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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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**TUESDAY, 12 MAY
EVEN NUMBER
TAXIS AND TWO-
WHEELERS
ALLOWED TO
PLY TODAY**

Centre ignoring domestic migrant workers: Sena MP Raut

MUMBAI, MAY 11 (PTI): Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut on Monday targeted the Centre for not making sufficient transport facility for migrant labourers to return home in the coronavirus-enforced lockdown but arranging special flights to bring back Indians stranded abroad.

He took potshots, through a cartoon, at the BJP-led government at the Centre over its 'Vande Bharat' mission and wondered if domestic migrant workers are paying the price for staying back in the country.

The senior Sena leader in the evening tweeted the cartoon where migrant labourers walking on railway tracks look frustrated as they do not have state provided means to return home.

A person in the cartoon looking at an aircraft bringing back stranded Indians from abroad says, "Our only fault was that we continued working here in our country." 'Vande Bharat' mission is written on the plane. The mega mission is aimed at evacuating stranded Indians from abroad.

Shiv Sena head and chief minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray has been demanding arrangement of adequate number of special trains for safe return of migrant labourers to their home states.

Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena, in an editorial in its mouthpiece "Saamana" targeted the BJP over its candidates for the May 21 polls to the Legislative Council and said the opposition party does not have enough votes in the assembly to get its fourth candidate elected.

The party chose a candidate like Gopichand Padalkar for MLC polls, who in the Lok Sabha elections had appealed to people to not vote for the BJP (Padalkar was not with BJP at that time). It has not given tickets to its key leaders like Vinod Tawde, Pankaja Munde and Elknath Khadse," it said. The editorial expressed surprise over the candidate filed by the Congress, a constituent of the ruling coalition.

It was expected that an aggressive and well educated person like Sachin Sawant will get Congress nomination," it said. Sawant is Maharashtra Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson. The Congress has fielded Rajesh Rathod, a little known face.

34 Sikkimese begin return journey from Dehradun aboard two buses



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 MAY:**

Thirty-four Sikkimese left from Dehradun today aboard two buses and are expected to reach Siliguri on Wednesday.

The group, led by Gagan Chettri and Sa-

meer Rai, is making the journey at their own expense. They inform that they received help regarding passes from Nirmala Tamang of Boomtar who had contacted the COVID-19 Evacuation Nodal Officer.

"We tried to contact as many people as possible and we contacted over 100 Sikkimese students stranded here in Doon," they inform.

Some cancelled at the last moment after the passes were made and

majority of them did not want to leave, according to the group.

They have requested the government to sponsor their paid quarantine facility since they are making the journey at their own expense.

27 labourers stranded in South Sikkim leave for Bihar



NAMCHI, 11 MAY (IPR):

Following the orders of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India with regard to the transportation of stranded labourers, the South District administration has also started facilitating the transportation of these people to respective home state from today onwards.

As such, the first batch of twenty seven (27) stranded labourers

of Bihar who were staying in Kitam, South Sikkim since lockdown and were willing to go back to the native state were sent back home early this morning from Melli Checkpost.

As informed by District Collector South, Ragul K, the district administration has deployed two SNT buses to ferry the stranded labourers till Melli Checkpost following

the strict guidelines to contain the spread of corona virus. A detailed plan is being made after consulting with the concerned state so as to ensure that these people reach home safely. From Melli Check Post, the stranded labourers will proceed to Bihar in two other buses arranged from Siliguri. They will enter Bihar via Kishanganj and will be dropped at Khagaria district.

HSP condemns arrest of youth for FB post, demands release

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 MAY:**

Hamro Sikkim Party has strongly condemned the recent arrest of Lalit Pokhrel Sharma and called it an attempt to crush the right to free speech.

In a press release, HSP spokesperson, Biraj Adhikari has said that Mr Sharma is a youth activist who has been highlighting issues affecting people of Sikkim at large. He added that the party understands that these are trying times, and countless laws and regulations have been passed to this effect, but the party shall not tolerate any effort to crush the right to free speech in our democracy.

"In this instance, the social media reports and photographs uploaded by Shri Sharma should

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6739 Sikkimese register, 953 return

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 MAY:**

As of today, 953 Sikkimese have returned from outside the state since 05 May. As per the cumulative report of the government on the arrival of Returnees from Rangpo and Melli checkposts, 608 persons of North and East Districts have entered so far from Rangpo check-post and 345 persons of South and West Districts have entered from Melli check-post till today.

As per the report, 83 people [76 from Rangpo CP and 07 from Melli CP] returned to Sikkim

on the first day on 05 May, 80 [48 from Rangpo CP and 32 from Melli CP] on 06 May, 172 [79 from Rangpo CP and 93 from Melli CP] on 07 May, 161 [95 from Rangpo CP and 66 from Melli CP] on 08 May, 212 [137 from Rangpo CP and 75 from Melli CP] on 09 May, 42 from Rangpo CP on 10 May and 203 [131 from Rangpo CP and 72 from Melli CP] on 11 May.

So far, 6739 Sikkimese who are located in different parts of the country have registered themselves online.

A total of 1849 people have registered so

far from Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal. From Darjeeling, 1207 people have registered, which includes 120 students, 100 patients, 84 medical workers and 903 other people.

A total of 376 have registered from Jalpaiguri including 42 students, 28 patients, 25 medical workers and 281 other people and 266 people from Kalimpong have registered from Kalimpong district, which includes 39 students, 06 patients, 22 medical workers and 199 other people.

COVID-19 death toll rises to 2,206; cases climb to 67,152

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 (PTI):

The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 2,206 and the number of cases climbed to 67,152 in the country on Monday, registering an increase of 97 deaths and a record jump of 4,213 cases in the last 24 hours, according to the Union health ministry.

The number of active COVID-19 cases stood at 44,029. While 20,916

people have recovered, one patient has migrated, it said "Thus, around 31.15 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said.

A total 97 deaths were reported since Sunday morning, of which 53 were in Maharashtra, 21 in Gujarat, 14 in West Bengal, three from Tamil Nadu and one each from Andhra

Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Haryana and Rajasthan.

According to the health ministry data updated in the morning, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country is from Maharashtra at 22,171 followed by Gujarat at 8,194, Tamil Nadu at 7,204, Delhi at 6,923, Rajasthan at 3,814, Madhya Pradesh at 3,614 and Uttar Pradesh at 3,467.

Assam corona cases increase to 64

GUWAHATI, MAY 11 (PTI):

Two more persons have tested COVID-19 positive in Assam on Monday taking the total number of those affected in the north eastern state to 64, including 22 active cases, its Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. "2 persons are tested #COVID19+ in Guwahati. One originally hails from Morigaon, while other is from Guwahati itself," Sarma tweeted.

He said, Glad to share that 5 #COVID19 patients of Bongaigaon, who were admitted to MMCH (Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital) are discharged today. Total discharged patients are 39 now.

So far, 64 total cases in Assam, while active cases are 22, as one person who had tested positive

here had left for Bihar, he tweeted. Guwahati has reported seven positive cases so far, including a 16-year-old girl who was detected with the disease after she died on May 7. Another death due to the disease had been reported on April 10 at Silchar.

There was no report of any fresh coronavirus case in the state on Sunday. On Saturday three cases of coronavirus have been reported after an ambulance with two passengers and a driver travelled from Mumbai to Jorhat. The driver was allowed to leave Assam as he was asymptomatic and was stopped in Bihar, Sarma had said.

The minister in an earlier tweet during the day expressed concern over an altered/morphed tweet circulating in the

social media which put the coronavirus affected at a higher number number and asked the police to immediately file an FIR and investigate.

"I have noted with deep concern an altered/morphed screenshot of my tweet - where the numbers have been changed. Asking @assampolice to immediately file an FIR and investigate", he tweeted. The tweet appeared to have been posted by Sarma, who said his Twitter account has not been hacked.

Sarma inaugurated on Monday a 50-bed "state of the art full functional" ICU at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital. "Fitted with ventilators and oxygen equipment, it will bolster our preparedness in fight against #COVID-19", he said.

Can antibody testing deliver on promises to lift the lockdown?

LONDON, 10 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: At the Erasmus University Medical Centre in Rotterdam, Marion Koopmans and a team of scientists are going through the laborious process of verifying antibody tests for Covid-19. Over the last two months, dozens of prospective tests have hit the market, and with many governments wanting to feed the results of large-scale testing into their decisions whether to end lockdowns, biological tests have rarely carried such weight.

Most of the tests are enthusiastically marketed, boasting of their ability to accurately de-

tect whether someone has previously been infected with the Sars-CoV-2 virus. The painstaking job of proving whether the tests do what they say has fallen to a worldwide network of 12 independent centres, of which Koopmans's team is one. "There are now more than 200 tests being offered and that number is increasing by the day," she says. "Because people want to have testing up and running fast, there's this massive, almost aggressive marketing of test kits that promise a lot, but haven't gone through proper scrutiny."

NHS doctors use a diagnostic called a poly-

merase chain reaction (PCR) test - which picks up traces of the virus's genetic material in oral or nasal swabs - to confirm suspected cases of Covid-19. However, PCR tests only work when the virus is still present in the body.

The aim of using antibody tests is to conduct what is known as serosurveillance or a serosurvey. This means testing a sample of a population to get an indication of how prevalent Covid-19 infections have been, including those who have been asymptomatic or only suffered mild symptoms.

Antibody tests search for the Y-shaped proteins produced by the body in response to an infection that linger (in some cases permanently) in the blood for some time after recovery.

The hope is that policymakers will be able to obtain accurate models of how far the epidemic has spread, and what the real infection tallies are, a topic that has become increasingly heated in recent weeks. At the start of April, Bruce Aylward - the World Health Organization delegate assessing China's response to the outbreak - declared that there was no evi-

dence that current infection statistics are only the "tip of a grand iceberg" and suggested that the virus had only affected a very small proportion of communities. He cited a study done in Guangdong province where 320,000 swab samples were retested for Covid-19, with less than 0.5% turning out to be positive.

Jay Bhattacharya, a professor of medicine at Stanford University, California, also detected a relatively low prevalence for Covid-19 after conducting antibody testing on 3,330 people in Santa Clara, one of the first serosurveys to be done. Bhattacharya estimated true rates of exposure of up to 4%, but his work has since been criticised by other scientists on various grounds, not least after it emerged that his wife had recruited some of the study participants by emailing a local high school.

Other early serosurveys conducted in New York City and the German town of Gangel have found much higher prevalences ranging from 14-21%. However, these communities were particularly severely affected, so reservations have been expressed

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Culture Deptt donates Rs 1.71 lakh towards CM's Relief Fund



MANGAN, 11 MAY [IPR]: Department of Culture and Heritage contributed Rs 1,71,000 towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to support the Government's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Secretary, Culture and Heritage Department, Vidhya Subba, handed over the cheque

to the Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Gola] in the presence of Culture and Heritage Department Minister Samdup Lepcha.

The Chief Minister thanked everyone for their kind gesture and generous contribution towards chief minister's relief fund.

SPCC asks SKM to focus on COVID-19, not on countering allegations

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 11 MAY:

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee [SPCC] president, Bharat Basnet today said that the state government should spend its time and energy dealing with the COVID-19 situation instead of getting involved in the game of allegation and counter-allegation with opposition parties.

He was referring to the recent press conference of Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba and SKM spokespersons, CP Sharma and Jacob Khal-

ing condemning and answering issues raised by Sikkim Democratic Front president, Pawan Chamling in another press conference.

On the same, Mr Basnet said that it is the democratic and political dharma of opposition parties to point out the weakness of the government and the SKM government should take it positively.

Further, he criticized the government on failing to deliver justice to a nurse of Central Referral Hospital with

whom a BJP worker had misbehaved.

Mr Basnet has also expressed his dissatisfaction on some decisions taken in the recent cabinet meeting held in the state. Instead of spending money on statues, the government should use that money to fulfill basic needs of the people.

He mentioned that the people of Central Pandam need drinking water, not a statue. He further suggested that the SKM government should work on its promise of giving priority to

health and education.

Mr Basnet said that his party has placed many suggestions to the state government but they have not been taken seriously. At the same time, he placed a suggestion to the government to let shops open at 7 am instead of 9 am to decrease crowd in the market.

He further suggested that the government should also allow tea stalls to open by maintaining strict social distancing for the convenience of the people.

On COVID, say no to discrimination and embrace basic humanity

GANGTOK, 11 MAY (IPR):

The novel coronavirus pandemic still running wild across the globe has put to test many aspects of our moral codes since its outbreak. Afraid of the unknown, surfacing of confusion, anxiety, and fear among the public unfortunately leading to fueling of harmful stereotypes and social stigma associated with COVID-19 is par for the course. However, it is important to understand that encouraging social stigma during these trying times would only aggravate the situation.

Here's why. The WHO has distinctly said that stigmatization of any person directly or partially related to the virus can result in more severe health problems and difficulties controlling the COVID-19 outbreak. It is clearly evident that it can drive people to hide the

illness to avoid discrimination, prevent people from seeking health care immediately and mostly discourage them from adopting healthy behaviours.

How can we avoid this grave danger? Well, building trust in reliable health services and advice, showing empathy with those quarantined or affected, understanding the disease itself, and adopting effective, practical measures can help keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Communication about COVID-19 is critical in supporting people to take effective action to help combat the disease and to avoid fuelling fear and stigma. Misconceptions, rumours and misinformation only contribute to stigma and discrimination which hamper response efforts. As a responsible citizen, what

we can do is correct misconceptions while promoting the importance of prevention, lifesaving actions, early screening and treatment. Collective solidarity and cooperation are the basic need of the hour to prevent further transmission and alleviate the concerns of communities.

Our Himalayan State of Sikkim under the guidance and direction of the State government has exhibited great amount of patience and discipline throughout the nationwide lockdown to prevent the outbreak of the virus. Today Sikkim is the only COVID-free State in the country.

The State government has been tirelessly making efforts to tend to the woes of every Sikkimese during this pandemic, be it the economically affected communities or the ones stranded out-

side of the State owing to the lockdown. These times do not call for stigmatization of any kind towards any person but rather calls for solidarity and compassion backed up by proper information and facts in order to contribute to the efforts to fight against the pandemic.

Let us all join hands in strictly following the advisories issued by the State government for the well-being of the entire State, extend out support to the frontline warriors and keep practicing the safety norms of social distancing, washing hands on regular intervals and use masks for the safety of all instead of stimulating social stigma and isolating the quarantined fellow citizens.

Let the pandemic not rob us of our defining human virtues of rationality and empathy towards our own race and kind.

Contribution towards CM's Relief Fund



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 11 MAY:

Manager NTPC RAM-MAM-III, Upper Burtuk, Pramod Tamang, and his wife Bhawana Thapa Tamang called on the Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang at Sam-

man Bhawan this afternoon and handed over a cheque of Rs. 50,000 for the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

The Chief Minister thanked them for their kind gesture and generous contribution.

Let states decide on COVID-19 zoning: Baghel to PM

Raipur, May 11 (PTI): Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Monday said the Centre should allow state governments to decide on red, green, orange zones based on severity of the coronavirus situation in areas under their jurisdiction, officials said here. He made the request during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference meeting with chief ministers to discuss ways to strengthen the COVID-19 containment strategy as the third phase of lockdown comes to end on May 17, and sought a Rs 30,000-crore assistance for Chhattisgarh.

At present, the Centre decides on demarcation of areas as red, green, orange zones on the basis of coronavirus cases.

Baghel said state governments should be empowered to decide on which economic activities should be taken up amid the coronavirus-enforced lockdown, an official statement said.

"State governments should be empowered to decide on the operation of economic activities. The state should also be given responsibility to decide on clas-

sifying its areas into the three zones based on the spread of coronavirus, the statement quoted CM as saying during the virtual interaction.

Citing the financial crisis triggered by the lockdown, Baghel gave suggestions related to functioning of economic activities in states and providing employment to labourers and villagers, the statement said.

Economic activities have been largely affected in states due to the pandemic and lockdown that has resulted in loss of revenue. The situation has caused maximum trouble to economically weaker sections of the society," Baghel said.

Baghel requested the PM to allocate Rs 30,000 crore to the Congress-ruled state.

He also urged that the credit limit for his state this year should be relaxed to 6 per cent and its fiscal deficit should be kept at 5 per cent of the GSDP, the release said.

A big amount has been donated by the industrial units operating in the state to the Prime Minister CARES Fund to support the fight against coronavirus.

Delhi govt to give Rs 5000 in aid to construction workers



NEW DELHI, MAY 11 (PTI): The Delhi government decided on Monday to provide another financial assistance of Rs 5,000 to the construction workers in the wake of the extended coronavirus lockdown.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Construction Workers' Welfare Board, chaired by Labour Minister Go-

pal Rai. There are around 40,000 construction workers registered with the board. It has also decided to launch an online portal where construction workers can register themselves.

The government had also given Rs 5,000 recently to the construction workers due to the lockdown over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can antibody...

about whether they are representative of the entire population.

Acquiring accurate antibody data will also be vital for vaccine developers to verify that their products are working as intended during clinical trials. Results from serosurveys will eventually help tell us whether exposure to Covid-19 provides immunity, or if we will face seasonal waves of infections. And intriguingly, they may assist in determining the importance of pre-existing immunity. Scientists have already wondered whether the differences in fatalities between various countries is due to certain populations having had greater exposure to similar viruses in the past.

But to gather truly reliable information, the antibody tests used must be shown to have a high degree of accuracy, something that has so far proven to be easier said than done.

RIGOROUS VALIDATION

The majority of current antibody tests target the spike protein. This is the sole protein on the viral surface responsible for entry into the host cell, and so the main part of the virus that elicits antibody responses. However, the amino acid structure of the spike protein has a 60% overlap with the four seasonal coronaviruses that circulate in humans. Targeting the wrong site on this protein means an antibody test is unable to distinguish between people who have had Covid-19 and those who have had the common cold.

Scientists initially look at a test's specificity – the proportion of healthy people it correctly identifies as not having had the virus – using blood samples from healthy individuals collected before the start of the outbreak.

For a test to be usable, the specificity should be close to 100%. If, for example, 5% of the population have had Covid-19, a test with only 90% specificity would mistakenly assess 95 people in a sample of 1000 individuals as having had the virus, ie nearly 70% of the positive results would be false.

If a test's specificity is sufficient, scientists then begin to examine its sensitivity – the proportion of people it cor-

rectly identifies as having had Covid-19 in the past few months – steadily increasing the difficulty in the process. To thoroughly assess this, they use samples from people who had severe bouts of the disease, and then samples from those only mildly affected.

But such verifications take time, and with fears growing daily about the economic consequences of prolonging the lockdown, some countries have responded impatiently. The UK government would like the general public to conduct their own tests through finger-prick kits made available in their millions through Amazon or Boots in the coming weeks.

However, these plans stalled last month when 4m antibody tests purchased from China at a cost of £16m were found by Oxford University scientists to have both insufficient sensitivity and specificity for mass use. Up to 17.5m more tests have now been provisionally ordered from companies across the UK.

Last week two companies, Roche and Quotient, announced they have US and EU approval for an antibody test with 100% sensitivity and 99.8% specificity – however both these tests require a blood sample taken under medical supervision that must be analysed in a lab.

LESSONS FROM HIV

The lessons of past infectious disease outbreaks have shown us that rushing large-scale epidemiological projects is inadvisable. Such initiatives need to be properly planned in order to gather reliable data.

The only comparable serosurveillance studies of this scale have been for HIV in the 1980s. One pioneer of these serosurveys across the US was James Curran, now professor of epidemiology at Emory University. One of the lessons we can take from that experience, says Curran, is that serosurveys are most useful when targeted at specific populations and that those for Covid-19 should initially be aimed at priority groups such as healthcare workers, care-home residents or schoolchildren to gain information that can be used to

make decisions around public safety.

"It's very important to do systematic surveys to find out what portion of certain populations have been infected and haven't, and do that for the highest priority groups," he says. "The danger is you're going to have everyone running off to get tested, and then you'll have to determine retrospectively how representative they are."

Curran highlights the example of schoolchildren, who so far appear to be rarely affected by Covid-19. "We know that children are very efficient transmitters of the influenza virus even if they don't get sick," he says. "Is that true also for coronavirus? We need to know that before we reopen schools. They may not be at great risk of dying but they may be great at transmitting. So knowing the past history of the virus in children of various age groups will be really important."

WILL IT PROVE IMMUNITY?

One of the hopes for antibody testing is that it will indicate whether those who have been infected by the virus will have some level of immunity, enabling governments to hand out "immunity passports" that allow people to return to work.

But so far we do not know whether those who recover from Covid-19 actually have so-called neutralising antibodies, those that bind to a virus and block any future infection. Questions remain as to whether such antibodies stick around for life or wane over a period of months or years.

"Answering that question will be critical when it comes to the success of the vaccines," says Elitza Theel, clinical microbiology director at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. "Is there going to be one vaccine or is it going to be like the flu where you need to get boosted and revaccinated every year?"

Immunity to pathogens is a spectrum ranging from the varicella-zoster virus (which causes chicken pox) – against which antibodies confer life-long protection – to HIV, where infected individuals produce large amounts of non-neutralising antibodies that do nothing to clear the disease.

HSP condemns...

have been used to make things better for the people who will be using these quarantine facilities, as the photos were of the actual location and not a photo-shopped copy," the release states.

The party has reminded the people that absolute orders and censoring of actual reports which are contrary to the Governments narrative, have been the legacy of the previous government, and that is why the people of Sikkim voted in a new dispensation.

If the new government tries to use un-democratic measures to suppress the right to our free speech, the HSP shall come forth to oppose it, and therefore demands that Shri Sharma be released immediately and all charges against him be dropped, the party has said.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Road-side just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593737387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

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

GOC Black Cat Division calls on Governor

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAY:

Major General, Ram Chander Tiwari, GOC, Black Cat Division called on Governor, Ganga Prasad at Raj Bhavan today, as per a Raj Bhavan press release.

It was a courtesy call by Major General Tiwari wherein he apprised the Governor on the emerging situation due to COVID-19 crisis and the national lockdown. He outlined the precautionary measures and safety protocols being followed by Army across the officers and ranks which has ensured zero COVID-19 positive cases among the personnel of armed forces in the State.

He further mentioned about smooth coordination and collaboration of Army



with State's civil administration in dealing any eventuality and situation which has complimented the Armed Forces in their role to ensure safety and securi-

ty of international borders in the State.

Governor expressed his pleasure and congratulated Major General Tiwari for ensuring

Zero COVID-19 Cases among the Armed Forces in the State. He also expressed that synergy and coordination existing between Black Cat

Division and civil population of Sikkim Division should be strengthened and nurtured further in the interest of the State and the nation.

Governor's message on International Nurses Day

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAY:

On the occasion of International Nurses Day, Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings to the nursing community of Sikkim, a press communiqué from Raj Bhavan informs.

In his message the Governor has said, "Nurses form the core of our health services and regarded as one of the most humane profession. Though technology has transformed our healthcare system, the role of nursing has remained important than ever before. The healing touch of nurses and their selfless service play an important role in the well being

of patients and serves as the backbone of our healthcare systems. At a time when the entire humanity is in battle with COVID-19 pandemic, the role of nurses as frontline COVID-19 warriors has brought the entire nursing fraternity into the forefront and prominence. Let us all compliment the hard work and dedication of our nursing community acknowledging their selfless service to the society.

May the theme of International Nurses day 2020 'Nursing the world to health', with the focus on 'true value of nurses to the people of the world', gets amplified with your selfless service and dedication."

Tennis courts, golf courses to reopen in England



London, May 11 (AP): The British government says tennis courts and golf courses in England can reopen from Wednesday, although people can only play with members of their own household.

The sports venues were ordered to be closed in March when Britain imposed a national lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Gyms and swimming pools remain closed, although swimming in the sea or lakes will be allowed.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can set their own stance on tennis courts and golf courses, and their administra-

tions have already indicated a more stringent version of the lockdown will be maintained.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson used a speech on Sunday to lay out the outlines of a road map for easing the coronavirus pandemic restrictions while maintaining forms of social distancing.

Johnson said people can play sports but only with members of your own household.

Johnson gave no indication when professional sports can resume after competitions, including the Premier League, shut down in March.

As lockdowns are eased, coronavirus spread will raise new questions



MICHAEL SAFI

LONDON, 11 MAY

[THEGUARDIAN]: A sudden rise in infections leads to the temporary closure of nightclubs in Seoul. Lebanon tightens the curfew it had earlier relaxed after cases rebound over the weekend. German leaders wonder if they are easing too fast, as the country's parks fill up and its infection rate appears to accelerate.

Welcome to the next phase of the coronavirus pandemic. Curves are being flattened in many countries. The harsh lockdowns of the past few months, implemented to prevent healthcare systems from melting down, are gradually being rolled back. The economic and social toll of mass isolation is growing every day.

More lenient regimes, including in France, the UK and Spain, have been greeted with relief. But the basic problem is still with us. An infectious virus is loose in our communities. The more we mix, the more it will spread.

Scientists are not surprised by the bumps in cases in China, Iran and other places that have relaxed their lockdowns in past weeks. "It's worrying, but it is to be expected," said Ian Jones, a professor of virology at the University of Reading. "It's an inevitable consequence of re-allowing social mixing."

"It's part of the trade off," said Ian Mackay, a virologist at the University of Queensland. "There will be lots of people who are asymptomatic cases or mildly ill people that we don't detect. So if people come together again, we're going to see these things happen."

Without a vaccine, epidemiologists predict the virus will smoulder for the next few months and possibly years, breaking out as spot-fires

around gatherings – such as a French funeral being blamed for a new outbreak, or in meat-packing plants in Germany and the US where cases surged last week. Restrictions on our lives are likely to be eased and tightened as new infections ebb and flow.

"The new phase will be living with Covid," said Jones. "I don't think the idea that you're going to get complete clearance [of the virus] is realistic. It's going to be there at a level, and the question is at what level. What community transfer rates are acceptable to society? And what mitigation strategies can you put in place to make these rates as low as possible?"

Among those strategies, he says, will need to be widespread and regular testing, the adoption of equipment such as masks as a standard accessory for leaving the home, and "as much social distancing as one can practically do".

If the first phase was about protecting lives and healthcare systems, the next will present more thorny questions. "We want to get people back to work, but there will be a cost," Mackay said. "And ultimately that cost is deaths, because we know as cases go up, so do deaths."

These might be the first weeks of the world's largest ever public health trial. "We are all watching and learning from each other's progress," Mackay said. "There's really a playbook being written in every country that we're learning from. It's one giant experiment, made up of lots of little experiments in every country, in every jurisdiction."

Over time, the list of safer activities is likely to grow. Ideally, societies will get better at managing the risk of things that are unsafe but deemed

necessary.

The past weekend has already given some clues: nightclubs, for example, where people are in close proximity and their inhibitions are lowered by alcohol, seem like an obvious site for mass transmission of disease. Time may prove otherwise. Some societies may decide the risk is worth it.

Countries that have managed to squash their curve, such as Australia and New Zealand, will potentially provide the most controlled environments and therefore the richest testing grounds, Mackay said.

"In Australia, for example, we are going to see if the people going to the shops this weekend will lead to a rise in cases, and that will inform the entire world."

Some of the difficulties ahead are already coming into focus. In the UK, there is widespread confusion over what exactly has been allowed. Germany, which was spared the worst ravages of the virus, is struggling with how to convince its citizens to adhere to the ongoing restrictions.

"It's not over until it's over," the president of South Korea, Moon Jae-in, reminded his country over the weekend, after announcing the new burst in cases.

In countries without a social safety net, the imperative to restart economic life will only grow more intense, and may pressure governments to eventually ditch the experiment altogether.

The beginning of the climb out of this pandemic has started in many places, but is likely to be long. "It continues indefinitely until the rate of transfer is so small that the virus will naturally extinguish, or until it can be pushed down by a vaccine," Jones said.

Training of elite athletes will resume once lockdown ends: Rijiju

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

(PTI): Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said training of elite athletes will resume after the lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic is lifted, urging sportspersons and stakeholders to be patient.

Reiterating a position he first took on May 3, Rijiju said health of the athletes is his top priority. The lockdown is set to end on May 17 after rising cases forced two extensions.

"Once the lockdown is lifted, we will resume the training of our elite athletes followed by other SAI Training Centres in phased manner. I appeal sportspersons and all stakeholders not to rush because health and safety is our top priority presently," he tweeted.

The national camps at Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centres have been shut since mid-March to contain the virus, which has infected over 65,000 people and caused more than 2,000 deaths in India.

Rijiju, on May 3, had stated that camps for all



athletes will resume by May end. He said at first, training will be restarted for the Olympic-bound and those who are close to gaining qualification.

"I thought of starting training of athletes at SAI centres from May 3 (the earlier stated end for the lockdown). Now we will have to do that in a phased manner by the end of this month.

"Sports events don't get any relaxations under Disaster Management Act. We don't fall under the category of essential services," he had stated.

Track and field athletes have been requesting the ministry to allow them to train within the campuses of the SAI centres they are based at but haven't got the nod so far.

The ministry is also deliberating on ways to restart training in contact sports such as boxing and wrestling.

Both cannot do without sparring, which might be considered a health risk at a time when even a touch of the hand is being seen as potentially infection-causing.

Karnataka, Kerala discuss steps on containing COVID-19

BENGALURU, MAY 11 (PTI):

Karnataka and Kerala on Monday discussed the measures taken to contain coronavirus and stressed on sharing information to control the disease besides quality treatment for patients.

Through video conference, Karnataka Medical Education Minister D K Sudhakar spoke to the Kerala Health Minister K K Shailaja and discussed the steps adopted for tracing, testing and treatment of the disease, the outcome, and measures to be taken to address the challenges following easing of lockdown restrictions, an official

release said. They discussed control and treatment practices adopted to fight COVID-19 and shared details in their 50-minute conversation.

The two ministers agreed to have regular dialogue to exchange information on disease control and quality treatment for patients.

Explaining the steps taken for better management of COVID-19, Shailaja said that soon after students returned from Wuhan, Kerala had taken proper precautions to prevent spread of the virus.

The press note quoted Shailaja as saying that Kerala is equipped

with health facilities at Taluk level and it became easier for the state to quarantine the infected and treat them at various levels.

This has reduced the mortality rate in Kerala, she added.

Shailaja said 'Asha' workers have been playing a key role in breaking the chain of infection.

In addition to it, the police are taking action to prevent people from coming in contact with infected people.

She appreciated the measures taken by Karnataka and emphasised on its assistance too, the release said.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

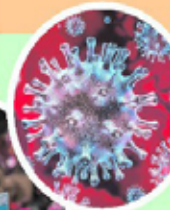
- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

Treatment

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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



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-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
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WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
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Disaster Mitigation: Informed Response Better Than Jerking Knees

It is that time of the year again

The pre-monsoon rains have opened strong and have already started scratching at the hill sides, the lockdown notwithstanding. The monsoon is scheduled to be normal to above normal this year and should officially debut in Sikkim by the World Environment Day on 05 June next month. And, if the nor'wester showers coursing through the State are any indication of what the monsoon months will bring, Sikkim would be well advised to do much more by way of preparedness than the occasional preparedness meetings.

The State, in fact the entire region, needs no reminding of how fragile its hills are. The slopes here have a long history of slips and slides and if anyone bothered to spend time with some of the village elders, they could also learn of how settlements came to be settled along safer zones and more stable locations. That traditional knowledge was honed over generations of living here, but now "development" has been added to this organic lifestyle mix. Roads, projects, constructions and expansions are disruptors too powerful for even rural pragmatism to manage, hence the need for more informed preparedness and quicker, more organized responses.

Unfortunately for the cause of disaster management awareness, the monsoon-opening landslips and road-blocks have bypassed Gangtok thus far in their severity if one were to ignore the sewage sinks and overflowing storm drains which mostly manifest after dark and are invariably cleared by the Gangtok Beautifiers before Gangtok wakes up. That, however, cannot be said for the districts, their roads and their habitations. The reason this is referred to as 'unfortunate' for disaster management awareness is because while areas beyond Gangtok are the ones which require better warning systems, more effective responses and more elaborate community-based training to minimize the destruction caused by monsoon calamities, the people who can influence decisions rarely see beyond Gangtok. Even the media has not effectively highlighted the problem of areas beyond the capital, in as much as rain-fed disruptions are concerned. To understand how locational reactions work, take the case of two incidents. The 1997 landslides in Gangtok were unfortunate and the scale unprecedented. They rightfully led to the creation of a Civil Defence programme, formalization of new building bylaws and the no construction during monsoons rule. In the year 2004, Gyalshing and areas around Namchi were ravaged by severe landslides, mud-slips and flashfloods. And two years back, there was the Mantam hillside collapse, which, even though not monsoon-induced, was more evidence of the fragility of the slopes here and the need to save the hills. One still does not know what really caused it, or what policy course-corrections that incident has resulted in. Ditto for the flashfloods and glacial lakes-threat reported from North Sikkim over the recent years. In all these cases, the administration responded to a natural calamity, carried out rescue and relief operations, but, as mentioned, one is yet to hear of any policy decisions which could effectively mitigate such devastations in the future.

Every time a landslide occurs or a road-widening work collapses, as is commonly reported from West Sikkim, one hears complaints against unplanned constructions, irresponsible drainage and unsafe worksites. There is nothing new in these observations. Still, after all these years, the districts remain knee-jerk in their response to the annual monsoons.

All this, despite the fact that just about everybody, everywhere, is participating in disaster risk management committee meetings all over Sikkim, and yet when the first chance arrives to display their training and commitment, they are found wanting. The problem is neither with the training nor with the individuals, it is with motivation. Sikkim is speaking of disaster risk management committees not because the people demanded it or even knew of it, these are being set up only because a central directive ordered it and UNDP funds it. That said, Sikkim could genuinely use some scientific and organized response to natural calamities. Instead of just making a token presence in such committees, the members should realize that every village in the State needs to work out a coherent and rehearsed response to calamities and set up a working advance warning system. If Sikkim continues to drag its feet, the State will continue paying the price for it every year.

As sport resumes after lockdown, it's time to level the playing field for women and girls

SARAH LEBERMAN, NICOLE LAVOI & SALLY SHAW
theconversation.com

Sports representatives are calling on New Zealand's government not to return to normal when the nation begins to ease restrictions from Thursday this week. Instead, they argue, it is time to create a more even playing field by addressing chronic underfunding for women's sports.

The Epidemic Response Committee focused on sports in one of its hearings last week and several sporting bodies argued that women's sports will struggle to rebuild without substantial targeted financial support.

Netball NZ chief executive Jennie Wylie told the committee her sport has more than 350,000 players, many from under-privileged groups, and the recovery period presents an chance to prioritise equal access and support.

"Getting sports up and running as soon as it's safe will play a vital role in New Zealand's economic and social recovery. Because sport is rebuilding in so many capacities, the time is right to create equality [...] and New Zealanders should not squander the change to address the systemic inequities across sport."

Our research focus is on sport management and leadership, and on equity in sports and active recreation for girls and women. We have welcomed the momentum for achieving gender equity in sports before the coronavirus pandemic, and believe women should now be at the forefront of planning as we rebuild.

DESIGNING SPORT FOR EQUITY

Before the pandemic, corporate sponsorship for women's sport increased by 47% between 2013 and 2017, and investment in women's professional leagues increased girls' participation at the grassroots level.

Viewership for women's sports was rising around the globe, including a 64% rise in TV ratings for the 2019 Women's National Basketball Association season and a record 1.12 billion viewers for the women's soccer World Cup final.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the landscape, and international sports organisations

are also concerned about its impact on women's sport.

But as sports resume, this offers a chance for decision makers to change dominant narratives and structures away from the male-dominated model. Those working in women's sports have always done the hard work — built, marketed and run our sports teams and programs - with limited funding and resources.

Data indicate more women and people with diverse backgrounds on boards and in leadership positions contribute to better decisions and outcomes on all measures.

Diversity of thought is critical to rebuilding



sports. It requires different models of collective leadership and a rethink of success going beyond winning and profit margins.

THERE'S MORE TO SPORT THAN COMING FIRST

A sports management model developed in 2017 includes social, cultural and environmental benefits of sports – such as working with under-served communities to improve team and leadership skills – alongside a traditional focus on investment return. It also adds a focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe girls and women have a basic human right to physical activity and the UN's de-

velopment goals provide a framework for equity in sport. They clearly state that social inclusion means gender equality, human rights and the reduction of inequalities.

Sport can play an important role in sustainable development and contribute to peace because it promotes tolerance and respect and the empowerment of women and young people.

LESSONS FROM AND FOR CHRISTCHURCH

To achieve long-term sustainable and ethical outcomes for sports organisations, structural change designed for equity is critical, from the grassroots to the top level. There are some examples of progress, where girls and women are chal-

lenging the norms of traditionally masculine sports such as skate boarding.

We also need to explore alternative funding models to minimise reliance on broadcasting revenue and gambling returns. COVID-19 lockdown has shown us that physical activity is critical to health and well-being. It should be funded by government and commercial partners committed to equity.

As the coronavirus was spreading globally, in March 2020, UN Women joined with the International Olympic Committee to launch the Sports for Generation Equality Initiative to accelerate progress on making gender equality a reality.

Emerging from a pandemic should not be a return to the status quo, and this includes access to participation and competition in sports and physical activity. When sport resumes, we must regain momentum to truly advance gender equity for all girls and women. To do anything else wastes an unprecedented opportunity.

[Sarah Leberman is Professor of Leadership, Massey University; Nicole LaVoi is Senior Lecturer of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Physical Activity, University of Minnesota; Sally Shaw is Associate Professor, University of Otago]

Before coronavirus, China was falsely blamed for spreading smallpox. Racism played a role then, too

ARI LARISSA HEINRICH
theconversation.com

Spitting. Name-calling. Physical assaults. The outbreak of COVID-19 has coincided with a dramatic escalation in racially motivated incidents towards people of Asian descent around the world.

US President Donald Trump has fuelled these attacks with his strident criticisms of China's handling of the pandemic, unsubstantiated claims the virus originated in a lab in Wuhan and constant references to COVID-19 as "the Chinese virus".

While this rhetoric has certainly been on the rise since the pandemic began, anti-Asian sentiment of this sort is nothing new. And it springs at least partly from deeply entrenched stereotypes about Chinese cultural practices, a topic I have researched extensively.

Some of these stereotypes have historically characterised China as a place rife with sickness and Chinese people as inherently vulnerable to disease.

In fact, the country itself used to be referred to as the "Sick Man of Asia", a derogatory phrase that gained momentum in the late 19th century following China's losses in the Opium Wars. (The phrase was used both literally to describe poor health and figuratively to describe poor governance.)

But as is so often the case, these stereotypes derive from misconceptions and misinformation. And in this case, the source of misinformation can be traced with remarkable precision to the politically charged observations of western visitors to China dating back to the late 1700s.

Recognising how these stereotypes evolved can help us understand – and hopefully defuse – some of the anti-Chinese vitriol being espoused around COVID-19 today.

HOW RUMOURS START: THE CASE OF SMALLPOX

Unfortunately, scapegoats are

common when epidemics break out. Take the plague, for example, which in medieval Europe was blamed on Jewish communities accused of spreading the disease by poisoning wells.

And for a long time, many Europeans and Americans believed China was the "cradle of smallpox", an idea that circulated widely in numerous journals, travelogues and official reports from the early 1800s onwards.

In 1838, for instance, the travel writer Charles Toogood Downing wrote of smallpox, "this dreadful malady is supposed to have originated among the Chinese, and to have spread westward in a gradual manner among the natives of Western Asia, until it became as prevalent with the people of Europe, as among those of the Centre Kingdom."

Downing got his information from a single, unreliable source: a late 18th century essay by the French Jesuit missionary, Pierre Martial Cibot.

Cibot composed the essay, "De la petite vérole" ("On Smallpox"), in Beijing in the late 1760s, but it didn't reach Paris until around 1772. The essay begins with the punchy proclamation that smallpox had existed in China for three millennia, and claims to summarise what Cibot describes as "many very knowledgeable and very boring [Chinese] essays on the origin and the cause of smallpox."

Cibot was disdainful of Chinese medicine, as well, dismissing the "pathetic stupidity" and "lunacy and inconsistency" of traditional treatments.

CHECKING THE FACTS

Yet, contrary to Cibot's claims, the mechanisms put in place to respond to smallpox by the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty were actually very advanced.

As early as 1622, imperial Manchu bannermen had implemented a precursor to our modern-day coronavirus tracing apps, with squad leaders required to report anyone showing symptoms of smallpox.

Safety guidelines were established to prevent the spread of smallpox when offers of tribute were brought from visiting dignitaries and when arranging audiences with the emperor. Military officers who had acquired immunity to smallpox were chosen to deploy to regions where the disease was active.

Both the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors were inoculated against smallpox, as were other members of the imperial retinue.

In fact, inoculation specialists held official government posts, and new specialists were actively recruited. In 1739, Qianlong even sponsored the compilation of a medical encyclopedia with detailed chapters on smallpox prophylaxis – the very same book on which Cibot later claimed to base much of his essay.

In all these ways, Chinese responses to smallpox were light years ahead of those in France during the same period.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FAKE NEWS

Given China's obvious achievements in dealing with smallpox, why then would Cibot portray the situation so harshly? As always, it comes down to cultural differences and politics.

When Cibot left for Beijing in 1758, inoculation had become the subject of heated debate between the French church and Enlightenment thinkers.

The debate centred on the fact that inoculation (as opposed to the practice of vaccination, which came later) involved deliberately infecting people with small amounts of the disease to stimulate an immune response. So while inoculation sometimes caused smallpox and death, often it successfully protected the patient from a more serious case.

Intellectuals like Voltaire favoured legalising inoculation in France, but the church interpreted it as interfering with divine will. The controversy

ended abruptly in 1774 when Louis XVI witnessed Louis XV's gruesome death from smallpox and had himself inoculated.

In Cibot's day, China also occupied a powerful position with regard to trade and culture. Many Europeans viewed China not just as a desirable trading partner, but as a source of medical knowledge and even a model of government.

So in composing his essay, Cibot faced a serious dilemma: If he represented Chinese responses to the disease too sympathetically, he risked contradicting the church and lending ammunition to Enlightenment thinkers who wanted to study Chinese inoculation methods.

Cibot found a way out by arguing the longtime presence of smallpox in China proved that inoculation had failed. According to Cibot, China was not a source of cures, but a source of disease – and not worth emulating.

Unfortunately, Cibot's text went on to become one of the most-cited western sources on Chinese smallpox in the 19th and 20th centuries, appearing in numerous bibliographies. It also directly contributed to the creation of the stereotype that China was the "Sick Man of Asia".

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

More than 200 years later, the political tensions between China and the west over COVID-19 and the disinformation being spread online about the origins of the virus feel uncannily familiar.

The old French adage that "the more things change, the more they stay the same" seems, well, more true than ever.

Yet the old adage doesn't teach us to be passive. If the story of smallpox reveals nothing else, it's that rhetoric remains powerful across history, its afterlife having consequences for real people and real lives.

[the writer is Professor of Chinese Literature and Media, Australian National University]

ITBP escorts over 900 essential supply trucks in Ladakh

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 (PTI):

Over 900 trucks carrying essential goods and fuel supplies have been escorted by the ITBP from the icy heights of Zojila to Kargil in the Union Territory of Ladakh over the last three weeks, officials said on Monday.

They said the paramilitary force has deployed a special team of its troops from the north-west frontier to ensure that the convoys move smoothly, backed by its logistical, security and medical support, for the 100 km journey on the Srinagar-Leh national highway.

"The force has escorted over 900 supply trucks over the last three weeks from Zojila to Kargil," ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has been assigned the vital



responsibility to escort goods trucks carrying essential supplies and fuel tankers during the ongoing lockdown for residents in far-flung areas of Ladakh, he said.

The convoys moved through Gumri, Meena

Marg and Dras via Fotu La pass and Namika La pass in extreme cold climatic conditions with temperatures dipping up to minus 10 degree Celsius, another official said.

The force ensured that issues like breakdown of

the vehicles and supply of eatables and medicines is made to the truck drivers and their help ers, he said.

They were also screened for body temperature and other coronavirus relate symptoms at various checkpoints,

the official said. The north-west frontier of the force is headquartered in Leh and it guards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in this area as part of its primary task to guard the entire 3,488 km long front.

BSF jawan shoots colleague, kills self in Manipur

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 (PTI): A Border Security Force jawan killed himself after firing a shot at a colleague at a camp in Manipur's Churachandpur district on Monday, officials said.

The injured colleague, a constable-rank jawan, has been admitted to a hospital, they said.

The officials said the incident took place

at around 10 AM when a BSF head constable posted at the subsidiary training centre (STC) of the border guarding force in the district, allegedly fired a gunshot from his service rifle at his junior, the constable-rank jawan.

The head constable later turned the gun on himself and died while the constable he fired

at is admitted to a hospital, a senior official said.

They added that the troops were part of the security setup of the director of the STC who is an Inspector General rank officer.

The BSF is deployed in the state as part of its task to guard the India-Bangladesh international border.

338 containment zones in Kolkata



KOLKATA, MAY 11 (PTI): The Kolkata Police on Monday put up on its twitter account the list of 338 containment zones in the city.

The list was made available to the police by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC).

West Bengal at present has four red zones including the city, neighbouring Howrah, North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur districts.

There are 11 districts in the orange zone

and eight in green zone. According to the list of district-wise containment zones put by the Egiye Bangla website of the West Bengal government, Howrah has 76 such areas, while North Parganas has 92.

In Hooghly, there are 23 containment zones while in Purba Medinipur there are three such zones.

The death toll from COVID-19 climbed to 113 in West Bengal on Sunday with 14 more people succumbing to the infec-

tion in the last 24 hours.

Of the 14 deaths, Kolkata alone accounted for 10 while two each were from North 24 Parganas and Howrah districts.

The highest number of fresh COVID-19 cases was reported in Hooghly district (47) while 18 people from Kolkata tested positive for novel coronavirus.

A total of 1,939 COVID-19 cases have been reported in West Bengal so far, of which 1,337 are active.

People worried more about health of loved ones: Study



PANAJI, MAY 11 (PTI): Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, most of the people are more concerned about the health of their near and dear ones than their own well-being, says a study conducted by a leading business school in Goa.

People are now more conscious about any bodily changes, and even mild cold, cough and sneezing, it says.

The study, on public's reaction towards COVID-19 outbreak by gauging their psychological response in terms of anxiety and their coping behaviour, was conducted by the Goa Institute of Management's Dr Divya Singhal and Prof Padhmanabhan Vijayaraghavan.

It took into account inputs from 231 respondents residing in various parts of the country.

"Nearly 82.25 per cent of the respondents were more worried about the health of their

loved ones than their own well-being," Singhal said. "Majority of the respondents have become conscious of any bodily changes, sensations, a mild cold, cough, sneezing and experience concern, and attribute those changes to the symptoms of COVID-19," she said.

Besides, more than 50 per cent of the respondents said their social media usage has gone up as well as their time spent on watching movies and shows through online medium, the official said.

The respondents agreed that their technology usage to connect with friends and relatives has gone up, she said.

The study also indicated that a large group of respondents found it "depressing" to read forwarded messages on the deadly disease.

"An overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed that they discourage unverified

forwarded messages about COVID-19 on social media," says the study.

It also found that 41 per cent of the respondents were not doing any physical activity, like yoga, during the lockdown period, while another 19 per cent were not sure about engaging themselves in physical activities. Besides, 57 per cent of the respondents were not engaged in any mind-calming practices like meditation, and 18 per cent were not sure about taking up meditative practices, the study said.

The respondents included 145 men and 86 women, aged 18 and above, with nearly 60 per cent of them residing in non-metro cities and rest from metros.

About 47.62 per cent of the respondents were employed in private or government sectors, and the remaining included students, retired persons and homemakers.

Pak could play more Tests in tour of England if it goes ahead

KARACHI, MAY 11 (PTI): Pakistan might play more Test matches during their tour of England if it goes ahead as scheduled in July after the West Indies pulled out of an assignment there in June owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pakistan Cricket Board and the England and Wales Cricket Board officials are due to have a video conference on May 18 to discuss how they should proceed with the tour given the situation because of the pandemic.

"At present we have to play three Tests and three T20 internationals but the number of Tests could be increased and the tour could start a bit early in July," a PCB source said.

The source said that the ECB could offer to organise a four or five Test series against Pakistan if the West Indies tour didn't go ahead.

Issues that are likely to be discussed in the May 18 meet are a quarantine period for Pakistani players when they arrive in England in July and limiting the venues for the matches and playing before empty stadiums. PCB CEO Wasim Khan confirmed the video conference but said so far, the ECB has not spoken to them on increasing the number of matches on the tour which is scheduled between July and September.

"Things will be clear after the meeting but whatever decision we

take we will consult our captains and head coaches before giving any confirmation," Khan said.

The PCB has so far kept mum on the chances of the series taking place in England because of the COVID-19 situation.

But with the British government due to announce measures to ease the lockdown in the country, it appears Pakistan could be touring on schedule. Some former players have, however, asked the PCB to tread on the side of caution.

"If the West Indies have decided to postpone their series in June because of safety reasons and because of the situation then the PCB should also be very careful before taking up any offer from the ECB," a former captain said.

The West Indies Cricket Board said its players have to be convinced of their safety for it to commit to the assignment, which "is not possible in June."

"...we will continue our discussions with the ECB and other International Boards on trying to find new dates," it said in a recent press release.

"We will only travel to England to play the series if our players can be assured that it is safe to do so," it added.

Pakistan is also scheduled to play an ODI series against Ireland while in UK but that series could be rescheduled and also be held in England.

Spanish league has 5 positive tests, hopes to resume June 12

MADRID, MAY 11 (AP): The Spanish league is not changing its plan to resume competing after five players from clubs in the first and second divisions tested positive for COVID-19, with president Javier Tebas saying he hopes it can restart on June 12.

Tebas said if everything continues to go according to plan in Spain, he expects the league to resume a month from now - depending on decisions by local authorities regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

We would like to start on June 12, but it will depend on a lot of things, Tebas said in an interview late Sunday with league broadcaster Movistar.

"If we all continue to comply with the health safety mea-

sures, I don't think we will have any problems.

The league confirmed the positive tests on Sunday but said it was not going to alter the practice protocol that got underway last week. Players from most clubs began individual training sessions on Friday after nearly two months of confinement because of the pandemic.

The league said it will continue to apply the back-to-training protocol that was approved by government authorities to guarantee the maximum safety of all players, coaches and club employees.

Tebas noted the very low number of positive cases and said it will be virtually impossible for contagion to happen

during games because everyone involved will have been tested ahead of time.

The matches are where there will be less risk, Tebas said.

The five players who tested positive will remain sidelined until they fully recover. They are all without symptoms and recovering from the disease, according to the league. They will be allowed to resume practicing after testing negative in two consecutive tests.

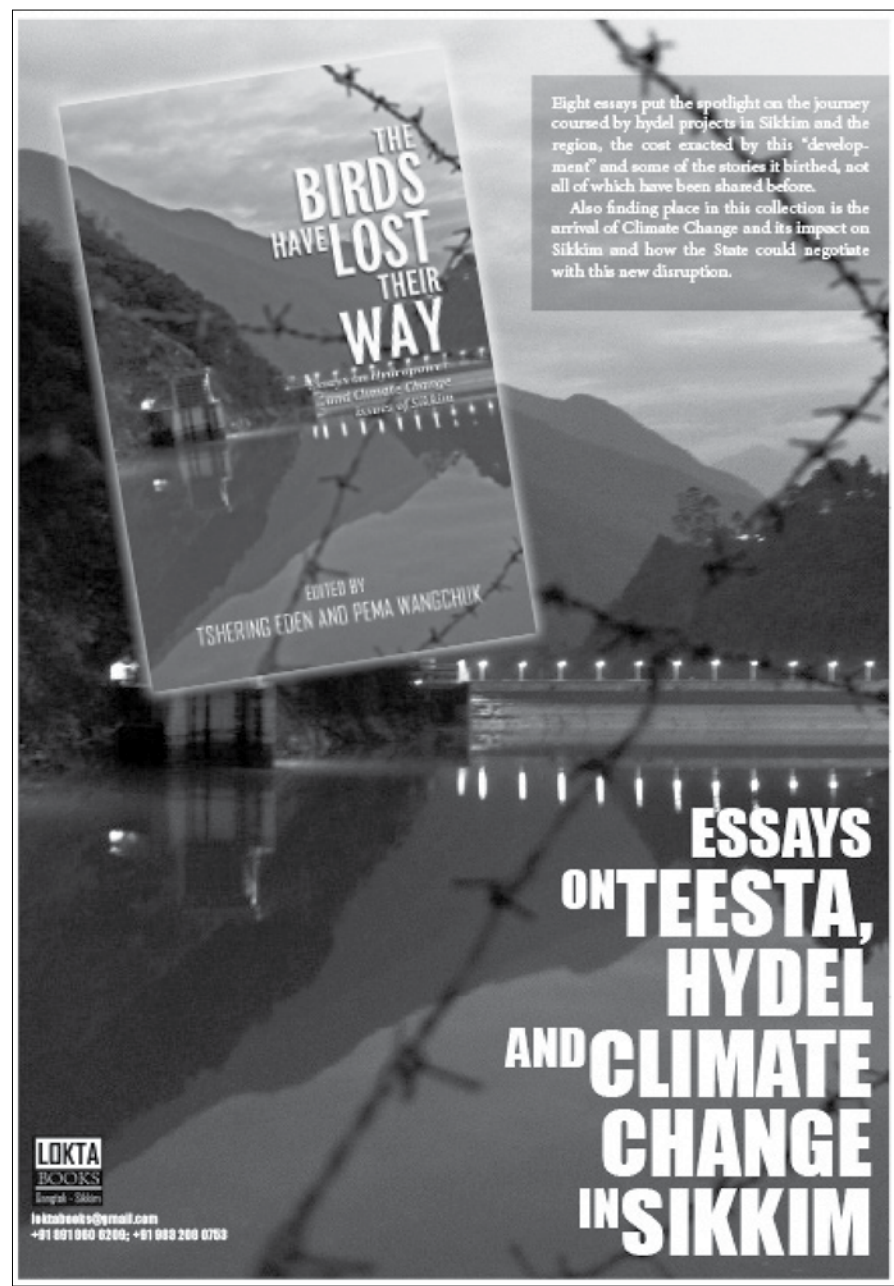
All other players tested negative, and the league said only three staff members of clubs tested positive after nearly 2,500 total tests were conducted.

This is good news for the football industry and for Span-

ish society as well," Tebas said, adding the league had expected about 30 positive tests. Players, coaches and club employees involved in the training sessions are being tested daily.

The league did not name the players who tested positive. It also didn't disclose their clubs, but Real Betis goalkeeper Joel Robles later confirmed he was among those with COVID-19. Spanish media said two other players were from first-division clubs, including Atl tico Madrid defender Renan Lodi.

Atl tico on Saturday posted a message on an official club social media channel with a picture of the Brazilian and the message: Renan Lodi says hello from his home.



Bruno Guimarães was ready to quit football. Now he is a Brazil player

Josué Seixas

Brasilia, 11 May [theGuardian]: When Bruno Guimarães was considering a move to Europe, he was not short of options. Benfica, Arsenal and Atlético Madrid were keen, but Lyon had a card up their sleeve: Juninho Pernambucano. Before moving to France, where he won seven Ligue 1 titles as a player, Juninho had lifted two Brazilian championships and a Copa Libertadores with Vasco Da Gama. The Guimarães family are fanatical Vasco supporter so, when Juninho picked up the phone and told Guimarães that he wanted to make him “the best midfielder in the world”, his destination was sealed.

“Juninho spoke with my father, with my mother and with me. I believe in his word and I believe that I can be one of the best,” says Guimarães via video link from his home in France. “Juninho is a great guy, who won a lot of titles here at Lyon. He was extremely honest with me and my parents. It was a hard choice, but they told us exactly what they wanted.”

The 22-year-old has adapted well to his new surroundings. He won the man of the match award in his first three games for Lyon, including his impressive showing in a 1-0 win over Juventus in the last-16 of the Champions League. Even the language has not proven too big an issue. Some of his teammates have translated the managers’ instructions and others have helped him along by pointing and signalling. The club have provided a translator and he has lessons every day on Skype with a tutor from Brazil.

Finding his feet in football was anything but straightforward, however. After Guimarães was rejected by a series of clubs in his native Rio de Janeiro, his parents Dick and Márcia had to travel 433km to Osasco – a tough, industrial suburb of São Paulo – at dawn every Sunday to see their teenage son play in the youth team of minnows Audax. After a match, the three of them



would spend some time together, but Dick and Márcia had to work the following day so back up the highway they went. As a child, Guimarães played futsal for Flamengo in Rio, but he did not manage to transition to the 11-a-side game. He spent a year at Fluminense, but that did not work out either. He was also discarded by Botafogo. Despite being just a boy, Guimarães told his parents that he was giving up 11-a-side football and would be sticking with futsal.

Yet his father kept pushing him. “He used to be angry at some games, demanding a lot, because he knew my potential,” says Guimarães. “It was good for me. He made jokes, but in a serious way. If we lost a game, I would eat a ham and cheese sandwich and get juice. But, if we won, he would let me eat whatever I wanted. If we lost, I would talk to my mother later in the day and tell her that I was hungry. ‘Give me a burger, for the love of God!’” he recalls with a laugh. The

persistence eventually paid off, with Guimarães earning a move to Série A club Athletico Paranaense in 2017, where he was met with an odd coincidence. The taxi in which Dick and Márcia drove to Osasco each Sunday – and which sustained their family for decades – was number 39 of the rank in Vila Isabel, a northern suburb of Rio. When he arrived at Athletico, he asked his dad which number he should wear. His father replied that 39 had always brought the family luck.

When Guimarães arrived at training the next day, he found out that he had already been assigned the number. He called his father immediately: “Dad, you won’t believe it! They gave me the 39! I didn’t even ask!” With the 39 on his back, Guimarães encountered the good fortune that his father had envisioned, leading Athletico to the Copa Sul-Americana and Copa do Brasil for the first time in the club’s history and being selected as the best defensive mid-

fielder in the country. When he arrived at Lyon, Guimarães asked Juninho if he could wear the number 39 again. His new employers agreed. “I try not to forget where I came from. I know what I had to go through to be here, to live what I am living. Despite having lifted a few trophies and being young, I want to do it much more. I want to play in the Olympics, at the World Cup and in the Champions League many more times. I want to win, I want to participate.”

Despite his performance against Juventus, it has not all been rosy in his early weeks in Europe. He says that the Coupe de France semi-final against PSG is the game in which he struggled most. It ended 5-1 to PSG, but was even until the hour mark, when Lyon went a man down and conceded a penalty. “Facing Neymar was the hardest,” he says. “They had a great day. It was a great match until the 60th minute, when the penalty was given. We had to go after them. It was

a knockout game, in our stadium. But it was also dangerous, as Neymar and Mbappé had an open field to counterattack.”

Lyon are still alive in the Champions League, but Guimarães and his teammates do not know when – or if – they will go to Turin to play for a place in the quarter-finals. Being in quarantine in an unfamiliar land has been a mental struggle. “It is a very bad feeling, because of the form I was in and because of the coronavirus pandemic. We know that it is important to save lives and to stay home, but our mind gets a little messy. This kind of thing happens once in a lifetime and we have to acknowledge it by staying safe. Everybody has to go through this together so we can all go back to our normal activities, doing what we love – which is playing football. There’s a high number of deaths here in France, so that worries me a lot.”

When the Olympics were postponed, Guimarães worried that he would not be able to take part

next year due to the age limit of the competition. He appealed to the IOC and Fifa in a video. “The appeal was not just for me, but for every footballer born in 1997. We’ve been training and thinking about the Olympics for more than a year. It is a situation that we cannot control, which is why I asked them to raise the age limit. So many players would not be able to play, like Lautaro [Martínez] for Argentina; [Ousmane] Dembélé, for France; David Neres, Richarlison, Lucas Paquetá, me, Matheus Cunha for Brazil. We all have the dream to play in the Olympics.” He says the decision to let players his age take part next year was “good for football and for the athletes”.

The excitement surrounding the Olympics – to which he will now almost certainly go, having excelled during the qualifying tournament in January – was added to when he was selected for Brazil’s senior team for the first time in March. One of Tite’s staff had watched Lyon beat Juventus, so he knew he had a chance of making the squad. While Guimarães was training, he asked Cláudio Caçapa – a former Brazil defender who now works at Lyon – to listen to the announcement. “I went on to the field and he went to the locker room, but he came back shortly after. ‘You are in, you are in,’ he said, and I was so happy. When he told me, all of the players found out and started to congratulate me.

“It was a defining moment, which I will never forget. After training, I saw the reaction of my family. I started to cry. It was a very emotional moment. Our dream finally came true. This is one of the greatest moments of a player’s career.” With the Olympics next year and the World Cup the following year, Guimarães has plenty to look forward to when football returns. He still has a long way to go to reach the heights Juninho believes he is capable of, but he has already come a long way.

Indian doctor in Kuwait dies from COVID-19

DUBAI, MAY 11 (PTI): An

Indian dentist in Kuwait has died from the novel coronavirus, becoming the country’s second medical professional to succumb to COVID-19, according to a media report.

Dr Vasudeva Rao, 54, died on Saturday in Jaber hospital where he was undergoing treatment for coronavirus infection, news website timeskuwait.com reported.

A resident of Kuwait for about 15 years, Rao worked as an endodontist at Kuwait Oil Company, a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, a government-owned company.

Rao was a member of Indian Dentists’ Alliance in Kuwait, an organisation of Indian dental professionals in Kuwait. The organisation mourned his loss. On Friday, Egyptian ENT specialist Tareq Hussain Mokheimer died of COVID-19, becoming Kuwait’s first such medical fatality, the Gulf News reported.

Mokheimer, 62, had worked in Kuwait for more than 20 years.

A total of 171 people arrived in Chennai from Kuwait on Sunday as part of the government’s Vande Bharat Mission to bring home Indian nationals stranded in various countries.

Kuwait has reported 58 deaths and 8,688 infections due to the novel coronavirus.

Globally, the death toll due to COVID-19 has gone up to 282,727 with over four million infections reported so far, according to Johns Hopkins University tally.

'Games every day' – La Liga outlines plan for return to action on 12 June



SID LOWE

MADRID, 11 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: Spanish football should return with the Seville derby on 12 June, according to the president of La Liga, Javier Tebas. If all goes to plan, the league season will be completed by the end of July in time for European competition to get under way, with games played every day for six weeks behind closed doors and the title, European places and relegation slots all to be decided.

There is optimism after teams returned to training over the last three days. Five players have tested positive for Covid-19 so far, with Tebas describing the risk during games as “virtually non-existent”.

The president of the league was bullish as he appeared on a specially-arranged TV programme broadcast on Movistar, the channel that holds the rights to La Liga, under the slogan “To return is to win”. Designed to celebrate and project growing confidence that the league season can be completed, the show announced that Sevilla-Betis will reopen the season, which has 10 weeks left in the first division and 11 remaining in the second division. And although Sergio Ramos said that he would like “a few more days”, Tebas expressed his optimism that it can get under way on 12 June. There are no guarantees, though.

“We don’t know [when we can start], no one knows the date,” Tebas said. “It will depend on spikes in the numbers and all the rules being followed. The virus is still there. But if it can be on 12 June, so much the better. If we all follow the health rules, I don’t think we’re going to have any problem. The idea is to finish on 31 July and that August can be left for European competitions. Those dates can [then] also be

used for the play-offs [in Spain]. There will be league [games] every day, as already happens in March and April with a normal fixture list.”

Although that assertion is not true following the Spanish Federation’s intervention to prevent Monday night matches, there has been no suggestion that the league will face any challenge to their plan to play daily matches. A successful return to work for most clubs has been a significant step towards a return, following a protocol that runs parallel to the government’s four-phase plan for a de-escalation of the state of alarm. There have been fewer infected footballers than the league had planned for. Those who test positive for Covid-19 will have to isolate and will not be allowed to return to work until they have undergone two consecutive tests that show up as negative.

“We expected 25 or 30 positives [for Covid-19 among players],” Tebas said. “We had made a statistical calculation based on the spread of the virus in Spain which gave us that number. There are five, and three who aren’t footballers. That’s eight from 2,500 tests.

“When the competition comes back, everyone due to play will undergo a test 24 hours before and if he is positive, he won’t play. The test’s failure rate is 5%. The risk during a football game is going to be practically nonexistent. We’ve done a study that says that the place where there is least risk is during the games and where there is the most risk is at home.

“If things are done the way they have been up until now there’s no reason to have five infected players in a single team. If that happens, there must have been some negligence. Not the clubs, but the players. If we all do the right things, I don’t think there will be problems.”

Long wait for Tokyo 2020 Olympic souvenir market to pick up

TOKYO, MAY 11 (AP):

These are lonely times for thousands of souvenirs in dozens of Tokyo 2020 Olympic stores, which are drawing few customers with the postponed games more than a year away and facing an unclear future.

And they’re worrying moments for Tokyo organizers, who hope to generate 100 million by selling 5,500 licensed products including official Olympic chopsticks, Olympic umbrellas, and large stuffed mascots that can go for almost 200.

The pandemic and the uncertainty have emptied Olympic stores of customers. And one large question looms to increase the anxiety: Can the postponed games really take place? Organizing committee President Yoshiro Mori has said if they can’t go ahead on July 23, 2021, they’ll be canceled not postponed again.

Strangely, a cancellation might stimulate souvenir sales, driving demand for memorabilia from the 2020 Olympics that didn’t take place not once, but twice because of the pandemic. Conversely, pent-up demand might also spur sales if the games are finally held.

Olympics have been canceled in war years 1916, 1940, and 1944 but never for a virus.

If there are no Tokyo Olympics in 2021, the value of the already created 2020 merchandise

will increase, and increase even more rapidly if the existing product is removed from retail, David Carter, who teaches sports business at the University of Southern California, said in an email to The Associated Press.

“The bottom line question being who will capture this official/unofficial revenue?”

Many will view 2020 Tokyo merchandise as a novelty product representing all that 2020 stood for globally a global conversation piece for those around the world,” Carter added.

Organizers and the International Olympic Committee maintain the games will be held, though many scientists and health experts argue they shouldn’t go forward without a vaccine.

If they do go ahead, will athletes be quarantined first, and will fans be allowed to attend?

What about packing 11,000 athletes from more than 200 countries and territories into the Athletes Village on Tokyo Bay? How will athletes train safely? And how will they travel the globe to qualifying events? If there are no fans at the Olympics, what happens to projected income from ticket and merchandise sales, expected together to produce income of about 1 billion for local organizers.

Will fans who’ve already bought tickets organizers say 7.8 million

tickets were available get refunds? Tokyo organizers say almost 90 licensed souvenir shops were open around Japan at the end of April. It’s unclear if all will continue to operate until the Olympics open in 14 1/2 months with online sales sure to remain.

Provided sales remain adequate, it may be best to remain open or at least partially open until a resolution is more in focus,” Carter said.

After all, that is still important revenue to be generated given the collective uncertainty.

Tokyo organizers and the IOC decided in March when the games were postponed until 2021 to keep the 2020 branding. This avoided scrapping tons of 2020 merchandise, which might have created a secondary market of discontinued 2020 items.

It might also have driven the market for knock-off items that would cut into organizing committee income.

Sponsors favored keeping the 2020 branding, which has been seen all over Tokyo for years on billboards, on taxis and on subways. Local sponsorship deals are worth 3.3 billion to the Tokyo organizing committee at least two times larger than any previous games.

Overall, Japan is officially spending 12.6 billion to organize the

games, though a government audit says it’s twice that much. All but 5.6 billion is public money.

Separately, the IOC has 14-long-term sponsors like Intel and Toyota that are reported to pay about 100 million each to display the Olympic logo.

An Olympic shop in a Tokyo shopping mall, lined with dozens of shelves filled with t-shirts, caps, and stuffed animal mascots, was mostly devoid of customers over the weekend. Those who browsed were in no hurry to buy. I’m not interested in purchasing any Olympic souvenirs, Misako Sato said.

But I would be more interested in buying something if the Olympics were canceled. Then they would be a conversation piece, a curiosity.

Added her friend Yasuko Kitadai: “Probably it’s too early to buy even if they were held this year, because Japanese tend to wait until the last minute to buy before the event.

They both agreed, maintaining the 2020 branding was the right move to keep down expenses. That was also the sentiment of a shopper who wanted to be identified only by his given name, Daisuke.

For sure I will buy something before the Olympics are over,” he said. But it’s too early now. More than 400 days too early.

Trump takes cautious approach to highlighting Biden accuser

WASHINGTON, MAY 11 (AP): President Donald Trump rarely holds his fire, hurling accusations true and false.

But when it comes to the sexual assault allegation leveled against Joe Biden, his Democratic rival, the president has been unusually reticent.

Trump didn't publicly address the issue until April 30, more than a month after former Senate staffer Tara Reade alleged on a podcast that Biden sexually assaulted her in a Capitol Hill basement in 1993. Biden has vehemently denied the allegation, saying it never happened.

When Trump has talked about the accusation, he's been tepid.

"I don't know anything about it, Trump first said in response to a reporter's question. I think he should respond. You know ... it could be false accusations. I know all about false accusations. I've been falsely charged numerous times. And there is such a thing."

He offered the same line on Friday during an interview with TV's "Fox & Friends." "Look, he's got to fight that battle. I've had battles, too, where I've had false accusations, many times," he said.

"I've had many false accusations made, I can tell you that. Many. And maybe it is a false accusation. Frankly, I hope it is, for his sake." Trump's comments highlight the complicated calculus he faces as he tries to weaponise a rival's potential vulnerability when he himself has been accused of assault and unwanted touching by a long list of women allegations he, too, denies. While Trump has never been shy about using his own weaknesses as ammunition an "I'm rubber, you're glue" strategy he used in 2016 to try to blunt attacks against him the November contest between Biden and Trump is the first presidential race since the dawn of the #MeToo era.

The movement has spurred numerous women to come forward with allegations of sexual assault, including against prominent men in politics, entertainment and other industries. Trump is stepping up his attacks on Biden on other fronts, particularly an effort to portray him as soft on China. But in resisting the urge to seize on Reade's allegation, Trump is acknowledging the bind he's in with women, who could help decide the election.

And some supporters say the bigger issue heading into the fall will be Trump's response to the coronavirus and economic collapse. "The specifics of the Reade allegation are secondary, said Jason Miller, who served as the communications director for Trump's 2016 campaign and argued that the allegations are less damaging to Biden than other weaknesses the episode exposes.

"This just reminds people that Biden has been in office for more than 40 years, Miller said. It reminds people that he's part of that permanent political class.

BY YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 11 (PTT): International tourism could decline by 60-80 per cent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the revenue loss of USD 910 billion to USD 1.2 trillion and placing millions of livelihoods at risk, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has said.

The global international agency said that the pandemic has caused a 22 per cent fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020.

According to the United Nations specialized agency, the global health crisis could lead to an annual tourism decline between 60 per cent and 80 per cent when compared with the 2019 figures.

This places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it said. The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said.

Available data reported by destinations point to a 22 per cent decline in arrivals in the



first three months of the year, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Arrivals in March dropped sharply by 57 per cent following the start of a lockdown in many countries, as well as the widespread introduction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders. This translates into a loss of 67 million international arrivals and about USD 80 billion in receipts (exports from tourism).

Although Asia and the Pacific shows the highest impact in relative and absolute terms

(a decline of 33 million arrivals), the impact in Europe, though lower in percentage, is quite high in volume (-22 million), the agency said. Prospects for the year have been downgraded several times since the outbreak and uncertainty continues to dominate.

Current scenarios point to possible declines in arrivals of 58 per cent to 78 per cent for the year. These depend on the speed of containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders. The agency has given three scenarios for 2020 based on

possible dates for the gradual opening up of international borders. According to scenario 1, there could be a decline of 58 per cent in arrivals based on the gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions in early July.

Scenario 2 could see a 70 per cent decline if international borders are gradually opened and travel restrictions are eased in early September.

Scenario 3 states that there could be a 78 per cent decline in arrivals based on the gradual opening of inter-

national borders and easing of travel restrictions only in early December.

Under these scenarios, the impact of the loss of demand in international travel could translate into loss of 850 million to 1.1 billion international tourists, loss of USD 910 billion to USD 1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism and 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk.

This is by far the worst crisis that international tourism has faced since records began (1950). The impact will be felt to varying degrees in the dif-

ferent global regions and at overlapping times, with Asia and the Pacific expected to rebound first, the agency said.

The COVID-19 pandemic, spread across every country on the planet, has so far infected 4.1 million people and killed 282,719 people. The US has been the worst-affected country with 1.3 million confirmed coronavirus cases and nearly 80,000 deaths.

Domestic demand is expected to recover faster than international demand, according to the UNWTO Panel of Experts survey. The majority expects to see signs of recovery by the final quarter of 2020 but mostly in 2021.

Based on previous crises, leisure travel is expected to recover quicker, particularly travel for visiting friends and relatives, than business travel.

The estimates regarding the recovery of international travel is more positive in Africa and the Middle East with most experts foreseeing recovery still in 2020.

Experts in the Americas are the least optimistic and least likely to believe in recovery in 2020, while in Europe and Asia, the outlook is mixed, with half of the experts expecting to see recovery within this year.

New nightlife cluster causes spike in South Korea virus cases



South Korea announced its highest number of new coronavirus cases in more than a month Monday, driven by a cluster in a Seoul nightlife district that emerged just as the country loosens restrictions.

The nation has been held up as a global model in how to curb the virus, but over the weekend its capital -- as well as neighbouring Gyeonggi province and the nearby city of Incheon -- ordered the closure of all clubs and bars after a burst of new cases sparked fears of a second wave.

The news comes as parts of Europe begin a cautious re-opening, with health experts warning that moving

too quickly will result in a surge in infection numbers.

South Korean officials reported 35 new cases Monday, taking its total to 10,909, after recording only single-digit increases for eight of the preceding 12 days -- many of them overseas arrivals.

But as of noon on Monday, a total of 86 cases had been linked to the new nightlife cluster, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

At first it was thought to have been triggered by a 29-year-old man who tested positive after spending an evening at five clubs and bars in the Itaewon

area in early May.

But the KCDC said there appeared to be multiple origins for the cluster, with director Jeong Eun-kyeong telling reporters people visited "different kinds of clubs" on "different dates".

Health officials are struggling to trace "thousands of people" who went to clubs and bars in Itaewon, said Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun.

"The majority of the visitors are not reachable," Chung said, urging all of them to get tested.

"If you hesitate a single day, our daily clock may stop for a month. Please contact the nearest clinic or health centre right now."

City authorities are

urging everyone who visited the district over a two-week period to get tested, Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon told a radio station.

Daegu, South Korea's fourth-largest city that was once the epicentre of the outbreak, on Monday also ordered the closure of all bars and clubs.

The spike in new infections came as everyday life in South Korea returns to normal, with the government relaxing social distancing rules last week.

The country endured one of the worst early outbreaks of the disease outside mainland China, and while it never imposed a compulsory lockdown, strict social distancing had been widely observed since March.

But it appeared to have brought its outbreak under control thanks to an extensive "trace, test and treat" programme that has drawn widespread praise.

Facilities such as museums and churches have reopened and some professional sports -- including baseball and soccer -- have started new seasons, while schools are set to re-open starting this week.

Coronavirus interrupts world's longest-running cartoon



Production of the world's longest-running cartoon and a mainstay of the Japanese weekend has been interrupted by the coronavirus, forcing the broadcast of re-runs for the first time in decades.

"Sazae-san", which first aired in 1969, revolves around the life of Mrs Sazae, a cheerful but klutzy full-time housewife who lives with her parents, husband, son, brother and sister.

The 30-minute episodes aired Sunday nights are very popular, and for many in Japan have come to denote the

end of the weekend. But the cartoon, recognised as the longest-running animated TV series by Guinness World Records, has been hampered by the outbreak of the virus, with animation dubbing halted to keep staff safe, broadcaster Fuji Television Network said.

"We will halt broadcast of new episodes of 'Sazae-san' for the time being from May 17 and instead air re-runs," it announced on Sunday.

The network said upcoming broadcasts would be episodes from two years ago, adding it would announce a date

for the resumption of new episodes as soon as possible.

It is the first time the network has been forced to air re-runs since 1975, when the economic effects of an earlier oil crisis lingered.

Japan has seen a comparatively small coronavirus outbreak with nearly 15,800 infections and 621 deaths.

The country is under a state of emergency that was extended last week until the end of May, though the government is considering lifting the measures early in parts of the country.

Iran missile strikes own ship, kills 1 sailor, hurts others

TEHRAN, MAY 11 (AP): An Iranian missile fired during a training exercise in the Gulf of Oman struck a support vessel near its target, killing at least one sailor and wounding others amid heightened tensions between Tehran and the US.

The friendly fire incident happened Sunday near the port of Jask, some 1,270 kilometers (790 miles) southeast of Tehran on the Gulf of Oman, state TV reported Monday.

The missile struck the Konarak, a Hendijan-class support ship, taking part in the exercise.

State television described the

missile strike as an accident, saying the Konarak had remained too close to the target. The Konarak had been putting targets out in the water for other ships to fire upon, it said.

Iranian media said the Konarak had been overhauled in 2018 and was able to launch sea missiles. The Dutch-made, 47-meter (155-foot) vessel was in service since 1988 and had capacity of 40 tons. It usually carries a crew of 20 sailors.

Iran regularly holds exercises in the region, which is closed to the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the

narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20 per cent of the world's oil passes. The US Navy's 5th Fleet, which monitors the region, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Iranian media rarely report on mishaps during its exercises, signaling the severity of the incident.

This incident also comes amid months of heightened tensions between Iran and the US since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018 and imposed crushing sanctions on the country.

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MASKED KISS! The couple, Ron Carlson & Selma Blair shares a kiss while waiting for coffee in Studio City, California.

Sunny Leone travels to LA with family amid coronavirus pandemic: Felt it'd be safer for kids

LOS ANGELES, MAY 11 (PTI): In order to ensure the safety of her children against the "invisible killer" coronavirus, actor Sunny Leone revealed that she has travelled to Los Angeles with her family amid the pandemic.

Leone, who has been residing in Mumbai since late 2000s, shared a picture with her daughter Nisha and sons, Noah and Asher from her LA house on Sunday on Instagram.

Sending Mother's Day wishes to the mothers around the world, the actor said, "In life when you have children, your own priorities and well being takes the back seat. Both @dirrty99 and I had the opportunity to take our children where we felt they would be safer against this invisible killer 'corona virus'."

"Our home away from home and secret garden in Los Angeles. I know this is what my mother would have wanted me to do. Miss you mom. Happy Mother's Day," Leone, 38, added.

A source close to Leone told PTI that the actor, along with her family, travelled to Los Angeles "a few days ago".

Her husband, Daniel Weber, posted a selfie on Instagram, writing "Quarantine part 2. Not so bad now. Getting used to the new vibes."



When a user asked Weber, 41, if they flew to the US via KLM Royal Dutch Airlines or Air India, he replied, "KLM government flight."

Leone had recently started her digital chat show "Locked up with Sunny" and was actively posting pictures and videos with her children from her Mumbai house amid lockdown.

Grammy winning-singer Betty Wright dies at 66

LOS ANGELES, MAY 11 (PTI): Iconic soul and R&B singer Betty Wright has died after a battle with cancer. She was 66.

According to Entertainment Weekly, the Grammy winner passed away on Sunday in her hometown Miami, Florida, Wright's niece confirmed.

The news comes a week after singer-songwriter Chaka Khan tweeted praying for her "beloved sister", without mentioning the cause of ailment.

"Calling all my #PrayWarriors | My beloved sister, Betty Wright, is now in need of all your prayers. 'Que Sera, Sera | Whatever Will Be, Will Be' In Jesus Name We Pray for Sister Betty All My Love Chaka," she wrote.

Wright, whose real name was Bessie Regina Norris, was born in 1953.

She started singing as part of her siblings' musical group called the 'Echoes of Joy', but she rose to fame in the 1970s.

The singer was a member of the gospel ensemble until they parted ways when she was 11, leading her to embrace R&B music.

Wright signed with the label Deep City Records in 1966, a year later becoming a local hit with songs "Thank You Baby" and "Paralyzed".

Her first album 'My First Time Around' wasn't released until two years later featuring the hit "Girls Can't Do What the Guys Do."

The biggest hit of her career "Clean Up Woman" came a year later, which was certified gold barely days after her 18th birthday.

At the age of 23, she went on to win her first Grammy Award for Best Song, "Where is the Love?"

Wright continued writing and producing music for two decades, her final

hit "No Pain, (No Gain)" was released in 1988. Wright also collaborated with talent in the industry including fellow Miami superstar Gloria Estefan, for whom she arranged the harmonies on the 1991 track "Coming Out of the Dark", as well as Jennifer Lopez, Kelly Clarkson, and Joss Stone.

She served as the vocal coach of the

"thankful Thursday's" at her Florida house years ago.

"I know god is pleased with your work. Tonight is the night you get to heavens gates. Long live. Betty Wright," he wrote on Instagram.

Legend said Wright will be missed. "She was always so loving and giving to younger artists. Always engaged, al-



girl group Danity Kane on "Making of the Band" (2006).

With her collaboration with The Roots titled 'Betty Wright: The Movie', Wright again came under spotlight in 2011. This was her first album in a decade.

She scored a Grammy nod for the song "Surrender" from the album. Her work has been sampled throughout the years by Beyonce, Mary J Blige, Afrika Bambaataa, and Chance the Rapper.

Several names from the music industry such as Snoop Dogg, John Legend, and DJ Khaled conolded Wright's demise on social media.

Snoop shared a video of Wright singing "Tonight is the Night" and thanked his mentor for inviting him to

ways relevant," he tweeted.

Khaled shared a clip of his performance with Wright on the song "Holy Key" at the 2016 BET Hip Hop Awards.

"Betty Wright, you are an angel. You one of my realest friends I have! You are like a mom to me! You had my back from the very beginning! We made beautiful music together! Betty Wright is an icon! And the Mother of Miami," he wrote.

Wright was married three times - her final marriage was to reggae legend Noel 'King Sporty' Williams from 1985 until his death in 2015.

She had five children: Aisha McCray, Patrice Parker, Patrick Parker, Patrice Parker, and Chaka Azuri. Her son Patrick was shot to death on Christmas Day 2005 at the age of 21.

Rapper Nick Blixy dies aged 21 after shooting in New York City

NYPD confirmed Blixy's death.

Rapper Nick Blixy has died at the age of 21 after being fatally shot.

The Brooklyn drill rapper - real name Nickalus Thompson- was pronounced dead this weekend in New York City after he was

found with severe wounds to his torso at around 9.30pm on Sunday night (May 10).

He was discovered on Winthrop Street in Prospect Lefferts Gardens in Brooklyn, New York, police reported.

He was rushed to NYC Health & Hospitals/Kings County, where he passed away.

In a statement to Metro.co.uk the New York Police Department said: "On Sunday, May 10, 2020, at approximately 2126 hours, police responded to a 911 call of a male shot..."

The statement added: "Upon arrival, officers found an unconscious and unresponsive 21-year-old male, with gunshot wounds to his torso and buttocks.

"EMS also responded to the scene and transported the individual to NYC Health & Hospitals/Kings County, where he was pro-

nounced deceased. "There are no arrests and the investigation remains ongoing."

According to the publication, unverified footage filmed after the shooting shows two police cars stopped in the middle of an intersection with what appeared to be a body in



the middle of the road.

The rapper's last Instagram post, shared hours before his death, excitedly promoted his upcoming project 'Different Timin'.

Sharing the artwork for his new mixtape, he captioned the post, writing: "JUNE 3RD I'm dropping my first Tape ever LOCK IN THE DATE DIFFERENT TIMIN (COMMENT A IF YOU READYYYY) #BG4L#HOMETEAM#TWIRLWITME."

'The Chronicles of Narnia' producer hopes Netflix

reboot is episodic

LOS ANGELES, MAY 11 (PTI):

"The Chronicles of Narnia" producer Douglas Gresham says he hopes Netflix's adaptations of CS Lewis' fantasy novels will be episodic so that they are able to capture "every single nuance" of the books on screen. In 2018, the streamer and The CS Lewis Company entered into a multi-year deal, wherein all series and films produced will be credited as Netflix productions.

Mark Gordon of Entertainment One alongside Gresham and Vincent Sieber are attached to serve as executive producers for series and as producers for features. Gresham, who is Lewis' stepson, expressed his wish while speaking to William O'Flaherty for '90 Seconds to Knowing CS Lewis' online show. "(I would) love it to be an episodic thing. Because with a movie, you have an hour, maybe two hour maximum if you really stretch it, to put an entire book - an adventure storybook - into the film.

ARIES:

Soon-to-be-mothers, this is a time of rest and rejuvenation. Tune out the drama and bring your attention back to yourself. Let self-care become the most important thing on your agenda. Remember, you're getting ready to witness the miracle of life! Others are being asked to stay in yin mode and receive the ideas that Spirit is sending you through your subconscious mind.

Tip: You are getting ready to witness the miracle of life.

TAURUS:

You may feel like your world is falling apart. Is it really, though? You're being asked to trust the divine plan more than ever before. Certain things have to be taken away from you so you can make space for what is truly in alignment with your soul. Let go of the unhealthy attachments and the false beliefs. A new world is opening up for you, one that is based on the principles of freedom and truth.

Tip: Let go of the old way of life.

GEMINI:

Those who truly embody their truth do not feel the need to scream it from the rooftops. Their life is a living, breathing example of their beliefs. They lead by example and command respect every time they step into the room. The dilemma at hand does not require you to relinquish your power or let somebody else make a decision on your behalf. It requires you to stand your ground like never before. How you convey your message will make all the difference, Gemini.

Tip: Assertive, not aggressive.

CANCER:

How would you define affirmations, Cancer? Potent spells

that help you move energy, create ripples in the Universe, and support your sacred mission in the earthly realm, or woo-woo words invented by a bored teenager? It is your faith in the process that will determine the outcome. Call upon your higher self and reflect upon the area of your life that is in need of re-alignment.

Tip: Tap into the power of affirmations.

LEO:

Nature is medicine, Leo, and your time at home is making you aware of the magical ingredients that have always been available to you. From turmeric to tulsi, the miracles are endless! So whether you're dealing with a sore throat or stomach cramps, turn to the apothecary in front of you. Some of you may be in the mood to appease the beauty Gods. Do your research and understand your skin type before you begin to concoct potions. Have a doubt in mind? Reach out to a skincare expert or aromatherapist.

Tip: Turn to nature's apothecary.

VIRGO:

Change is seldom easy, but it's the only constant, Virgo. The time to shed old skin has come yet again. Let go of the unhealthy attachments. Let go of the idea of who you are supposed to be and allow yourself to transform. A popular quote comes to mind, given your circumstances: "The woman you're becoming will cost you people, relationships, spaces and material things. Choose her over everything." Let these words show you the light in the darkest of times.

Tip: Embrace the becoming.

LIBRA:

This is a magical time in the Libra HQ, full of ideas and

inspiration. Grounding your energy will help you manifest them in your reality. The stirrings of your heart are a sign that the messages coming through are divinely guided. Some of you may be experiencing a serious case of baby fever. The time is right when you're ready. So get back to the boudoir right now! As for Venusians who are pregnant, tune out the drama and focus on self-care in a way you never have before.

Tip: "Birth" and "fertility" are your magic words.

SCORPIO:

It's okay to not have your stuff together at all times. It's okay to wake up on the wrong side of the bed or feel like you're having three bad days in a row. What's not okay is isolating yourself from others and receding into a dark space. Remember, your crew won't be able to reach out to you unless you let them. If there's anything this phase of your life is trying to teach you, it's that vulnerability takes colossal strength.

Tip: It's okay to reach out for help and support.

SAGITTARIUS:

You didn't think you could go a week without ordering in. Look at you now with your sourdough loaves and homemade granola! You're winning the self-isolation game and your body couldn't be happier. The cards are urging you to adopt mindfulness as a way of life; to become conscious of what you are putting on your plate and where it is coming from. A plant-based diet will keep your vibrations high and your physical vessel in good shape.

Tip: Consider a plant-based diet.

CAPRICORN:

The truth is, this lockdown has thrown one surprise after another our way. What do you do when you have to abandon your original plan? You adapt, adjust, and make the most of your circumstances—something you've begun to understand despite your formerly rigid ways. So, become cognizant of the business ideas coming through at this moment and ponder upon how you'd like to bring them to life. PS: You're getting ready to write a brand new chapter in your book about how to win the game of life.

Tip: It's time to put your ideas into action.

AQUARIUS:

Exercising isn't merely about sculpting your body (although that's a plus). It's about connecting with your physical vessel and experiencing a whole new level of awareness. Make your way back to your mat even on the days you're not feeling it. Stretching for 20 minutes is better than not stretching at all. Think of this as a commitment to your mental, physical, and emotional well-being, Aquarius. PS: Signing up for a virtual class is a good way to stay motivated and connect with your tribe.

Tip: Rethink your exercise routine.

PISCES:

The trouble is, we often hide behind masks because we believe they will make us more palatable to the outside world. But one can only put on an act for so long. The loopholes in your plot will start to show soon enough. There's great strength and beauty in showing up as you are and that is exactly what Spirit is asking you to focus on today. Remember, it's okay to not have everything together. Perfection is an illusion anyway. Tip: You are not required to be perfect. You're just required to be you.