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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Gangtok to go on weeklong lockdown



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

With the State Government having decided to open its borders for unrestricted interstate movement from 01 Oct onwards and hotels, homestays and other tourism related services to begin unhindered business operations from 10 October onwards, the Home Department has ordered a complete lockdown in the Gangtok Municipal Corporation area from 21 to 27 Sept as part of “special measures” to contains the spread of COVID-19 in GMC.

Vehicles will not be allowed to ply except those authorised or engaged in essential services. State government offices will operate on 30% staff strength, all shops, except those selling essential items, will remain closed.

As for tourism, an SOP for operation of hotels is expected soon and while the odd-even regulation will be lifted for passenger vehicles, they continue to apply to private vehicles.

SMCON mourns alumnus who made ultimate sacrifice in Sikkim's battle against COVID

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

The Vice Chancellor, faculty, staff and students of Sikkim Manipal University and its constituent institutes and colleges today issued an official statement saluting the supreme sacrifice made by ANS Basanti Sundas who succumbed to COVID-19 yesterday after spending months serving COVID patients. The late Ms Sundas was an alumnus of Sikkim Manipal College of Nursing [SMCON].

“We salute the supreme sacrifice of our former student,” the statement opens, adding, “She made the ultimate sacrifice as a frontline healthcare professional who was at the forefront of COVID care services.”

The late ANS was an SMCON alumnus Post BSc 2015-17 batch.

“She will always be remembered as an energetic, committed and efficient care giver with an endearing personality.

We pray for peace to the departed noble soul; and strength to the bereaved family to cope with this huge loss. We also gratefully acknowledge the yeoman service by the healthcare fraternity who put their lives on the line in service of the patients and people of Sikkim.

We share the grief of the people of Sikkim who have lost their near & dear ones to the Corona virus. We also wish quick recovery to those who have been infected and are undergoing treatment. We urge our citizens to take all preventive measures to minimize the spread of this infection,” the release details.

Sikkim Police to launch state-wide drive to enforce COVID-19 protocol

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

The Law & Order branch of Sikkim Police will be launching a state-wide special drive to enforce stricter observance of COVID-19 safety protocols like face mask wearing, social distancing and hand sanitizing, a press release issued by DIG-Range, PrawinGurung, informs.

The move comes in light of the weeklong complete lockdown starting Monday.

The release appeals to people to “behave in a very responsible manner both at home and outside.”

While claiming that Sikkim Police has been working tirelessly to contain the virus, the release goes on to contend that people have become “a bit callous and negligent” of late. This was also discussed at the State task force meeting chaired by the Chief Minister yesterday following which the police engagement has been announced.

The special drive will have “all senior police officers of their respective districts along with the force will conduct extensive checking in public places and vehicles and impose fines prescribed by the government on violators strictly.”

Students giving CBSE compartment exams exempted from lockdown, says Edu deptt

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

In a circular issued on Saturday, the Education Department has said that I Compartment Examinations of the CBSE will be held as per the Datesheet from 22 Sept to 30 Sept. In view of the complete lockdown declared within Gangtok Municipal Corporation Area, the candidates are advised to travel with their valid Admit Cards to authenticate their travel to their Examination centers. This will also be applicable to IGNOU Term-End Examinations.

Due to the Gangtok lockdown there are some changes in the instructions issued earlier on 31 Aug to educational institutions.

50% of the teaching and non-teaching staff members were instructed to attend the institutions from 21 Sept, however, this will not apply to staff of Gangtok till the lockdown is in place.

Also, starting 21 Sept, students of classes 9 to 12 would be permitted to visit their schools in areas outside the containment zones, however, this too shall not apply in Gangtok.

However, it is not clear how students are expected to reach their exam centers during the lockdown.

Sikkim records 39 new COVID cases and two more deaths

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTK, 19 SEPT:**

Thirty-nine fresh cases of novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours took Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to 2,342. Sikkim also recorded two more COVID-related deaths on Saturday taking the total number of such fatalities to 28.

A 70-year-old male from Shyari, who was admitted in STNM hospital on 11 September and was in the ICU, passed away yesterday. The patient also had the co-morbidity of hypertension.

Another 68-year-old male from Arithang, who was admitted in STNM hospital on 14 September and was in the ICU, passed away at around 11 AM this morning. He had co-morbidities of hypertension and asthma.

Meanwhile, out of the 39 new cases, 22 were detected in East District and 17 in West Sikkim.

In the meantime, 34 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Friday taking the total number of discharged COVID-19 patients in



Sikkim to 1,891. With these, there are now 426 active cases lodged at isolation facilities in the State.

In the daily health bulletin on Saturday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that in RT-PCR screening of 334 samples at the VRD Lab on Friday, 34 returned positive for COVID-19.

He added that one of 38 samples tested by TrueNat also returned positive for COVID-19, while four more new cases of COVID-19 positive were detected in the rapid antigen testing

of 26 samples.

While giving the break-up of new cases found in RT-PCR testing, he informed that one person from power quarters in DPH colony in Jalipool, one from the containment zone on Deorali Girls SSS road, one from below Forest Secretariat in Deorali and one from near SBI Bank in Majhitar were found positive for COVID-19.

Meanwhile, five legislators of Sikkim along with three others from VIP colony also tested positive in RT-PCR testing. Likewise, one from below Hospital

Dara, one from Namchi, one person from below Thapa Golai Sichey but presently residing at Bhanjyang Road in Namchi, one from below West Point SSS in Tathangchen, three staff of the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong from the CRH hostel, one from Jubilee Line, Singtam, one from Baghay Khola and one from Majhitar were found positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing, he said.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that samples of 17 persons from West Sikkim also

returned positive for COVID-19, of whom 14 are SSB personnel based at Melli-Aching in Yuksom and three workers of a construction company, who are presently at Yaktay in Gyalshing in West Sikkim.

Likewise, he added that a resident of Jorethang tested positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat testing, while a person from near CIPLA in Kumrek, Rangpo, one person from Rongli, one from Chanatar Rangpo and one from Sangkhola were found COVID-19 positive in the rapid antigen testing.

SIBLAC urges UNESCO to save KNP

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee [SIBLAC] convenor, TsetenTashi Bhutia has written to UNESCO World Heritage Centre urging its intervention in saving the Kanchenjunga National Park which UNESCO recognized as a World Heritage site in 2016.

The letter mentions that the High Court of Sikkim had asked the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to take a final call while hearing a PIL demanding the scrapping of the 97-MW Tashiding Hydro Power Project (or Tashiding HEP) on the sacred Rathong Chu River in

West Sikkim.

The judgment pronounced by the division bench of Chief Justice N K Jain and Justice S P Wangdi passed the ball to the court of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), asking it to take a final call on the matter within six months from the date of the order.

The judgement was pronounced on World Environment Day, 5 June 2014 by the Sikkim High Court.

Till date no decision has come from the MOEFCC but the controversial project has been commissioned without any official announcement (because

the matter is subjudice in (MoEFCC), this is how money power overpowers the system in India, Mr Lepcha writes.

Further alleging that the 97 MW Tashiding HEP is in fact the 30 MW Rathong Chu HEP which was scrapped by the state government following strong protest from the local population, Mr Lepcha has said that the Tashiding HEP falls well within the 10-km radius of the Khangchendzonga National Park.

While this particular project received Environmental Clearance (EC) from the MoEFCC on

29 July 2010, neither the project developer nor the state government has obtained statutory clearance from the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) under the MoEFCC, he mentions.

“Having highlighted all these wrong doing on part of the government, both at the state and the central level, we would humbly like to request you to please take prompt and appropriate action at the earliest. The UNESCO Heritage Status accorded to the KNP is itself at stake and in grave danger of blatant violations,” Mr Lepcha has said.

Since Chamling won't attend Assembly session, SDF places demands through media

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:**

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, MK Subba, demanded today that the State government pass a resolution in the legislative Assembly stopping the extension of the Citizen Amendment Act 2019 to Sikkim.

He also demanded that the government bring a resolution for seat reservation for Limboo and Tamang communities in the legislative assembly spelling out a clear formula for seat reservation and provide tribal status to eleven leftout communities of the State.

He explained that the lone SDF legislator, Pawan Chamling, will not be attending the assembly session scheduled for Monday so the party was placing these issues through the press to the government.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Subba mentioned that although the CAA has already been extended to the State, Sikkim has received a lifeline to stop its implementation as the Centre was still taking time to frame rules.

On the same, he added that the Centre would be ready with its rules soon so the State government still has the chance to secure exemption for

Sikkim from the CAA by passing a resolution in the State Assembly.

He mentioned that the Centre was also in the process of starting the National Population Register [NPR] in the country. On the same, he demanded the state government bring the Sikkim People's Protection Bill in the Assembly like some other States of the north east region to provide protection to Sikkimese people and stop the NPR process in the State.

He urged the political leaders and social organizations and people of Sikkim to get serious about this matter.

He also asked the government to release details about the State Economic Revival Committee and its findings and recommendations.

He demanded that the government also provide details about the budget status and its expenditure and information regarding funds allocated to deal with COVID-19.

Mr Subba mentioned that an RTI reply received from the Health Department clearly shows that the State government has not allocated a separate budget for COVID-19 and it was responsible for the present situation of

COVID-19 in the State.

He added that the government has still not formed an expert medical advisory committee to take address the pandemic and contended that there were no pre or post COVID treatment options with the health department.

On behalf of SDF party, the party's spokesperson, JB Darnal extended deep condolences on the passing away of senior party worker and former Chairperson, RM Rai.

He also conveyed the party's condolences on the death of Assistant Nursing Superintendent Basanti Sundas of STNM hospital.

24 families quit SDF to join SKM

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:

Twenty-four families from Kirtipur and Upper Bokrong Ward under RatepaniNamthang Constituency, South Sikkim quit SDF and joined SKM today, a press release informs.

They joined in a function attended by Area MLA cum Minister Transport, SanjeetKharel and other party functionaries.

Lakpa Tamang, brother of SDF's Assembly election candidate, Brijan Tamang, also joined SKM, the release mentions.

Chairman, Sikkim Poultry Development Board, Krishna SKM CLC president,



Gurungsaid that SKM was formed for the development of every area and field, and to bring about good governance in Sikkim.

SKM CLC president,

RS Tamang in his address clarified that within one and a half years of government formation, a lot of positive changes have been seen. The function was also attended

by SKM functionaries of South District.

Minister SanjeetKharel in his speech welcomed all in the party and appealed to them to participate

in the development of RatepaniNamthang Constituency with an active interest in building the constituency as a model constituency in the State.

Medical Professionals – “Frontline Warriors”

Their ordeal amidst their heroism

Dr REMON CHETTRI

It was heartbreaking to see the final farewell of Sikkim's first medical casualty today. After all her contribution towards imparting health care over the years, her active participation in the fight against COVID, the risk she undertook willingly, the sacrifices she made along her professional journey, the final goodbye is simply unceremoniously unjustified to her credit. Her mortal remains wrapped in an impenetrable covering, her family had to tearfully bid their goodbyes from a distance, no last look could be accorded, no rituals for her safe passage to the next realm, condolences muted, prayers muffled. All her colleagues and well-wishers could only join their hands in gratitude, in remembering with pride how she had been, silently watching her being taken away forever – by strangers.

But her death was not in vain. She did not die because she wasn't cautious, because she didn't wear a mask or her PPE properly, because she didn't maintain social distancing. No one would ever endanger themselves or their dear ones purposely. She knew the risks involved. Medical professionals' risk everything in their line of duty. What was surprising and worrying for us was that she did not have any underlying comorbidity unlike the COVID mortality statistic in the State till date, nor was she a senior citizen. This goes to say that the virus cannot be taken lightly, healthy, young individuals cannot take it for granted that they are less susceptible to contracting it, even after following all SOP's and precautionary measures, they are no guarantees to safety. She is gone too soon. May her family find strength in her accomplishments and may she rest in eternal peace.

Being a health professional myself, I realise that the threat is real and imminent. I do not have any qualms in admitting that I am fearful for my life and the safety of my loved ones around me. If I am not healthy and fit, what use am I to anyone - my fraternity and my family? Each day I wake up, dress up, take the blessings of my elders

and pray that I come back safe from work. What keeps me going is my belief that when the going gets tough the tough gets going. We are called “warriors” for a reason. This is the time we need to prove our mettle. If not now, then never. However, even if you are not on active COVID duty, you are always surrounded by a high probability of infection. Like in my case. Inside a hospital it is difficult to maintain “social distancing”. You cannot evade your responsibilities and

have to go about carrying them out keeping in mind all safety protocols.

Despite maintaining them, I have had to go for self-quarantine two times in a period of 45 days. I was a high-risk primary contact in both the instances. I feel if I were tested positive, it would be less complicated for me to get cured from it than the ordeal I have been through in sitting on the fence, fearing every day of the isolation period, anticipating symptoms, waiting in agony, dreading the test, imagining the worst, suffering in isolation. I feel sad knowing that I have brought suffering and plight to my family too. Having parents who are senior citizens, mother a diabetic patient, two children under 10 years of age, all at home, I am constantly made aware of the hazardous nature of my work and work place.

My 8-year-old daughter has to lie to her 5-year-old brother about their father's location in the house, where he stays isolated from them. It's been nothing short of a game of hide-and-seek with the little one. Its almost as if a secrecy of an extraterrestrial entity in the house is being kept under wraps! I feel like an outcast, a prisoner. Our household caretaker comes to give me food and essentials and runs away dousing herself in sanitizer, without even a word from the other side of the door. My area in the house seems like ground zero for Armageddon! My family and relatives trying to act normal and being supportive, when I can see their questioning eyes and worried frowns on the video calls throughout the

day. Regardless of the test result, the fight to maintain my sanity, my mental equilibrium, poses a challenge most days in waiting.

The stigmatization that surrounds this disease is another malady we are grappling against. My neighbors cast suspicious looks towards my family members and are skeptical of being in the vicinity of my house. It would be prudent for them to ask of our well-being, if all is well, if we need anything, than to speculate. I, being a responsible citizen, went for self-quarantine even without any symptoms. I wouldn't jeopardize anyone's health & safety on my own whim. This throws light on the ignorance and misinformation that lurks in our society.

I am still fortunate that I have my family near me. I have a strong support system as I am in my home town and hence own turf. I can understand how difficult it must be for medical workers who are posted away from family and home to deal with this critical time. To find the strength and stamina to get up and show up every day, to serve humankind whilst wrestling with their own fears and insecurities.

I am writing this piece while I am still isolated at home. I felt the need to tell the story of my struggle of not testing positive but fearing the symptoms each passing day and how it affects me mentally. There are many such stories of people from different walks of life, fighting their own battles and ending it triumphantly. I'd like to implore people to be responsible, kind, supportive & understanding. This veil of uncertainty and fear will get lifted sometime or the other. Till then, we need to be aware, stand together and push ourselves to look beyond the darkness. I, for one, will seek refuge in the love that surrounds me and keeps me going. This too shall pass.

(The writer is a Public Relations Officer at Central Referral Hospital and Associate Professor, Sikkim Manipal College of Physiotherapy, Gangtok. He also holds the post of President, Futsal Association of Sikkim and Publicity Secretary, All Sikkim Physiotherapists' Welfare Association)

Centre rejects study which claims India is world's largest emitter of anthropogenic sulphur dioxide

NEW DELHI, SEP 19

(PTI): The Environment Ministry on Saturday rejected the findings of a study which claimed that India is the world's largest emitter of anthropogenic sulphur dioxide (SO2) and informed the Rajya Sabha that 18 units for flue-gas desulphurization were installed in the country.

Congress MP Ripun Bora had sought to know whether the government is aware that India is the largest emitter of anthropogenic sulphur dioxide from coal burning which causes air pollution.

In his reply, Union Minister of State for Environment Babul Supriyo said, “No sir, it has been reported in one of the study of environmental NGO Greenpeace that India is the world's largest emitter of anthropogenic

sulphur dioxide (SO2) and coal-based thermal power plants are the major contributors. Government facts do not agree to this.”

He said the ministry, through its December 2015 notification, stipulated norms for emission of sulphur dioxide from thermal power plants apart from other pollutants.

“There was no SO2 emission norms for coal-based thermal power plants prior to this notification and regulated through stipulating the height of discharge/emittance through fixing height of chimney,” Supriyo said in a written response.

Asked whether India has flue-gas desulphurization technology installed in coal plants that will help in reduction of air pollution, the

minister said two of the commonly acceptable technology for flue-gas desulphurization of coal-based thermal power plants -- wet scrubbing in alkaline media and dry sorbent injection (DSI) -- are installed in India.

“As on August 31, 2020, 16 units on wet scrubbing and two units on DSI technology are installed for desulphurisation of flue gas from coal-based thermal power plants,” Supriyo said.

According to the data, of the 16 wet-scrubbing units, eight are in Maharashtra, three in Gujarat, two each in Haryana and Tamil Nadu and one in Madhya Pradesh. The two DSI units are in Uttar Pradesh. In August last year, a study by environment NGO Greenpeace India had claimed that India is the world's largest

emitter of anthropogenic sulphur dioxide, which is produced from coal burning, and greatly contributes to air pollution.

The Greenpeace India has released an analysis of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) data saying India has more than 15 per cent of all anthropogenic sulphur dioxide (SO2) hotspots in the world detected by the OMI (Ozone Monitoring Instrument) satellite.

“The major SO2 emission hotspots in India are Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh, Neyveli and Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Talcher and Jharsuguda in Odisha, Korba in Chhattisgarh, Kutch in Gujarat, Ramagundam in Telangana and Chandrapur and Koradi in Maharashtra.

Governor condoles demise of health worker due to COVID

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:

Ganga Prasad has condoled the demise of Basanti Sundas (49), Assistant Nursing Superintendent who passed away on 18 Sept at New STNM hospital, Sochyagang. She is the

first health worker to die of COVID in the state.

“I am deeply pained about her demise. It's sad to lose such a hardworking, brilliant and dedicated COVID warrior, Assistant Nursing Superintendent of New STNM hospital. My

heartfelt condolences to her family,” said the Governor.

The Governor has appealed to the people of Sikkim to use mask, social distancing, personal hygiene and stay home, stay safe to win the battle against COVID-19.

Orientation Program by DIET-Namchi

NAMCHI, 18 SEPT (IPR): With a vision of transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledgeable society by providing high quality education to all, National Education Policy, 2020, with the approval of Union Cabinet of India has now replaced the National Policy of Education, 1986.

With the aim of Orienting School Heads of Primary Schools of South Sikkim on the same, a two days web based Orientation Program was organised by DIET, Namchi on 17 and 18 Sept, 2020. Participants of the event were the School Heads of Primary schools, Principals and Faculties of DIETs (West & East), and Assistant

Directors of Block Administrative Centres of South Sikkim. 91 Participants participated actively in the event.

The Inaugural Session began with a warm welcome by Principal, Ganesh Chandra Dahal, DIET, Namchi and was chaired by Deputy Director, DB Subba, Education Department, South Sikkim.

Two key note speakers, Dr SR Adhikari and Sagar Moktan, Joint Directors of SCERT, Sikkim gave their deliberations on prospects, opportunities, need and preparedness of the teachers according to NEP, 2020 and the Implementation of same in due course.

Faculties of DIET, Namchi viz. Dr Nanda

Lal Sharma, Ajay Subba, Parumita Rai, Bandana Chettri, Nayuma Rai, Passang Lhamu Bhutia and Martha Lepcha were the resource persons of the event who gave presentations on important aspects and themes of NEP, 2020 such as Strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, New Curriculum and Pedagogical Structure, Transformation of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Teacher and Teacher Education, Equitable & Inclusive Education for Every Child in the Country, School Complexes, Effective Management and Administration of Schools, Promoting Indian Languages, etc.

Couple attacked, accused arrested

RUDRA KAUSHIK

GYALSHING, 19 SEPT:

A couple at Lasso under Yuksam Yashiding constituency was brutally attacked with an iron bar by an alleged burglar in the wee hours of Saturday morning. The victims of the violent attack, Laxmi Prasai Sharma and his wife Parmila Sharma have suffered grievous injuries and they have been referred to CRH Tadong.

The accused is one Kidra Bhutia, son of Rinzing Yongda Bhutia of upper Lasso who has been arrested by Tashiding police with the help of the victim's neighbours.

The accused has

been charged with attempt to murder charge under section 307 along with other relevant sections such as 326/457/441/459 of Indian Penal Code. The case is under investigation.

As per the victims, the incident took place at around 3.00am in the morning when they were fast sleep. The couple further informed that the accused somehow managed to enter the room they were sleeping in and attacked them with an iron bar. However, the couple was able to raise an alarm alerting the neighbours who came to their rescue.

After nabbing the culprit, the neighbours informed Tashiding police and handed over the culprit



to the police.

Both husband Laxmi Prasai Sharma and Pramila Sharma have suffered major injuries on their head and other body parts. They were then taken to CRH Tadong immediately.

According to the neighbours, the accused might have entered the house with the motive of robbery.

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BUILDING FOR SALE

A two storey house building constructed on plot area 50×40 ft. Situated at Upper Phong near Phong SS, South Sikkim is on sale. Cost Rs 56 Lakhs (Negotiable). Interested party may contact : 8145829309, 7864937800, 9749897695.

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LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

FOR RENT

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

SAATHI life skills training for West Sikkim students

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:

Three days training on life skills was organized by SAATHI through digital platform where students from seven schools of Sikkim participated, a press release informs. The training was started from 17 to 19 Sept, 2020.

The participating schools were, MangshilaSr Sec School, Kalzang GyatsoSr Sec School (Kabi), KewzingSr Sec School (Sreebadam), DentamSr Sec School, KitamSr Sec School, EncheySr Sec School and Middle Gyalshing Sec School.

The objective of this camp was to provide knowledge among students about various life skills which we require in everyday basis.

The sessions covered

were career guidance by Associate Professor, DrSatyadeep S Chhetri, NB Bhandari Govt Degree College and Interpersonal Relationship & Teamwork by Research Scholar & Counselling P s y c h o l o g i s t , Roshni Chhetri.

Coping with emotion and stress by Counselling P s y c h o l o g i s t , Pragyan Dewan and Communication Skills & Time Management by Professor, HoD (Dept of Social Science) SCERT, Manorath Dahal.

Awareness & usage of social media by Advocate, Pragya Parameeta, Co-founder of Accelerator & Eastern Himalayan News Services and Coordinator, Prashant Sharma, Sikkim Drug Users Forum had shared his life experience with the students.

PTCA surgery successfully performed in CRH

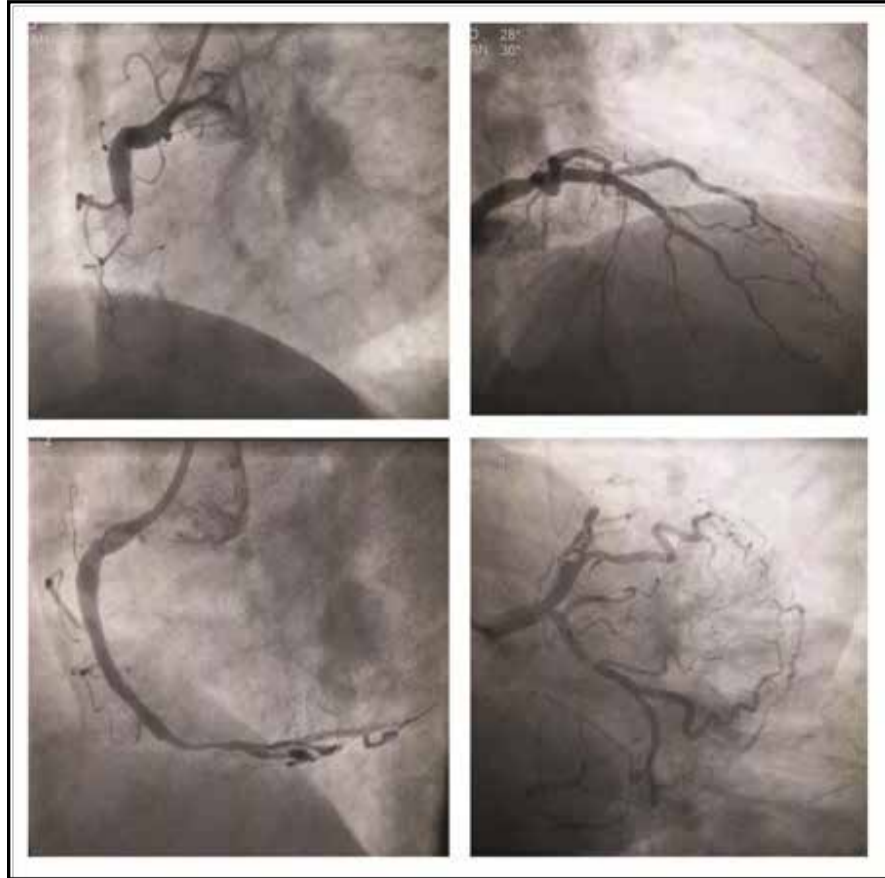
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:

A 55-year-old male came to the Department of Cardiology, Central Referral Hospital (CRH), Sikkim Manipal University with complain of persistent chest pain. Electrocardiogram (ECG) revealed changes suggestive of ongoing heart attack, a press release from the hospital informs.

He was immediately rushed to the Cath Lab and coronary angiogram was performed. The angiogram showed 100% occlusion (blockage) with thrombus (clot) of two major arteries proximally and the third artery also showed 90% stenosis (narrowing) proximal to the heart.

This is a rare presentation wherein both of the arteries in heart showed clot and third artery showing narrowing with possibility of fatal outcome. The patient was lucky to have survived to reach a hospital, the release mentions.

The Cardiology Team under the able leadership of Dr SaifulHaque,



Consultant Cardiologist, CRH and his team immediately took up the patient for life saving ballooning Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty (PTCA). PTCA where both arteries were opened in the same sitting. The chest pain disappeared, and the patient showed improvement in

symptoms.

Patient was admitted for three days of which two days were spent in intensive care in the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) of CRH, and discharged on the third day with advice for PTCA and stenting of 3rd artery after 1-2 weeks. This is a story of timely intervention by a

committed, competent and dedicated healthcare team during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The cardiology department at Super Speciality wing of CRH is equipped with the state-of-the-art Cath Lab and has successfully been treating life threatening cardio (heart) ailments with high success rates.

Poultry farms cause pollution, can't be exempted from regulation: NGT

NEW DELHI, SEP 19 (PTI): The National Green Tribunal has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to revisit the guidelines for classifying poultry farms as Green category industry and exempting their regulation under various laws.

The green panel asked the CPCB to issue fresh appropriate orders within three months and if no further order is issued, all the state pollution control boards will require enforcement of consent mechanism under the Air, Water and Environment Protection Acts.

"Till then, even without such consent mechanism, the state pollution control boards may strictly enforce the environmental norms and take appropriate remedial action against any violation of water, air and soil standards statutorily laid down," a bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A K Goel said.

The tribunal said sustainable development is a part of the right to life and the state authorities are under obligation to protect the environment as per sustainable development concept.

"Responsibilities of the states to the environment are by Public Trust Doctrine. The Water Act, the Air Act, and the Environment (Protection) Act have been enacted in the wake of international conventions and override all other legislations.

"They create an obligation on the regulatory authorities to enforce the environmental

measures. There is no discretion to exempt the mandate of the Water Act for activities having the potential to cause water pollution," the bench said.

The NGT said the operation of poultry farms has the potential to cause damage to the environment which needs to be regulated.

It noted the submission of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute that poultry production is associated with a variety of environmental pollutants, including oxygen-demanding substance, ammonia, solids, besides it attracts flies, rodents, dogs and other pests that create local nuisances and carries diseases.

"Poor management of manure, litter and wastewater etc. adversely affects the living in the vicinity. Odour is generated for fresh and decomposed waste products such as manure, carcasses, feathers and bedding litter. Furthermore, intensive poultry production may be responsible for greenhouses gasses, acidification and eutrophication," the tribunal noted.

The NGT was hearing the plea filed by animal activist Gauri Maulekhi seeking quashing of the CPCB's 2015 guidelines exempting commercial poultry farms from the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act and delegating the power to local authorities.

As per the guidelines, farms which have more

than one lakh birds are required to take clearance under the section 25 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, while poultry farms with 5,000 birds have to register themselves with the local authorities.

The plea claimed that poultry farms caused extensive pollution in the surrounding areas as they have thousand of birds in intensive confinement, resulting in huge accumulation of waste.

This huge quantum of waste is seldom disposed scientifically. The poultry farms impact the ecology and the living of those who surround the farm. Pests which are

attracted to the farms make it difficult for the people living in the vicinity, it said.

"To keep thousands of birds alive in such intensive confinement and unclean surroundings it becomes important to administer non-therapeutic antibiotics regularly. The administration of these antibiotics adversely affects the health of those who live around the farms and those who consume the birds or eggs," the plea said.

It has also sought directions to regulate the use of antibiotics in poultry farms so that these drugs are not administered indiscriminately.

2 MLAs and 3 Ministers test positive for COVID-19

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 19 SEPT:

In screening prescribed in the SOPs in preparation for the upcoming Assembly Session, five MLAs, including three Ministers, tested positive for COVID-19.

DG-cum-Secretary, Health Department, while confirming the news today, informed that Agriculture Minister Loknath Sharma, Power Minister MN Sherpa, Forest Minister Karma Loday Bhutia, Melli MLA Farwanti Tamang and Barfung MLA TT Bhutia tested positive in the screening.

The Assembly session is scheduled for Monday.

Parliament's monsoon session likely to be curtailed, may end by mid-next week

NEW DELHI SEP 19 (PTI): The ongoing monsoon session of Parliament is likely to be curtailed and may end by the middle of next week in view of the threat of the COVID-19 spread among parliamentarians, official sources said on Saturday.

At a meeting of the business advisory committee of Lok Sabha, which has floor leaders of all parties besides the government representatives and is chaired by the Speaker, most political parties favoured curtailment of the session, which started on September 14 and was scheduled to conclude on October 1.

A final decision will be taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.

The Lok Sabha has so far passed three Bills to replace agriculture sector related ordinances. Also, both the Houses have cleared a bill to replace an ordinance for cutting by 30 per cent the salaries of MPs to ramp up funds in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

After some Members of Parliament, including Union ministers Nitin Gadkari and Prahlad Patel, tested positive for COVID-19 during the session, some opposition parties had conveyed to the government that conducting the full 18-day session could be a risky affair, sources said.

The government then started thinking in that direction, the sources

said.

Several MPs had also tested positive for COVID-19 around the time the session began and they were advised not to attend proceedings.

In order to prevent the spread of coronavirus within the parliament complex, reporters and parliamentary staff entering the premises now have to undergo the rapid antigen test mandatorily on a daily basis, according to a new protocol put in place.

Besides, members of both Houses are undergoing RT-PCR tests

on regular intervals on a voluntary basis, said a senior Parliament official.

A member of Parliament can undergo the RT-PCR test as many times he or she likes.

Journalists covering the monsoon session from press galleries of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha also have the option to undergo the RT-PCR test, which is valid for 72 hours.

Since the result of the much reliable RT-PCR test takes time, the antigen test has been made mandatory on a daily basis.

Government officials accompanying their respective ministers during the bill discussions also have to show a negative report of RT-PCR test taken within the last 72 hours of their visit to the complex.

The session began on September 14 and is slated to end on October 1. Both houses are meeting in shifts of four hours each without the customary Saturday-Sunday weekend break.

The Budget Session was short-terminated in March after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

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.
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New STNM

AMS : 9434711402



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

Battle the Bottle

Booze is a problem that the society ignores at its own peril

The festive season will soon be upon us; the lockdown, economic downturn and virus worries notwithstanding, a march of weeks and months which will be as much about piety as they will be about excesses, making it perhaps the right time to speak about alcoholism. A week's lull with the lockdown and the floodgates will open after that with restrictions and regulations finally mothballed. One can expect cops to be keeping a keener eye out to check drunken driving. Who knows, even those breathalyzer toys might get issued again and cops begin stopping vehicles and inviting drivers to blow into the equipment. One could argue about the many levels at which such random stopping [without any apparent reason] for random checks is wrong (inconvenient in the least), but that line will not find many backers once reports begin coming in of rash driving leading to road mishaps which are way too frequent despite restrictions on movement. And while checking by cops might lead to some challans and avert some accidents, what remains unaddressed is the root problem – alcoholism, a condition which does not surface only on weekends or only at night and is a 24x7 worry for too many families.

The problem of alcoholism is not talked about enough probably because it is substance abuse and HIV/ AIDS which receive funding, leading unfortunately to a situation where this condition is not as widely discussed as the scale of the problem requires. Many people tend to identify alcoholism as a traditional dispensation of the Hill People. This is an ill-informed preconception since alcoholism [as a wide-spread problem] could not have debuted in the hills more than half a century back or six decades at the most. Alcoholism really becomes possible with the arrival of the IMFLs [India Made Foreign Liquors] since the local brews required too much work and time to be manufactured in enough quantities to feed alcoholism on a scale that cause the kind of health and social complications which are now possible and common. It is hence wrong to begin any discussion on alcoholism by suggesting that it is a traditional weakness of the Hill People. The communities here might have allowed 'drinking', but that cannot be construed as addictive levels of drinking. The prejudice, however, because it serves so many businesses so well, has been allowed to set in and after it was ignored in the initial years [of IMFLs and other mass distilling units arriving], spread rapidly to ingrain itself in the society.

The damage wreaked by alcoholism cannot be stressed enough and media here should carry forward its success with getting the problem of substance abuse addressed and report more effectively and widely on the abuse of alcohol which is just as impairing. But the local media, when it overlooks the problem of alcoholism in the society, ends up reflecting the social acceptance of this malaise. Sikkim's indifference towards this problem will weigh heavy on its collective conscience some day. Many excuse alcoholism with the argument that the person is earning enough to indulge himself/ herself. Substance abuse, because it usually starts at a much younger age, is more scandalous also because of the petty crimes that the addicts invariably resort to finance their addictions. While there is no denying that substance abuse is a serious concern, alcoholism, because not enough seem to be taking it seriously, is even more worrying. Even if one were to keep the emotions aside, the impact alcoholism has on the economy should attract corrective action. Most people turn alcoholic in what should be the most productive years of their lives, both professionally as well as part of a family. When their faculties are compromised, as alcoholism is wont to do, their work suffers as do their families. Indifference towards this problem puts too much at risk because like with all social problems, alcoholism does not affect only the individual but has the entire family suffering. While the younger 'addict' makes the elders of the family suffer guilt pangs, an alcoholic, because in most cases they are working members of the family, end up abusing the family [because they have more 'power' but less control]. This is a social problem and requires the community to step forward and engage proactively in its battle against the bottle. Sadly, in Sikkim, even the war-cary has not been sounded yet...

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Strong relationships help kids catch up after 6 months of COVID-19 school closures

LISA BAYRAMI

THECONVERSATION.COM

Many Canadian children are now returning to their classrooms after schools shut down in March to stem the spread of COVID-19.

Classrooms under strict health guidelines are very different to the settings children knew last spring. The children may be different too, having experienced family stress brought about by fear, uncertainty or life-changing events related to the pandemic, such as family violence.

Students' learning loss over the summer months has long been the subject of research concern — some call it the "summer slide." COVID-19 school closures have been almost three times as long as a summer vacation, prompting some to discuss a potential COVID-19 slide. Researchers have projected that due to pandemic school closures some students may have lost a year's worth of learning in some elementary grade subjects — particularly more vulnerable students who have faced traumatic events during the shutdown.

The amplification of the effects of learning loss is an important consideration. But directing attention to missed learning should not mean overlooking the powerful contribution of relationships, well-being and mental health to student success — an elevated priority for children who have experienced fear and trauma related to the pandemic. How school districts respond may have a lasting effect on this generation.

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EXCESSIVE STRESS PREVENTS LEARNING

Educators can alleviate some of the negative consequences of excessive stress and enhance children's well-being through positive and attuned relationships — relationships where educators

are tuned in, aware of and responsive to children's emotional needs as they are being expressed. Well-being is a required condition upon which achievement is built.

The growing international body of evidence on the impact of social isolation on the mental health and well-being of young people has led to calls for school systems to take a balanced approach to reopening, addressing children's mental health as well as their educational needs.

Children experiencing increased stress, anxiety and worries as a result of the pandemic are operating in a state of high alert. This affects their ability to regulate emotions and impulses, and to attend to, reflect upon and remember information, as well as to engage in constructive relationships with others.

In a spring report for UNESCO, as children and their teachers were entering the new world of distance learning and isolation, renowned educator Armand Doucet and his colleagues argued that students needed to feel safe and have their basic needs met as a priority.

REGULATION OF STRESS THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

The ability to regulate students' stress and anxiety through classroom relationships is a powerful tool to support academic outcomes.

Attempts to fulfil urgent academic expectations, without addressing children's fundamental need for emotional safety, will exacerbate children's feelings of stress and anxiety and even further challenge their ability to self-regulate.

When children experience this state of imbalance, they perform more poorly in school. Their bodies go into a state of fight-or-flight, with survival being the primary focus, leaving little room for learning.

Educators have been subject to the stresses of the pandemic too.

In a survey of 17,352 Canadian educators by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, 44 per cent expressed concerns about their own mental health and well-being.

Here are three ways school systems and school leaders can support student emotional well-being to ground academic success.

1. Foster teachers' sense of personal and professional safety. In order for educators to attend to the well-being of their students, they must also prioritize their own well-being.

When school systems and school leaders provide reassurance of personal safety, opportunity to collaborate with peers and time to adapt their classroom practices, they contribute to educators' sense of well-being. Research suggests that perceiving that decisions and actions can impact life outcomes is associated with lower work stress, greater likelihood of asking for support and positive thinking.

Teachers need to have agency to shape the learning environment, and to assess and address their students' emotional well-being and readiness to learn before embarking on an ambitious plan to make up for lost academic time. When teachers feel safe and supported, they will be better positioned to support their students through responsive relationships.

In turn, students connect to teachers' cues and feel soothed and safe. Through the important co-regulating responses of the educator-student relationship, children's autonomic nervous systems (the primary mechanism behind the fight-or-flight response) are calmed. This creates a state of readiness to engage and learn.

2. Modify academic expectations. Curriculum documents lay out expectations for each grade. There is no

prescription for the timing of delivery, nor of the pacing. As professionals, teachers are well-aware of curricular expectations, and they modify pace and order to suit their class. Principals, vice-principals and any teachers in school leadership roles should recognize this need, and signal to teachers that this is OK. Teachers will plan to meet curriculum expectations as they always have, but there may be modification in their planned timelines particularly at the start of the year.

Encouraging teachers to set reasonable expectations and being kind to themselves will also support positive mental health. Self-compassion supports feelings of safety and security.

By accepting that things are different, and curbing the propensity to take on unrealistic timelines for improvement, educators can help students transition from a state of heightened stress to a more balanced state — a precursor to learning and success.

3. Build relationships with families. By taking an interest in how families are doing, and really listening, school-based educators take the lead on building more caring relationships with children and their homes. Home-school partnerships are crucial to understanding children's well-being needs, and prioritizing them would help realize the pandemic's catch phrase of collaboration and mutual support: "We're all in this together."

Making children feel emotionally safe and supporting their ability to self-regulate through positive relationships, and prioritizing teacher well-being and family connections, will support the quest for academic success.

[the writer is Contract Lecturer, Department of Education and Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Lakehead University]

Recycling isn't enough — the world's plastic pollution crisis is only getting worse

STEPHANIE B. BORRELLE

THECONVERSATION.COM

Plastic production and consumption has snowballed since large-scale production began in the 1950s. In 2020, an estimated 24 million to 34 million tonnes of plastic waste will enter the world's lakes, rivers and oceans. That is roughly the weight of 21,000 rail locomotives.

And if trends continue without improvements in the way we manage plastic waste, we could be spewing as much as 90 million tonnes of plastic waste into the world's waters by 2030. Already, an estimated 10,000 tonnes of plastic waste enter the Great Lakes every year.

Back in 2015, the world agreed that eight million tonnes of plastic waste contaminating the ocean alone was unacceptable. Several international platforms emerged to address the crisis, including Our Ocean, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the G7 Ocean Plastic Charter, among others.

These are ambitious commitments, but will they meaningfully reduce plastic pollution?

New research published in Science shows that even if governments around the world adhere to their global commitments to address plastic pollution, and all others join in these efforts, in 2030 we will still emit between 20 million and 53 million tonnes of plastic waste into the world's aquatic ecosystems. Global commitments do not match the scale of the problem — we need to rethink our strategy.

THE MYTH OF PLASTIC RECYCLING

Plastics are commonly tossed into mixed-recycling bins to be conveniently collected and — we incorrectly assume — remade anew. The reality is that we're "wishcycling." In fact, less than 10 per cent of plastics are recycled.

Virgin plastics are cheaper to produce than recycled products, undermining the viability of the recycling sector. For example, in 2019, California's largest recycling plant closed, laying off 750 employees, because of increased business costs and falling prices for recycled materials.

The abundance of disposable plastic has led to waste colonialism — the dumping of large quantities of mixed-plastic waste in developing countries, most commonly Southeast Asia.

These practices are fuelled by policies that harken back to European colonization of the Americas. They give companies access to the raw materials used to make plastics today — oil and ethane gas — often without approval, and that directly endanger the lives of Indigenous women.

UNEQUAL HEALTH IMPACTS

Across the globe, health problems associated



with plastics production disproportionately affect lower-income Black, Indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC) communities. That's because the bulk of the petrochemical plants producing plastics are located in communities of colour.

Thousands of toxic chemicals are used in plastics production and most are unregulated. Bisphenol A (BPA), banned from many consumer plastics, has simply been replaced with other bisphenols such as BPS or BPF, even though they may be as hazardous to human health. Subsequently, plastics workers suffer high rates of respiratory and cardiovascular disease and cancers.

It's no coincidence that Louisiana, a hotbed for the petrochemical sector, is the epicentre of what is known as "Cancer Alley." Perhaps a more appropriate name would be "Cardiovascular-respiratory-illness-reproductive-disorder-cancer Alley." BIPOC communities have been overburdened with pollution for decades, and air pollution from petrochemical plants is a leading cause of chronic respiratory illnesses contributing to greater risks of morbidity from diseases like COVID-19.

Globally, plastic waste treatment facilities (collection, sorting, processing, recycling, incineration facilities and landfill sites) are frequently located in communities of colour, exacerbating negative health outcomes.

An estimated 15 million waste pickers worldwide pluck the most valuable pieces of plastic from mountains of imported waste to make their living. Often the remaining plastic is burned, belching carbon-rich smoke into the atmosphere. Everyone unfortunate enough to be in its plume inhales carcinogenic furans and dioxins. Plastics that aren't burned or processed are piled high or buried, contaminating previously arable soils and waterways.

WHAT DOES GENUINE PROGRESS LOOK

LIKE?

Progress requires us to address the structural inequality that encourages and normalizes the waste of resources, ecological destruction and the perpetuation of colonial systems.

Progress requires decolonial policies, where justice and equity are prioritized. That means the equitable investment in effective collection, sorting, cleaning, reuse, repair and recycling infrastructure, where BIPOC don't carry the burden of pollution.

It requires policies that dissuade the unabated extraction of resources and ensure companies are responsible for the life cycle of their plastic products. This would include abolishing US\$296 billion in subsidies provided annually by governments to petrochemical companies and introducing laws that require companies to pay for waste collection, recycling or disposal, rather than taxpayers.

Quantifying the scale and extent of plastic pollution helps us understand the kind of effort needed to make change, but just as vital is mapping the health, economic, cultural and human rights dimensions of this toxic industry.

By rallying for policies that tackle the underlying structures that perpetuate the plastic pollution crisis, we can reverse inequality, fulfil human rights obligations, improve the health of all communities and prevent and mitigate ecological damage. Policies like the Green New Deal are moving us in the right direction, but we need to do more.

If ever there was a time to redefine the business-as-usual plastics industry and transition to a healthy and more equitable global society, it is now.

[the writer is Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Ecology and evolutionary biology, University of Toronto]

UP STF arrests man for “duping” 600 people of 60 cr

LUCKNOW, SEP 19 (PTI): The Uttar Pradesh police on Saturday arrested a man for allegedly duping over 600 people of around Rs 60 crore on the promise of a 60 percent return on their investments.

The Special Task Force of the UP police said it arrested the racket’s mastermind, Hari Om Yadav, from Chandpur village in Sultanpur Road here under Gosaiganj police station at around 5 am.

The police also confiscated three mobile phones, five cheque books, one passbook, an Aadhaar card, a laptop and Rs 700 cash from the accused, the STF said in a statement.

The STF said it made the arrest following a probe into complaints by several people that they have been duped of their money on the promise of 60 percent returns on their investments.

During the probe, it transpired that the racket was being run through a multi-level marketing mechanism, with Hari Om Yadav, doubling as CMDs of Alaska Real Estate Pvt Ltd, Alaska Commodities and Alaska Enterprises and duping around 600 persons for Rs 60 crore.

A case was registered in this connection at Gosaiganj police station under various sections of the IPC, and as many as nine members of the gang were arrested earlier on September 15, the statement said.

Naga flag, constitution must be part of solution: NSCN (IM)

DIMAPUR, SEPT 18 [NAGALANDPAGE]: The NSCN (IM) has reiterated that the Naga national flag and Yehzabo (constitution) must form a part of the Indo-Naga political solution in order to qualify the Naga deal as honourable and acceptable.

A resolution to this effect was unanimously adopted in a joint council meeting of NSCN/GPRN held on Friday at CHq Hebron. The meeting deliberated on the historical and political rights of the Naga people and how the Indo-Naga political talks has reached this far.

A statement from the MIP NSCN/GPRN informed that the meeting also resolved that the Government of India and NSCN must seek a final agreement based on the historic Framework Agreement of 3rd August, 2015.

‘SOCIAL MEDIA MISUSE’ In a separate statement, the NSCN (IM) expressed indignation at what it alleged was the “social media misuse” to tarnish the image of Naga Army chief and thereby smudge the organization’s name.

“Such a social media nuisance is being floated on Facebook by resorting

Political blame game in WB over arrest of terrorists

KOLKATA, SEP 19 (PTI): The arrest of nine terrorists, including six from West Bengal, and busting of an al-Qaeda module on Saturday has triggered a political blame game in the state with opposition BJP and Congress alleging that intelligence failure and appeasement politics of the Mamata Banerjee government have led to such a pass.

The ruling Trinamool Congress on the other hand said the arrests can not be construed as failure on the part of the state administration which is committed to flush out terrorists.

The opposition is politicising an issue involving national security, the TMC said.

Leader of Congress party in Lok Sabha, Adhir Choudhury said the arrest of six alleged al-Qaeda operatives from Murshidabad district shows “total intelligence failure on the part of state police who are only busy running errands for Trinamool Congress leaders.”

“It throws up the



question whether the state administration is competent enough to tackle the spurt in terrorist activities in state. Earlier, we had heard about numerous cases of Jamat activists arrested. Now it is al-Qaeda, the most dreaded terror outfit in the world.

“This brings bad name to Murshidabad district which has borders with Bangladesh, to entire West Bengal,” Chowdhury, the WBPCC President said.

He alleged that these incidents send out the message of “communalisation pof olitics which does not augur well for the state.”

Playing the TMC government, senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha said

the state should shun “appeasement politics, dirty communal politics and take strong measures against terror modules setting up their bases in state.”

Sinha blamed the TMC of practicing votebank politics “which prevents the administration from taking any affirmative steps against terrorists.”

“Remember the RDX blast at Bowbazar over two decades back. The entire state is now sitting on a powder keg. If the administration doesn’t sit up and take note, Bengal will be in flames,” Sinha said.

Countering the allegations, TMC MP Sougata Roy said the

arrests should not lead to any question about the state government’s resolve to flush out and crush terrorists.

Roy said the terrorists cross over to this side of the border which is manned by central forces.

“The border forces could have been more vigilant,” he said adding there should be better coordination between the state and BSF.

He said there should be more vigil by the border guards so that infiltration can be thwarted and those coming to this side are tracked.

About the opposition charges, the veteran TMC leader

said “They are doing politics over an issue of national security”.

In early morning raids at Ernakulam in Kerala and Murshidabad in West Bengal, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday busted an inter-state module of al-Qaeda operatives and arrested nine persons.

The agency arrested six terrorists from West Bengal and three from Kerala.

Murshid Hasan, Iyakub Biswas, Mosaraf Hossen from Ernakulam and Najmus Sakib, Abu Sufiyan, Mainul Mondal, Leu Yean Ahmed, Al Mamun Kamal and Atitur Rehman from Murshidabad were arrested by the premier investigating agency.

A preliminary probe revealed that the arrested men were radicalised by Pakistan-based al-Qaeda terrorists on social media platforms and were motivated to launch attacks at multiple locations, including in the National Capital Region.

27 new cases push COVID-19 tally of Andamans to 3,631

PORT BLAIR, SEP 19 (PTI): The COVID-19 tally of Andaman and Nicobar Islands rose to 3,631 on Saturday as 27 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said.

T w e n t y - t h r e e infections were detected during contact tracing, while four new patients have travel history, he said.

Thirty-six more people have been cured of the disease, the official

said.

The Union territory now has 165 active coronavirus cases, while 3,414 people have recovered from the disease and 52 patients have succumbed to the infection so far, he said.

The administration has so far sent 50,035 samples for COVID-19 tests, of which 49,901 reports have been received and 134 are awaited, the official added.

14 new COVID-19 cases in Mizoram; tally rises to 1,548

AIZAWL, SEP 19 (PTI): At least 14 people, including six security personnel, have tested positive for novel coronavirus in Mizoram in the last 24 hours, taking the state’s tally to 1,548, an official said on Saturday.

Of the 14 new cases, eight were reported from Aizawl district, five from Lunglei and one from Serchhip district, the official said.

While six patients have no travel history and were diagnosed with COVID-19 during contact tracing, the remaining eight patients have returned from outside the state, he said.

Of the six security personnel testing

positive for COVID-19, five are of Assam Rifles and one BSF jawan, according to the official.

There are 575 active COVID-19 cases in the state while a total of 973 people have already recovered from the virus.

Mizoram has so far not reported any COVID-19 death.

Of the 575 active cases, 136 are security personnel, 18 are Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) staffers, 14 are truck drivers and the remaining 407 are civilians.

As many as 59,016 samples have been tested for COVID- 19 till Friday, according to the health department.

Elephant electrocuted to death in Jharkhand

CHATRA/RANCHI, SEP 19 (PTI): An elephant died after coming in contact with a live wire in Jharkhand on Saturday, a senior forest officer said.

The incident took place in a village adjoining Bhelwatand forest along the border of Ranchi and Chatra districts, Ranchi Divisional Forest Officer

“A 35-year-old female elephant, which was part of a 22-strong herd, came in contact with a live wire illegally connected to an irrigation pump,” Dubey told PTI.

A case was registered against the person, on whose field the wire was laid, and the matter is being investigated, he added.

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Real Madrid begin La Liga defence surrounded by air of mystery

SID LOWE
LONDON, 19 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: Real Madrid beat Getafe 6-0 this week, or so it goes. The league champions' only pre-season match was a ghost game: there was no one there to watch it, which is at least perfect preparation these days, but there were no television cameras and no report either, no lineups, no mention of it on the club's Twitter and no glimpse of the goals – four of them scored by Karim Benzema. Sergio Ramos got a penalty, which you like to imagine was a Panenka, and Sergio Arribas hit the other. Or did he head it? Who knows? That is what the sports paper AS said, anyway, although they were understandably sketchy on the details.

Madrid treated it as a training session not to be shared. There is a photo of the captains, Ramos and David Timor, with the officials but, under the headline "the week's second training session", all the club's website reveals is: "Some of the squad played a training match against Getafe in the Alfredo Di Stéfano. Another group of players worked in the gym and on pitches one and two." And that's pretty much that.

A previous friendly against Rayo Vallecano had already been cancelled because of Covid and so in the end everyone was denied the only chance to see Real Madrid before they begin the defence of their title at Real Sociedad on Sunday night, joining La Liga a week later than most but a week earlier than Barcelona, Sevilla, Athletic and Elche. Their impressive win over Getafe – if

that's what it was – was clandestine, which feels oddly appropriate after a summer when Madrid have gone unexpectedly unnoticed, almost hidden away with none of the normal noise.

All things are relative and maybe not even they could shout above the rolling thunder from Catalonia, but in the capital these have been unusually inactive days largely devoid even of rumour. There have been moves for Gareth Bale, James Rodríguez, Achraf Hakimi, Óscar Rodríguez, Brahim Díaz, Sergio Reguilón, Dani Ceballos and Kubo, possibly Luka Jovic too, almost an entire team's worth of talent, but all are outbound moves and none had a significant role last season. There are just four low-key arrivals, all loan returnees. Of those, the only one that can be considered a probable starter is Martin Ødegaard – the outstanding midfielder in Spain until lockdown, heading back from Real Sociedad a year earlier than planned.

Otherwise, the faces will be familiar following a process of sporting consolidation and financial accumulation for Madrid, conscious of the impact of the coronavirus crisis and preparing for 2021, when they hope Kylian Mbappé comes on the market. It's not just that Madrid have not bought anyone; it is that from the start they were clear that they would not, almost all the talk silenced before it had even begun, however hard some tried. There has also been no tour, and not much time. "It's been different, much shorter, but it's been intense and the team is in



good condition," Thibaut Courtois said.

Madrid's income this season is projected to be closer to €650m (£596m) than the €822m they had planned for last season. That target was not met, incomes dropping by an estimated 15%, but Madrid did turn a small €320,000 profit by imposing 10% pay cuts and completing transfers out. Those deals have resulted in a saving on salaries and raised almost €100m on sales – although that figure is cast into considerable doubt by the claim of Rodríguez's former club Banfield, entitled to a proportion of any fee, that far from paying €25m for the Colombian, Everton got him for free.

Maybe, then, no one needed the Getafe game to predict what Madrid will look like this season, and not just because Ødegaard, Mariano, Jovic, Lucas Vázquez, Marco Asensio and Isco didn't play. On the face of it, the answer is obvious: like last season. And they are the champions, after all.

It shouldn't look exactly the same though, even with Zinedine Zidane still in charge, seeking to become the first Madrid manager to win back-to-back titles

in almost 30 years. Last season the revolution was cancelled.

Even the transition didn't take place, a generational shift put on hold then that must be restarted now. Luka Modric is 35, Ramos is 34, Marcelo and Benzema are 32, Kroos 30.

Of those that played important roles, only Ferland Mendy, 25, and Fede Valverde, 22, had not been there the previous season and in the case of the Uruguayan, so important in the opening six months, he slipped from the side after lockdown.

Valverde may anticipate greater continuity, and a role must be found for Ødegaard, who has been convinced to come back. Greater responsibility and roles may also be handed to Rodrygo, 19, and Vinicius, who is 20. A year on, it is not a stretch to expect them to be better. Borja Mayoral has returned from loan at Levante and could climb ahead of Mariano and Jovic, for whom Madrid seek a buyer. They will need more goals from somewhere: 22 players scored last season, helping to disguise their reliance on Benzema, but their second top marksman was Ramos. That can't continue.

Which is where Eden Hazard comes in, or at least that's what they hope. Not just at Madrid but at the league, clinging to the star quality he has but is yet to show. Madrid's first galáctico since Rodríguez, Hazard arrived five kilos overweight, suffered an ankle injury, played just 16 league games in his debut season – at a cost of €10m per match – and scored only once. Rather less was said than it might have done, Madrid winning the league anyway, but that can't last.

And yet, with Hazard still not ready or at his ideal weight, Roberto Martínez was unable to field the player during the international break. "He's 100% medically but a returning player needs 60 sessions," the Belgium coach said but he hasn't had any with his Madrid teammates, not even the ghost game with Getafe.

"I will be judged on my second season; it's up to me to be in shape," Hazard said during quarantine. On Sunday night, his Real Madrid teammates emerge from the quiet and step back into the spotlight to start that season without him.

St. Louis Online chess: Harikrishna stuns Carlsen but later suffers four losses

CHENNAI, SEP 19 (PTI): Indian Grandmaster P Harikrishna pulled off a stunning win over world champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway but suffered four losses later in the day to slip to overall sixth place in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament. Harikrishna defeated world number one Carlsen in round three of Blitz 1 in 63 moves with white pieces. He also beat lower-rated American Jeffery Xiong but save for the two wins, he had a forgettable day as he suffered four defeats, apart from three draws.

His losses were against Americans Leinier Dominguez and Wesley, Alexander

Grischuk of Russia and Iranian prodigy Alireza Firouzja.

Harikrishna shares the sixth place with Armenian GM Levon Aronian with 3.5 points after the nine rounds of Blitz 1.

Carlsen, who had dropped to second place behind So at the end of the Rapid event, leapt to the top spot in the standings with 18.5 points. He scored 6.5 points in the Blitz 1 despite defeats at the hands of Harikrishna and Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia.

The tournament concludes with the Blitz-2 later on Saturday.

In each Blitz game, a win is worth one point



while a draw carries half a point and a loss zero point. In each rapid game, a win is worth two points while a draw carries one point.

The ten players are competing for a USD 250,000 prize fund in

nine rapid games and eighteen blitz games over five days of play.

Standings after Blitz-1: 1. Magnus Carlsen (NOR) 18.5 points, 2. Wesley So (USA) 18, 3. Ian Nepomniachtchi (RUS) 15, 4. Hikaru Nakamura

(USA) and Alexander Grischuk (RUS) 14.5, 6. P Harikrishna (IND) and Levon Aronian (ARM) 12.5, 8. Jeffery Xiong (USA) 11.5, 9. Leinier Dominguez (USA) 9.5, 10. Alireza Firouzja (Iran) 8.5.

No fond farewell but Zidane praises 'spectacular' Bale impact

MADRID, 19 SEPT (REUTERS): Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said he did not say anything to Gareth Bale before he left to sign for Tottenham Hotspur but insisted he had no personal issue with the Wales forward and praised what he did for the Spanish club.

Bale travelled to London on Friday to finalise a return to Tottenham on loan after seven years at Real which

witnessed a remarkable haul of trophies and goals but ended with the player barely featuring at the end of last season.

"I did not speak to him," Zidane told a news conference ahead of Real's first game in La Liga away to Real Sociedad on Sunday, where they will begin their title defence.

"But I know what he has done for this club. He always proved his quality and what he has achieved

with the club cannot be argued with."

While Bale was key to Real winning the 2016 Champions League in Zidane's first season, he was absent from most of the second campaign due to injuries and never managed to re-establish himself as a first-choice player for the Frenchman, even after scoring twice in the 2018 final against Liverpool.

But Zidane disagreed with the perception he

forced Bale out.

"It's not like that. It's more complicated. With Bale it's always about one side against the other. But I've never had a problem with Gareth.

"There will always be things that happen. Now he's making a change, all we can do is wish him the best... These things happen in football, but I've always said he was a spectacular player."

There will now be more expectation

on Real's joint-most expensive player, Eden Hazard, although the Belgian is unlikely to feature against Real Sociedad.

Hazard's debut season at Real was marred by two ankle injuries and other fitness troubles. Zidane said he would not rush him back to action.

"We have more time to prepare for the season and all he needs to do is ensure he gets to 100 or 120% fitness," he said.

AIFF to conduct three-day International Virtual Conference for coaches

NEW DELHI, SEP 19 (PTI): The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is set to organise an International Virtual Conference for coaches from September 28-30.

The three-day conference will feature sessions by several top-level speakers including men's national team head coach Igor Stimac, Phil Brown, Thomas Dennerby (India U-17 women's national team coach), Basir Mohamed (senior manager, FIFA coaching development department), Dawn Scott (high-performance coach, FA UK), among others.

"The conference is based on various aspects, such as youth football, women's football, media, scouting and coach education, where an instructor from the FIFA Coach Education department will be there," AIFF head of coach education Savio Medeira said

during a chat with AIFF TV.

"On the last day, we have planned a master class with two of the best coaches -- national team head coach Igor Stimac and Phil Brown," Medeira added.

For the first time ever, the attending coaches will be accorded credits as part of the new revalidation process introduced by Medeira.

"I want to kick off by giving credits to the coaches who are attending the seminar. This conference will be for C, B, A and Pro-license at the moment because these certificates do not have revalidation.

"The revalidation will start from C, B, A and Pro. Along with my coach educators and department, we would like to start by giving them points and accepting as CPD (Continuing Professional Development), which is

needed by coaches for refreshing themselves."

Under the new system, the coaching licenses will fall under a validity period and will need to be renewed periodically.

"Revalidation is very important for us. It's long overdue. To have a stronger coaching convention criteria there has to be revalidation," he explained."

Coaches with C Certificate, B, A and PRO diploma who have finished the courses will receive a license, much like a Smart card, where the validity of four years will be mentioned. So every four years, each coach will have to attend refresher courses, which will be shown to them.

"CPD is vital if we want to keep up to the AFC's A-Level Coaching Convention. CPD does happen everywhere else in the world and it is a big challenge to start it here.

'Fit and Fresh' Dhoni ready to lead Chennai in IPL



MUMBAI, 19 SEPT [REUTERS]: Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who retired from international cricket last month, is in top shape and ready to lead the Chennai Super Kings in the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League on Saturday, head coach Stephen Fleming has said.

The 39-year-old former skipper drew curtains on an illustrious, trophy-laden career for the national team, having not played for India since their semi-final exit at the 50-overs World Cup in July last year.

Due to his long break, there were concerns over Dhoni's readiness for the IPL, which will be played in the United Arab Emirates due to the worsening COVID-19 pandemic in India.

"It has been no different," former

New Zealand captain Fleming said in an interview on the team's website here&news_providerId=3 on Friday. "He's very fit and mentally he's been very engaged and determined.

"In some ways the break can work for the experienced and older players that we have. MS is fresh and ready to go."

The IPL kicks off on Saturday with a repeat of last year's final, which the Mumbai Indians won by one run against the Chennai outfit.

Three-time winners CSK did not have an ideal pre-season when many people from their touring party tested positive for the novel coronavirus upon arriving in the UAE, but Fleming felt the squad had dealt with the challenge well.

Adjusting to the conditions in the

Emirates also means the 2020 edition of the popular Twenty20 tournament will be tactically "very different" and Fleming is banking on the wealth of experience in his side to adapt.

Apart from Dhoni, the Chennai side also boast experienced campaigners like Australian Shane Watson, Dwayne Bravo of West Indies and Pakistan-born South African Imran Tahir.

"We've got experienced players, and experienced players identify key times and that's why they've done so well in their careers, that they can turn games, absorb pressure or just sum out the situation," Fleming said.

"That's what experience is about and that's why we value it so highly."

Looking to play good brand of cricket to make this season a memorable one: KL Rahul

DUBAI, SEP 19 (PTI): Kings XI Punjab skipper KL Rahul on Saturday said the side is motivated to making this IPL season a memorable one by playing a good brand of cricket.

The Rahul-led side will open its campaign against Delhi Capitals at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

"The team has been fantastic, we've been getting along great and are looking forward to playing a good brand of cricket and making this season a memorable one," Rahul said.

"We're confident, we're motivated and we are really excited to be a part of this edition of the Indian Premier League," he added.

Rahul, who has been handed the Kings XI Punjab captaincy after two stellar seasons with



the bat at the top of the order, said it will be a challenging experience playing in the UAE without the fans but the team is ready for it.

"It is going to be a different experience this year, but we as a team are up to the challenge and are playing for all the fans who continue to support us," Rahul said.

KXIP, who have never won the IPL, are aiming to go all the way this time with a strong squad at their disposal with the likes of Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Mohammad Shami and overseas recruits Chris Gayle,

Glenn Maxwell, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, the in-form Nicholas Pooran and Mujeeb Zadran.

"The team looks great and we have a top-notch line up this season. The boys have been working really hard and we have a nice balance of youth and experience in our squad," head Coach Anil Kumble said.

"We are all looking forward to having a good season this year. I truly believe that Kings XI Punjab have the necessary squad to go all the way in this IPL," he added.

Court weighs allowing courtroom cameras in George Floyd case

MINNEAPOLIS (AP): The trial of four former Minneapolis police officers charged in George Floyd's death will generate massive public interest when it begins in March, but as it stands, most people who want to watch the proceedings will be out of luck.

The judge overseeing the case has yet to decide whether cameras will be allowed. Supporters of audio and visual coverage say the high-profile nature of Floyd's death, the outrage that led to worldwide protests, and courtroom restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic make this the right time and case to allow cameras in court. But the state attorney general's office, which is prosecuting the case, opposes them, saying cameras would only create more problems.

"I just can't think of a situation where it's more important than a case like this for the public to see what's actually transpiring in the courtroom," said Jane Kirtley, director of the Silha Center for the Study of Media Ethics and Law.

"Justice that cannot be observed cannot really be considered justice. The public won't believe what they can't see," she added.

In June, Judge Peter Cahill decided against allowing audio and visual coverage of pretrial proceedings because he said it would risk tainting

the possible jury pool and the state opposed it. But Cahill, who is still weighing requests to try the defendants separately, said he would rule on trial audio and video coverage at a later date. It's unclear when that ruling will come.

Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, died May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white officer, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck even as Floyd said he couldn't breathe. Floyd's death was captured in widely seen bystander video that set off protests around the world.

Chauvin is charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter. Thomas Lane, J. Kueng and Tou Thao are charged with aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and manslaughter. All four officers were fired.

Unlike many other states, Minnesota does not allow cameras at criminal trials before sentencing unless the judge, prosecutors and defense attorneys agree to them. The former officers have consented to cameras, but prosecutors have resisted, saying they may revisit the issue as the trial nears.

Defense attorneys say cameras would help ensure the trial is fair and open during the pandemic, when courtroom attendance has been limited to allow



for social distancing. They have asked Cahill to grant camera access regardless of whether prosecutors agree.

Prosecutor Matthew Frank wrote in July that the state was concerned that live audio and visual coverage "may create more problems than they will solve." Among them, Frank wrote, broadcast coverage of the trial could alter the way lawyers present evidence, force participants to endure even more media scrutiny or intimidate witnesses.

Earl Gray, Lane's attorney, said in a written response that it was "obvious" Frank and Attorney General Keith Ellison have never tried a televised high-profile case. "I have tried a handful in Wisconsin and there is absolutely no issue. You do not even know the cameras are there."

A coalition of media organizations, including The Associated Press, has requested camera access, arguing that cameras would increase transparency, especially during the pandemic.

Kirtley, who is part of the coalition, said any concerns that cameras would be disruptive can be managed by the judge. Although overflow courtrooms can increase access, they are often small, their closed-circuit monitors may not provide the best quality and the experience is usually diminished. She said meaningful access is key, and there should be a presumption that the public has a right to see everything that happens in the courtroom.

Livestreaming proceedings to the court's YouTube channel could be an option as well, she said.

Other states have chosen to do that during the pandemic.

"It's frankly time for us to move into the 21st century," Kirtley said.

Raleigh Hannah Levine, a professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, said many states have used cameras in the courtroom for years and concerns raised by Ellison's team have been largely non-issues.

Most of the concerns, she said, stemmed from the 1995 O.J. Simpson trial, where attorneys, the judge and witnesses were criticized for apparently performing for the camera. She said the world has come a long way since then and that the widespread use of social media, not to mention the increase in videoconferencing during the pandemic, has changed many people's views about being

captured on video.

Levine also said the Supreme Court — which made history in May by hearing arguments by phone and allowing the world to listen in for the first time — has long recognized that open proceedings can serve as a check on possible abuses and can prevent vigilantism.

"If people see how the trial is proceeding, they have less reason to take the matter into their own hands," she said. If people can see how the judge handles a trial, how evidence is presented and hear witnesses for themselves, it can increase their confidence in the judicial system.

"Whichever way it comes out, people won't be as outraged by a verdict that they dislike because they might understand how it was reached," she said.

Russia's Navalny says he's now more than 'technically alive'



MOSCOW (AP): Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said he is recovering his verbal and physical abilities at the German hospital where he is being treated for suspected nerve agent poisoning but that he at first felt despair over his condition.

Navalny, the most visible opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on a domestic flight to Moscow on Aug. 20 and was transferred to Germany for treatment two days later. A German military lab later determined that the Russian politician was poisoned with Novichok, the same class of Soviet-era agent that Britain said was used on a former Russian spy and his daughter in England, in 2018.

Navalny was kept in an induced coma for more than a week while being treated with an antidote. He said in a Saturday post on Instagram that once he was brought out of the coma, he was confused and couldn't find the words to respond to a doctor's questions.

"Although I understood in general what the doctor wanted, I did not understand where to get the words. In what part of the head do they appear in?" Navalny wrote in the post, which accompanied a photo of him on a staircase. "I also did not know how to express my despair and, therefore, simply kept silent."

"Now I'm a guy whose legs are shaking when he walks up the stairs, but he thinks: 'Oh, this is a staircase! They go up it. Perhaps we should look for an

elevator,'" Navalny said. "And before, I would have just stood there and stared."

The doctors treating him at Berlin's Charite hospital "turned me from a 'technically alive person' into someone who has every chance to become the Highest Form of Being in Modern Society again — a person who can quickly scroll through Instagram and without hesitation understands where to put likes," he wrote.

The Kremlin has repeatedly said that before Navalny's transfer to Berlin, Russian labs and a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk found no sign of a poisoning. Moscow has called for Germany to provide its evidence and bristled at the urging of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other Western leaders to answer questions about what happened to the politician.

"There is too much absurdity in this case to take anyone at their word," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday.

Peskov also accused Navalny's colleagues of hampering a Russian investigation by taking items from his hotel room out of the country, including a water bottle they claimed had traces of the nerve agent.

Navalny's colleagues said that they removed the bottle and other items from the hotel room in the Siberian city of Tomsk Siberia and brought them to Germany as potential evidence. because they didn't trust Russian authorities to conduct a proper probe.

Ethiopia charges prominent opposition figure with terrorism

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA (AP): Ethiopia has charged its most prominent opposition figure, Jawar Mohammed, and 23 other people with terrorism-related offenses, telecom fraud and other criminal activities, the attorney general's office announced Saturday.

The office said they will appear in court on Monday. The charges relate to deadly violence that erupted in July in parts of the capital, Addis Ababa, and the Oromia region after the killing of singer Hachalu Hundessa, a prominent voice in anti-government protests that led to Prime

Minister Abiy Ahmed coming to power in 2018. Authorities said over 180 people were killed in the July unrest.

Jawar, a media mogul-turned-politician, has huge support among youth in the Oromia region and returned to Ethiopia after Abiy came to power and urged exiles to come home amid sweeping political reforms that led to him receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Oromo make up Ethiopia's largest ethnic group but had never held the country's top post until they helped bring Abiy to power. Now ethnic tensions and

intercommunal violence are posing a growing challenge to his reforms.

Jawar has become fiercely critical of the Ethiopian leader, most recently over the postponement of the general election once planned for August because of the coronavirus pandemic. The government's mandate expires late next month, and a new election date has not been set.

Jawar has been detained since he and several thousand people were arrested during the July violence. His lawyers have repeatedly asserted he was locked up because

of his political views and have called for his release.

Human rights groups have warned that such arrests show that Abiy's political reforms are slipping.

Youth in Oromia have staged a number of recent protests calling for the release of political prisoners, including one in late August that left "scores" of people dead, according to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and witnesses who spoke to The Associated Press.

Abiy in an opinion piece published this week in The

Economist wrote that "individuals and groups, disaffected by the transformations taking place, are using everything at their disposal to derail them. They are harvesting the seeds of inter-ethnic and inter-religious division and hatred." He rejected "dangerous demagogues."

The prime minister also acknowledged alleged abuses by security forces during the bouts of unrest, saying that "given the institutions we have inherited, we realize that law-enforcement activities entail a risk of human-rights violations and abuse." Security reforms take time, he said.

Iran vows 'hit' on all involved in US killing of top general

TEHRAN, SEP 19 (AP): The chief of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened on Saturday to go after everyone who had a role in a top general's January killing during a US drone strike in Iraq.

The guard's website quoted Gen. Hossein Salami as saying, "Mr. Trump! Our revenge for martyrdom of our great general is obvious, serious and real."

US President Donald Trump warned this week that Washington would harshly respond to any Iranian attempts to take revenge for the death of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, tweeting that if they hit us in any way, any form, written instructions already done we're going to hit them 1000 times



harder.

The president's warning came in response to a report that Iran was plotting to assassinate the US ambassador to South Africa in retaliation for Soleimani's killing at Baghdad's airport at the beginning of the year.

"We took out the world's number one terrorist and the mass murderer of American troops and many, many people

all over the world, Trump said. Qasem Soleimani is dead. He's dead. Bad guy. Bad guy. Very bad guy.

Salami rejected the report of an Iranian plot to assassinate Ambassador Lana Marks, but made clear that Iran intends to avenge the general's death.

"Do you think we hit a female ambassador in return to our martyred brother?" the general

said. We will hit those who had direct and indirect roles. You should know that everybody who had role in the event will be hit, and this is a serious message. We do prove everything in practice.

In January, Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting US soldiers in Iraq in response to the fatal drone strike.

Trump has stepped up economic pressure on Iran with sanctions since he pulled the United States out of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

Tehran has continued to expand its stockpile of enriched uranium and pressured other nations to offset the harm of US sanctions, while insisting it does not want to develop a nuclear weapon.

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SummitTIMES

Himani Shivpuri discharged from hospital days after COVID-19 diagnosis

MUMBAI, SEP 19 (PTI): Veteran Bollywood and television actor Himani Shivpuri, who was tested positive for coronavirus, on Saturday said she has been discharged from a city hospital here.

The 59-year-old actor was receiving treatment for the novel disease at Holy Spirit hospital after getting admitted on September 12.

Shivpuri said the doctors have advised her to quarantine at home as there was an improvement in her health.

"There is improvement in my health and doctors suggested I should be in home quarantine for 15 days and then I will get myself tested again," Shivpuri told PTI.

On Friday, the actor thanked healthcare workers in a post on her official Instagram page.

"A big thank you to our Covid warriors, the hospital staff, am back in home quarantine! Thank you all for your



positive wishes," Shivpuri had posted.

The actor had recently shot for comedy show "Happu Ki Ultan Paltan". She had said that even though adequate safety measures were followed on the sets, she still doesn't know how she contracted the disease. In her over three-decade-long career, Shivpuri has featured in many critically-acclaimed and blockbuster

movies such as "Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!", "Raja", "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", "Khamoshi", "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai", "Biwi No.1", "Hum Saath-Saath Hain" and "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham..."

On the small screen, she has been part of shows such as "Yatra", "Sasural Simar Ka", "Ek Vivah Aisa Bhi" and "Astitva... Ek Prem Kahani".

Luca Zingaretti to star in Italian prison drama The King



LOS ANGELES, SEP 19 (PTI): Acclaimed actor Luca Zingaretti has been signed on to play the lead role in Italian prison drama The King from European pay-TV operator Sky Italia.

The 58-year-old Italian star is known for playing Salvo Montalbano in mystery series Inspector Montalbano, based on the character and novels created by Andrea Camilleri.

According to Deadline, the show is being produced for Sky by Lorenzo Mieli's company The Apartment in collaboration with Wildside, producer of The New Pope and My Brilliant Friend.

The story is set in the prison of San Michele where Bruno Testori (Zingaretti), the director, applies his own idea of justice.

But when his kingdom risks collapse, threatened by an imminent danger, Bruno finds himself fighting the most difficult war of his life, the synopsis reads.

The eight-episode show has roped in 1992 helmer Giuseppe Gagliardi as director.

Stefano Bises, Peppe Fiore, Bernardo Pellegrini, and Davide Serino have penned the screenplay.

Bruno Testori is a sullen, majestic, perverse, and controversial character, a king. Playing him is a challenge that I immediately accepted and which I find enthralling, seeing how he continues to develop page after page, Zingaretti said.

Production on The King is set to begin by the end of this year or early 2021 in Rome, Turin, and Trieste.

Scarlett Johansson talks about passing on 'Black Widow' mantle to Florence Pugh



LOS ANGELES, SEP 19 (PTI): Actor Scarlett Johansson says she do believe that her "Black Widow" co-star Florence Pugh could succeed her as the titular superhero and take the franchise forward.

After 10 years and seven films of playing the Russian superspy-turned- Avenger, Johansson is expected to bid adieu to the character of Natasha Romanoff aka Black Widow with the upcoming film.

Pugh, the star of films such as "Little Women" and "Midsommar", plays the role of Yelena, Natasha's sister, in the Cate Shortland-directed movie.

During an interview with Total Film, Johansson was asked about her view on the idea of Pugh's Yelena taking over the mantle of Black Widow from Natasha.

"I definitely felt that way from the very beginning. She stands completely on her own. She's strong and different. She's so different to Natasha. You also see the generational difference, too, in how they react to things, and what they're careful about, or what they're careless about," the 35-year-old actor said.

"It's so fresh, what she does. It's very representative, also, of who she is as a person. She's unapologetic, and confident in herself, and curious, and brave, and emotionally brave far more than I ever was. And that stuff all comes through. It's wonderful to feel like you're witnessing something great happening," she added.

Pugh said she hasn't thought about the possibility of Yelena becoming the new Black Widow as she is still enjoying the moment that she is starring in Marvel movie.

"If you get asked to be in a Marvel film, and it was so thrilling and fun and exciting to be in, then of course, your head goes: 'Oh my God. If this is what it's like, then what else is next?'"

"If that happens and I am lucky enough that people appreciate my character, that's an exciting road to go on. I would be silly to not be excited by it. I think that being part of the Marvel club is a great honour. But we'll just see if people like Yelena first," the actor said.

"Black Widow", which also features David Harbour, Rachel Weisz and OT Fagbenle, is expected to release worldwide in November.



OUT AND ABOUT! The actress, Anne Hathaway wears an all black outfit with beige ballerina flats in NYC.

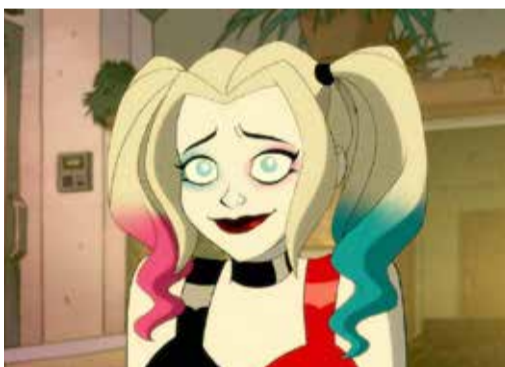
Harley Quinn' renewed for season 3 at HBO Max

LOS ANGELES, SEP 19 (PTI): Harley Quinn animated series has been renewed for a third season at Warner Bros-owned streaming platform HBO Max.

According to Deadline, the shift comes as DC Universe is moving out of scripted original series and will transition solely to comic book subscription service DC Universe Infinite, to be launched in January next year.

Actor Kaley Cuoco voices the titular DC anti-heroine in the series, the first two seasons of which were recently made available on HBO Max.

The adult animated show was developed by Justin Halpern, Patrick Schumacker and Dean Lorey.



The voice cast also features Lake Bell, Alan Tudyk, Ron Funches, Tony Hale, Jason Alexander, and JB Smoove.

Apart from Harley Quinn, DC Universe series Young Justice, Titans, Doom Patrol and Stargirl will also stream on HBO Max.

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ARIES:

You can have all the ka-ching in the world, but it won't fulfill that void in your being, Aries. The cards are urging you to look beyond your material reality and explore your inner landscape. Oh, the jewels you will find within once you commit to meeting your true self! Remember, complaining about the things that are not working out will only give them more power. Focusing on all the things that are aligning for you, on the other hand, will make space for miracles in the days to come.

TAURUS:

You've been *this* close to bringing the given project to life, yet you haven't been able to reach the final step. What's keeping you from making the big move, Taurus? Could your own self-doubt be creating hurdles for you? It's time to take your demons out for coffee, wild one. Some of you could be yearning to launch a project or business of your own. Trust that the fund you require will come to you at the right time provided you're willing to hustle for it, starting now.

GEMINI:

The only thing that's standing between you and the realisation of your dream is your own ego. A healthy sense of pride is recommended, Gemini, along with the openness to listen to the point of view of another. Remember, the end goal is to work with, rather than against, people. On the upside, you're becoming more focused and disciplined than ever before, which will in turn bring forth

the acclaim you truly deserve.

CANCER:

When your expenses start to outweigh your income, you know you've got a problem, Cancer. The cards are urging you to re-examine your finances. How and where do you need to realign in the days to come? If you're weighed down by responsibilities, ask those around you to provide assistance. Remember, there's no shame in asking for help. On the upside, the resources you require could come through from an unexpected source, providing temporary relief from the chaos.

LEO:

There are days when you have to jump in and engage with life fully, and then there are days when you need to step back and watch the show. If the cosmic cues are anything to go by, you will need to play the role of the 'observer', and yes, this means becoming a witness to your triggers too. Remember, what others are saying or not saying has little to do with you

VIRGO:

The cards are urging you to examine your relationship with yourself. Do you resist the idea of solitude, or embrace every given opportunity to come home? The past few months have been chaotic, but the storm is beginning to settle now. Consider this as a perfect time to observe silence and practice meditation. Trust you will receive the clarity you seek in these moments. Remember, your worldly responsibilities can wait for a while. So can your social media updates. We're not as busy as we'd like to believe.

LIBRA:

Not everything works out in the way we imagine it would, and this can only be a good thing. Friday is bringing with it immense perspective, along with the power to break free from an illusion you have created for yourself. Trust that this destruction is a necessary part of the creation process, one that will help you align with your true path. On the upside, a project that you've been working on will reach its final stages. Perfection is an illusion, Libra. Allow people to witness the masterpiece you have created.

SCORPIO:

A Billy Chapata quote to reflect upon: "I no longer force things. What flows, flows. What crashes, crashes. I only have space and energy for the things that are meant for me." The change is inevitable, Scorpio. The longer you hold on, the more painful it will be for you. Word for the wise: loosen the grip and allow Spirit to come through. Trust that you will be led in the right direction.

SAGITTARIUS:

Endings are going to be a big theme for you, Sagittarius, and this can only be a good thing. Loosen the grip and allow Spirit to come through. Your surrender will enable the forces to free you of the karmic baggage that no longer serves you. But that doesn't mean the change is going to be easy. You may feel like you're being stripped of all things familiar. Breathe and ease into the discomfort anyway. A wonderful affirmation to repeat when you

find yourself going into a space of self-doubt: "I am being guided and protected in every way."

CAPRICORN:

The yogis and the spiritual masters have often spoken about the concept of 'meditation in the marketplace'—the idea of finding inner stillness as an antidote to the chaos outside. The world will keep demanding more time and attention from you, Capricorn. But you deserve your own energy too. Word for the wise: prioritise. As you do, free yourself from the guilt narrative and know that everything is taking place in divine time.

AQUARIUS:

Yes, there is such a thing as poetic justice, and you are about to see proof in your own reality. The cards are urging you to surrender the given situation to the wisdom of the Whole and trust that you will be taken care of. The wheel of fortune is turning in your favour. The rewards you deserve will be yours soon. The only thing you need to focus on is the legalities involved. Get your paperwork in order, Aquarius.

PISCES:

This could be a challenging time in the Pisces HQ, with you and your partner disagreeing on multiple levels. Your difference of opinion with regards to children (or having them) could also be a cause of concern. The cards are urging you to take the 'respond, not react' route. Unless you hold space for the other, you won't know where they are coming from.