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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Taxi drivers stage counter protest against SPYF

DAY ENDS WITH AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO TO PURSUE COMMON DEMANDS WITH DEPARTMENT

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 OCT:

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum [SPYF] called off its protest in front of DC Office at Sichey today following a meeting with the District Administration and members of taxi driver associations.

There was some tension at the protest site this morning after a large number of members of taxi driver associations from across the state turned up to stage their counter protest against SPYF. They were of the opinion that SPYF was against the taxi drivers and was maligning their image.

The taxi driver group held up vehicular traffic on the stretch for a while as they sat on the road shouting slogans against the SPYF protest. In the afternoon, they announced a chakka jam from



30 Oct onwards if SPYF did not withdraw its demands.

SPYF has been demanding the removal of passenger limits on taxis and buses as it has caused a considerable increase in the fares and does not provide for the 6 ft

distance required for preventing the spread of COVID-19. On the other hand, taxi drivers remain insistent that the passenger limits are in place for the safety of the drivers and passengers from COVID-19.

In the evening the District Administration called for a meeting between the two groups following which SPYF announced that it has decided to call off the protest but on the agreement that the taxi driver group will join them when they approach the Transport Department next week regarding their demands.

Among the demands are extension of SNT bus fare reduction which is currently valid only till 30 Oct and increase in passenger limit in mainline taxis to at least 7 instead of the existing 5 passengers per vehicle.

In the agreement which was signed in the presence of SP East, ASP and SDM HQ, the two groups have resolved that they bear no ill-will against each other and withdraw any uncharitable



comments or allegations against each other.

"SPYF did what an organization could have done best in this situation. We have negotiated and persuaded all the stakeholders.

Now there will be no one to object if Government removes all restrictions in transportation. Now the ball is in the Government's court. It can take its decision freely now," said an SPYF member.

COVID-19 caseload in India breaches 80-lakh mark with 49,881 new cases



NEW DELHI, OCT 29 (PTI): India's COVID-19 caseload surpassed the 80-lakh mark on Thursday, 18 days after it had gone past 70 lakh, with 49,881 new cases while the recoveries surged to 73.15 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 90.99 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 80,40,203 and the death toll climbed to 1,20,527 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 517 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.49 per cent.

There are 603687 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 7.5 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 10,65,63,440 samples have been tested up to October 28 with 10,75,760 samples being tested on Wednesday.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28 and crossed 70 lakh on October 11.

The 517 new fatalities include 91 from Maharashtra, 60 from West Bengal, 55 each from Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, 40 from Delhi, 35 from Tamil Nadu and 27 from Kerala.

A total of 1,20,527 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 43,554 from Maharashtra followed by 11046 from Karnataka, 11,018 from Tamil Nadu, 6,958 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,643 from Andhra Pradesh, 6,664 from West Bengal, 6,396 from Delhi, 4,158 from Punjab and 3701 from Gujarat.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

80-year-old adventure lover takes to the skies



AARON RAI

GANGTOK, 29 OCT:

Dukmit Lepcha ticked off another adrenaline-pumping activity on 28 Oct when she paraglided off the hill opposite Gangtok. Anyone who was there at the moment would have noticed that she is not exactly the age one expects to be people indulging a thrill-seeking

diversion. And they would be right. When it comes to age, she is not even close to the average paragliding clientele. SHE IS 80!

Apparently, ever since the Gangtok skies opened for paragliding she had wanted to try it out. And on the 28th, she finally indulged herself to mark the

28th birthday of her grandson. She loved it, and now wants to take off from BulbuleyDara as well in the near future. Along the way, she has also made history by becoming the only 80 year old Sikkimese to have paraglided.

She thanked NimaTamang, the pilot for taking her for the flight, quipping that it was Nima who must

have had to muster up more courage for the flight than her - it is after all a big ask to expect a pilot to take the responsibility of an 80 year old on a heart-pumping excursion.

Ms Lepcha, meanwhile is not new to adventure.

Five years ago, she has gone Sea Trek Helmet Diving in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

In Nepal's capital, sole crematorium for COVID victims becomes busier

GOPAL SHARMA

KATHMANDU, 29 OCT [REUTERS]:

As the number of coronavirus deaths climbs in Nepal, workers at the only crematorium in Kathmandu designated to handle the victims have been working past midnight, their meagre wages supplemented by less than 50 U.S. cents for each corpse.

Elsewhere in a country that ranks among the world's poorest, the bodies are burned on funeral pyres and their ashes are buried, but in the capital they are brought to the crematorium in the Pashupatinath Hindu temple complex.

"There is hardly any space for emotion," Shyam Kharel, one of the workers there, told Reuters as he got ready to place a yellow bag containing a body in the incinerator.

"Initially there were not many, hardly five or six, and sometimes none at all for days," Kharel said. "But now it goes up to 25 or 26 in a day." Despite being provided protective equipment, Kharel said five of his co-workers had been infected.

Keeping count of infections and



deaths is a challenge in Nepal, a country of 30 million strung along the southern Himalayas, as testing is limited, rendering confirmed cases of COVID-19 potentially far below the actual number.

Latest government figures show Nepal's total cases stood at 162,354, including 887 deaths. The official daily death toll has been running at around 15 a day since a peak of 26 seen on Oct. 21. Nepal was quick to enter a lockdown when its second COVID-19 case was confirmed in March. But protesters angry at the government's handling of the epidemic clashed with police in June.

Restrictions were eased at the end of July and, despite a rise in infections since, the government has been reluctant to tighten up again as the economy was

teetering, and Nepal's poor could ill-afford to stay away from markets or work.

Prime Minister K.P Sharma Oli has told Nepalis that they have strong immunity and has advised them to strengthen it with traditional remedies like drinking hot water with tumeric.

The old, densely populated city of Kathmandu and its temple studded valley account for 44 percent of Nepal's infections and more than one-thirds of deaths.

Authorities say the nation's overstretched health infrastructure, with few critical care beds, is in danger of being overwhelmed.

Kharel waited grimly for more victims to arrive at the crematorium. "It is your job, and if one is finished there is another waiting."

With 18 new cases, Sikkim's COVID load climbs to 3,893



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 OCT:

Sikkim's tally of the confirmed COVID-19 cases reached 3,893 with the detection of 18 fresh cases of novel coronavirus on Thursday. Meanwhile, the number of discharged COVID-19 patients in the State further improved to 3,476 with 13 more patients being released from the isolation ward at STNM Hospital on Wednesday.

There are now 268 COVID-19 case still in home or institutional isolation, of whom three are admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital. Sikkim thus far registered 67 COVID-19 deaths.

Of the 83 samples tested by RT-PCR at the VRD Lab on Wednesday, 15 returned positive for COVID-19, while three new cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 38 samples. Similarly, all seven samples screened by TruNat came back negative for the virus.

In the daily health bulletin on Thursday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that out of the 18 new cases of novel coronavirus, 17 were reported from East District and one from West Sikkim.

Among the new cases are six persons from Sichey in Gangtok, of whom one is from near the STNM Hospital in Lower Sichey, one from near the Forest check-post, one from near Tamang Gumpa, one from behind Lemon Tree Hotel and one from near Shiv Mandir. While five cases were picked up on RT-PCR, one case was detected in RAT screening.

Likewise, one person from Luing, two from Daragaon Tadong, one from Development Area, one from above CS Rai Secondary School in Lower Arithang, two from Majhitar, one already admitted in te medical ward of STNM Hospital and two at Central Referral Hospital [one from Khamdong and one from 6th Mile Tadong] were also found COVID-19 positive in RT-PCR testing.

The West Sikkim case came from Gufa Dara, Yuksom and another case from Dalapchand were also detected in rapid antigen testing.

Aarogya Setu a result of 'public-private' collaboration we are told now

NEW DELHI, 29 OCT: The Aarogya Setu app for covid-19 contact tracing was developed in the "most transparent" manner with "public-private collaboration in record time" to curb the spread of the contagion, the Centre said on Tuesday in a detailed clarification after reports that ministries were evasive over an RTI query related to the creation of the App.

...turn Pg3



Facebook.com/
SummitTimesSikkim
fresh lot of rapid information

‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ celebrated in PIB webinar

GANGTOK, 29 OCT (PIB): ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ is providing catalytic spur to AtmaNirbhar Entrepreneurship and Socio-Economic Development, experts emphasised in a Webinar organised by Press Information Bureau, Guwahati on the topic here today.

A galaxy of experts from textiles & fashion industry and socio-economic cultural fraternity, Government sector along with academicians deliberated and discussed about the topic from varied perspective.

Talking about the teachings of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’, Padma Shri Naresh Chander Lal, Ambassador Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, said that environment and bio-diversity of a place, is another aspect of cultural development. He said that Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat is sustainable development with respect and accessibility to culture and ethos of a place. He lauded PIB Guwahati team for the Webinar and for the public awareness initiative on the topic.

ADG (Region), Dr Pragya Paliwal Gaur, Press Information Bureau and Regional Outreach Bureau, Jaipur said that ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha



Bharat’ is appreciation of multiple cultures of the country and how it is leading to socio-economic development, particularly the evolving importance of woman entrepreneurs in multiple arenas of work.

Director, Ritu Shukla, Regional Outreach Bureau, Jaipur said that Culture of a place is correlated to the socio-economic development of place. She that the opportunities in various sectors and markets are opening vitas of economic activities where woman entrepreneurs are playing a vital role.

Talking about Assam and Rajasthan, the two states which are grouped together in ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’, a beauty pageant winner, Soumi Dutta, Mrs India Universe

(Kolkata) 2019 and an entrepreneur in textile and fashion industry said that culture opens a vista of opportunities. She said that women entrepreneurs are changing the arena of business and opportunities in the employment sector. She said that employment is also correlated to the socio-economic development of a place.

Information Assistant, Barnali Mahanta, Press Information Bureau, Guwahati said that the culture and the discipline, hard work of women entrepreneurs in a place also affects the quality and final results leading to a WIN-WIN scenario for various efficacious opportunities in the value chain of development. Field

Exhibition Officer, Hiramani Das, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati said in this context, the Railways and Airlines are connecting places of tourism which helps in cultural appreciation of a place too. She said that the celebration in Assam including that of Rongali, Kongali and Bhogali Bihu, Baisagu and Bohuwa dance demonstrates the culture of people.

PRO, Satyajit Narayan Singh, National Council of Science Museum, Ministry of Culture and a Journalist, Pooja Yadav said that the exuberance and vivacity of culture and festivals exemplifies its ebullience and opportunities for youth of the country. They said that ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ celebrates the joy of cultural diversity.

industry are opening vitas of employment opportunities for youth of North East.

Former DGM SBI and Circle Development Officer, Asish Biswas, HR In-Charge, North-East Region and Journalist, Srishti Jaswal said that media has a quintessential and pivotal importance to make aware about the pertinent aspects of socio-cultural development of a region. They said that not only the highways, railways and airlines are ways of communication, but also they are also helping in connecting the country, emotionally and culturally. They said the infrastructure is the centre of economic development with opportunities for farmers to connect to markets.

The public awareness Webinar on teachings of Sardar Patel Webinar was managed and coordinated by Joint Director, Samrat Bandyopadhyay, PIB Guwahati. While Deputy Director, Pallav Chakravorty, PIB welcomed the experts, along with students, eminent journalists and other government senior officials from Press Information Bureau, Doordarshan, Regional Outreach Bureau, All India Radio of Delhi, Assam and Rajasthan were also present on the occasion.

Vigilance Awareness Week from 27 Oct



GANGTOK, 28 OCT (PIB):

North Eastern Council as a part of its effort to promote integrity and to achieve a corruption free society, observes Vigilance Awareness Week every year. This year it is to observed on the theme “Satark Bharat, Samriddh Bharat” (Vigilant India, Prosperous India) from 27 Oct to 02 Nov, 2020.

A four day long Vigilance Sensitization programme would commence with integrity pledge on 27 Oct, 2020 administered by Member, Prof BK Dutta, NEC and will be followed by the Seminar/Workshop for sensitization of officers and staff about the role of vigilance in the development of a nation and written quiz & Poster making competition on the theme on 28 and 29 Oct, 2020 respectively. The awareness week will be concluded with the Talk competition

on the theme and the felicitation program for the competition winners on 02 Nov, 2020.

The North Eastern Council is the agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region which consists of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The North Eastern Council was constituted in 1971 by an Act of Parliament. NEC has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region and has ushered in an era of new hope in this backward area full of great potentialities. The main objective of the Council is to ensure the balanced and integrated economic development of the North Eastern parts of the country.

US official says UN has ‘lack of curiosity’ on Xinjiang

BEIJING, OCT 29 (AP): The United Nations is not doing enough to investigate reported abuses in China’s Xinjiang region against members of Muslim minority groups, the U.S. envoy for women’s issues said Thursday.

Citing reports of forced birth control, home visits and sexual violence in detention centers, Ambassador-at-Large on Women’s Issues Kelley Currie said such practices show a pervasive pattern of targeting women.

It’s really remarkable to me as someone who used to work at the UN the complete lack of curiosity or concern we see from the UN on what are really grave allegations and very widespread and quite disturbing human rights abuses, said Currie, who also serves as the US representative at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The UN is failing to speak out about the situation in Xinjiang, failing to demand access in a meaningful way and to investigate these very serious and credible



allegations, Currie told reporters on a media call.

The Associated Press has previously reported that China has been carrying out a draconian campaign to cut birth rates among its Uighur Muslim population by forced sterilization and compulsory family planning practices.

The Trump Administration withdrew the US from the UN Human Rights Council in 2018, citing what it said was a bias against Israel and the human rights track records of member countries. China was reelected to the council earlier in October in a move condemned by major democratic

nations and human rights groups.

Pointing to what it says are ongoing abuses, the US has in recent months issued a series of sanctions against actors in Xinjiang, including senior officials and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps that operates as a government-within-a government within the resource-rich region.

On Tuesday, a group of US senators introduced a resolution to call what is happening in Xinjiang genocide.

China has maintained that there are no human rights abuses in Xinjiang, denouncing reports to the contrary as

fabrications. Critics say China has detained more than 1 million Uighurs, Khazaks and members of other Muslim groups under prison-like conditions in political indoctrination centers across the vast region.

China at first denied the existence of the centers, but now says they are intended to teach job skills and deradicalize potential terrorists and religious extremists.

The so-called ‘genocide’ in Xinjiang is a rumour deliberately concocted by some anti-China forces and a farce to slander China, foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Wednesday.

Later talking to the media, Singh said the constitutional boundary of Assam will be respected by everyone and all the statutory provisions are being utilised with regular interactions being held by central and Assam governments.

The interstate border was witness to clash between the people of the two states on October 17 in which some people were injured and several shops damaged.

Zeta barrels northeast after battering storm-weary coast

NEW ORLEANS (AP): A fast-moving Zeta weakened to a tropical storm as it tripped through the South on Thursday morning, killing at least two, knocking out power to more than 2 million across the region and prompting a rare tropical storm warning for Atlanta.

And officials said life-threatening conditions would last into the day.

Zeta weakened over central Alabama but its strong winds continued across portions of the state and the Florida Panhandle early Thursday. The storm was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Asheville, North Carolina, with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph). Zeta was moving quickly toward the northeast at 39 mph (63 kph).

The storm killed at least one person, a 55-year-old man who a Louisiana coroner said was electrocuted by a downed power line in New Orleans. In Georgia, authorities said a man was killed when high winds caused a tree to fall onto a mobile home in Cherokee County.

Power outages were reported across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, according to the website PowerOutage.us. Georgia had the most outages before dawn Thursday with more than 1 million customers in the dark.

The storm raged onshore Wednesday afternoon in the small village of Cocodrie in Louisiana as a strong Category 2 and then moved swiftly across the New Orleans area and into neighboring Mississippi, bringing with it both fierce winds and storm surge.

There was heavy rain at

times but since the storm was so fast-moving, rain related flooding wasn’t as much of a concern.

Waveland Mayor Mike Smith told WLOX-TV that his Mississippi Gulf Coast city, which was part of the area most heavily damaged by 2005’s Hurricane Katrina has maybe taken the worst hit since then from Zeta.

“We’re going to see a whole lot of damage in the morning,” Smith said. Among the many trees blown down was one that fell on Smith’s own house. “It was my next-door neighbor’s and he wanted to give it to me, apparently,” Smith said.

In Louisiana, Gov. John Bel Edwards was expected Thursday to tour the coastal regions hardest hit by the storm. During a radio interview Wednesday evening, Edwards said the wind had caused extensive structural damage. And as neighbors and church groups started reaching out to help those affected, he also highlighted the need to protect against the coronavirus at the same time.

“Offer the help but do it with a mask on,” he said.

Much of New Orleans and the surrounding area was without power Wednesday night. The storm packed a punch as it whipped through the city. Signs outside bars and restaurants swayed back and forth in the wind and palm trees along Canal Street whipped furiously. Officials said a person was hospitalized with minor injuries after a structure collapsed.

More than 200 trees were reported down in the city. Echoing a plea made by officials across the Gulf Coast in the dark hours after the storm passed, New Orleans

Mayor LaToya Cantrell implored residents to stay home and let city officials assess the damage.

“Although we have made it through, we have been damaged, we have been hit,” she said.

Along coastal Louisiana, there were reports of some trailers flipped over, a gas station destroyed, and downed power lines and trees.

Zeta had top sustained winds of 110 mph (177 kph) as a Category 2 hurricane at landfall and is the 27th named storm of a historically busy Atlantic hurricane season — with over a month left to go. It set a new record as the 11th named storm to make landfall in the continental U.S. in a single season, well beyond the nine storms that hit in 1916.

Zeta weakened to a Category 1 hurricane with winds of 90 mph (144 kph) as it moved into southern Mississippi a few hours after landfall.

As much as 5 feet of Gulf water surrounded a casino in Biloxi, Mississippi, and deputies in Harrison County, Mississippi, received multiple calls from people who had remained in mobile homes that were threatened by winds.

In the small coastal town of Bay St. Louis in Mississippi, former mayor Les Fillingame said the storm was “very intense” when it blew through.

“It was a noisy storm. It was a truly howling wind,” he said, but said thankfully it was also fast-moving. “It was a lot of wind for several hours which is enough.”

Tropical storm warnings were issued as far away as southern Virginia, highly unusual for the region.

Forecasters issued a string of tornado warnings for as far east as the Florida Panhandle. And Atlanta was under a tropical storm warning for the second time ever. Its first warning was in 2017 when Hurricane Irma roared into Florida as a deadly Category 4 storm.

New Orleans was in the warning areas of six previous storms that veered east or west this season. This time, Zeta stayed on course. Officials had been worried about the loss of a power from a turbine that helps power the city’s aging drainage infrastructure and whether that would leave the city vulnerable to flooding but Zeta’s swift movement meant flooding wasn’t an issue.

On Tuesday, Zeta raked across Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula, toppling trees and briefly cutting power to more than 300,000 people but causing no deaths.

It then regained strength over the Gulf of Mexico along a path slightly to the east of those of Hurricane Laura, which was blamed for at least 27 deaths in Louisiana in August, and Hurricane Delta, which exacerbated Laura’s damage in the same area weeks later.

The deteriorating weather prompted early voting sites to close for hours in the western Florida Panhandle. One voter in Mississippi worried about how long felled trees and debris might block roads.

“With the election I just kind of hope the city gets the roads clear by November 3rd so everybody can get out and vote,” said Mackenzie Umanzor, of D’Iberville, Mississippi.

SILCHAR, OCT 29 (PTI):

Additional Director General of Police (law and order), Assam, G P Singh visited the Assam-Mizoram interstate border here, the scene of a clash between the people of the two states, and reviewed the law and order situation.

Accompanied by senior civil and police officials, Singh reviewed the law and order situation in the wake of a bomb blast in a school located at Khulicherra



area close to the Assam-Mizoram interstate border on October 22, said a government release.

Singh said the explosion at the school was possibly the handiwork of miscreants out to terrorise the local people.

He instructed the Cachar district

superintendent of police to file a petition in the court under relevant sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the release said.

During his visit to Khulicherra, Singh also discussed with superintendent of police and other senior police officials of Kolasib district of Mizoram.

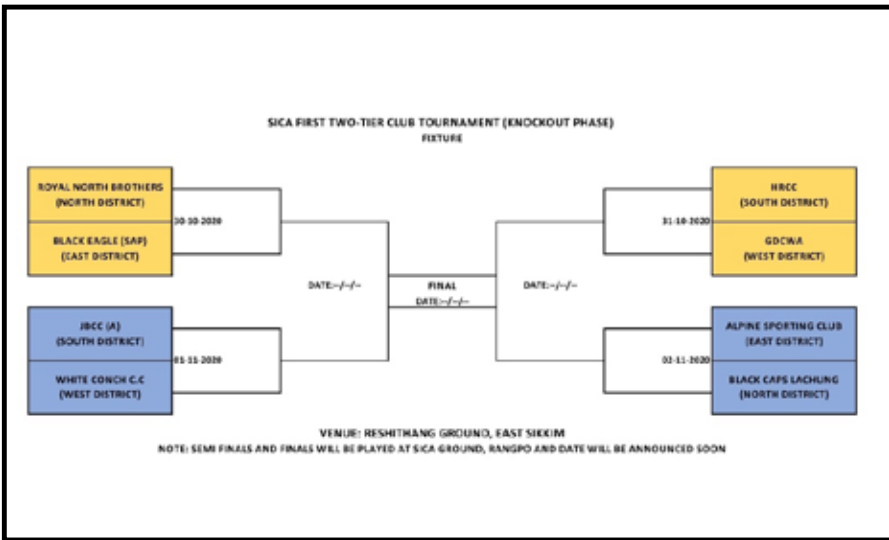
8 Clubs in Quarterfinals of SICA Cricket Club Tourney

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 OCT:

The ongoing 1st Two-Tier Cricket Club Tournament of Sikkim taking place at Reshithang sports complex ground has now reached its Quarter Finals stage, a press release informs.

Eight clubs who have made it through to the quarterfinals from all four districts of Sikkim. The quarterfinals will be held from 30 Oct till 02 Nov, 2020.

The 8 Clubs who have qualified are Royal North Brothers & Black Caps Lachung of (North District), HRCC



& Jorethang Brothers Cricket Club (A) of (South District), Alpine Sporting Club & Black Eagle (SAP) of (East District), White Conch Cricket

Club & Geyzing & District Cricket Welfare Association of (West District).

"The hard work invested in the last

several years by Sikkim Cricket Association along with the District Committees and having adopted a proactive approach towards

Cricket in the Districts of the State has now borne fruit. Today the results of the Tournament clearly show the success and effectiveness of this plan, with the 8 quarter finalists hailing from all 4 districts (2 each). I would also like to congratulate the 8 clubs of the quarter finals as they are now the Historic First A Division Clubs in Sikkim. The SICA family and the District bodies, Committees jointly hands over the first A Division Club Teams to the Cricket lovers of the State," said SICA president, Lobzang G Tenzing.

Sikkim Professional Univ to be inaugurated on 31 Oct

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 OCT:

The inauguration of the new campus of Sikkim Professional University (SPU) at Budangis scheduled to be held on 31 Oct at 10:30 a.m.

A press release informs that Chief Minister, PS Tamang, MLA, Aditya Goyal and Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Education, G. P. Upadhyaya, would be attending the inauguration function.

A press conference was held today as a curtain raiser for the inauguration ceremony of SPU's Campus at Budang.

The press conference was attended by Rishiraj Maharajji, Delhi, Hemant Kumar Goyal, Chairman, Mukesh Goyal, Board of Governing Body, Prof S.S. Hasan, Vice Chancellor, Prof Jaswant Sokhi, Pro Vice Chancellor and K. Satha Sivam, Registrar.

Sikkim Professional University (SPU),



formerly Vinayaka Missions University, was established under Assembly Act no. 11 of 2008. It has been renamed as Sikkim Professional University vide Sikkim Assembly Act no. 09 of 2020. Jeen Universal Foundation, Delhi, has taken over the governance of this University since 2017.

Under the management of the above Foundation presently there are three Universities namely

Manglayatan University, Aligarh; Manglayatan University, Jalpur; and Usha Martin University, Jharkhand. These Universities are presently functioning and Sikkim Professional University is the fourth one in Gangtok.

S i k k i m P r o f e s s i o n a l U n i v e r s i t y has accreditation and recognition of UGC, INC, SNC, PCI and is offering BSc(N), GNM, BPharm, DPharm, BPT,

DPT, BA, BSc, BCom, BBA, MA MSc, MCom, and MBA courses from its campus in Gangtok.

At the new campus of SPU at Budang it is proposed to offer B.Tech, M.Tech, BSc(Agri), MSc(Agri), BSc, MSc, Biotechnology, Arts and Sciences and many more innovative programs aimed at creating intelligent trained skilled human resource pool in Sikkim through research and extension activities, in order to generate

manpower to meet the growing demand of modern India.

The University is continuously integrating different subjects and is collaborating with different companies and organizations to bring best for its students.

Sikkim Professional University Management is thankful to Sikkim State Government for giving it an opportunity to spread education in West & South Sikkim. The Foundation has invested resources in renovation & further expansion of the campus allotted by Sikkim Government at Budang. The University would be employing staff from local region.

Hemant Kumar Goyal, Chairman of the Foundation expressed his gratitude to the CM, Education Minister, MLA, Aditya Goyal, and G.P. Upadhyaya, Additional Chief Secretary, Education Department for giving an opportunity to SPU to serve the people of Sikkim by providing quality higher education.

Biker reaches Sikkim on COVID awareness nationwide ride



S U M M I T
REPORT

RANGPO, 29 OCT: Bhagirath Paliwal, who vroomed off on his motorcycle from Surat, Gujarat, on a nationwide campaign to generate

Covid-19 awareness, arrived in Sikkim today.

Mr Paliwal is a member of the bikers' club, Bike Walla, and was received by members of the Lions Club of Rangpo Gateway of Sikkim at

Rangpo. He has already covered 10 states, riding across 11,000 Kilometers and aims to cover 24,000 KMs in his Royal Enfield covering 24 States by 31 Dec, 2020.

108 new cases push Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 14,580

ITANAGAR, OCT 29 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rose to 14,580 on Thursday as 108 more people, including three security personnel, tested positive for the infection, a senior health official said.

The Capital Complex region reported the highest number of new cases at 28, followed by Lower Subansiri (12) and Siang (eight), he said.

"Two Army jawans and an Indian Reserve Battalion personnel are among the new patients," State Surveillance Officer Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

Three undertrial prisoners lodged in July Central Jail and three health workers also contracted the disease, he said.

16-08/2014/CCPD (PLV-II)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
6th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Arundhaya Bhawan,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

FILLING UP THE POST OF CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Applications are invited for appointment to the post of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. The post carries pay and allowances as admissible to the Secretary to the Government of India. The present pay is Rs.2,25,000/- per month (fixed) as per the 7th Central Pay Commission dispensation.

- Educational Qualification:**
 - Essential: Graduation from a recognized university.
 - Desirable: Preference shall be given to persons having recognized degree or diploma in social work or law or management or human rights or rehabilitation, or education of persons with disabilities.
- Experience:** Should have experience of at least twenty-five years in a Group "A" level post in the Central Government or a State Government or a public sector undertaking or a semi-Government or an autonomous body dealing with disability related matters or social sector or as a senior level functionary in registered national and international voluntary organizations in the field of disability or social development. Provided that out of total of twenty five years of experience, he/she should have at least three years of experience in the field of rehabilitation or empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- Age Limit:** Not exceeding 60 years as on 01.01.2020.
- Term:** The term of the office of Chief Commissioner shall be for a period of three years from the date on which he assumes office, or till he attains the age of sixty five years, whichever is earlier. A person may serve as Chief Commissioner for a maximum period of two terms subject to the condition that he has not attained the age of sixty five years. If the applicant is in the service under the Central Government or State Government, he/she shall seek retirement from such service before his/her appointment to the post.
- Detailed powers, duties and functions of CCPD and eligibility criteria along with all other relevant details including the application form are available in Department's website - www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in. The eligible applicants may send their applications by 9th November, 2020 as the publication of this advertisement appeared in the "Employment News" on 10th October, 2020 to Shri K.V.S. Rao, Director at the above mentioned address.

(Ramanuj Dey)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

davp 38117/11/0020/2021

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Bihar records 53.54% polling in first phase

NEW DELHI, Oct 28: Bihar recorded a 53.54% polling in the first phase of assembly polls on Wednesday, according to a release by the Chief Electoral Officer Bihar.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora earlier addressed a press conference here and said the final figures will come later on the basis of all the votes cast by the electorate.

"Till 5 pm the voter turnout in Bihar phase one election was 52.24%.

In 2015 elections, Phase one turnout was 54.94% and in Lok Sabha elections it was 53.54%. The voting is still underway in some places and the final figures will be out soon," Arora said.

The CEC said 12 out of the 16 districts where polling was held are affected by left Wing Extremism (LWE).

He said that the

polling time had to be extended in 12 polling stations owing to the late start of the process.

He thanked the voters, political parties and the local administration for the smooth conduct of elections.

"I thank the voters of Bihar who came out to vote in these times, all political entities who showed maturity in the conduct of elections and the local administration which made such extensive arrangements keeping Covid-19 in mind," Arora said.

The CEC said that it was important to conduct free, fair, and safe elections.

He also urged the voters to turn up in even greater numbers in phase two and three of the elections to choose the government they wanted in the state.

Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep

Jain that the overall functioning of the EVMs had been very satisfactory today barring some problems in the Jamui constituency

"The failure today has been only 0.22 pc in the ballot units. From 41,689 ballot units, only 0.22 pc had to be replaced. It was 0.25 pc in the control

units among the 31,371 control units and 1.28% of VVPATs had to be replaced out of 31,371," he said.

"At Jamui, due to longer time taken for replacement in 12 polling stations the polling time had to be extended to 7 pm. Apart from this, no other complaints of any

kind were received with respect to working of EVMs and VVPATs," he added.

Eighty-nine cases of violations were registered under sections of IPC and NDMA Act related to violation of Covid-19 norms in the first phase of polls, another official said.

Aarogya Setu a result of 'public-private' collaboration we are told now

Issuing a clarification in light of the controversy related to the creation of the app, the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology said "On all such occasions, it has been clearly mentioned that the Aarogya Setu App has been developed by NIC in collaboration with volunteers from Industry and Academia. Aarogya Setu app has been developed in the most transparent manner," the ministry said in a statement.

"The Aarogya Setu App was developed in a record time of around 21 days, to respond to the exigencies of the Pandemic with Lockdown restrictions only for the objective of building a Made in India Contact Tracing App with the best of Indian minds from Industry, Academia and Government, working round the clock to build a robust, scalable and secure App.

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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

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- WEST : 9593287809
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- SOUTH : 7407691463
- New STNM
- AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Divided in Suspicion

Anyone can deal in whispers, it takes leaders to deliver coherence

It is worrying how discussions on communalism and other divides like ideology, political leaning and life choices continue to remain in circulation and of how often different sections and groups keep crying wolf, painting monsters only they see and hyperventilating over threats only they perceive. After all, into how many slivers can a population of barely 6 lakh people be divided? Of course, with some sections, the divisions are a simple two-way process of “us” and “them”, and that is a disturbing condition to suffer because that reduces every disagreement into an attack, every counter argument into an attempt to deny or subvert. When people and positions get divvied up into such binaries, empathy and understanding are scuttled to the altar of camps, the competition then becomes about noise and in shallow public domains, the loudest claims victory, helped along by agencies loyal to the camp they speak for. But there are no victors in such a situation, only a lot of resentment and more animosity than is healthy.

To begin with, let us not deny that divisions exist within the Sikkimese society. That much is natural, but what has also been exceptionally reassuring about the State is that the privately held prejudices have not been encouraged by the people to pour out in public displays of sycophantic posturing; at least not a scale that causes any more damage than hurt feelings and some despicable proxy muscle-flexing. Sikkim, despite some close calls, has never suffered a real clash beyond the political skirmishes which have remained rare. The State’s politics and several politicians have often succumbed to the temptation of brow-beating compliance, but even though the state machinery has always delivered obediently, the people have performed much better.

But, if people are resistant to divisive confrontations, why is the bogey raised so often in Sikkim? Perhaps because it is an easy divide and hack away as experience elsewhere has shown that the people’s defenses eventually crumble in the face of persistent scare-mongering. Given that everyone belongs to some community or the other and generation, it is an accepted fact that people are also inherently suspicious, and given how social media has made people lazy, comfortable in withdrawing into the silos and being spoon-fed priorities and context. That said, Sikkim has traditionally been communal only to the extent of having a soft corner and this instinct has not manifested as hate. Also, because we are social animals, this inherent streak seldom develops into paranoia or gets directed against other communities or positions because in a small place like Sikkim everyone needs everyone else. This conditioning of social grooming, however, gets stressed when issues are projected as being emotive and the argument manufacturing a threat is projected without challenge [even encouragement at times]. Few things move off the counter faster than a theory that fabricates insensitivity and hurt. The more dramatic the fabrication, the more looming is the threat perception. Years of shepherding a disinterested public has honed the skills of these leaders and they are only aided by the blunted perspicacity of the people. People share the blame of allowing space for such voices which keep growing in belligerence because no one holds them to account.

One must realise that every voice is allowed space in our country. The present dispensation running the GOI might want us to believe that this space is conditional, but the freedom struggle and the Constitution [both of which the current sarkar has made no contributions to beyond weakening it] guarantee not only the space but also the safeguards to nurture it. Such safeguards we all should reinforce for the very selfish reason that we too will eventually need access to such spaces when we want to demand better, aspire for more, disagree and get heard even if others are shouting louder. The lead in ensuring such an environment will have to come from leaders. They have to communicate more clearly, handhold coherence in these times of easy confusion. No one wants to ascribe malign intentions to every mistake, but when excessive efforts are made to cover-up incompetence and ego comes in the way of empathy, insensitive malevolence becomes the only explanation left.

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Young Nigerians rise up to demand a different kind of freedom

SAKIRU ADEBAYO

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Two days after Nigeria celebrated its sixtieth year of independence, a video of a young man brazenly killed by a member of the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad or SARS caught the attention of netizens. The Twitter user who posted the viral video claimed the man’s body had been left at the side of the road and his Lexus stolen. It sparked a wave of protests across most of Nigeria’s urban metropolises. Under the moniker #ENDSARS, the protests have garnered support from Nigerian celebrities, Nigerians in the diaspora and even international stars such as John Boyega, Mesut Özil, Kanye West and Cardi B.

The protests could be said to fit neatly into the ongoing global campaign against police brutality, especially against black people. One could even argue that the restrictive context of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to tensions behind this sudden civil eruption. Whatever the case, one thing is sure: Nigerians have been driven up the wall by an autocratic political system disguised as a liberal democracy.

I argue that the protest placards demonstrate the idea that #ENDSARS on social media and on the streets is as much an expression of a will to modernity by Nigerian youths as it is a yearning to be treated with dignity.

(YOUNG) NIGERIAN LIVES MATTER

As a unit of the Nigeria Police Force, SARS was set up in 1992 to stem armed robbery, car snatching and kidnapping. It appears to have metamorphosed into a pernicious force, called out by Amnesty International as early as 2016. In fact, the #ENDSARS hashtag had been in circulation since at least 2017 and the Nigerian government has reportedly disbanded and reinstated SARS four times in the

past four years.

Amid fury at SARS brutality and killings, protesters and online accounts also accuse the police unit of unfairly profiling young Nigerians – especially those who use iPhones, drive luxury cars and wear brands such as Nike or Adidas. The squad is also accused of having maltreated young people with piercings, tattoos and dreadlocks. In other words, Nigerian youths (once scornfully referred to as lazy by the nation’s president) are at the forefront of the #ENDSARS revolution precisely because they are commonly the main targets of SARS’ violence.

Many of the #ENDSARS placards contain phrases such as, “To be modern is not a crime”; “iPhone, laptops, styled hair and living fresh isn’t a crime”; “We are techies not thieves”.

It is quite absurd that people get arrested and tortured simply because of how they look or what gadgets they possess, but this is the daily reality of many young Nigerians. In my view, the iconic #ENDSARS protest placards flooding social media have wider implications. One of these is that they reveal Nigeria’s ongoing and deep-seated struggle to establish itself as a modern democracy. They also point to a new generation of Nigerians (the #ENDSARS generation?) rising to take their place in national affairs. This seemingly courageous and woke crop of young Nigerians use social (and traditional) media to make their voices heard to fight for their country’s endangered democracy.

TO BE MODERN IS NOT A CRIME

The placards raise many questions: Why is being modern criminalised in 21st century Nigeria? Why is it so important that Nigerian youths claim their right to be modern? What and

whose modernity are they alluding to? These questions may seem peripheral in the face of the daily lived violence young Nigerians are subjected to but they are, in the long run, important.

The demand for the decriminalisation of modern sensibilities in the protests is not necessarily a demand for periodised modernity because, by many standards, Nigeria is a modern country. Also, it is not that SARS is pre-modern in its operation but rather that it is anti-modern in its persuasions. Hence, the expression of the will for modernity in the context of the protests is an ideological and ontological quest for freedom, rationalisation, professionalism and representative democracy as well as rejection of tradition.

The fact that SARS reportedly preyed on signs of ostentatiousness among young people is reflective of Nigeria’s still prevalent embrace of oppressive orthodoxies. It reflects paternalistic social relations and work culture – which extends to the entire Nigerian civil service – that fuel the infantilisation of Nigerian youths. It also partly explains the blanket disavowal of post-traditionalism and the demonisation of the technology and fashion of progressive youth culture.

Put differently, the #ENDSARS movement is symbolic of many things, one of which is a generational divide in ideological posturing. The older generation seems intractably establishmentarian while the younger generation is becoming increasingly radical.

Also, at the heart of the issue is the policing of appearance and mannerism. In my view, SARS officers and the Nigerian government in general conflate the aesthetics of modernity –

displayed among young Nigerians – with vices such as scamming, debauchery and insolence. The #ENDSARS protest is, among many other things, a yearning by young people to be respected as full human beings. It is also a wilful engagement in acts of civil disobedience as a way of fashioning a truly civil society.

‘A FREEDOM TO BE, TO DO’

As I write, SARS has been dissolved. The victory for the protesters came at a price. Some were reported dead and countless others injured at the hands of the police during the protests.

However, one cannot be celebratory when one considers that SARS has a history of reinventing itself. As we speak, SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics), a replacement for SARS, has been announced to the displeasure of many Nigerians.

The #ENDSARS revolution attests to the idea that the Nigerian people, especially young Nigerians, are capable of challenging the systemic failures and deteriorating public services that plague their country. The #ENDSARS protests (arguably the biggest civil revolt in Nigeria since the time of the last military regime in 1999) are still unfolding. Many hope they will form a social movement that marks the genesis of a long walk to radical change in the structures of governance in Nigeria.

Watching the protests, I am reminded of a scene in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Purple Hibiscus, a novel which allegorically portrays the repressive regimes of former leaders Sani Abacha and Ibrahim Babangida in Nigeria. In it, the young protagonist, Kambili, longs for a different kind of freedom, “a freedom to be, to do”. In the same manner, the #ENDSARS protest is a yearning for freedom, a freedom to be, a freedom to do.

[the writer is Postdoctoral fellow, University of the Witwatersrand]

COVID Stress Syndrome: 5 ways the pandemic is affecting mental health

GORDON JG ASMUNDSON

THECONVERSATION.COM

In addition to its staggering impact on physical well-being and mortality, COVID-19 is also taking an unprecedented toll on our mental health. Numerous recent studies have shown global increases in the prevalence and severity of depression and anxiety as well as increases in post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. These increases likely stem from the changes to daily life we have all been asked to make in attempts to mitigate viral spread.

Yet conventional mental health approaches and diagnoses do not fully capture the nuanced mental health impacts of this pandemic. These approaches may not be sufficient to guide the development of strategies to address the pandemic’s rapidly increasing mental health burden.

As clinical psychologists with expertise in fear and anxiety-related conditions as well as assessment and treatment development, our team was interested in trying to fully understand the specific mental health effects of this pandemic in order to inform the development of effective public health messaging and evidence-based interventions.

Supported by funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the University of Regina, we conducted a longitudinal population-based survey of a large sample of Canadian and American respondents, with surveys administered in late March, mid-May and early July of 2020. Based on this data we determined that the mental health impact of COVID-19 is best understood as a multi-faceted syndrome comprising a network of interconnected symptoms.

COVID STRESS SCALES

Using data from approximately 7,000 respondents collected in late March, we developed, validated and published our COVID Stress Scales. These scales assess five core features of COVID-19-related stress: fear of danger and contamination, fear of adverse socio-economic consequences, checking and reassurance seeking, xenophobia (discrimination against foreigners) and traumatic stress symptoms (for example, pandemic-related nightmares).

Since the five scales were intercorrelated, they can also be added together to provide an overall indication of pandemic-related stress levels.

The COVID Stress Scales, now translated into 12 languages, offer widespread promise as a tool

for better understanding the distress associated with COVID-19 and for identifying people in need of mental health services. An online self-assessment that provides people with a severity rating and self-help recommendations is now available.

COVID STRESS SYNDROME

The five COVID Stress Scales are intercorrelated; that is, the symptoms measured by each of the five scales tend to occur together. This observation provided initial evidence that the various symptoms of COVID-19-related distress may be facets of a syndrome. We further evaluated and confirmed this idea in a subsequent study.

The COVID stress syndrome is anchored by COVID-19-related danger and contamination fears as its central feature, with strongest connections to fear of adverse socio-economic consequences and disease-related xenophobia (fear of foreigners who might be carrying infection).

Fear of adverse socio-economic consequences was the second-most central feature, highlighting the importance of impacts of the pandemic on social and financial security.

Traumatic stress symptoms were the third-most central feature and most strongly associated with danger and contamination fears and checking and reassurance seeking, suggesting a vicious cycle wherein these facets of the syndrome fuel each other. For example, more exposure to COVID-19 news or social media may lead to greater frequency of nightmares about COVID-19, which, in turn, increases fear of contamination and further fuels checking the news and social media for up-to-date information.

Although less central, xenophobia affected fears of danger and contamination, socio-economic consequences and, to a lesser extent, checking and reassurance seeking, highlighting the impact of discriminatory beliefs on pandemic-related emotional responding.

SUBSTANTIAL MENTAL HEALTH FOOTPRINT

Our preliminary findings suggest the percentage of the population affected by COVID stress syndrome is substantial, with the mental health footprint of COVID-19 exceeding the medical footprint. Although two per cent of our sample reported having had COVID-19 and six per cent knew someone who had been infected, 38 per cent and 16 per cent respectively were classified as having moderate-to-severe or severe COVID-19-related distress.

In short, more than 50 per cent of the population reported considerably elevated levels

of distress specific to the pandemic. Higher scores were associated with things like panic buying, excessive avoidance of public places and unhelpful ways of coping (for example, overeating and overusing drugs and alcohol) during self-isolation.

In subsequent studies we have shown that elevated COVID stress is also associated with greater stigmatization of health-care workers and that the significant proportion of the population with pre-existing anxiety disorders experience more negative effects than those with depressive disorders or no mental health conditions.

On a positive note, we have also observed that elevated COVID stress is associated with favourable attitudes towards vaccination, use of personal protective equipment and pandemic-related altruism.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our research has identified what appears to be a network of interconnected symptoms, a COVID stress syndrome, with fear of the dangerousness of the SARS-CoV-2 virus at the core, interconnecting to socio-economic concerns, xenophobia, traumatic stress symptoms and compulsive checking and reassurance seeking. The syndrome, in turn, is primarily associated with other negative mental health and socially disruptive consequences such as panic buying, excessive avoidance and unhelpful ways of coping during self-isolation.

We anticipate that as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, so too will the mental health challenges and needs of the public. Further research is needed to understand the full effects of COVID-related stress and whether these change as the pandemic progresses.

Research is also needed to understand the disruptive impact of the antithesis of COVID-19 stress, that being a disregard for the seriousness of COVID-19 and its consequences.

COVID-19 has generated a complex network of mental health reactions. The concept of the COVID stress syndrome can help build the nuanced understanding of those reactions necessary to develop targeted, evidence-based campaigns and interventions to reduce its psychological footprint. These developments are as critical to reducing the mental health toll of the pandemic as is the discovery of a vaccine to facilitating immunity.

[the writer is Professor of Psychology, University of Regina]

Unified Headquarters Mechanism reviews security situation in NE

TEZPUR (ASSAM), OCT 27 [PTI]: The Operational Group of the anti-insurgency Unified Headquarters Mechanism held a meeting here on Tuesday to review the prevailing security situation in the North East region and Assam in particular.

The meeting chaired by GOC, Gajraj Corps, Lt Gen Shantanu Dayal deliberated on aspects of Intelligence, law and order, counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations, social media and measures coordinated to ensure a secure environment in the state, a defence release said.

It also emphasised

the need for proactive measures to avoid any adverse law and order situation in the wake of forthcoming events like state and Bodo Territorial Region (BTR) elections and Republic Day celebrations.

The meeting was attended by Assam Additional Chief Secretary Jishnu Barua, Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta and senior officials of the Army, state administration and paramilitary forces, including representatives of BSF, CRPF and SSB, the release said.

As part of the Unified Headquarters Mechanism established in Assam in early 1990s,

the Strategy Group functions under the Assam Chief Secretary and the Operational Group is headed by the Tezpur-based GOC of Gajraj Corps.

The Operational Group is responsible for formulating and streamlining counter insurgency and counter terrorism at the operational and tactical level.

The smooth and efficient functioning of the mechanism has resulted in greater synergy between the administration and the security forces, and overall improvement of the security situation in Assam, the defence release added.

Protestors attack policemen in Manipur; none injured

IMPHAL, OCT 29 (PTI): Protesters belonging to two students' bodies of Manipur on Thursday targeted policemen with slingshots and stones when the law enforcers allowed some vehicles to pass during a roadblock, erected by the demonstrators in Hattia area here, as part of a general strike.

However, there was no report of anyone receiving injuries, a police officer said.

The All Manipur Muslim Students Organization (AMMSO) and Pangal Students Union (PSU) have called a 48-hour general strike since Wednesday midnight demanding four per cent reservation for Muslim students during admission in Dhanamanjuri University here.

The demonstrators came out in large numbers on the streets and blocked a section of a road with boulders,

bricks, bamboo sticks and burnt tyres in the middle of the road, prompting a small group of policemen to urge them to stop blocking the road and carry out their agitation in a peaceful manner, police said.

The protesters targeted the police personnel after the latter allowed some vehicles to pass, police said.

They also pelted the police with stones.

Additional forces were rushed to control the situation and few rounds of tear gas shells were lobbed to disperse the mob, the police said.

"The protestors used slingshots to attack the police officers but there is no report of anyone getting injured," a police officer said.

Chief Minister N Biren Singh urged the demonstrators to sit for a peaceful dialogue and termed the general strike called during the COVID-19 pandemic as

"inappropriate".

Speaking on the sidelines of the flagging off ceremony of Jan Andolan Bike Rally in Mantripukhri area, the chief minister invited them for a dialogue to resolve the matter.

Similar incidents of violence were also reported from Muslim majority areas of Lilong and Sangaiyumpham in Thoubal district, Mayang Imphal in Imphal West district and Kwakta in Bishnupur district, police said.

Manoj Khan, executive member of the AMMSO told reporters, "we have been demanding four per cent reservation for Muslim students of Manipur in higher education for the last three years and have submitted memorandum to the chief minister but there has been no positive outcome.

"We will continue with our agitation till our demand is met.

Bhopal-based literary, arts fest to go online

NEW DELHI, OCT 29 (PTI): The annual Bhopal based literature and arts festival Vishwarang 2020' will host its second edition online owing to the pandemic, featuring over 1000 artists, poets and writers from 50 countries.

Organized by Rabin Dranath Tagore University in collaboration with the Tagore International Centre for Arts & Culture, Bhopal, the festival known to promote literature in Hindi and other regional languages, will be held between November 20-29.

Touted to be a kaleidoscope of art, culture and literature, the event boasts of an eventful calendar over the course of 10 days this year, featuring panel discussions on the arts, as well as performances, including light mood melodies and folk dances.

"The event will begin with programs based on Rabindranath



Tagore and his works. Moreover, tributes will be paid to dhrupad singer Ramakant Gundecha, former President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, theatre artist and director Usha Ganguly and poet Rahat Indori," chairman of the organizing committee Santosh Kumar Choubey said in a statement.

It will feature over

72 sessions on subjects ranging from arts, science, literature and culture.

In order to increase youth and children participation, two new categories an international film festival and a children's literature, art and music festival have been added to this year's edition.

The festival line up also includes a painting exhibition, an international mushaira, discourses on Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, meet the author sessions, dastangoi and performances by popular Indian and overseas bands.

"This year, the theme of the painting exhibition

would be 'Women in Indian Art', for which more than 1,000 paintings have been received. Cash prizes will be awarded to five best paintings," the statement said.

As many as 50 books along with a coffee table book, based on the first edition of the festival, will also be released during the event.

Violent protesters in Bihar target police over Munger firing; EC removes SP, DM



to set kotwali and Kasim bazar police stations on fire, but there they faced a strong resistance from the policemen who fired in the air to disperse the mob

They burnt tyres near Rajiv Chowk in the Munger town, demanding action against the SP and the police personnel responsible for allegedly opening fire during the idol immersion procession.

Additional Director General of Police

(Headquarters) Jitendra Kumar told PTI-Bhasha in Patna that extra police force has been sent to Munger

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Munger, Manu Maharaj led a flag march in Munger town to bring the situation under control

The RJD-helmed Grand Alliance has strongly criticised the Monday incident, likening the district police with General Dyer of infamous Jallianwala

Bagh incident in Punjab during British rule on April 13, 1919.

IPS officer Lipi Singh is the daughter of RCP Singh, the JD(U) leader in the Rajya Sabha

Coming on the eve of the first phase of polling, the incident had its impact voting too as two of the three Assembly seats -- Munger, Jamalpur -- in the district witnessed lower voter turnout as compared to the 2015 polls.

While Munger constituency had witnessed a poll percentage of 54.26 in 2015, it recorded 47.89 Wednesday. Similarly, the decline was from 49.70 per cent to 47.24 per cent in Jamalpur this time.

But Tarapur constituency recorded a polling percentage of 54.80 this time compared to 52.66 in 2015

State minister and senior JD(U) leader Shailesh Kumar is in the fray from Jamalpur seat

Meanwhile, the police department has ordered the removal of in-charges of mufasil police station and Basudeopur outpost in connection with the October 26 firing and baton-charge incidents

RCP Singh was mobbed Wednesday by angry protesters demanding action against the "guilty officials" when he visited Begusarai, where polling is scheduled for November 3

Begusarai is the Lok Sabha seat of BJP leader and Union minister Giriraj Singh who had condemned the Munger incident and sought action against "erring officials no matter how highly connected they may be."

Govt urged to include tobacco in RoDTEP scheme to boost export

GUWAHATI, OCT 28 [PTI]: The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) on Wednesday urged the government to include tobacco in Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP) scheme to encourage export of the product.

India removed tobacco export incentives, making the country a less competitor in the global market compared to other countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi, FAIFA said in a statement.

"On the occasion of World Tobacco Growers Day, FAIFA appeals to the government to include tobacco in Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP) scheme and encourage exports through aggressive promotion schemes," it said.

The association of farmers also urged the government to adopt a consultative approach and include tobacco farmers while framing tobacco control regulations.

The FAIFA further said that rising instances of illegal trading of cigarettes have severely affected the production of Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco in the country.

"FCV farming community has faced business losses of over Rs 6,000 crore with a drop in production from 325 million kg in 2014-15 to 210 million kg in 2019-20," the statement quoted FAIFA president Javare Gowda as saying.

The fall in production is primarily because of rising illicit cigarette trade in the country on account of higher and

punitive taxation on cigarettes due to which legal cigarette volumes sales have dropped significantly, he claimed.

The illicit cigarette market in the country has doubled from a level of 13.5 billion sticks in 2006 to 28 billion sticks in 2019, the FAIFA said.

As smuggled cigarettes do not use Indian tobacco, the offtake of tobacco for manufacture of legal cigarettes in the country is declining, the statement said.

"As a result, FCV cultivation is reducing and farmers are incurring a loss in excess of Rs 1,300 crore every year.

"We demand immediate and strict regulations to curb rising illicit cigarette markets so that Indian farmers can benefit," Gowda said.

The election commission has asked Magadh Divisional Commissioner Asangba Chuba Ao to complete the probe within a week.

Rajesh Meena is District Magistrate and Lipi Singh is SP of Munger. The EC statement said Munger will get a new DM and a Superintendent of Police Thursday itself.

Alleging that no action was taken against the SP and other police personnel over the Monday night incident, the agitators allegedly torched mufasil and women police stations in the town.

They also allegedly set police outposts at Purab Sarai and Basudeopur on fire, and ransacked the SP office and several other police stations and outposts

The office of Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) was also allegedly targeted by the protestors, official sources said.

Witnesses said that finding themselves outnumbered, the police personnel at all these stations escaped from the premises

Official sources said the agitators went berserk and also tried

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Jofra Archer: ‘You’re just counting the days down until you’re free again’

JONATHAN LIEW DUBAI, 29 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: Jofra Archer is thinking of buying a calendar. “Just to cross them down and feel like the days are going faster,” he says. As he nears the end of his latest confinement, with the Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, the days and nights have begun to weigh heavy. There are worse places to be imprisoned than a luxury Dubai hotel with access to a private beach. He gets that. Even so, he craves escape. “It will be over soon,” he says. “You’re just counting the days down until you’re free again.”

Freedom will be sweet and fleeting. Rajasthan’s last fixture of the regular season is on Sunday. But get all the way to the final on 10 November and Archer – like his England teammates Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler – will have five days to enjoy the comforts of home before flying out for the white-ball tour of South Africa. The next assignment. The next bubble.

This is how Archer has spent much of 2020 and how he will probably spend much of 2021 too. It’s not all bad: he is surrounded by teammates, his family have been out to visit and then there is the

small matter of being paid lavish sums to play a sport he loves. Even if nobody is around to watch it. “No crowds is probably sucking most of the excitement out of the game,” Archer says. “It’s like bowling in the nets again. I guess it’s the best of a bad situation, bubble-wise.”

The irony here is that this strange, sterile and mentally disorienting environment has produced some of the best and most consistent cricket of his career. With the ball, he has been devastatingly quick and relentlessly accurate, taking 17 wickets and dragging a misfiring Rajasthan team up by its straps. He has bowled four of the 10 fastest deliveries in this year’s IPL. More than half of his deliveries have been dot balls.

The sight of Archer scattering both stumps and opening batsmen has become one of the defining motifs of the tournament. Not least for David Warner, who has now faced 45 balls from Archer this year in all formats, and been dismissed from six of them. “You can only guess at who’s there,” Archer says in typically sanguine fashion when asked about turning one of the world’s most feared batsmen into his



personal valet. “I guess I was just fortunate enough that it was him.”

With the bat, Archer has grown into a ruinous late-overs hitter. One in five of the deliveries he has faced has gone for six. Against Chennai last month, he took 26 off the final over, bowled by a forlorn Lungi Ngidi. This is not simply a personal summit. Based on pure impact, Archer is currently enjoying one of the greatest IPL seasons.

Naturally, there is a temptation here to search for parables and meanings in all this: perhaps to contrast the relative calm of the Emirati franchise bubble with the ceaseless chatter and hand-wringing angst that seems to pursue Archer in England colours. The truth is a little more complex and a little more simple. Give a world-class bowler a stage,

give him responsibility befitting his talent, and the rest takes care of itself. Or, as he puts it: “You don’t really need to fix what’s not broken.”

What the future holds, by contrast, is anyone’s guess. Archer’s England colleague Mark Wood has already admitted his future might lie in white-ball specialism. Archer believes an all-format career is still feasible. “It just goes down to man-management,” he says. “You can definitely play all three [formats], but they can’t expect you to play every single game.”

“I’ve probably done the most bubble days out of anyone. From an on-field point of view, it’s fine. But Woody has just had a kid and the time he is spending away from cricket is now very, very precious.

“Being in a Covid

bubble, you are going to need your family with you. It helps you stay sane. Four or five days in, you start to get a little bit of cabin fever. You need your family to take some of that pressure off you.”

Ultimately, in the Covid era this is a question that goes beyond performance and into basic human well-being. How much sacrifice is it reasonable to demand of these young athletes, wilfully shuttering themselves away from friends and family for our entertainment? Cricket as a sport is still grappling with the answer.

While it does, Archer will still be whiling away the hours in his hotel room, waiting for his freedom. “You’re just counting days down,” he says. “You’re still going to play and train. But when you’re done, you’re just counting days down.”

Suryakumar has burning desire to don India blue: Kieron Pollard

ABU DHABI, OCT 29 (PTI): Mumbai Indians skipper Kieron Pollard was effusive in his praise for Suryakumar Yadav, who made quite a statement with a match-winning IPL knock after being overlooked for national duty, and said the batsman is driven by a “burning desire” to don the India blue.

After restricting Royal Challengers Bangalore to 164/6, courtesy effective death bowling led by lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah (3/14), Mumbai Indians rode on a blistering unbeaten 79 off 43 balls by Yadav to chase down the target and record a five-wicket win on Wednesday night here.

“It (Yadav’s innings) was very, very valuable. We always spoke about one of the top three batters, or top four batters, bat all the way through if you are chasing, go all the way through and win the game for us. He (Surya) has done that more often than not,” Pollard said at the post-match media conference.

“...he wants to do well and today again he showed his class on how well he can bat...and deep down inside the burning desire to don that blue, but again he continues to show consistency, which is all that he can do as an individual,” he added.

Yadav was overlooked for India’s tour of Australia despite his consistent run.

Pollard also said that it was a good bowling effort to restrict RCB to 164/6, as at one stage, the opposition looked like putting 190-200 runs on the board.

“At one point it looked like we were staring at the barrel at 190-200 and I thought we came back really well and to restrict a batting line-up like RCB, with wickets in hands, and the position they were in to 165 was well done to the bowlers.

“Bumrah coming back and getting wickets, Boult (Trent Boult) as well, Krunal Pandya bowling four economical overs, so again, was a total team effort in terms of the bowl and restricting them was very good for

us,” he added.

He also conceded that getting AB de Villiers was crucial, else the momentum would have shifted in RCB’s favour.

“once we got a wicket, our spinners will come into play, and so they did and it worked for us. A couple of overs they got away from us again but we were able to pull it back.

“Luckily, I came on at that time and got the wicket of AB with an innocuous delivery that could have gone straight for six and the momentum would have been straight to them. A bit of luck on our side, but the guys really bowled well,” said the West Indian.

According to Pollard, Mumbai wanted to come back stronger and get two points.

“We haven’t got much time to think about that (possible scenario of five teams could finish with eight wins). Our main game today was to get two points, we went out and played really well to get those two points,” he signed off.

Rashford’s stunning cameo shows Solskjær is using deep squad wisely

PAUL WILSON LONDON, 29 OCT [THEGUARDIAN]: Ole Gunnar Solskjær keeps saying that having too many good players to use all at once is a sign of Manchester United’s standing and ambition, and perhaps by way of proving it he left out Marcus Rashford and Bruno Fernandes against RB Leipzig.

That was quite a big call against an unbeaten side at the top of the Bundesliga. Rashford may have been making most of his headlines off the pitch in recent weeks and Fernandes finding himself a member of a rather crowded selection panel for midfield, but the pair are United’s leading goal scorers this season.

Resting Rashford left United with only Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood up front, almost a return to a 4-4-2 formation, except that neither of the forward attacking options operated as a central sharp edge in front of goal.

Resting Fernandes allowed Solskjær to give Donny van de Beek some time on the pitch, the former Ajax player’s virtual invisibility in Premier League games having attracted comment and criticism after a £35m transfer, but without the Portugal international’s energy and invention behind the front two, United began looking conservative and oddly unthreatening.

Paul Scholes, working as a pundit and putting his finger on the point as usual, said it looked as though they were playing away from home. True enough, but without the usual 75,000 crowd offering encouragement and partisan fervour, is home advantage even relevant any longer?

Leipzig, by the same token, were supposed to be playing away, yet an empty Old Trafford is

hardly the full European experience. Not so much Theatre of Dreams as undercooked cauldron of caution. The snazziest thing by far about the German side was the excessively loud jacket worn by their manager Julian Nagelsmann, a stripy acid-blue number that was practically alone among the visitors in sparkling under the lights.

It might be remembered that José Mourinho first made a name for himself by attracting attention when celebrating a Porto win at this stadium, though even the soon-to-be special one was dressed more demurely in a dark blue coat.

On the pitch, Van de Beek was tidy and efficient without suggesting he deserves a regular slot ahead of Paul Pogba or Nemanja Matic. At least he was kept on when the latter was withdrawn after an hour, but only to appreciate he also faces competition from Fred and Scott McTominay. As Solskjær keeps emphasising, he is not short of options in midfield, and the questions about where Van de Beek would fit in surfaced when he signed, not simply after a few weeks of bench warming.

The consensus in summer was that Van de Beek was a signing for the future, possibly an insurance against Pogba departing at some point, though until Fernandes came on with 20 minutes to go there was no doubt Pogba was the most influential of the home midfield pack.

Greenwood’s finish for the opening goal was characteristically crisp and accurate, but the ball to his feet from Pogba was what cut the visitors’ defence apart. Pogba almost did it again in the second half with an imaginative pass that invited Martial to break

his goal drought, only to find his fellow French international could not quite summon a finish to match Greenwood’s.

In all probability one goal would have been enough for United, Leipzig never really looked like getting back on terms even after bringing on a couple of attacking substitutes, but in further bad news for Van de Beek his manager sent on first Fernandes then Rashford for the later stages.

He had only been on the pitch for a few minutes when Fernandes found him with an instinctive pass into space, one that Rashford not only collected but wisely went on to put away, important when VAR overruled the referee’s assistant who failed to spot he was still in his own half when the ball was played.

Within minutes Rashford would again finish impeccably when Fred won the ball just outside the Leipzig area, then magnanimously eschew the chance of a hat-trick by allowing Martial to claim a goal from the penalty spot. No problem – the striker was able to pounce again in stoppage time – proving that not only is he a hero for our times with confidence levels verging on the stratospheric, he can do a decent impersonation of what his manager used to get up to back in the day.

Rashford’s emphatic contribution after entering the fray on 62 minutes suggested Solskjær knew exactly what he was keeping in reserve, and though the United manager has not had everything his own way in the Premier League thus far, in Europe it is impossible to argue with another win in Paris followed by a 5-0 leathering of the form side in the Bundesliga.

Messi, Barcelona ease past Juventus; Chelsea, Man U cruise



TURIN (ITALY), OCT 29 (AP): There was no Cristiano Ronaldo on the field and no fans in the stands to see Barcelona and Lionel Messi beat Juventus 2-0 away in the Champions League.

Ronaldo’s lingering COVID-19 case prevented a first meeting between him and Messi in the group stage of a competition they have combined to win nine times.

Barcelona took an early lead in Turin through Ousmane Dembélé and had plenty of chances to seal the win long before Messi scored a penalty as 90 minutes ticked over into stoppage time.

Marcus Rashford scored a hat trick as Manchester United beat Leipzig 5-0 at home, while Chelsea brushed aside Krasnodar 4-0 in Russia, giving England’s four clubs a sweep of wins this week without conceding a goal.

A wave of second-half goals also earned wins for Paris Saint-Germain after losing Neymar early to injury Borussia Dortmund and Sevilla.

Some of the gloss

went out of the Juve-Barca game -- the repeat of a standout final in 2015 -- when Ronaldo was ruled out in the morning. His virus infection was revealed more than two weeks ago while on international duty with Portugal.

Barcelona quickly pushed back the Italian champion and Antoine Griezmann’s shot struck a post in the second minute. The lead arrived in the 14th from Dembélé’s deflected, looping shot.

Barcelona’s forwards were often hesitant and wasteful, with even Messi missing the target with a clear shooting chance on his left foot.

Juventus officially had no shots on target yet its No. 9 Alvaro Morata had a hat-trick of goals disallowed for offside calls. The third would have leveled in the 55th but was ruled out more than two minutes later after a video review.

Also in Group G, Ferencváros and Dynamo Kyiv missed the chance to join Juventus on three points by drawing 2-2 in Budapest before a crowd of 6,171.

Ferencváros coach

Serhiy Rebrov, who played and coached at Dynamo, saw his team fall two down in the first half, then earn a point with substitute Franck Boli’s 90th-minute strike.

ROMAN IN RUSSIA Chelsea’s Russian owner Roman Abramovich used his team’s trip to his home country to make a rare visit to see a game.

Abramovich, whose British visa was withdrawn in 2018 during diplomatic tensions with Russia, was rewarded with a 4-0 win in Krasnodar.

Chelsea’s players are not used to seeing their owner, nor any fans at games. There were 10,544 spectators in the first paying crowd Chelsea has played for since the coronavirus pandemic was declared in March.

Hakim Ziyech, in his first start for the 2012 European champion, scored in a late burst of goals. Another expensive summer signing, Timo Werner, scored a penalty after regular taker Jorginho missed from the spot in the 14th. United States international

Christian Pulisic came off the bench to score in stoppage time.

Sevilla, who drew 0-0 at Chelsea last week, also has four points in Group E after beating Rennes 1-0.

KEAN STEPS UP Italian forward Moise Kean’s goals lifted Paris Saint-Germain to a 2-0 win at Istanbul Basaksehir after Neymar limped off with a muscle strain.

Kean, who is on loan to PSG from Premier League leader Everton, scored in the 64th and 79th minutes. After two goals in the French league at the weekend, Kean already matched his goals tally for all of last season in England.

For a game between teams owned by the government of Turkey and the state of Qatar, PSG wore a uniform in the maroon of Qatar’s national flag. The official attendance was 350.

REGAL RASHFORD Manchester United’s Rashford has had a stunning October on and off the field, leading a campaign

3 dead in knife attack in French church; terrorism suspected

PARIS (AP): An attacker armed with a knife killed three people at a church Thursday in the Mediterranean city of Nice, authorities said. It was the third attack in two months in France. The assailant was wounded by police and hospitalized after the killings at the Notre Dame Church, less than a kilometer (half-mile) from the site in 2016 where another attacker plowed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd, killing dozens. Thursday's attacker was believed to be acting alone and police are not searching for other assailants, said two police officials, who were not authorized to be publicly named.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office opened an investigation into the killings, which marked the third attack since the opening in September of a terrorism trial in the January 2015 killings at the satirical newspaper



Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket.

"He cried 'Allah Akbar!' over and over, even after he was injured," said Nice Mayor Christian Estrosi, who told BFM television that three people had died, two inside the church and a third who fled but was mortally wounded. "The meaning of his gesture left no doubt."

In Nice, images on

French media showed the neighborhood locked down and surrounded by police and emergency vehicles. Sounds of explosions could be heard as sappers exploded suspicious objects.

The lower house of parliament suspended a debate on France's new virus restrictions and held a moment of silence Thursday for the victims.

The prime minister rushed from the hall to a crisis center overseeing the aftermath of the Nice attack. French President Emmanuel Macron was headed to Nice later in the day.

Less than two weeks ago, an assailant decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammed for

a class on free speech. Those caricatures were published by Charlie Hebdo and cited by the men who gunned down the newspaper's editorial meeting in 2015.

In September, a man who had sought asylum in France attacked bystanders outside Charlie Hebdo's former offices with a butcher knife.

Pompeo, in Indonesia, renews China attacks as US vote looms

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (AP): U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo renewed the Trump administration's rhetorical onslaught against China in Indonesia on Thursday as the American presidential election looms.

With China a central theme in President Donald Trump's campaign to win a second term in just five days time, Pompeo took aim at Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea, where it has advanced maritime and territorial claims over the objections of its smaller neighbors, over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic and its repression of religious minorities.

Speaking in Jakarta, the headquarters of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Pompeo praised Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN for pushing back on what he called China's "unlawful" claims and lauded Jakarta's protection of its own territory. He also attacked Beijing for its treatment of religious minorities, calling China "the gravest threat to the future of religious freedom."

Delivering a speech on religious freedom in the capital of the world's most populous Muslim nation, Pompeo denounced the Chinese Communist Party for its reported mass abuses of Muslim minorities in the western Xinjiang region.

"The atheist CCP has tried to convince the world that its brutalization of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang is necessary as a counterterrorism efforts or poverty - depending on the audience, they are speaking to," Pompeo said. "I know the Chinese Communist Party has tried to convince Indonesians to look away from the torments your fellow Muslims are suffering."

He dismissed as

fantasy Chinese officials' claims that Uighurs are "eager to discard their ethnic, religious and cultural identities to become 'modern' and enjoy the benefits of CCP-led development" and urged Indonesians to reject them.

Earlier, in an appearance with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, Pompeo took China to task for threatening its neighbors.

"We respect freedom of the seas, sovereignty and the rule of law," he said, standing beside Marsudi. Marsudi agreed, saying "any claims should be based on universally recognized principle of international law" although she did not specifically mention China.

"Our law-abiding nations reject the unlawful claims by Chinese Communist Party in the South China Sea as is clear from Indonesia's courageous leadership on this subject within ASEAN and at the United Nations," Pompeo said. "It's a cause worth pursuing in multilateral settings and the Trump administration very much supports this."

Earlier this year, the Trump administration clarified its longstanding policy on the disputes by rejecting outright nearly all of Beijing's maritime claims in the South China Sea. That decision in July came as Trump began a concerted effort to use China as a campaign cudgel against his Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden, who he paints as weak on China and beholden to it.

Previously, U.S. policy had been to insist that maritime disputes between China and its smaller neighbors be resolved peacefully through U.N.-backed arbitration. But in a July 13 statement, Pompeo said the U.S. now regards virtually all Chinese maritime claims outside

its internationally recognized waters to be illegitimate.

China has pressed ahead with attempts to enforce its disputed claims in the South China Sea, leading to serious spats with Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia in recent years. It has ignored arbitration rulings that the disputes must be negotiated.

In making the U.S. announcement, Pompeo said China cannot legally claim the James Shoal near Malaysia, waters surrounding the Vanguard Bank off Vietnam, the Luconia Shoals near Brunei or Natuna Besar off Indonesia.

On Thursday, Pompeo said Indonesia's protection of Natuna Besar was commendable example of "decisive action to safeguard its maritime sovereignty."

"I'm looking forward to cooperating together in the new ways to ensure maritime security and protect some of the world's busiest trade routes," he said.

Pompeo arrived in Indonesia from the Maldives, where he announced the United States would for the first time open an embassy in the Indian Ocean archipelago, a move that reflects growing U.S. concern about increasing Chinese influence in the region.

"The Chinese Communist Party continues its lawless and threatening behavior," Pompeo said in Male, just hours after accusing China of being a "predator" during his previous stop in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo.

"The Chinese Communist Party is a predator," he said.

Responding to Pompeo's remarks, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the secretary of state's true intention was to "let China fall back to an era of poverty and underdevelopment, and let the world fall into the abyss of confrontation and division."

France braces for monthlong lockdown as virus deaths mount

PARIS (AP): French doctors expressed relief but business owners were in despair as France prepared Thursday to shut down again for a month to try to put the brakes on a fast-moving fall coronavirus outbreak.

Shoppers at a Paris farmers' market said Thursday they were ready to restrict their freedoms given the rising number of virus-related deaths and COVID-19 patients filling French hospitals.

The new lockdown is gentler than what France saw in the spring, but still a shock to restaurants and other non-essential businesses that have been ordered to close their doors in one of the world's biggest economies.

French schools will stay open this time, to

reduce learning gaps and allow parents to keep working. Farmer markets, parks and factories can also continue operating, officials said.

French lawmakers are voting Thursday on the new restrictions announced by President Emmanuel Macron, which are set to come into effect at midnight. The lower house of parliament is dominated by Macron's centrist party, so approval is virtually guaranteed. The prime minister will lay out details of the virus-fighting plan Thursday evening.

Dr. Eric Caumes, head of the infectious and tropical disease department at Paris' Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital, said Thursday on BFM television that the new restrictions are



"an admission of failure" of the government's prevention efforts. He urged tougher restrictions.

The head of France's main business lobby MEDEF, Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux, said on Europe-1 radio Thursday that "shutting businesses

that are not responsible for contamination is a mistake" that could drive many into bankruptcy. He claimed it was a gift to internet retailer Amazon, "the big winner from confinement."

COVID patients now fill 60% of French intensive care units, and

France is reporting tens of thousands of new cases daily. Authorities reported 244 virus-related deaths in a single day Wednesday, for a total of 35,785 since the pandemic began, the third-highest toll in Europe after Britain and Italy.

Typhoon, landslides leave 35 dead, 59 missing in Vietnam

HANOI, VIETNAM (AP): Typhoon Molave set off landslides that killed at least 19 people and left 45 missing in central Vietnam, where ferocious wind and rain blew away roofs and knocked out power in a region of 1.7 million residents, state media said Thursday.

The casualties from the landslides bring the over-all death toll from the storm to at least 35, including 12 fishermen whose boats sank Wednesday as the typhoon approached with winds of up to 150 kilometers (93 miles) per hour. Vietnamese officials say it's the worst typhoon to hit the country in 20 years.

At least 59 people remain missing in the landslides and at sea. The toll may rise with many regions still unable to report details of the devastation amid the stormy weather.

Rescuers dug up eight bodies Thursday morning in Tra Van village in south central Quang Nam

province where a hillside collapsed on houses. The victims had taken shelter in the community as the typhoon approached, the official Vietnam News Agency reported.

In Tra Leng village, about 45 kilometers (28 miles) from Tra Van, another landslide buried a community with several houses occupied by about 45 people. Four managed to escape. Rescuers have recovered eight bodies and were scrambling to save 37 others, Vietnam News said.

Tra Leng remains inaccessible due to damaged roads and other landslides and government disaster-response teams were using bulldozers and excavators to open up a road to bring in more rescuers and heavy equipment.

Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung traveled to the site where soldiers were clearing up a landslide with bulldozers and ordered officers to urgently bring

in troops to the landslide-hit village.

"We must reach the landslide site the fastest way. First, send in more soldiers before we can get the big machine there. We have to reach the area by all means, including by using helicopters," he said.

As troops scrambled to rescue those buried alive in Tra Leng, another part of a rain-soaked mountainside cascaded down in a torrent of mud in nearby Phuoc Loc district Thursday morning, trapping 11 people. Three bodies were pulled out immediately by villagers, Vietnam News said.

Other villagers in Phuoc Loc were advised to flee to safety given the unstable mountain slope.

The three landslide-hit areas lie in the mountains of the hard-hit province of Quang Nam in a coastal region still recovering from floods that killed 136

people and destroyed hundreds of houses earlier this month.

Four people were killed by falling trees and collapsed houses in Quang Nam and Gia Lai provinces when the typhoon slammed into the coast Wednesday. Navy search and rescue boats found the bodies of 12 of 26 fishermen whose boats sank Wednesday off Binh Dinh province, state media said.

The typhoon blew off roofs of about 56,000 houses and caused a massive blackout in Quang Ngai province, where 1.7 million people endured the typhoon onslaught overnight in darkness, according to Vietnam News.

At least 40,000 people were evacuated to emergency shelters and authorities shut down offices, factories and schools to prevent casualties.

The typhoon left at least 16 people dead in the Philippines before blowing across the South China Sea toward Vietnam.

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FLOWER POWER! Pregnant Emma Roberts glowed in a flower-print dress and SOREL's Lennox Lace Boot while out in L.A.

‘Brave New World’ axed after single season

LOS ANGELES, OCT 29 (PTI): Streamer Peacock has cancelled the science fiction drama series ‘Brave New World’, starring Alden Ehrenreich and Demi Moore, after its first season.

Based on Aldous Huxley’s novel of the same name, the show premiered on the the streaming service from NBCUniversal in July.

Sources told The Hollywood Reporter, the show’s studio arm, Universal Cable Productions (UCP), is in the process of shopping the series to find an international window for the drama. It’s unclear if landing an international partner will lead to a second season for the series.

The representatives for Peacock and UCP shared a statement after pulling the

plug on the David Wiener-created show on Wednesday.

“There will not be season two of ‘Brave New World’ on Peacock. David Wiener created a thought-provoking and cinematic adaptation. We’re grateful to the cast and crew who brought this world to life. We look forward to telling more stories with David in the future,” they said.

“Brave New World” imagines a utopian society that has achieved peace and stability through the prohibition of “monogamy, privacy, money, family and history”.

The show also features Kylie Bunbury, Hannah John-Kamen, Sen Mitsuji, Joseph Morgan and Nina Sosanya.

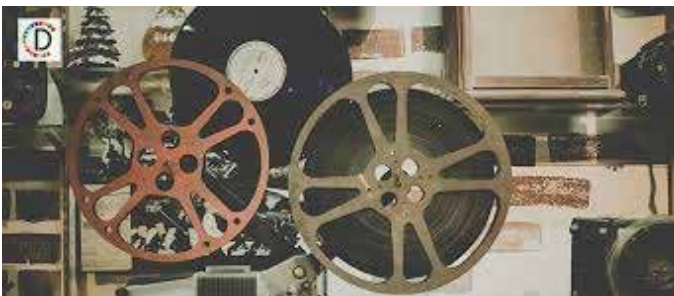
Kim Coates to lead indie ‘Neon Lights’

LOS ANGELES, OCT 29 (PTI): “Sons of Anarchy” alum Kim Coates will play the lead role in the psychological thriller “Neon Lights”.

According to Deadline, the movie will also feature Coates’ daughter Brenna Coates, marking their first on-screen outing.

Rouzbah Heydari will helm the upcoming indie feature from a screenplay by Dana Abraham, who will also star in the movie.

The story is about a tech tycoon with anger management issues who goes on a retreat only to witness guests disappear one by one.



Coates will also produce the movie along with Abraham.

The project, which is a joint venture between Ideal Entertainment and Red Hill Entertainment, in association with Twin Fins Productions, will start production in Ontario, Canada next week.

Jason Sudeikis-starrer ‘Ted Lasso’ gets early season 3 renewal

LOS ANGELES, OCT 29 (PTI): Comedy series “Ted Lasso”, starring Jason Sudeikis in the titular role, has secured a third season order at Apple TV Plus.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the development comes as the series is gearing up to return to production in January in London on its second season.

Sudeikis portrays Lasso, an idealistic all-American football coach, who despite having no soccer coaching experience at all, is hired to manage an English football club.

The show debuted on the tech giant’s streamer on August 14 and was renewed for a second run a week after its premiere.

It also stars Hannah Waddingham, Juno Temple, Brett Goldstein, Jeremy Swift, Phil Dunsten, among others.

Sudeikis originally appeared as the Ted Lasso character in an NBC Sports



video in 2013 to help promote that the channel would begin broadcasting English Premier League games. It proved so successful that the network brought the character back the following year to serve as an analyst.

Sudeikis also serves as executive producer alongside Bill Lawrence and Jeff Ingold via Doozer Productions. Liza Katzner serves as co-executive producer.

Warner Bros Television and Universal Television produce.

Khloe Kardashian confirms she had coronavirus in video

LOS ANGELES (AP): Khloe Kardashian says she had tested positive for the coronavirus.

The reality star confirmed her previous diagnosis in a Wednesday sneak peek clip of “Keeping Up with the Kardashians.” The bedridden Kardashian spoke in the video with a hoarse voice.

“Just found out that I do have corona,” she said in the teaser of the episode, which was filmed months ago. A teaser in September showed Kardashian being tested for the virus.

“I have been in my room,” she continued. “It’s gonna be fine, but it was really bad for a couple days.”

Kardashian said her symptoms included coughing, shaking, vomiting, headaches along with cold and hot flashes. She said she had a burning sensation while coughing.

The video clip was released a day after her sister, Kim Kardashian West, drew hefty criticism for celebrating her lavish 40th birthday vacation with a large group on a private island during the pandemic. She posted a few group photos on social media of herself with family and friends, who were



all unmasked.

Kardashian West said in the post that “after 2 weeks of multiple health screens and asking everyone to quarantine, I surprised my closest inner circle with a trip to a private island.”

Porn star Ron Jeremy pleads not guilty to new rape charges

Adult film star Ron Jeremy pleaded not guilty Wednesday to new charges of rape and sexual assault involving six victims, including a teenage girl, prosecutors said.

Jeremy, 67, entered the pleas to seven additional charges including three of forcible rape, according to a statement from the Los Angeles County district attorney’s office.

The new charges involve alleged attacks dating from 1996 to 2013 on victims ranging in age from 17 to 38, prosecutors said.

The 17-year-old was raped at a Woodland Hills home in 2008, prosecutors contend.

The other alleged victims include a 19-year-old woman who was raped during a photo shoot in the San Fernando Valley; a 26-year-old woman who was raped at a party in a nightclub; a 38-year-old who was sexually assaulted at a West Hollywood bar where Jeremy was a regular; a woman who was sexually assaulted at Jeremy’s home and a woman who was assaulted at a strip club.

Jeremy is now facing a total of 35 charges involving 23 alleged victims, including a 15-year-old girl. The attacks occurred from 1996 to 2020, authorities contend.

Nicknamed “The Hedgehog,” Jeremy has been among the best-known and most prolific performers in the adult film



industry since the 1970s.

Jeremy, whose legal name is Ronald Jeremy Hyatt, was investigated and charged by a district attorney’s task force formed to take on sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry as the #MeToo era gained momentum in late 2017.

He has been held in jail on \$6.6 million bail since June.

If convicted of all charges, Jeremy could face a sentence of more than 330 years to life in state prison.

‘Extraction’ producer David Guillod arrested in sex assault

LOS ANGELES (AP): “Extraction” and “Atomic Blonde” producer David Guillod was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of sexual assault only months after being charged with drugging and assaulting women in Santa Barbara, authorities said.

Guillod, 53, was taken into custody at his home in the Sherman Oaks area of Los Angeles after a woman told police on Oct. 21 that he had sexually assaulted her during an evening meeting, according to a police statement.

Guillod remained jailed on \$5

million bail.

Guillod’s defense attorney, Philip Cohen, confirmed to the Los Angeles Times that his client had been arrested but could not offer further details.

Guillod was out on bail after surrendering in June to authorities in Santa Barbara, northwest of Los Angeles. The Santa Barbara County district attorney’s office has charged him with 11 felony counts involving four women, one of them a former assistant. The charges include rape, kidnap and rape of a drugged victim.



Prosecutors contend that he attacked the women in 2012, 2014 and 2015. Guillod has denied those allegations.

ARIES:

It’s time to check in with yourself, Aries. What are you giving your time and energy to, and are these activities worth the effort you are putting in? Learning that ‘no’ is a complete sentence will change the game for you—permanently. Single rams are being reminded that there is such a thing as having too many tabs open. Again, pick who’s worth the effort and get to know them better. There’s nothing like the gift of presence to make your relationships (both romantic and otherwise) thrive.

TAURUS:

You could do everything by yourself, but where’s the fun in that? The cards are urging you to acknowledge your team—the fellow warriors who are walking by your side and assisting you in your worldly mission. Leadership expert and motivational speaker Robin Sharma says, “Smart leaders understand the power of publicly praising excellence in action. So do it often. Coach your teammates as to areas they need to improve in private. So they can save face.” In addition to this, consider setting goals that challenge them to put their best foot forward and grow in ways they never imagined.

GEMINI:

In the words of Bashar, channelled by Darryl Anka, “Your purpose is to be *you* as fully as you can and the way that’s perhaps most easily done is to act on your highest joy.” Yes, it’s that simple, Gemini! Your guidance today is to stay in the energy of passion and do what brings a smile to your face. As always, leave ‘the how’ and ‘the why’ to the Universe as you continue facing your True North. Before you know it, your circumstances will have transformed, and you’ll find yourself doing exactly

what you have been consistently working towards.

CANCER:

There are times when we tempt fate, throw caution to the wind, and move forward with courage despite the risks this entails. And then there are times when we examine the plan of action thoroughly, calculate each move, and vow to play it safe. If the cosmic cues are anything to go, you will find comfort in sticking to the rulebook and doing what you do best. Remember, there is only so much you are capable of achieving by yourself. So, pause. Take a moment to acknowledge the contribution of your co-passengers and share words of encouragement that are coming from an authentic space.

LEO:

They used to call you on your cell phone, late at night when they needed your love—but then something changed in the blink of an eye and everything fell apart. Here’s the thing, though: nothing that is truly yours can be taken away from you; Leo. So, breathe. Ease into the moment. Allow yourself to grieve, but don’t get caught up in a whirlwind of emotions. You’ll know how the Universe conspired in your favour once you’re on the other side of the dark tunnel.

VIRGO:

Transition is a big theme for you right now. You’re actively moving away from the things that aren’t serving you (despite your attachments) and making space for a future that is synonymous with good health and happiness. Remember, it’s okay to feel all the things you’re feeling—from melancholy to sadness. Instead of giving into the ebb and flow, stay detached and watch the scene as if it were a part of a show. PS: This too shall pass, Virgo!

LIBRA:

There was a time you couldn’t go a day without sharing stories with each other, and now you’re nothing more than strangers. Remember that not all relationships are meant to last forever—and that death is a necessary part of the procreation process. No matter how heavy your heart feels right now, continue to gaze at the horizon as you move gracefully forward. Before you know it, the pain will have become a distant memory and your heart will expand with love.

SCORPIO:

There’s always two ways to get what you want: the former involves waging a war, while the latter requires you to tap into your wit and charm. No matter how exhausted you are by the given situation, put on your best smile, and work your way through the room. The key is to make it look like you’re working with, rather than against, the crew. PS: The right amount of tact will come in handy, Scorpio!

SAGITTARIUS:

Thursday sees you prepping for the upcoming full moon by clearing your space and letting go of that which is no longer yours—both literally and figuratively. There’s a newfound optimism within you that comes from accepting the things you cannot change and recognising the light in every situation, including the ones that caused you immense pain. So, what do you want the next chapter of your life to look like? Find that space of stillness within, and set an intention for positive change. PS: It’s all going to work out fine.

CAPRICORN:

You’ve got that big goal energy about you that reads ‘the

impossible is possible’. It’s all about commitment and consistency in the Capricorn HQ, coupled with the ability to take both success and failure in your stride. Besides, it’s the things that don’t work out that teach us how and where we need to course correct. Acknowledging the contribution of your team members is also imperative to your growth. Lead by example and show them, through both your actions and words, just how grateful you are for them.

AQUARIUS:

Decluttering, minimising, and letting go of the old stories has been a big theme this year (yes, despite your best attempt to resist the change). The Universe applauds all the ways in which you have cleaned up your act, Aquarius. It’s time to go a step further this week and give Project Redecoration a go. Remember, it’s not about indulging in big, fancy things. It’s about exercising your creative muscles, beautifying your space in a way that awakens your sense of joy, and rearranging the objects of art in a manner that harmonises the energy of the space. Know that in doing so, you will be bringing a little more beauty and harmony into your life.

PISCES:

There’s good news for those who have been manifesting a change on the work front. Surprise, surprise! A tempting offer could come your way right about now. Those who have their own venture are being reminded that something that is in the nascent stages looks rather promising. We’re talking joy, abundance, and prosperity, Pisces. So, put in the required effort and play your cards right. Most importantly, believe in your own power as the master manifestor of your reality.