and also prepare alternate day routine for classes as per the enrolment in each class and the infrastructure facilities available.

Schools outside the containment zones only shall be allowed to open, said Sinha, adding that students, teachers and employees living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend schools.

Students, teachers and employees shall also be advised not to visit areas falling within containment zones.

Assemblies, sports and events that can lead to overcrowding are strictly prohibited under the SOP, he said.

The schools should display state helpline numbers and also numbers of local health authorities to teachers, students and employees to contact in case of any emergency, he added.

Swapna Dasgupta tenders resignation as RS member

NEW DELHI, MAR 16 (PTI): Nominated Rajya Sabha member Swapna Dasgupta on Tuesday tendered his resignation from the upper house of Parliament after being named as a BJP candidate in the West Bengal assembly elections.

Dasgupta, who be-

came a Rajya Sabha member in April, 2016, has been named by the saffron party as its candidate from Tarakeswar assembly seat in the poll-bound state.

Sources said that he has submitted his resignation, asking it to be considered effective from Wednesday.

Asked about his resignation, Dasgupta told PTI that "I have always said whatever necessary steps will have to be taken will be done by me before I submit my nomination papers (for West Bengal polls). His term as Rajya Sabha member was till April, 2022.

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Holding awarded Best pundit at British Sports Journalism Award



LONDON, MAR 16 (PTI): West Indies cricket great Michael Holding, who came out in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, has been named the 'Best Pundit' at the SJA British Sports Journalism Award 2020. Holding had delivered a powerful message against racism during last year's England-West Indies series, saying that blacks have been dehumanised and their accomplishments wiped off from a history "written by people who do the harm."

The awards were hosted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is something that has been in me and in my head for many, many years," 'Sky Sports' quoted Holding as saying in his video acceptance speech.

"People don't under-

stand what it is like to go through life and always thinking that people think less of you than what you think of yourself," he added.

Asked if he thinks that 2020 will play a vital role in bringing about change in social and racial equality, Holding said: "I believe so and I hope so."

"If you just look at the protests on the road and look at the faces of the people that were on the road. I saw a Swedish women's football team take a knee before a game, so it is going all over the world that people are recognising that things need to be done, and it's about time it did."

BLM gained momentum in the wake of African-American George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer in the USA in May last year.

Real Madrid without Hazard for game against Atalanta

MADRID, MAR 16 (AP): Some of Real Madrid's top players are coming back at a crucial time of the season. Eden Hazard isn't among them, though.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane will have the squad close to full strength on Tuesday when it defends its 1-0 first-leg win over Atalanta in the round of 16 of the Champions League, but Hazard again won't be available because of an injury.

The club said Monday that the Belgium playmaker has a muscle injury in his right leg, the latest of a series of problems that have kept him from playing much lately. Hazard had come off the bench to play a few minutes in a Spanish league match against Elche on Saturday after being out for nearly two months.

He is not fit to be with us in this match (against Atalanta)," Zidane said. I can't tell you any more because I can't explain these things. I hope it's not much because we have to be positive. Something is happening. "He's a player who



has never been injured or not been injured much in his career and this is a new situation for him. I can't explain it. We are there for him and we want him to get better. I hope he'll be back with us soon.

Madrid had nearly 10 players sidelined not long ago, but little by little they have been coming back to help the club as it enters the final stretch of the season while still in contention in the Champions League and the Spanish league.

Karim Benzema, Ser-

gio Ramos and Marcelo who have missed several matches recently because of injuries, including the first game against Atalanta are all expected to be available for the second leg at the Alfredo Di Stfano Stadium.

Benzema, who had missed three consecutive games, returned two matches ago, while Ramos played from the start in the 2-1 win over Elche. Benzema scored both goals, including the winner in second-half stoppage time, against Elche. Ramos was back

after being out for nearly two months.

Marcelo is set to return to the squad after more than a month out injured.

The return of those players gives Zidane greater flexibility tactically. He has been experimenting with different setups recently and could take advantage of having more options available. He has been favoring a 3-5-2 scheme that he used against Elche and is likely to try it again.

We have played with this formation in a few

games, Zidane said.

It's part of our game, we can play like this or with four defenders. We can play in different ways. But we'll see how we are going to set up the team.

The return of Marcelo may make it easier for him to use the 3-5-2 formation because the Brazilian can play well helping the attack. The 3-5-2 setup backfired for Zidane a few weeks ago, though, when he switched from a 4-3-3 halfway through a league match against Real Socie-

dad, when left back Ferland Mendy struggled, and Madrid ended up drawing 1-1 at home.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini has almost a full squad available, though defender Remo Freuler is suspended following his red card in the first leg. Madrid will be without the suspended Casemiro because of an accumulation of yellow cards.

Atalanta has won all of its European matches away from home this season, including a 2-0 victory over Liverpool at Anfield. It has won three of its four games in Serie A since the first-leg loss to Madrid.

This will be a different kind of game, Gasperini said.

We are facing Real Madrid after losing the first leg. They were favorites before, now even more so. But we are still capable, we want to play well and ensure the game is as competitive as possible.

Atalanta is looking to make it to the Champions League quarterfinals for the second straight season. Madrid hasn't made it out of the last 16 in the last two seasons.

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SA Legends qualify for semis in Road Safety World Series T20

RAIPUR, MAR 16 (PTI): South Africa Legends entered the semifinals of the Road Safety World Series T20 by beating Bangladesh Legends by 10 wickets here.

Openers Andrew Puttick (84 not out off 54 balls; 9x4, 1x6) and Morne van Wyk (69 not out off 62 balls; 9x4) slammed unbeaten half centuries as South Africa Legends chased down the 161-run target in 19.2 overs late on Monday.



The Mohammed Rafique-led side were restricted to 160 for 9 in 20 overs with South Africa Legends offie Thandi Tshabalala and pacer Makhaya Ntini taking two wickets each.

Nazimuddin provided a decent start with a 33-ball 32 with five fours and a six while Aftab Ahmed (39; 1x4, 3x6)

and Hannan Sarkar (36; 2x4, 1x6) were the other main contributors.

Nazimuddin, however, was dismissed by Tshabalala while Ahmed and Sarkar were sent back by Zander de Bruyn and seamer Garnett Krugger.

Once Sarkar was dismissed at the team score of 130, Bangladesh lost

six wickets for 30 runs.

Brief Scores:
Bangladesh Legends: 160/9 in 20 overs (Nazimuddin 32, Aftab Ahmed 39, Hannan Sarkar 36; Makhaya Ntini 2/26, Thandi Tshabalala 2/33) lost to South Africa Legends 161/0 in 19.2 overs (Andrew Puttick 84 not out, Morne van Wyk 69 not out) by 10 wickets.

Liverpool beats Wolves 1-0, Patricio OK after head knock

WOLVERHAMPTON (UK), MAR 16 (AP): Diogo Jota scored the winner against his former club as Liverpool beat Wolverhampton 1-0 in an English Premier League match that ended with Wolves goalkeeper Rui Patricio being carried off with a head injury.

Jota, who spent three years at Wolves before joining Liverpool in September, drove in a low, first-time shot that squirmed into the corner in the second minute of first-half stoppage time. Patricio got a hand to the ball but failed to keep it out at his near post.

The goalkeeper didn't finish the game after be-

ing struck on the head in the 87th minute by the knee of teammate Conor Coady, who was running back into his area.

Coady looked particularly concerned as medical staff attended to Patricio with caution for 10 minutes before he was taken off on a stretcher.

Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo gave a positive update on Patricio's condition after the game, saying: He's OK. He is conscious, he remembers what happened, he is aware. He is OK.

In November, Wolves striker Raul Jimenez fractured his skull in a clash of heads during a

league match at Arsenal. Jimenez was in the empty stands at Molineux on Monday.

Football becomes irrelevant when someone is down that long and the doctors have to come on," Liverpool defender Andrew Robertson said of Patricio.

I know how it can affect the lads and that's two (incidents) they've had this season. I hope to see him in front of the goals again soon because he's a fantastic goalkeeper.

It was only Liverpool's second win in its last eight league games of a title defense that has imploded in the second half of the season.

The Reds climbed two places to sixth, but was still five points behind fourth-placed Chelsea with nine games remaining in the race for Champions League qualification. Chelsea along with three other teams in the race for the top four Everton, West Ham and Tottenham all failed to win over the weekend.

Aided by the return of Jota to spark the attack and Fabinho in the holding midfield role, there are small signs of a revival for the Reds, who also beat Leipzig last midweek to reach the Champions League quarterfinals and have kept two straight clean sheets.

Britain's Prince Philip leaves hospital after treatment

LONDON (AP): Britain's Prince Philip left a London hospital on Tuesday after being treated for an infection and undergoing a heart procedure.

Philip, 99, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, had been hospitalized since being admitted to the private King Edward VII's Hospital in London on Feb. 16, where he was treated for an infection.

He was later transferred to a specialized cardiac care hospital, St. Bartholomew's, for a short stay, before returning to King Edward VII's.

Photographers standing outside the door of the private hospital captured his departure in the back of a black car. Buckingham Palace has not yet commented on the matter.



Philip's illness is not believed to be related to the coronavirus. Both Philip and Elizabeth received COVID-19 vaccinations in January and chose to publicize the matter to encourage others to also take the vaccine.

Philip, also known as the Duke of Edinburgh, retired in 2017 and rarely appears in public. Before his hospitalization, he had been isolating at

Windsor Castle, west of London, with the queen.

His illness comes as the royal family has been rocked by an interview with Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, and Prince Harry. In the explosive broadcast, Meghan, who is biracial, said the palace had failed to help her when she had suicidal thoughts and that an unidentified member of the royal family had raised "concerns" about

the color of her baby's skin when she was pregnant with her son, Archie.

The interview, conducted by Oprah Winfrey, divided people around the world. While many say the allegations demonstrate the need for change inside a palace that hasn't kept pace with the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements, others have criticized Harry and Meghan for dropping their bombshell while Philip was hospitalized.

The longest-serving royal consort in British history, Philip married the then-Princess Elizabeth in 1947. He and the queen have four children, eight grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Messi ties Xavi's record as Barcelona cuts Atl tico's lead

MADRID, MAR 16 (AP): Lionel Messi scored twice as he tied Xavi Hernandez's record of most appearances for Barcelona, putting them within four points of the Spanish league lead after beating last-placed Huesca 4-1.



For his 767th match, Messi was honored by Barcelona with a large image behind one of the goals showing him embracing Xavi as the players looked forward and pointed upward. The banner included the words "767 matches" and touching the sky.

It's incredible, Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman said. His impact on this team is enormous. It's amazing what he has done for this club up until now.

Antoine Griezmann and scar Mingueza also scored at the Camp Nou

Stadium as the Catalan club won its fourth straight league match to increase the pressure on leader Atl tico Madrid.

Atl tico, seeking its first league title since 2014, had a comfortable lead until recently, having won only two of its last six league games. It was held to 0-0 at Getafe on Saturday.

Diego Simeone's team will visit Barcelona in May.

We always said we wouldn't give up, Barcelona midfielder Pedri Gonz lez said.

We have a good squad that can keep fighting for this title and we have momentum on our side.

Barcelona, coming off elimination by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last 16, was in control from the start on Monday.

Messi scored in each half for his 130th double in the league. He opened the scoring with a shot into the top corner after a nifty one-touch to clear a defender just outside the area in the 13th minute, then closed the scoring with another shot

from outside the area in the 90th.

The Argentine playmaker has 21 league goals, three more than Atl tico's Luis Su rez at the top of the scoring list.

Barcelona kept pressing and nearly added to the lead when Jordi Alba hit the crossbar in the 33rd, and a couple of minutes later Griezmann added his goal with a well-struck curling shot into the top corner past Huesca goalkeeper lvaro Fernandez.

Huesca pulled one back through a penalty kick earned after a breakaway in first-half stoppage time, converted by forward Rafa Mir.

Then Mingueza scored his first goal for Barcelona with a header off a cross by Messi in the 53rd.

Huesca, which has won only one of its last six matches, stayed four points from safety.

Sweden is latest country to stop using AstraZeneca vaccine

BERLIN (AP): Sweden on Tuesday became the latest country to pause use of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine as European regulators review safety data following reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients.

The company and international regulators continue to say the vaccine is safe, however, and many countries elsewhere in the world are forging ahead with their vaccination campaigns.

The European Medicines Agency plans to meet Thursday to review experts' findings on the vaccine and decide whether action needs to be taken. The agency has so far said that the benefits of receiving the shot outweigh the risk of side effects.

The Swedish Public Health Agency said Tuesday that it would suspend use of the AstraZeneca vaccine pending the results of the EMA meeting. Germany, France, Italy and Spain were among countries that suspended use of the vaccine on Monday.

"The decision is a precautionary measure," Sweden's chief epidemiologist, Anders Tegnell, said in a statement.

Also Tuesday, the German government said it would postpone until after the EMA meeting a virtual summit of state governors called to review the country's vaccination efforts. The summit had been scheduled for Wednesday.

AstraZeneca's vaccine is one of three authorized for use on the European continent. But escalating concern about the shot has created another setback for the European Union's vaccination drive, which has been plagued by shortages and other hurdles and is lagging far behind the efforts in Britain and the U.S.

AstraZeneca said there is no evidence the vaccine carries an increased risk of blood clots. There have been 37 reports of blood clots among the more than 17 million people who have received the vaccine across the EU and Britain, the company said.

"This is much lower than would be expected to occur naturally in a general population of this size and is similar across other licensed COVID-19 vaccines," AstraZeneca said.

Much of Asia has shrugged off concerns about the AstraZeneca jab, with Thailand's prime minister receiving a shot Tuesday as the country started rolling out the vaccine.

"There are people who have concerns," Prayuth Chan-ocha said after his vaccination. "But we must believe doctors, believe in our medical professionals."

Thailand was the first country outside Europe to temporarily suspend use of the AstraZeneca vaccine. But health authorities later decided to go ahead with it, with Prayuth and members of his Cabinet receiving the first shots.

Indonesia suspended use of the vaccine on Monday, saying it was waiting for a full report from the World Health Organization regarding possible side effects.

Asia shares mostly higher after US stocks gain for fifth day

TOKYO, MAR 16 (AP): Asian shares mostly rose on Tuesday, cheered by a rally to all-time highs on Wall Street.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 0.6 per cent to 29,953.97. South Korea's Kospi added 0.3 per cent to 3,054.77.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 jumped 1.1 per cent to 6,846.20. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.5 per cent to 28,971.04, while the Shanghai Composite inched down nearly 0.1 per cent to 3,417.02.

The slower rollouts of the coronavirus vaccine in Asia, compared to the US and Europe, continues to put investors in the region in a cautionary mode, although South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and other nations have had fewer deaths.

Weighing on sentiment is news that the vaccine from AstraZeneca had had reports blood clots after usage, whether or not a side-effect,

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'Avengers: Endgame' was a monumental shift of superhero universe: Anthony Mackie

NEW DELHI, MAR 16 (PTI): Marvel star Anthony Mackie says the goal of the cast and crew of "The Falcon and The Winter Soldier" was "not to make a bad show" following the massive success of the 2019 tentpole feature "Avengers: Endgame". "The Falcon and The Winter Soldier" picks up after the events of "Endgame", where superheroes Sam Wilson/Falcon (Mackie) and Bucky Barnes/Winter Soldier (Sebastian Stan) team up in a global adventure that tests their abilities and patience.

Besides being a stellar example of fan service and record-breaking box office collections, "Endgame" also brought down the curtain on the third phase of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

The 42-year-old actor, who stars alongside Stan in the upcoming Disney Plus series, said the team was determined not to "mess it up".

"'Endgame' was a monumental shift of the superhero universe. The scope of that movie, the idea of that film was something larger than anyone had imagined. Our goal was not to mess it up.

"We didn't want to be the first cr**** Marvel project. Our job was to take the torch and not make a bad show," Mackie said during a global virtual press confer-

ence from Los Angeles on Sunday.

The spin-off also addresses the retirement of Steve Rogers/Captain America (Chris Evans). At the end of "Endgame", Evans' character hands over his shield to Sam and Mackie said Steve would be "very proud that our show does not s****".

"The next show has a problem because if it's bad, they are going to be the first cr**** Marvel project in 20 years," he quipped.

In response to which Stan asked about the next Disney Plus series up for release: "What are they saying about 'Loki'?"

Stan further said it was "scary and exciting" to reprise his character in a series format.

"We had established the character a certain way, certain things I was comfortable with tonally in the movies.

"We had to kind of going into 'What is he like now?', part of it was us honing our sense of humour, that really came into the tone of the series, his dynamic with Sam Wilson, and my own dynamic with Anthony and kind of just marrying the two," the 38-year-old actor said.

Both Sam and Bucky explore existential questions in the six-part series, directed by Kari Skogland and penned by Mal-

colm Spellman.

"We are really zooming in his quest of identity and accepting his past. There are these questions:

'Who am I now?', 'What do I



have to contribute?'

"That guy did this... What is going to be my legacy? If I even want that?" Stan said.

"These pieces are interesting rather than coming out of the gate and say that I've found all the answers," he added.

Asked how different it was develop-

ing a series instead of a feature film, director Skogland compared the movies to "snacks" and a show to a "meal".

A viewers can get involved with the characters in a way in six hours that they unable to in a film, particularly because the movies are often are high octane and immersed in some world-saving event, she said.

"So it is hard to go off on a little tangent on a character because the stakes are so high in one singular direction. In a series, we are able to meander a little bit, get inside the lives of our characters, and explore new twists," Skogland added.

Writer Spellman said they spent months working on the show, which explores important themes like racism, post-traumatic stress disorder, and socioeconomic problems.

"We didn't tackle one episode at a time, we spent months. Vertically storytelling is features. Features is compressed time and directed towards one world event. A series allows horizontal storytelling and the rhythm of a series is different," he explained.

The story in "The Falcon and The Winter Soldier" moves forward, dipping into the personal lives of the titular characters who are still reeling from the impact of Thanos' (Josh Brolin) finger snap in "Endgame" which wiped out half of the population of the world including some of the superheroes.

The series is loaded with some questions and surprises, including the introduction of new characters.

Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige said there are many surprises ahead and the previous events in the MCU have "led to this moment".

"Sometimes there's just the name, but often times we pull the lineage of their biography from the comics and then tweak it as is appropriate to the point of time we are introducing it in the MCU," the senior studio executive added.

"The Falcon and The Winter Soldier" is slated to be released on March 19 in English for subscribers of Disney+ Hotstar Premium and in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu for subscribers of Disney+ Hotstar VIP and Disney+ Hotstar Premium.

The series also stars Emily VanCamp, Daniel Bruhl, Wyatt Russell, and Don Cheadle, among others.

Beyonce becomes most awarded female artiste in Grammy history



LOS ANGELES, MAR 16 (PTI): With her four wins at 2021 Grammy Awards, pop diva Beyonce became the most awarded female artiste in the history of the ceremony.

At the 63rd edition of Grammys, organised by the Recording Academy, Beyonce was nominated in nine categories and won an award with Megan Thee Stallion for Savage (Remix) for best rap song as well as one for Black Parade for best R&B performance.

In the pre-telecast premiere ceremony, the pop star won the best music video award for Brown Skin Girl and another trophy for Savage.

With 28 Grammy wins in all, Beyonce broke a mark set by veteran singer Alison Krauss. She trails only classical conductor Sir George Solti, who still holds the all-time record with 31 Grammys.

As an artist, I believe it's my job and all of our jobs to reflect the times. And it's been such a difficult time. And so, I want to uplift, encourage, and celebrate all the beautiful Black queens and kings that continue to inspire me and inspire the whole world," the pop singer said after winning the R&B performance award for Black Parade".

She also congratulated her and music producer Jay Z's daughter Blue Ivy Carter, credited as a collaborator on the song, for the win.

"I know my daughter is watching. Blue, congratulations, she won a Grammy tonight. I'm so proud of you. And I'm so honored to be your Mommy," she added.

Blu Ivy, nine, became the second youngest act to win a Grammy in show's history. Leah Peasall was eight when The Peasall Sisters won album of the year at the 2002 ceremony for their appearance on the T Bone Burnett-produced O Brother, Where Art Thou? soundtrack.

Hosted by Trevor Noah of "The Daily Show", the 2021 Grammy Awards were held at the Los Angeles Convention Center with COVID-19 protocols in place.

Other venues were used for the reading of nominations and announcement of winners in various categories.



THE GRAMMY'S GAL! Best New Artist nominee Ingrid Andress toasted to music's biggest night with her signature Tequila Don Julio cocktail aptly named The Lady Like That in Los Angeles.

ARIES:

You are on the right track, baby, and your life is progressing the way that it should be! Let single-minded focus help you move the mountains (if any) that are standing in your way, Aries. Now is also a good time to check in with yourself about your intentions. What inspired you to embark upon this journey? Are you being true to yourself in each moment? If not, make a conscious effort to realign.

TAURUS:

It's that time of the year again! A celebration is close at hand, reuniting you and your favourite crew. Don't you love how the passage of time has only strengthened your bond? So take a moment, appreciate all the love that you are receiving right now, and send out a prayer of gratitude into the cosmos. For some of you, this may be a time of getting to know your co-workers on an informal level. PS: Given everything that's going on in the world, it's a good idea to check in on those you care about.

GEMINI:

Heaven and hell are not faraway concepts. They exist right here, right now, in this time and space dimension. It all comes down to the choices you make, Gemini! So today, instead of giving your attention to what went wrong and how you could have fixed it, visualise a clean slate in your mind's eye. Paint it with the colours and symbols that you resonate with. Add in a few words to the mix: 'Peace', 'love', 'harmony' and 'abundance' are some of the spells you could work with.

PS: Something tells you you are about to collaborate with the divine forces to call in a miracle.

CANCER:

The time has come once again to leave the past behind and start afresh. Don't be afraid to take that leap of faith, Cancer. Don't be afraid to leave the familiar behind. Stepping into the unknown is always intimidating. But you've got to start somewhere, right? Remember, not everybody is going to support your decision. They may not understand where you are coming from either, and that's okay. Trust your intuition and do what's right for you at this point.

LEO:

There's an inner knowing within you that they're the one and that you've got to do what it takes to make this relationship work. Yet, you struggle to let them in every now and then. Where do you think this fear is stemming from? Have you convinced yourself that you need to put on a facade or that you're unworthy of being loved? Be mindful of the past wounds that could be controlling you on a subconscious level as you let them go with grace. The time has come to open your heart again, and that time is now.

VIRGO:

They say it takes a lifetime to be an overnight success. As an earth sign, you resonate with this Universal truth on a deep level. Today, you are accepting where you are (which is a magical place), and realising that you are your only competition. So let go of the need to compare your journey with that of others as you continue to pursue your dreams with single-minded focus. What the cards

want you to know: your patience and dedication will pay off in the long run.

LIBRA:

At any given point of time, there are two voices in your head: the voice of reason and the voice of knowing. While the former tends to over analyse things to the point of exhaustion, the latter relies completely on intuition. You already know which one is guiding you in the right direction. Instead of complicating things further, trust your inner wisdom and take action without delay. You won't regret a thing—we promise!

SCORPIO:

There are times we feel weighed down by the burden of our responsibilities and question the amount of effort we're putting in. But, the cards are reminding you that there is no need to second guess yourself. You are where you need to be, and you are moving forward at the right pace. So continue to put in the work with the inner knowing that the harvest is going to be magnificent.

SAGITTARIUS:

You are a master manifestor, Sagittarius, and you are attracting all the right opportunities towards yourself. So trust the doorways that are opening up as you march forward. Unyielding faith in your own potential will help you call in miracles along the way. Abundance is also going to be a big theme for you in the coming week. But it's not just your profit margins that you're celebrating at this moment. You're grateful for both the tangible and the intangible blessings, as well as the connections that help raise your vibrations.

CAPRICORN:

The signs we receive from the Universe don't always make sense to us. Yet, we have to trust them fully and keep walking the chosen path. So let single-minded focus guide your actions, Capricorn, as you ask yourself the question, "How can I serve better?" As such, this is a turning point in your life. You are on the brink of a breakthrough, one that will bring you the recognition you deserve.

AQUARIUS:

Why limit yourself when you have the potential to go places and take your work places with you? It's all about expansion in the Aquarius HQ. You are actively looking at opportunities abroad or signing a contract with a coveted client who could be stationed away from you. Trust what's opening up, and trust yourself to perform the given role to your best capacity. Remember, the mysterious forces are working overtime to draw into your experience opportunities that are in alignment with your highest good.

PISCES:

Let's take a walk down memory lane, shall we? Think about yourself as a child—starry-eyed with hopes and dreams. You trusted the magic that surrounded you even though you have no real way of manifesting the given change in your reality. So, what's keeping you from trusting the same magic now? What's keeping you from believing in the impossible? The cards are warning you against disillusionment. Now is not the time to give up, Pisces. Remember, you have miles to go before you can sleep.

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