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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Anil Yadav breaks his own UGC-NET record



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 JAN:**

Anil Kumar Yadav, an alumnus of Sikkim Govt. College, Tadong [now Nar Bahadur Degree College] and St. Xavier's School, Pakyong, has broken his own 'India Book of Record' count for "UGC -NET in Most Subjects" by clearing this tough exam in Political Science as well. Mr Yadav the UGC-NET for his eighth subject in the June 2020 UGC-NET Examination which was held in September-November 2020. He has qualified UGC-NET in Economics, Management, Commerce, HRM/ Labour Welfare, Psychology, Public Administration, Mass Communication & Journalism and Political Science.

Covid infections continue to dip in Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 JAN:**

Sikkim registered only four new cases of novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours taking the state's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported so far to 5,988 on Sunday. Of these four, two are army personnel.

The number of new cases in the State have remained below 20 since 29 December [without any drop in the average number of tests] and today was the second consecutive day that daily infections were in single-digits.

Meanwhile, 22 more patients were discharged from isolation facilities to further improve the number of so discharged Covid patients in Sikkim to 5,413. This has further brought down the number of active cases of novel coronavirus in the State to 351.

In the daily health bulletin on Sunday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia, informed that the four new cases were reported from the testing of 246 samples on Saturday, from which three returned positive in RT-PCR testing of 215 samples and one was detected in rapid antigen testing of 27 samples.



While three of the cases were reported from East District, one was from West Sikkim.

While providing details of the new cases, Mr Bhutia informed that an army personnel admitted at the Army Hospital at Libing and another soldier from the Army Camp at Bardang have tested positive and have been isolated at their respective places as per the COVID protocol of the Army.

Likewise, one person from Metro Point-Tadong in East District and another person from Song Yaksom were also found positive for COVID-19.

GOVT PREPS FOR HISTORIC ASSEMBLY SESSION

Clear proposal to include left-out communities in Scheduled Tribes list to be tabled today

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 JAN:**

The one-day Assembly session called for 11 January, Monday, will be historic, Chief Minister PS Tamang informed a meeting of Legislators and Advisors of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha he chaired today at Mintokgang.

A press release issued by Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, who is also the SKM spokesperson, informs that while speaking on the main agenda of the meeting, the CM, who is also the SKM party president, underlined that the one-day session of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly will be historic because an important step forward will be taken towards securing Scheduled Tribes status for the 12 left-out communities of the State.

The CM informed the meeting that after careful vetting of the proposal to provide tribal status to the left-out communities, the Cabinet has approved it and that this proposal will be officially placed at the Assembly session.

The release adds that the CM reiterated that the SKM government has consistently pursued the demand to provide tribal status to Thami, Bahun-Chettri [Khas], Sanyasi [Jogi], Newar, Kirat Khambu Rai, Kirat-Dewan, Sunuwar, Gurung, Mangar, Bhujel and Majhi communities, who, he added, have been living in equal status since monarchy. The SKM Government is also

committed to making Sikkim a Tribal State so the Treasury Bench will be placing this proposal in the House.

The CM added that the previous Sikkim Democratic Front government did not bring such a proposal to the Assembly and instead side-stepped commitment to the demand by making one of its MLAs table a Private Member's Bill in a move to mislead the people since Private Member's Bills do not carry the same legal validity as a government bill, the release adds.

It was this "weak" initiative of the previous SDF Government due to which the left-out communities were still awaiting tribal status.

On the same, the CM stressed that this time, the SKM government has properly studied all legal aspects of the demand to make the initiative stronger and added that it has also been vetted by the Law Department and then approved in the Cabinet to ensure a clear and robust proposal.

This, he pointed out, was evidence of the SKM Government's seriousness on the issue.

He added that that after the proposal is passed by the Assembly, it will be sent to the Centre and central agencies for study and approval.

The CM exuded confidence that the proposal will receive a positive response from the Centre and the concerned central agencies since the proposal has gone

through all the required processes and carefully drafted and clearly reasoned.

Stressing that the assembly session was going to be very important and historic since an important proposal was going to be tabled, the CM appealed to all MLAs to attend the session and endorse the Bill, the release adds.

The CM further informed the meeting that after the proposal was passed by the Assembly, a high-level state delegation of MLAs representing all political parties and representatives from all communities will go to Delhi to lobby the Central government.

The release informs that earlier at the meeting, the CM conveyed condolences on behalf of the SKM party and the State government on the demise of the mother of Namcheyong MLA, Em Prasad Sharma.

The CM also expressed happiness on the recovery of Education Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha and informed that the Minister was taking rest for some days on the advice of doctors. He further informed that the Speaker, LB Das, could not attend the meeting as one of his family members was undergoing treatment and conveyed his wishes for quick recovery.

Today's meeting, which was chaired by the Chief Minister, was also attended by Deputy Speaker Sangay Lepcha, Ministers, MLAs, Advisors to the CM and Political Secretary to the CM.

Foundation stone for Heavenly Path's Spiritual Healing Centre to be laid on 17 Jan



**AARON RAI
GANGTOK, 10 JAN:**

Heavenly Nirvana Path, Sikkim, along with Vyasnanda Guru MB Chettri informed that this will be the organisation's most substantial programmes which was their dream for many years. The programme will have Chief Minister PS Tamang as chief guest, and witnessed by Master God Angel (Guru-Hajur) online through virtual mode and also deliver a sermon, he informed.

Heavenly Nirvana Meditation Centre at Nandugaon in South Sikkim on 17 January.

Addressing a press conference today, Vyasnanda Guru MB Chettri informed that this will be the organisation's most substantial programmes which was their dream for many years. The programme will have Chief Minister PS Tamang as chief guest, and witnessed by Master God Angel (Guru-Hajur) online through virtual mode and also deliver a sermon, he informed.

The Heavenly Nirvana Path committee has requested all followers to attend this historic event.

Mr Chettri highlighted that after forming the government, Mr Tamang had visited the Nirvana center and promised to construct a Spiritual healing center there and now has now fulfilled his promise.

The organisation has invited people from all walks of life, communities, NGOs and officials to be part of this special occasion.

Traffic Police supplement with 16 new motorcycles

Summit Report



GANGTOK, 10 JAN:

Chief Minister PS Tamang today flagged off a fleet of new motorcycles of Traffic Police from MG Marg here.

The fleet of 16 new Royal Enfield motorcycles has been apportioned between the districts with 12 to be stationed in East Sikkim, two in South Sikkim, and one each for West and North Sikkim.

In a Facebook post about the ceremony, the CM shares that the State Government has the highest regard for the police force and will provide every assistance towards improving resources to help the force carry out its duties with more efficiency. "The motorcycles will

aid our forces manoeuvre through congested traffic and reach spots which are inaccessible for vehicles. It will also assist in swift response in numerous matters," the CM goes on to explain.

He adds that the government looks forward to supplementing more resources for the police force in the days to come to further strengthen the law and order situation in the State.

Also on the day, Traffic Police Helpline number - 8900295999 - was dedicated to the people. This number will be open 24x7 for citizens to call in, sms or share photographs via WhatsApp of possible traffic violations.

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Barfung MLA distributes old age pension to left out senior citizens

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JAN:

Barfung MLA TT Bhutia distributed Old Age Pension today to senior citizens left out of the government's old age pension scheme because they did not possess Certificates of Identification. They are however registered voters of the constituency.

Mr Bhutia covered expenses towards their old age pension from his own resources and plans to provide them Rs 2,000 every two months. Today's function was the third such by the MLA and was held at the BJP office in Rabongla.

While talking to Summit Times, the MLA informed that this was being done on his



own initiative and has thus far not received any support from any other agency except the support he has received from family members, well wishers and his own salary.

Today, between 60 to 65 senior citizens

received assistance.

Also, apart from old age pension, under the initiative, the MLA is also helping out patients from BPL families meet their medical expenses.

BPL patients undergoing treatment for Cancer and Kidney

complications were provided Rs 20000 in cash. For this work, the MLA has a team working at every GPU in the constituency, it is informed.

This work will continue till he remains an MLA, Mr Bhutia states,

hoping that it will be continued by those who follow in coming years as well.

The function was also attended by the Zilla Panchayat, BJP CLC president and other panchayats of Barfung constituency.

India generated around 33,000 tonnes COVID-19 waste in 7 months

GAURAV SAINI

NEW DELHI, JAN 10 (PTI):

India generated around 33,000 tonnes of COVID-19 biomedical waste in the last seven months, with Maharashtra contributing the maximum (3,587 tonnes) to it, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

Over 5,500 tonnes of COVID-19 waste was generated across the country in October -- the maximum for a month so far.

According to the data received from state pollution control boards, since June 2020, all states and union territories have generated 32,994 tonnes of COVID-19-related biomedical waste which is being collected, treated and disposed of by 198

common biomedical waste treatment facilities (CBWTFs).

COVID-19 biomedical waste could include PPE kits, masks, shoe covers, gloves, human tissues, items contaminated with blood, body fluids like dressings, plaster casts, cotton swabs, beddings contaminated with blood or body fluid, blood bags, needles, syringes etc.

According to the data, Maharashtra generated 5,367 tonnes of COVID-19 waste in seven months since June, followed by Kerala (3,300 tonnes), Gujarat (3,086 tonnes), Tamil Nadu (2,806 tonnes), Uttar Pradesh (2,502 tonnes), Delhi (2,471 tonnes), West Bengal (2,095 tonnes) and Karnataka (2,026 tonnes).

Around 4,530 tonnes

of such waste was generated in December, with Maharashtra contributing the maximum 629 tonnes, followed by Kerala (542 tonnes) and Gujarat (479 tonnes).

Delhi generated 321 tonnes of COVID-19 bio-medical waste in December, according to the CPCB data.

Around 4,864 tonnes of COVID-19 waste was generated in November, of which 609 tonnes was contributed by Maharashtra, 600 tonnes by Kerala, 423 tonnes by Gujarat and 385 tonnes by Delhi.

In October, the country generated 5,597 tonnes of COVID-19 waste, the maximum in the last seven months, with Kerala (641), Gujarat (545) and Maharashtra (542)

being the top three contributors.

In September, 5,490 tonnes of such waste was generated. Gujarat contributed the maximum 622 tonnes, followed by Tamil Nadu (543 tonnes), Maharashtra (524 tonnes), Uttar Pradesh (507 tonnes) and Kerala (494 tonnes), as per the data.

The CPCB had in March last year issued specific guidelines for handling, treatment and disposal of such waste at healthcare facilities, quarantine centres, homes, sample collection centers, laboratories, pollution control boards, urban local bodies and common biomedical waste treatment facilities (CBWTFs).

The apex pollution body had

in May developed the 'COVID19BWM' mobile application to monitor coronavirus-related biomedical waste and to compile the data through electronic manifest system. This application tracks COVID-19 waste at the time of generation, collection and disposal.

In July last year, the Supreme Court made it mandatory for all urban local bodies and state pollution control boards to use the mobile application for tracking biomedical waste daily in a bid to ensure that the waste is collected, transported and sent to the registered CBWTFs.

As on Sunday, India's COVID-19 caseload stands at 1,04,50,284 while the death toll is 1,50,999.

Cities key to India's post-pandemic growth: WEF study

NEW DELHI, JAN 10

(PTI): Cities have borne the maximum brunt of the COVID-19 outbreak but they will also be key to India's post-pandemic growth as they account for nearly 70 per cent of the country's GDP and an average of 25-30 people migrate to cities from rural areas every single minute, a new study has shown.

The study by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) said the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic has been catastrophic for cities.

"According to estimates, about 70 per cent of India's GDP comes from its cities and around 25-30 people migrate to the cities from rural areas every minute. However, most big cities in India have a wide economic disparity, with expansive slums and a large urban poor population," the WEF said.

The study further said that about 25 million households in India -- 35 per cent of all urban households -- cannot afford housing at market prices and it is time to create a new urban paradigm that enables cities to be healthier, more inclusive and more resilient.

The WEF report, titled Indian Cities in the Post-Pandemic World, highlights the country's most pressing urban challenges that were further exacerbated by the pandemic. The report also provides insights for translating the lessons learned from the pandemic into an urban reform agenda.

The impact of the pandemic has been profoundly uneven on different population groups. Vulnerable populations, including low-income migrant workers, have suffered the dual blows of lost income and weak social-protection coverage, while the pandemic has also laid bare gender-based imbalances in public and private life in India's urban areas, the WEF said.

The report, produced in collaboration with Mumbai-based IDFC Institute, compiles insights from leading global and Indian urban experts across seven thematic pillars -- planning, housing, transport, environment, public health, gender and vulnerable populations.

Among other recommendations, the report underscores the

critical role data can play in helping cities manage and direct emergency operations during a crisis.

"But data alone is not a panacea; realizing the potential of cities requires empowered and capable governance, investment in transport and infrastructure to fuel productive urban economies, and a rethink of outdated planning norms and regulations," the WEF said.

The wide-ranging recommendations compiled in the report include a rethink of outdated urban planning regulations, which will make cities more compact, commuter-friendly and green.

It also recommends greater decentralisation and empowerment of local governments, which will allow for more proximate and responsive governance. Besides, it suggests addressing supply-side constraints to building houses at an affordable cost and encouraging a vibrant rental housing market that allows for labour mobility.

The study also calls for investing in transport solutions that recognise the need to integrate peri-urban areas with urban cores, and bolstering

health capacity in cities by increasing the number of trained healthcare personnel.

It also recommended ensuring that infrastructure has the adequate functional capacity, aligned with current and future demands, and prioritising inclusivity by addressing the biases and impediments faced by women and vulnerable populations in accessing urban opportunities.

Another suggestion calls for prioritising action on environmental sustainability, air pollution and disaster management in urban rebuilding efforts.

"Well-designed and governed cities can be dynamic centres that spur innovation, drive economic productivity and provide citizens with a good quality of life. The pandemic is an opportunity to address historical urban challenges and bring about positive long-term change," said Viraj Mehta, Head of India and South Asia and Member of the Executive Committee, World Economic Forum.

"Amidst every pandemic, from the bubonic plague to the Spanish flu, pundits have

foretold the death of cities. And yet they have emerged stronger every time. The pandemic can be a turning point in India's urban journey if we draw the right lessons and translate them into lasting change," said Reuben Abraham, CEO and Senior Fellow at IDFC Institute.

The study is part of the WEF's broader collaboration with the IDFC Institute for a working group on 'Rebuilding Cities' which has emerged from the Regional Action Group for South Asia.

This group brings together public and private sector leaders and prominent experts from the region to interact regularly in order to support an adequate public-private response to the COVID-19 pandemic and jointly chart recovery efforts.

The working group on Rebuilding Cities is partnering with multiple Indian state governments to constitute state-level working committees comprising local and municipal government representatives, urban experts, and other relevant stakeholders to devise implementable and context-specific urban reform recommendations.



'WEALTH FROM WASTE' TRAINING AT KAMAREY

Representatives from six Self Help Groups today began a 3-day skill development training on zero waste management at Kamarey ward under Budang Kamarey Gram Panchayat Unit of Rhenock constituency. The participants are being coached on making buckets and even decorative items from waste plastic at this training by SIRD & PR. [from AJAY AGARWAL]

SIKKIM MARATHONERS AT JAIGAON DALSINGPARA



Sikkim's 'Marathon Man' Amar Subba along with six of his students reached Jaigaon Dalsingpara today to participate

in the Dalsingpara Marathon scheduled to be held on 12 January at Jaigaon Dalsingpara. In the squad are Shiva Hang

Limboo, Phurba Tamang, Mon Hang Limboo, Nimsang Limboo, Lhamu Sherpa and Rinchu Lamu Dukpa. [from AJAY AGARWAL]

OFOJ employees form association

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 JAN:

Government employees appointed under the One Family One Job scheme formed an association at a meeting held at Gorkha Bhawan in Singtam, East Sikkim, on Saturday.

A press release informs that OFOJ employees under

various departments of all the four districts attended the meeting and passed several resolutions. The primary objective behind forming the association is to bring unity among the OFOJ employees, it states.

As per the first resolution passed in the meeting, the association was formed with the name 'All Sikkim One

Family One Job Govt. Employees Association (ASOFOJGEA)'. Ten executive members were selected from employees belonging to all four districts, as per the second resolution. Consequently, the nominated executives of the association vowed to work relentlessly for the development of OFOJ employees.

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

The Anthyesti Kriya of late Mrs. Karna Kumari Baraily who left her heavenly abode on 30th of December, 2020 falls on 11 January, 2021 (Monday). All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at DEORALI, HOTEL CHOWTARA BESIDES BUTTERFLY FLY OVER.



We would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement and to thank you all for your kind support and concern.

Ujjal Baraily (Son)
Pradeep Baraily (Son)
Mamta Thapa (Daughter)
Parina Baraily (Daughter)
Marena Baraily (Daughter)
Susil Thapa (Son-in-law)
Kalpa Baraily (Daughter-in-law)
Sumitra Baraily (Daughter-in-law)
And all other Baraily Family members.

Contact: 9775996049 Ujjal Baraily (Son)
9563068906 Marena Baraily (Daughter)
9749683189 Susil Thapa (Son-in-law)



STILL NOT ACCOMODATED

SINGTAM, 10 JAN: Local vegetable sellers in Singtam continue to carry out their business with appointed place, laying out their wares outside other shops and crowding stairs and footpaths because the Lall Bazaar here has spared no room for them. "We feel embarrassed when we are insulted by shopkeepers when we occupy space in front of their shops. We were promised proper space to sell out produce, but those promises have not materialized," shared one of the vendors. In the photograph here, the vendors can be seen setting up shop on stairs in front of someone else's shop behind the taxi stand. [from YOGEN THATAL]

Haryana CM cancels farmers' meet in face of aggressive protest

NEW DELHI, 10 JAN [NDTV]: Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's visit to a village near Karnal and his meeting with a gathering of farmers got cancelled after a group of farmers protesting against the Centre's agri-sector laws ransacked the venue. The Haryana police had started the crackdown on the protesting farmers, when they tried to enter the Kemla village, using tear gas shells and water cannons. But the farmers had managed to enter the village and reach the venue of the meeting.

Cellphone footage showed many of them on the dais, shouting,

throwing down chairs and tearing up posters.

The Chief Minister was scheduled to attend the gathering of farmers at the village and speak on the benefits of the Centre's three farm laws passed in September. Anticipating trouble, arrangements were made for heavy security and a number of police personnel were deployed at the village ahead of the meeting.

BJP-ruled Haryana had made headlines in November when it decided to stop the farmers on way to Delhi from across the state as well as those in Punjab.

For days, there have

been reports and video footage of the police clashing with farmers, using batons, barricades, tear gas and water cannons.

Following the huge criticism, the Central government had decided to conduct a huge outreach programme to dispel "misconceptions" about the laws.

But over the last week, the Chief Minister's outreach programme had run into trouble in this area as farmers hardened their stance in Delhi.

On Friday, the local protesters had clashed with the villagers and the local BJP workers,

who are promoting the visit. The face-off started when the villagers didn't allow the farmers to enter into the village to register their protest.

Today, Congress's Randeep Surjewala tweeted: "Respected Manohar Lal ji, please stop this pretence of Kisan Mahapanchayat in Kaimla village. By playing with the sentiments of those who provide us with food, please stop meddling with the law and order situation".

"If you want to have a conversation, have it with those who have been protesting for the last 46 days," read another tweet from Mr Surjewala.

Bird flu confirmed in 7 states; test results of Delhi, Maharashtra samples awaited

NEW DELHI, JAN 10 (PTI): The Centre on Sunday said bird flu outbreak has been confirmed in seven states -- Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, while test results are still awaited for Delhi and Maharashtra samples.

No samples have been confirmed positive in wild birds from Balod district, Chhattisgarh which were tested earlier, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying said in a statement.

After confirmation of avian influenza (bird flu) positive samples in poultry (two poultry farms) of Panchkula district of Haryana, the state government has deployed nine Rapid

Response team, and containment operation is underway in both the epicentres.

Samples of crow/wild birds have been confirmed for avian influenza from Surat district of Gujarat and Sirohi district of Rajasthan.

"Further, reports of unusual deaths of 86 crows and 2 egrets were received from Kangra district (Himachal Pradesh)," the statement said.

"Reports of unusual mortality of wild birds have also been received from Nahan, Bilaspur and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) and samples have been sent to the designated laboratory for testing," it added.

The Department has issued advisories to the affected states to avoid further spread of

disease.

"So far, the disease has been confirmed from seven states (Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh)," it said.

The Centre said test reports of samples from Delhi and Maharashtra, which have been sent to the designated laboratory, are still awaited.

Control and containment have been completed in both the affected districts of Kerala. Post operational surveillance programme guidelines have been issued to the state.

Meanwhile, the central teams formed for monitoring the situation in the affected areas of the country are visiting the affected sites.

One of the central

teams reached Kerala on January 9 and is presently monitoring the epicentre sites and conducting epidemiological investigation. Another central team reached Himachal Pradesh on January 10 and is undertaking survey in the affected areas.

The Centre has asked states to build awareness among the public and avoid the spread of misinformation regarding avian influenza.

"States/Union Territories have been requested to increase surveillance around water bodies, live bird markets, zoos, poultry farms, etc., proper disposal of carcass, and strengthening of bio-security in poultry farms," the statement said.

'Not prepared for offline exams', say CBSE students of classes 9 and 11

NEW DELHI, 10 JAN [NDTV]: Students of Classes 10 and 12 have finally got clarity over CBSE board examinations 2021 with the announcement of examination dates but Classes 9 and 11 students are still unsure about their final examinations which are expected to take place in the coming months.

While the Classes 10 and 12 students had asked for the offline

exams, the Classes 9 and 11 students are majorly asking for online examinations citing rising COVID-19 cases and being prepared for the online tests after a year of online classes. Some of the students are asking to conduct the exams both online and offline.

In previous years, majority of schools conducted the final exams for Classes 9 and 11 by the month of

February or early March before the beginning of CBSE board exams. This year, as the schools have been unable to complete their syllabus due to disruption in classes during the lockdown, various students are asking for reduction in the exam syllabus.

Students have also cited COVID-19 related health risks during the offline exams.

"Please CBSE, take

the exam in an online way because we are not prepared for offline exam please think that for 9th and 11th," a student named Sachin Dev said.

Few students have suggested that Classes 9 and 11 exams must be held both online and offline and give options to the students to select the mode of papers.

"Online or offline. if they give, then the total responsibility will be of the parents and those

Yi meets young entrepreneurs, explores possibility of opening Sikkim chapter



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JAN:

Young Indians [Yi], an arm of the Confederation of Indian Industry [CII], convened a meeting at Denzong Shangrila Hotel & Spa here today with leading entrepreneurs and youth of the state.

Yi, a press release

informs, is planning to launch its Sikkim chapter soon.

Piyush Garg, representing the Yi national team, introduced Yi at the meeting, its vision and spoke about its nation-building activities, while Lekh Ram Nyoliwala, chair - Yi Siliguri Chapter, spoke

about the organisation's youth leadership activities conducted by Yi-Siliguri.

The meeting was attended by over 20 young entrepreneurs who displayed keen interest to start a Yi Sikkim chapter, it is informed.

Yi currently has a presence in over 54

cities across the country and more than 3,200 members.

Among the State's young entrepreneurs who attended today's meeting were Rewaj Chettri, Raj Lama, Rohit Khandelwal, Kevin Rasaily, Rahul Khandelwal, and Bikash Gadaily, the release details.

18,645 fresh cases push India's COVID-19 tally to 1,04,50,284

NEW DELHI, JAN 10 (PTI): India's COVID-19 caseload rose to 1,04,50,284 with 18,645 infections being reported in a day, while the recoveries have surged to 1,00,75,950, according to the Union Health Ministry's data updated on Sunday.

The death toll reached 1,50,999 with 201 more people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the infection so far surged to 1,00,75,950, pushing the national COVID-19 recovery rate to 96.42 per cent, while the case fatality rate dropped to 1.44 per cent.

The COVID-19 active caseload remained below three lakh for the 20th consecutive day.

There are 2,23,335 active coronavirus



infections in the country which comprise 2.14 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20 lakh-mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore-mark on December 19.

According to the

ICMR, 18,10,96,622 samples have been tested so far with 8,43,307 samples being tested on Saturday.

The 201 new fatalities include 57 from Maharashtra, 22 from Kerala, 20 from West Bengal, 15 from Chhattisgarh and 12 each from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 1,50,999 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 50,027 from Maharashtra followed by 12,215 from Tamil Nadu, 12,138 from

Karnataka, 10,666 from Delhi, 9,922 from West Bengal, 8,481 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,128 from Andhra Pradesh and 5,439 from Punjab.

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.

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Climate Change is Here

Better make its acquaintance to be able to become more resilient

Prime Minister Modi, in his message delivered virtually at the Climate Ambition Summit a month back to the day, claimed that India was not only on track to achieve its Paris Agreement targets, but will also exceed them beyond expectations. The Summit was held online to mark the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement. When he was not getting carried away with his own bombast, he also made one significant point when he recognized climate change as one of the big threats facing the world.

India's ambitious claim came at a time when the US of A was still insistent on denying climate change and dismissing global warming as a hoax. Bird-brained arguments point to the extreme winter in USA as proof that the globe is not warming! This, after the continent was struck by monster hurricanes, struggles through forest fires and landslides, posting casualty figures in competition with "third world s***hole" countries. But there has been a regime change in that country and chances are that sanity will return and science allowed back into policy decisions. And that can only be a good thing because Climate Change has become an urgent reality. What regions like Sikkim, which are really the canaries in the open mine of climate change, need to realize is that it will only take one more country (and UK is lining up for that job) for the study of climate change to lose substantial funding, and with that also lose the urgency with which the issue is being pursued and addressed.

The rich people and the richer countries will go ahead and manufacture stronger air conditioners and larger air purifiers [much like they are emptying Covid Vaccine shelves to the loss of countries which do not have pockets as deep], and frontlines like Sikkim will be left behind as cannon-fodder for climate change to consume and ravage during its march to the mainland. Too much scaremongering? Perhaps. But a valid fear nevertheless. Hopefully, better sense will prevail at the global level, but this is not the time to sit on the sidelines and wait for that to happen. Admittedly, there is little, infinitesimally little, that Sikkim can do to contain climate change. What it can do, however, is understand it, notice it, and then maybe prepare for it better.

Studying climate change, understanding what's happening around the world and comparing it against how Sikkim is faring is much more important now than it was, say even two decades ago. Till the time when people lived more 'organic' lives, their lifestyles more in tune with their immediate environs, changes in climate patterns and the corrective adjustments were instinctive here. Nowadays, however, most of us live lives too distanced from weather patterns to make us even realise a dramatic climate change until it is too late. Among the changes which have already taken place, but not yet even attracted raised eyebrows is the near complete absence of fog from Gangtok thus far this winter. And this is not first winter without fog in Sikkim. The erratic winter rain of the past few years is something only those who till the land will be able to attest and explain, but most of us do not miss the absence of "local" field produce any more because supplies from Siliguri remain abundant (until an import ban kicks in, that is).

The impact of climate change can also be blamed for the near complete disappearance of some important pollinators from Sikkim's orchards and fields. Bees, the local kind, have been noticeable missing. Some blame the mobile signal towers for this and others have pointed fingers at road and hydel projects and the intense "blasting" that such "development" entails, but colony collapse among bees is being reported the world over. Sikkim should notice and try to explain this phenomenon. If someone bothered to research, there may even be crops no one grows anymore and foods we no longer eat; each was an important part of the biodiversity that makes Sikkim a hotspot, and we will lose more if more sensitivity and awareness is not generated.

Not everything dwindled away because of climate change, but their absence from Sikkim could make the land's adjustment to Climate Change more difficult. It thus follows that now that Sikkim has a Department of Science & Technology and Climate Change, its resources should be utilized better to prepare the State for Climate Change (in the real sense, not in the report-producing exercise). Remember, before Sikkim builds resilience against Climate Change, it will need to understand it more intimately.

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5 Strategies for Cultivating Hope This Year

JACQUELINE S. MATTIS
THECONVERSATION.COM

The raging coronavirus pandemic, along with political turbulence and uncertainty, have overwhelmed many of us.

From almost the start of 2020, people have been faced with bleak prospects as illness, death, isolation and job losses became unwelcome parts of our reality. On Wednesday, many of us watched in horror and despair as insurgents stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Indeed, all through these times, both the dark and bright sides of human nature were evident as many people engaged in extraordinary compassion and courage when others were committing acts of violence, self-interest or greed.

As a research scientist whose work focuses on positive psychology among people facing challenges, I am deeply aware that if ever there were a time for a conversation about hope, it is now.

HOPE vs. OPTIMISM

First, let's understand what hope is. Many people confuse optimism with hope.

Charles R. Snyder, author of "The Psychology of Hope," defined hope as the tendency to see desired goals as possible, and to approach those goals with "agency thinking," a belief that you or others have the ability to achieve the goals. He also defined hope as "pathways thinking," a focus on mapping routes and plans to achieve those goals.

Optimism is different. Psychologist Charles Carver defines optimism as a general expectation that good things will happen in the future. Optimists tend to seek out the positive and, at times, deny or

avoid negative information. In sum, optimism is about expecting good things; hope is about how we plan and act to achieve what we want.

Here are five key strategies to cultivate hope in these trying times:

1. DO SOMETHING – START WITH GOALS

Hopeful people do not wish – they imagine and act. They establish clear, achievable goals and make a clear plan. They believe in their agency – that is, their capacity to achieve the outcomes. They recognize that their path will be marked by stresses, roadblocks and failure. According to psychologists such as Snyder and others, people who are hopeful are able to "anticipate these barriers" and they "choose" the right "pathways."

Further, hopeful people adapt. When their hopes are thwarted, they tend to become more focused on doing things to achieve their goals.

As psychologist Eddie Tong writes, "hopeful people tend to think that desired goals are attainable even if personal resources are exhausted." In other words, people of hope persist even when prospects may not be so favorable.

Importantly, evidence suggests that the belief that one is capable of achieving one's goals may be more important for hope than knowing how to achieve those goals.

2. HARNESS THE POWER OF UNCERTAINTY

Several researchers have argued that, for hope to arise, individuals need to be able to perceive the "possibility of success."

Research shows that many of life's uncertainties could help people

cultivate hope in difficult times. For example, a 2017 study showed that parents of children diagnosed with multiple sclerosis used the fact that so little is known about the condition in childhood to fuel and sustain their sense of hope. Parents reasoned that since it is so hard to accurately diagnose childhood multiple sclerosis and prognosis is so varied, there was a chance that their children were misdiagnosed and they could recover and live normal lives.

In sum, a future that is uncertain holds lots of possibilities. As such, uncertainty is not reason for paralysis – it is a reason to hope.

3. MANAGE YOUR ATTENTION

Hopeful and optimistic people show similarities and differences in the kinds of emotional stimuli they pay attention to in the world.

For example, psychologist Lucas Kelberer and his colleagues found that optimists tended to seek out positive images, such as that of happy people, and avoid images of people who seem depressed.

Hopeful people did not necessarily seek out emotionally positive information. However, people high on hope spent less time paying attention to emotionally sad or threatening information.

In a world in which we are overwhelmed with options for what we read, watch and listen to, maintaining hope may not require us to go after positive information, but it does require that we avoid negative images and messages.

4. SEEK COMMUNITY. DON'T GO IT ALONE

Hope is hard to sustain in isolation. Research demonstrates

that for people working to bring social change, particularly anti-poverty activists, relationships and community provided the reason for hope and ignited their conviction to keep fighting.

Connection to others allowed activists to feel a sense of accountability, to recognize that their work mattered and that they were part of something bigger than themselves.

Relationships are important, but health research also suggests that sustaining hope depends, in part, on the particular company we keep. For example, parents of chronically ill children often maintained hope by withdrawing from or avoiding interactions with negative people who challenged their efforts to seek positive ends. We can stay hopeful if we connect with others who hold us accountable and remind us of why our struggles matter.

5. LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE

Hope also requires trust. Hopeful people stake their trust in data, particularly in the evidence of history. Research demonstrates, for example, that anti-poverty activists drew hope from knowing that, historically, when people joined together in resistance they were able to create change.

Cultivating and sustaining hope, then, requires that we gather evidence from our own lives, history and the world at large and use that evidence to guide our plans, pathways and actions.

Hope also requires that we learn to use this data to effectively calibrate progress – no matter how small.

[the writer is Dean of Faculty, Rutgers University - Newark]

The Insurrection at the Capitol Challenged Now US Media Frames Unrest and Shapes Public Opinion

DANIELLE K. KILGO
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The chaos at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday wasn't typical. Nor was the coverage.

Footage carried live by cable news and clips and photos shared across social media were jolting. One image showed a man who had broken into the building sitting in a chair, foot on desk, in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office. A video clip showed a crowd chasing a police officer as he retreated up the stairs.

As a researcher of media and social movements, I was absorbed by the violent events that unfolded. My research on protests shows that how the media portrays unrest – as riot or resistance, for example – helps shape the public's view of the protest's aims. Typically news coverage pays more attention to disruptive tactics than to the aims of protesters, especially when it comes to anti-Black racism protests or action that radically challenges the status quo.

By focusing on the disruption while underreporting the protest's substance, agendas and goals, coverage contributes to a "hierarchy of social struggle" in which the voices of some advocacy groups are lifted over others.

But this was different. News audiences aren't necessarily used to seeing violence and disruption at citizen demonstrations in support of a president – and certainly not on the scale we witnessed on Wednesday at the Capitol. It proved a novel test of how the news media would frame the unrest and the aims of those involved.

RIOT OR RESISTANCE?

Traditional news media have come under heavy criticism for their coverage of civil rights protests, most recently after the death of George Floyd. A study of demonstrations between 1967 and 2007 concluded that protests were often framed as public nuisances, especially when those doing the protesting were ideologically liberal. Conservative protests were less likely to be seen as nuisances. And my research has highlighted the tendency to frame anti-Black racism protests as "riots" more than other protests.

But much of the coverage of events at the Capitol stripped euphemistic labels like "protests," "rallies" and "demonstrations" from their description of what was going on.

Instead news media labeled the event as a "siege" or "insurrection" carried out by a "mob."

It is also notable that at least one major network, CNN, described the events as "terrorism" – a term still more common in descriptions of Muslims and people of color than white supremacists.



NO TANKS NECESSARY?

In my work, I call for journalists to balance their attention to protester actions with the reasons and grievances that brought the demonstrator out onto the streets in the first place – and reflect this in their reporting. This balance usually skews toward the actions, especially when those actions involve violence or damage to property or when there are confrontations with police.

Despite the escalation of events from protest to insurrection, the initial coverage Wednesday seemed to include the grievances of those taking part.

Coverage also focused on police behavior, but it appeared more concerned with the lack of policing. Police didn't show up in riot gear or wielding batons as Trump supporters ascended the Capitol steps. There were no tanks, or large-caliber rifles on display as protesters arrived.

This too was different from other protests. Many have commented on social media that if these had been Black Lives Matter protesters, there might have been a very different outcome – the assumption being Trump-sponsored insurrections are treated differently by authorities.

Some news media outlets, such as USAToday, made this comparative difference clear in their reporting. This is not a typical narrative in mainstream protest news coverage.

Even the initial news coverage by Fox News seemed largely in line with the framing of other news channels, until the evening, when commentary from the "Tucker Carlson Tonight" show shifted the network's narrative.

Carlson's monologue on Wednesday evening half-addressed the siege, but asked the audience

to consider why people like Ashli Babbitt, the woman shot and killed during the break-in, attended the rally in the first place. Detailing her tragic death, Tucker said, "She bore no resemblance to the angry children we have seen wrecking our cities in recent months." Carlson used this to transition to his critique of liberal leaders and the election results.

Some may dismiss Carlson's comments as irrelevant and radical. However, his framing provides insight about how the right-wing media has sought to portray certain protests in recent years, and the consequences of that action.

My colleague from Michigan State University Rachel Mourão and I have used panel survey data from 2015 and 2016 to explore attitudes about protests in general and Black Lives Matter's core grievances specifically. The results showed that

increased consumption of news from right-wing organizations like Fox and Breitbart didn't really affect people's views about protests generally. But it did strongly correlate with more negative opinions about some of the core grievances and demands connected with Black Lives Matter.

WAKE-UP CALL

More evidence lies in other popular right-wing media. Their framing doesn't accentuate the unrest's violent actions carried out by an angry mob at all.

Less than 24 hours after the siege, the homepage of right-wing outlet One America News Network's (OAN) website was devoid of any pictures of protests. Meanwhile, Breitbart had a Mark Zuckerberg image front and center. That article described how Facebook had "blacklisted" Trump after the "events" on Capitol Hill.

Right-wing media not only distort the realities of the insurrection, they undermine and erase the impact of such undemocratic actions. Out of sight, out of mind.

These are starkly different realities from the websites of news outlets such as ABC, NBC, CBS and CNN, as well as newspaper front pages – both online and in print – from around the country.

In recent months, some news organizations have vowed to address shortcomings in their coverage, including how reporters cover protests. If the unrest that followed the police killing of George Floyd was the event that triggered a welcomed media reckoning, then the insurrection at the Capitol could be the event that helps outlets better understand why framing is important.

[the writer is John and Elizabeth Bates Cowles Professor of Journalism, Diversity, and Equality, University of Minnesota]

No fresh COVID-19 case in Andamans, tally at 4,959

PORT BLAIR, JAN 10 [PTI]: Andaman and Nicobar Islands did not record a single fresh COVID-19 case in the last 24 hours, a health department official said on Sunday.

The coronavirus tally in the union territory remained at 4,959, while a total of 62 people have so far died due to the contagion, he

said.

Seven more persons were cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the archipelago to 4,873, the official said.

The union territory now has 24 active COVID-19 cases and all the patients are from South Andaman district.

On January 4 and January 6 also

the archipelago had reported zero COVID-19 cases.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration has conducted 1,92,250 sample tests for COVID-19 so far, and the positivity rate stands at 2.58 per cent, he added.

The union territory reported its first COVID-19 case on June

10 last year and the first COVID-19 death on July 27, 2020.

Official sources said passengers arriving by flight or reaching by ship from Kolkata or Chennai are mandatorily required to show a negative coronavirus report before the authorities allow them to enter the islands.

Nepal's Covid toll reaches 1,917; national tally reaches 2,64,780

KATHMANDU, 10 JAN [KATHMANDUPOST]: Nepal on Sunday reported five more Covid-19-related fatalities, pushing the death toll to 1,917. The country also recorded 259 new cases. The overall infection tally has reached 264,780 with 4,422 active cases.

According to the Ministry of Health and Population, 258,441 infected people have recovered from the disease so far; of them 513 in the past 24 hours.

Kathmandu Valley recorded 126 new infections in the past 24 hours. Of them, 99 cases were confirmed in Kathmandu, 18 in

Lalitpur and nine in Bhaktapur.

As of Sunday, the number of confirmed cases in the Valley has reached 123,284. While Kathmandu has reported 480 Covid-19-related fatalities so far, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur have recorded 152 and 110 deaths respectively.

According to the ministry, 958 individuals from Bagmati Province, 245 from Lumbini Province, 218 from Province 1, 216 from Province 2, 192 from Gandaki Province, 63 from Sudurpaschim Province, and 25 from Karnali Province have died of Covid-19 so far.

As of Sunday, 1,982,246 PCR tests have been carried out across the country.

A total of 4,286 PCR tests were performed in the past 24 hours, according to the data released by the ministry.

In the past 24 hours, 17 new infections were reported in Province 1, five in Province 2 and 141 in Bagmati Province.

Similarly, Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces reported 23, 39, three and 31 cases respectively.

While Kathmandu has more than 500 active cases, Taplejung, Solukhumbu and Mugu districts do not have any

active cases, according to the ministry.

While 191 individuals infected with the virus are being treated in intensive care units across the country, 44 others—26 in Bagmati Province, nine each in Gandaki, six in Lumbini, two in Sudurpaschim, and one on Province 1—are on ventilator support.

Nepal on Saturday reported three Covid-19-related deaths and 362 new infections. Similarly, six deaths and 554 new infections were recorded in the country on Friday and four deaths and 412 new infections on Thursday.

Brown sugar worth Rs 50 lakh seized in Bengal's Malda



ENGLISH BAZAR (WB), JAN 10 (PTI): Brown sugar worth Rs 50 lakh was seized and a man arrested in West Bengal's

Malda district, police said on Sunday.

The seizure was made on Saturday night in the Kaliachak police

station area, following a chase of the accused persons, they said.

Acting on a tip-off, two police officers began

chasing the two suspects on a motorcycle. They managed to catch one, while the other accused fled, police said.

A hunt is on to nab him, they said.

Following interrogation of the accused, a resident of Dakshin Laxmipur village, police seized around 2.5 kg of brown sugar from his house.

The seized drugs are worth around Rs 50 lakh, said Prashanta Debnath, the deputy superintendent of police (headquarters).

Further investigation is underway, he said.

Kanpur zoo shut after bird flu confirmed in dead fowls



KANPUR, JAN 10 (PTI): The Kanpur Zoological Park has been closed for visitors till further orders after samples taken from two dead birds found there tested positive for the avian influenza virus, an official said on Sunday.

The area up to one kilometre of the zoo has been declared an infected zone and the culling of birds has begun there, said Additional District Magistrate (City) Atul Kumar.

"Four fowls and two parrots were found dead in the zoo in the last five days. Of these, two birds tested positive," Kumar said.

According to the official, the samples of

dead birds were sent to the animal disease laboratory in Bhopal which confirmed the presence of H-5 strain of bird flu in them.

The zoo has been closed for visitors and morning walkers. The hospital enclosure where the infected birds had been placed has also been shut down," Kumar said.

An area of 10 kilometres around the zoo has been cordoned off and declared containment zone for an indefinite period by the authorities and shops selling chicken and eggs there have been asked

to down shutters for an indefinite period, an official said.

"We have imposed an indefinite ban on the transportation and entry of poultry products including live birds, unprocessed poultry meat in the district as a precautionary measure," District Magistrate Alok Tiwari said.

"We have taken the decisions after marathon discussion with the officials of Kanpur zoo, health department, animal husbandry and veterinary doctors," he said.

Meanwhile, section 144 of CrPC has been imposed to curb the

spread of bird flu in the district, Kumar said.

The process of disinfecting all poultry farms in the radius of one kilometre of the zoo has started and teams have been formed to inspect shops selling raw chicken and mutton, he said.

Strict instructions have also been issued to make adequate arrangements for the disposal of dead birds, he added.

"We have also issued an advisory to keep a strict watch on unusual sickness or mortality in poultry birds and wild or migratory birds," ADM said.

Students close to NCP (Dahal-Nepal faction) clash with police in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, JAN 10 [MYREPUBLICA]: Students close to the faction of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal clashed with police during their protest demonstration at Maitighar in Kathmandu on Sunday afternoon.

The clash erupted when the protestors tried to advance toward

Baneshwor from Maitighar, pulling a bullock cart as a satire against Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's statement made several years ago that 'bringing republicanism to Nepal was equal to going to the USA on a bullock cart'.

Students affiliated to the sister wing of the rival faction were pulling the cart from Thapathali Campus to

Maitighar Mandala when they were intervened by police.

The protestors also claimed that the latest demonstration is also a reflection of Oli's ideology and political thoughts.

As President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the 275-member lower house on December 20 last year at the recommendation of

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, protests have sparked across the country. Various political parties including the rival faction of the ruling NCP led by Dahal and Nepal have taken to the streets demanding House restoration.

The government, however, announced fresh elections dates for April 30 and May 10 later this year.

WhatsApp says latest does not change its data-sharing practices with Facebook

NEW DELHI, JAN 9 (PTI): Facebook-owned WhatsApp on Saturday said its latest update - which has received criticism from a multitude of users globally - describes business communication and does not change its data-sharing practices with the social media giant.

Earlier this week, WhatsApp had started rolling out in-app notifications to users about an update in its Terms of Service and privacy policy regarding how it processes user data and partners with Facebook to offer integrations across the social media giant's products.

It also stated that users will have to agree to the new terms and policy by February 8, 2021, in order to continue using WhatsApp's service.

This kickstarted a spate of conversations and memes on the

internet over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook.

Rival platforms like Signal and Telegram are reportedly seeing a surge in downloads in the wake of the development.

Tesla chief Elon Musk had also joined in the conversation, asking people to leave WhatsApp.

In a series of tweets, WhatsApp Head Will Cathcart sought to share his views on the matter.

He said the company updated its policy "to be transparent and to better describe optional people-to-business features".

"It's important for us to be clear, this update describes business communication and does not change WhatsApp's data-sharing practices with Facebook. It does not impact how people communicate privately with friends or family wherever they are in the world," he said.

Cathcart emphasised that with end-to-end encryption (E2E), it cannot see private chats or calls and neither can Facebook and that the company remains committed to E2E.

"We're in a competition on privacy with others and that's very good for the world. People should have choices in how they communicate and feel confident that no one else can see their chats. There are people who disagree with this, including some governments," he said.

The tweets, however, received varied responses from users with many continuing to point out concerns around the sharing of user data between WhatsApp and Facebook.

Meanwhile, Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov - in a blog -

alleged that Facebook's WhatsApp has switched to covert marketing and it has detected bots

that spread inaccurate information about Telegram on social media.

Durov also sought to clarify "myths" that are allegedly being pushed by WhatsApp about Telegram that has over 500 million users globally.

He said "myths" that Telegram's code is not open-source, that the company is Russian and that the platform is not encrypted - are all incorrect.

Signal app too joined the conversation with its series of tweets. One of the tweets said: "Look at what you've done" and carried a picture of the app showing as the number one free app on the app stores across markets like India, Germany, France, Austria, Finland, Hong Kong and Switzerland.

In another tweet, it said: "There are no Terms of Service for a mother's love", taking a dig at the ongoing controversy.

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2021: a year of hope or chaos for the biggest events in world sport?

LONDON, 10 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: It has been billed as a golden year of sport. But, as our team of reporters has discovered, there are growing doubts about whether the biggest jewels in the 2021 calendar will take place in all their glory – or, in some cases, at all.

There is an expectation the 12-city format for the Euro 2020 football tournament will be slimmed down, perhaps even to a single city, while Uefa has already started to plan for the absence of fans. There are major doubts over the Lions tour to South Africa. And, while organisers remain confident that the Olympics and Paralympics will go ahead as planned this summer, the spike in Covid-19 cases is making them nervous.

Yet in the fear and gloom there are also several shards of light. So what can we look forward to in 2021? Our writers assess the chances of the major events taking place as planned.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 8-21 Feb

With the country's border still closed to non-residents, it has taken significant efforts for Tennis Australia to organise the Australian Open. After lengthy crisis talks in December, the tournament was pushed back by nearly a month and more than 300 players must arrive on 15 January with their team members by charter flights to quarantine for two weeks. They will be allowed five hours out of their hotel rooms each day for training. The state of Victoria endured a three-and-a-half-month lockdown until 27 October and registered one new locally acquired coronavirus case last Wednesday, which makes the situation even more delicate than for other events. Should the figure rise, the arrival of up to 1,000 foreigners will not be without controversy. If Tennis Australia fails to contain any infected arrivals, it could significantly affect Melbourne's attempts to contain the virus.

INTERNATIONAL CRICKET SUMMER AND THE HUNDRED Apr-Sep

England men: 2 x Tests v NZ (tbc), 5 x Tests v India, up to 12 T20is/ODIs v SL, Pak; England women: 14 x T20is/ODIs v SA and NZ; Domestic cricket: CC, T20 Blast, RL Cup, the Hundred, Women's regional comps

English cricket is looking to avoid a repeat of 2020 when international matches were forced behind closed doors

in bubbles, the domestic schedule was reduced and losses in excess of £100m were incurred. that forced 62 job cuts at the England and Wales Cricket Board. As things stand, the 2021 season is packed with fixtures and returns to grounds across the country. The ECB chair, Ian Watmore, has warned the county summer may face a slow start allowing crowds in April , but tickets are on sale for the major matches from June in anticipation of the national picture improving. If not, the ECB at least has a proven – albeit expensive – model to revert to and ensure it can meet its end of a five-year broadcasting deal with Sky and BBC worth £1.1bn overall. There will be fears for the Hundred, however, after its launch was delayed by 12 months and requires crowds to generate the buzz it likely needs.

EURO 2020 11 Jun-11 July

Uefa maintains it is pressing ahead to stage the European Championship as originally envisaged (and named) in 12 cities, including London, Glasgow and Dublin. But European football's governing body has started to plan for the partial or complete absence of fans. "A decision on which scenario will be applied in each city will be made on 5 March," Uefa says. A big problem is not only whether supporters can be accommodated but if they can cross borders. Either way, it seems likely the 12-city format will be slimmed down or even that one alone could serve as the host – as Lisbon did for the final eight of last season's Champions League. London is an option or maybe it could co-host with Glasgow? The sense remains that the tournament will happen because football has shown itself capable of carrying on despite recent disruption. What it will look like is impossible to say.

LIONS TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA 26 Jun-7 Aug

There is growing acceptance the Lions tour will not take place as scheduled given how unlikely it is that 30,000 travelling supporters will be able to attend. As far as the South African union is concerned, staging the tour behind closed doors is not commercially viable and there are few sporting events that rely more on travelling fans to illuminate it. The problem is that there is no contingency solution that suits all parties. South Africa



would prefer a delay until the summer of 2022 but the home unions have tours arranged and their head coaches will not want such disruption so close to the 2023 World Cup. The home unions are open to the idea of the tour taking place in the UK and Ireland – a scenario only worth consideration on financial grounds if fans can attend and that is still a big if. To do so would also go against more than 130 years of tradition. A decision will be made in the next few weeks.

TOUR DE FRANCE 26 Jun-18 July

Tour organisers are confident the race will go ahead. Indeed, last week they announced the route for Paris-Nice in March, which shows their optimism racing will resume in Europe sooner rather than later. The Belgian classics from the end of February to April have said they will all be behind closed doors as they were in October, which worked well. The Tokyo Games are due to start less than a week after the end of the Tour and with organisers not requiring athletes to quarantine, cyclists will be able to target the Tour and the Games.

WIMBLEDON 28 Jun-11 July

Wimbledon was the only slam not to take place in 2020, its first cancellation since the second world war, so another is undesirable. The All England Club's

investment in an insurance policy in the case of a pandemic yielded a significant payout that will safeguard the tournament and the Lawn Tennis Association. The club announced the commencement of planning for the 2021 event last October and the tournament will likely be held unless prevented by public health guidelines. The tournament is keeping all crowd options open, including the possibility of a championships behind closed doors.

OLYMPIC GAMES AND PARALYMPICS 23 Jun-8 Aug; 24 Aug-5 Sep

Tokyo organisers remain confident both Games will take place in "some form", although that choice of words gives plenty of wriggle room – ranging from a full bells-and-whistles event in front of packed stadiums to a more modest venture with fewer athletes and spectators. Expect more meat to be put on the bone by March, although if infection numbers spiral out of control all bets are off. It certainly will not be easy to stage such a global event in a pandemic with 11,000 competitors, 10,000 officials and another 20,000 journalists due in Japan. However, the International Olympic Committee remains hopeful the vaccines will be a game changer. While having a jab will not

be mandatory, the IOC is pressing for most athletes and staff to get it in the second wave, once key workers and the most vulnerable have had it.

RYDER CUP and SOLHEIM CUP 24-26 Sep; 4-6 Sep

With eight months to go it is too early to say whether the events will take place – although last week Europe's Solheim Cup captain, Catriona Matthew, gave no indication her event would not be played. However, there is a lively debate whether it is right for the Ryder Cup to go ahead without fans lining the fairways and filling the galleries, given they are so central to the event. The US captain, Steve Stricker, has insisted: "There has been no talk of contingency plans. I would imagine we're at the point where we would play no matter what." Kerry Haigh, the chief championship officer for the PGA of America, was more downbeat. "We are talking about an event with an atmosphere like no other," he said. "So our hope and expectation is that we will be able to play it in a manner it deserves, with full crowds and full support. If the situation exists that is not going to allow that, I guess it likely would not be played."

THE ASHES Nov 2021-Jan 2022

Australia's thus-far successful home summer suggests nothing other than the tour going ahead and this far out the chief questions appear to be what state the two teams are in and whether England's vocal supporters can attend. The latter will hinge on the ease of global travel by the end of the year and the current 14-day hotel room quarantine on entry that would put many off; there is plenty of time for this to be eased or lifted beforehand. On the field the issue of mental fatigue is hard to ignore. Covid-safe bubbles may have disappeared by the time the urn is at stake but the fixture pile-up caused by the pandemic – and cricket's thirst for broadcast money – means a number of players may be cooked. Before the Ashes comes a T20 World Cup in India, while England have trips to Bangladesh and Pakistan sandwiched between this and their packed home summer schedule. Rest and rotation is the expected, product-diminishing response to counter this.

Australia board apologises after India players complain of racist abuse

NICK MULVENNEY SYDNEY, 10 JAN (REUTERS): Cricket Australia apologised to the India team on Sunday and launched a probe into allegations visiting players were subjected to racial abuse by part of the crowd during the third test at Sydney Cricket Ground.

The Indian team lodged an official complaint after play on Saturday after bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj complained of hearing racist slurs while fielding near the boundary rope.

On Sunday, Siraj approached the umpire pointing towards the stands and the action was paused as police ejected six fans from the ground.

CA launched a parallel investigation with New South Wales Police, promising to take the "strongest measures" against anyone found guilty of vilification.

"It is most regrettable that an otherwise excellent test match contested in tremendous spirit by two friendly rivals has been tarnished by the actions of a small number of spectators over the past two days," Head of Integrity and Security Sean Carroll said in a statement.



"As hosts, we once again apologise to the Indian team."

Venues New South Wales, which operates the stadium, said CCTV footage was being reviewed to assist the investigation and any fans identified as engaging in racial abuse would be banned from the SCG and other major stadiums in Sydney.

India's Ravichandran Ashwin said the team had been insulted by Sydney spectators in the past but the racial abuse had crossed a line during the ongoing match, which is being played in front of a reduced crowd of less than 10,000.

"It is definitely not acceptable in this day and age. This must definitely be dealt with iron-fist

and we must make sure it doesn't happen again," the bowler said.

'A B S O L U T E L Y UNACCEPTABLE'

India's regular captain Virat Kohli was fined half of his match fee in 2012 for responding to barracking from the SCG crowd by gesturing at them with his middle finger.

Kohli, who returned home after playing in the first test to attend the birth of his first child, said racial abuse was completely unacceptable.

"Having gone through many incidents of really pathetic things said on the boundary lines, this is the absolute peak of rowdy behaviour," Kohli said on Twitter. "It's sad to see this happen on the field.

Serena Williams rises above Tiriac and co but misogyny and racism take a toll

TUMAINI CARAYOL LONDON, 10 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: There has not been much reason to talk about Serena Williams lately. She last competed in late September, withdrawing from the second round of the French Open with an achilles injury, and has been resting, baking cookies with her family and training for the new season. Considering how uninteresting all of these things are, it would have been fair to assume that only when she finally began her season would she attract some attention in the new year.

Instead, she attracted attention this week after Ion Tiriac, a former player and now owner of the Madrid Open, sent unsolicited comments her way. Tiriac was appearing on a Romanian television show and was asked if he had doubts before Simona Halep's 2019 Wimbledon final. He responded by referring to Williams, the Romanian's opponent, as a monster. "At this age and the weight she is now, she does not move as easily as she did 15 years ago," he said. "Serena was a sensational player. If she had a little decency, she would retire."

The only surprise was the journalist he was speaking to, Irina Pacurariu, directly challenged him. "You are mean. You were very misogynistic every time

you judged Serena," she said.

None of this is a shock. Tiriac has directed similar comments towards Williams numerous times. It reflects what Williams has had to deal with throughout her career. Even when there is no reason for her name to cross any lips, at some point she will always have to deal with racist and/or sexist comments from people in positions of prominence within her own sport.

It is worth recalling some of the incidents. Two years ago, in the early months of her return from maternity leave, Tiriac decided to shame her weight: "With all due respect, she is 36 years old and 90 kilograms," he said to the German magazine Sport Bild. "I would like to see something else, I would like to see a player like Steffi Graf."

In 2017, shortly after Williams announced her pregnancy, Tiriac's good friend and countryman Illie Nastase, Romania's Fed Cup captain, commented on Williams's unborn child during the tie against Great Britain. "Let's see what colour it has. Chocolate with milk?" he said.

In 2018, after Williams returned to grand slam competition in Paris wearing a bodysuit, the French federation

president, Bernard Giudicelli, stated he would ban such outfits. "I believe we have sometimes gone too far," he said. "Serena's outfit this year, for example, would no longer be accepted. You have to respect the game and the place."

In 2014, Shamil Tarpishev, president of the Russian tennis federation, referred to Serena and her sister, Venus, as the Williams brothers on a talk show. Sitting quietly to his left was Williams's old rival Elena Dementieva.

There has always been enough misogyny to go around. In that Fed Cup tie, Nastase was abusive to a female British journalist and the GB captain, Anne Keothavong. In 2016, the Indian Wells tournament director, Raymond Moore, concluded his event with a flourish: "If I was a lady player, I'd go down every night on my knees and thank God that Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal were born because they have carried this sport."

As Justin Gimelstob, a former player, managed to rise up to a position of considerable influence on the ATP player council, he never received a proper reckoning for his threatening, misogynistic comments about Anna Kournikova and others. It took an assault conviction for him to be forced to step away from the tour.

Indonesia locates black boxes of crashed jet as body parts recovered

JAKARTA, 10 JAN (REUTERS): Indonesian authorities on Sunday located the black boxes of the Sriwijaya Air jet that crashed into the sea soon after taking off from the capital Jakarta, as human body parts and suspected pieces of the plane were retrieved.

The Boeing 737-500 with 62 passengers and crew was headed to Pontianak in West Kalimantan on Saturday before it disappeared from radar screens four minutes after takeoff.

It is the first major air crash in Indonesia since 189 passengers and crew were killed in 2018 when a Lion Air Boeing 737 Max in 2018 also plunged into the Java Sea soon after takeoff from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.

Even before the latest crash, more people had died in air crashes in Indonesia than in any other country over the past decade, according to Aviation Safety Network's database.

Indonesia National Transport Safety Committee chief Soerjanto Tjahjono said the locations of Flight SJ 182's two black boxes had been identified.

"Hopefully, we can retrieve them soon," said military chief Hadi Tjahjanto, without giving an estimated timeframe.

Pieces of wreckage were brought to Jakarta port by rescuers. Authorities said they came from a depth of 23



metres (75 feet) near a group of islands off the Jakarta coast.

One twisted piece of metal was painted in Sriwijaya Air's blue and red colours. Indonesian authorities said they had also retrieved body parts and clothing.

Police asked families to provide information such as dental records and DNA samples to help identify bodies.

The plane had 12 crew and 50 passengers on board, all Indonesians and including seven children and three babies.

President Joko Widodo, speaking at the palace in Bogor, expressed "deep condolences" over the disaster and urged the public to pray the missing people could be found.

Tracking service

Flightradar24 said the aircraft took off at 2:36 p.m. local time (0736 GMT) and climbed to reach 10,900 feet within four minutes. It then began a steep descent and stopped transmitting data 21 seconds later.

There were no immediate clues on what caused the jet's sudden descent. Most air accidents are caused by a cocktail of factors that can take months to establish, safety experts say.

A transport ministry spokeswoman said air traffic control had asked the pilot why the plane was heading northwest instead of on its expected flight path seconds before it disappeared.

The pilots had decades of experience between them with the flight captain reported to be a former air force

pilot and his co-pilot at Sriwijaya Air since 2013, according to his LinkedIn profile.

The Sriwijaya Air plane was a nearly 27-year-old Boeing 737-500, much older than Boeing's problem-plagued 737 MAX model. Older 737 models are widely flown and do not have the stall-prevention system implicated in the MAX safety crisis.

"We are in contact with our airline customer and stand ready to support them during this difficult time," Boeing said in a statement. "Our thoughts are with the crew, passengers, and their families."

Distraught relatives waited in Pontianak about 740 km (460 miles) from Jakarta for news of their loved ones. At Jakarta's main airport

a crisis centre was set up for families.

"We feel powerless, we can only wait and hope to get any information soon," Irfansyah Riyanto, who had five relatives on the flight, told reporters.

Founded in 2003, Jakarta-based Sriwijaya Air group flies largely within Indonesia's sprawling archipelago. The budget airline has had a solid safety record, with no onboard casualties in four incidents recorded on the Aviation Safety Network database.

In 2007, the European Union banned all Indonesian airlines following a series of crashes and reports of deteriorating oversight and maintenance since deregulation in the late 1990s. The restrictions were fully lifted in 2018.

China, Vietnam shown the way of dealing with pandemic even in absence of vaccine: IMF

WASHINGTON, 10 JAN [PTI]: China and other countries in Asia like Vietnam have shown that there is a way of dealing with a pandemic even in the absence of a vaccine, allowing the economy to get back on track, according to a top IMF official.

The playbook here is the one that includes local restrictions, rapid testing, rapid tracing and seeing these measures through until the end, until localised outbreaks subside, said Hlge Berger, Mission Chief for China and Assistant Director, Asia and Pacific Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"I think China, but not only China, but other countries in Asia, look, for example, at Vietnam, have shown

that there's a way of dealing with a pandemic even in the absence of a vaccine, that will allow the economy to get back, at least close to normal operating capacity by learning how to deal with local outbreaks," Berger told reporters during a conference call.

That's an important takeaway in a narrow sense from the experience of China that is particularly applicable to low-income countries that are facing pressures for the vaccine, he asserted.

"Other developments that I would stress have to do with digital enhancements of otherwise not online businesses; for example, in many low-income countries you do have well-developed electronic

communication networks through cell phones. So, progress along these lines is helpful as well," he said.

Vaccines, of course, are ultimately what will be needed to make sure so that all economies and the global economy gets back to normal, defined as the pre-pandemic normal, he noted.

"And here, I note that China has pledged to help facilitate the supply of vaccines to low-income countries; together with other economies, of course, it's not just China. But that is an important endeavor and at the Fund we encourage this, and we think it's important for the global economy and to help us all to overcome the pandemic, ultimately and go back to normal," Berger added.

New coronavirus cases in China double, mainly in Hebei province

BEIJING, 10 JAN (REUTERS): The daily number of new coronavirus cases has doubled in China, prompting tougher movement restrictions and, in the capital, passengers must scan a health code before boarding a cab or ride-hailing car, officials said on Sunday.

Mainland China reported 69 cases on Jan. 9, compared with 33 reported a day earlier, the country's national health authority said on Sunday.

The new rule on cab journeys follows the discovery on Saturday that a ride-hailing driver in Beijing was an asymptomatic carrier of the new coronavirus, city health official Pang

Xinghuo told media.

Since Jan. 1, 96 drivers on a ride-hailing app Didi have been fined a total of 1 million yuan (\$154,440) for improperly implementing coronavirus prevention measures, such as wearing a mask, Rong Jun, a Beijing city transport official, said.

Over the course of the pandemic, mainland China has reported a total of 87,433 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 4,634 deaths.

In its daily bulletin, the National Health Commission said 21 of the new cases were imported.

Most of the locally-transmitted cases, 46 out of 48, were in Hebei, the province surrounding Beijing that entered a "wartime mode" this

week as it seeks to contain rising infections.

China reported 27 asymptomatic cases on Jan. 9, down from 38 a day earlier. China does not classify these patients, who have been infected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease, but are not showing any COVID-19 symptoms, as confirmed cases.

Hebei has finished testing all 13 million people in the major cities of Shijiazhuang and Xingtai, a provincial officer said in a briefing on Sunday.

Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital, is in lockdown and people and vehicles are barred from leaving the city. Public transport has also been halted.

A year after first death in China, Coronavirus source still a puzzle

WUHAN, 10 JAN [AFP]:

It is the world's most pressing scientific puzzle, but experts warn there may never be conclusive answers over the source of the coronavirus, after an investigative effort marked from the start by disarray, Chinese secrecy and international rancour.

January 11 marks the anniversary of China confirming its first death from Covid-19, a 61-year-old man who was a regular at the now-notorious Wuhan wet market.

Nearly two million deaths later, the pandemic is out of control across much of the world, leaving tens of millions ill, a pulverised global economy and recriminations flying between nations.

Yet China, which has broadly controlled the pandemic on its soil, is still frustrating independent attempts to trace the virus' origins and the central question of how it jumped from animals to humans.

There is little dispute that the virus which brought the world to its knees sparked its first known outbreak in late 2019 at a wet market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan where wildlife was sold as food, and the pathogen is believed to have originated in an undetermined bat

species.

But the trail ends there, clouded by a mishmash of subsequent clues that suggest its origins may predate Wuhan as well as conspiracy theories -- amplified by US President Donald Trump -- that it leaked from a Wuhan lab.

Establishing the source is vital for extinguishing future outbreaks early, leading virologists say, providing clues that can guide policy decisions on whether to cull animal populations, quarantine affected persons, or limit wildlife hunting and other human-animal interactions.

"If we can identify why they (viruses) keep emerging, we can reduce those underlying drivers," said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, a global NGO focused on infectious disease prevention.

DOUBTS ABOUT WUHAN MARKET

China won early kudos for reporting the virus and releasing its gene sequence in a timely manner, compared with its cover-up of the 2002-03 SARS outbreak.

But there has also been secrecy and shifting stories.

Wuhan authorities initially tried to cover up



the outbreak and later spent precious weeks denying human-to-human transmission.

Early on, Chinese officials declared flatly that the outbreak began at the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan.

But Chinese data in January 2020 showed that several of the first cases had no known links to the now-shuttered market, suggesting a source elsewhere.

China's story morphed again last March when top Chinese disease control official Gao Fu said the market was not the source, but a "victim", a place where the pathogen was merely amplified.

But China has since

failed to publicly connect any dots, releasing scant information on animal and environmental samples taken at the market that could aid investigators, experts say.

And it has kept foreign experts at arm's length, with a planned mission by World Health Organization virus sleuths now in limbo after China denied them entry.

On Saturday, a top Chinese health official said the country was now "ready" for the 10-strong team and opened the door to a visit to Wuhan.

Yet "the specific time is being determined", National Health Commission vice

minister Zeng Yixin told reporters.

COLD CASE What the scientists will be allowed to see or may expect to find a year on is also in doubt. Experts say authorities may have destroyed or scrubbed away crucial evidence in a panicked initial response.

"Every outbreak goes the same way. It's chaotic and dysfunctional," said Daszak.

"They didn't do a great job on the animal investigation early on," he added.

"In some ways, they were quite open, in others they were less than open."

The reasons for China's secrecy are

unclear, but the ruling Communist Party has a history of suppressing politically damaging information.

Whistleblowers and citizen reporters who shared details of the terrifying early weeks of the virus on the internet have since been muzzled or jailed.

Beijing may want to hide regulatory or investigative lapses to avoid domestic embarrassment or global "blowback", said Daniel Lucey, a Georgetown University epidemiologist who closely tracks global outbreaks.

The Wuhan market might not even be the issue, Lucey adds.

He notes that the virus was already spreading rapidly in Wuhan by December 2019, indicating that it was in circulation much earlier.

That's because it may take months or even years for a virus to develop the necessary mutations to become highly contagious among humans.

The market-origin theory is "just not plausible whatsoever", Lucey said.

"It occurred naturally and it had to have been many months earlier, perhaps a year, perhaps more than a year."

Augmenting the doubt, in December China said the number of coronavirus cases circulating in Wuhan may have been 10 times higher early in the epidemic than revealed by official figures at the time.

The trail has now gone cold, with the drip of subsequent clues only adding to the confusion, including findings that the virus may have existed in Europe and Brazil before Wuhan's outbreak, unconfirmed suggestions which China has seized upon to deflect blame.

'WE'LL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE'

Daszak remains hopeful the source can be found, especially after US President Donald Trump's re-election loss.

He blames Trump for killing cooperation with China by politicising the virus -- typified by his "China virus" label - and his administration's promotion of the conspiracy theory that China created it in a lab, which scientists reject.

"I'm confident we will eventually find out the bat species it came from and the likely pathway," Daszak said.

Others are less certain.

Diana Bell, a wildlife disease expert at the University of East Anglia who has studied the SARS virus, Ebola and other pathogens, said focusing on a particular origin species is misguided.

She says the overarching threat has already been exposed: a global wildlife trade that fosters a "combustible mix" of trafficked species, a known breeding ground for disease outbreaks.

"(The species) actually doesn't matter. We don't need to know the source, we just need to stop that sodding mixing of animals in markets," she said.

"We need to stop the wildlife trade for human consumption."



COZY CARA! Model Cara Delevingne looks cool and casual in a pink tie-dye hoodie, Savage X Fenty face mask, and grey skull print sweatpants while out and about in L.A.

Esha Deol's Instagram account hacked

Actor Esha Deol on Sunday said her Instagram account has been hacked and alerted her followers to not engage with it in case they receive a message from her profile.

Deol took to Twitter and shared a screenshot where she received a "copyright violation" message, after which the security of her Instagram account was compromised.

Her display name has been changed to "Instagram Support".

"This morning my official Instagram account 'imeshadeol' got hacked, so please don't reply to any message if you received any from my Instagram account. Sorry for the inconvenience," the 39-year-old actor wrote.

Recently, legendary singer Asha Bhosle, actor-politician Urmila Matondkar, celebrity interior designer Sussanne Khan, actor Vikrant Massey and choreographer-director Farah Khan's social media accounts were also hacked.



Barry S3 is completely written and ready to go

Actor Bill Hader has revealed that the writing process for the third and fourth seasons of his critically-acclaimed dark comedy "Barry" has been completed.

Hader discussed the status of the third season during his appearance on "Late Night With Seth Meyers".

"Right when the lockdown happened in March we were a week away from shooting. The last time I was in a room with a lot of people was the table read for episodes one and two of season three and we were ready to go. And then it all got shut down.

"Season three is completely written and ready to go, and during this time we actually went and wrote season four, so we have both of those kind of done. We're just waiting until we can start shooting again.

The show features actor Bill Hader



as the titular character, a depressed hitman from the Midwest who finds himself drawn into a community of acting students while on a job in Los Angeles.

Hader, along with Alec Berg, has created the show which bagged three Emmy awards, including the Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series, in 2019.

Prince Harry, Meghan Markle quit social media for good

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have "no plans" to return to social media almost a year after Megxit, Page Six has reported.

A source close to the ex-royals told The Times of London that they're "very unlikely" to have an online presence, mostly due to the "hate" they've received.

As per Page Six, before the couple broke off from the royal family, social media was a large part of their lives.

The couple announced their Megxit plan to the world through an Instagram post on their "Sussex Royal" profile. Though the profile is still up, it is not active. They last posted a goodbye message in March 2020, saying "while you may not see us here, the work continues."

They also revealed the birth and name of their child Archie through the platform.

Page Six reported that before her engagement to Harry, Meghan ran an online blog called "The Tig," which she shuttered after her engagement to Harry. She also had a personal Instagram profile.

Harry reportedly used a secret anonymous Instagram



account when he and Meghan first started dating.

Though they have a podcast on Spotify, their Archewell Charity will not have its own social media accounts.

The pair released their Christmas card through Mayhew, an animal organization Meghan has been involved with in the past.

Priyanka Chopra wraps 'Text For You'



Priyanka Chopra has finished the shoot of her upcoming Hollywood film "Text For You" in London.

The Jim Strouse-helmed romantic drama is inspired by the 2016 German-language box office hit "SMS Fur Dich", which is based on Sofie Cramer's popular novel of the same name.

The 38-year-old actor took to Instagram and shared a picture of herself, holding the film's script.

"That's a wrap! Congratulations and thank you to the entire cast and crew. See you at the movies," she wrote.

Last month, Chopra Jonas had described that shooting amid the coronavirus pandemic for her and the crew involved daily testing as well as appropriate social distancing.

"Text For You" also stars music icon Celine Dion and "Outlander" star Sam Heughan.

Chopra Jonas is currently gearing up for the release of director Ramin Bahrani's "The White Tiger" adapted from author Aravind Adiga's 2008 novel of the same name.

The film will premiere on Netflix on January 22.

Zack Snyder explains why he made 'Army of the Dead' with Netflix



Filmmaker Zack Snyder says he decided to make his new movie, zombie heist film "Army of the Dead", with streamer Netflix as Warner Bros showed lack of interest in the project.

The filmmaker, known for movies such as "300", "Watchmen", "Man of Steel", "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" and "Justice League", returns to zombie genre with the new film.

He had made his directorial debut with zombie horror "Dawn of the Dead" in 2004.

Headlined by Dave Bautista, "Army of the Dead" is set following a zombie outbreak in Las Vegas, when a group of mercenaries take the ultimate gamble, venturing into the quarantine zone to pull off the greatest heist ever attempted.

The filmmaker said when he pitched the idea to Netflix, the streamer instantly agreed to back it.

"We were in a meeting at Netflix and I was talking about some of these scripts I was working on. And I mentioned the idea to (Netflix head of original films Scott Stuber) and he was like, 'That is the movie! Go write that movie and let's make it.'"

"I was like, What, do you mean now?" And he's like, Go write it tomorrow and we'll do shoot it in a week," Snyder said.

While "Army of the Dead" is yet to be released on Netflix, the streamer has already green lit a prequel film as well as an anime television series to expand the franchise.

ARIES:

If you stop and think about it today, you'll realize that the greatest battles of your life have been battles of will. So if you encounter conflict today, keep that in mind. If you can focus your brainpower on achieving one goal, there is nothing that can stop you. Do not accept compromise just for the sake of keeping the peace. Move forward with your ideas. If you display all the confidence you feel, you won't ruffle any feathers. You will inspire people.

TAURUS:

There is no such thing as "too late." If you see things aren't going the way you want them to, put a stop to the progress. Even if you're not behind the wheel, you have every right to voice your opinion and suggest an alternate route. Starting today, you need to give yourself a lot more credit when it comes to business and financial matters. Although you certainly could use a stronger dose of willpower, you are on the right track. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

GEMINI:

When your schedule opens up and presents you with a chunk of free time, be sure you have a good way to use it! Try not to fritter away the hours with mindless online surfing, shopping, or napping. You need a fun escapade you can enjoy by yourself. Fix yourself a nice dinner. Stream that foreign film you've been meaning to watch forever. Take a bubble bath. Whatever you do, try to use your extra time to treat yourself.

CANCER:

Money continues to be on your mind today. A glimpse at your bank statement might make you wonder if someone is playing a cruel joke on you! The numbers don't lie, and what they're telling you isn't terribly great news. Don't worry. Your lifestyle doesn't have to change significantly, but your attitude does. Continue on your quest toward prioritizing your needs and try to make the little changes that make a big difference.

LEO:

Shy away from anything emotionally or physically risky today. You should be concerned about safety. A new opportunity comes with more risks than you initially realized, and you'll have to do some thorough research to make sure that you're up for it. If you're feeling a bit fragile, then let those in power know that this might not be the best time for you. There is no need to push yourself on this. Play it safe. You can hop on board this gravy train next time.

VIRGO:

The day starts off smoothly and easily, and a sweet gift may even land right in your lap. Resist getting too relaxed too soon, though, because there could be a lot of noise coming from the sidelines. Pay attention and take note of any changes afoot, but don't let yourself get sucked into any drama (no matter how fun it may seem). Toward the end of today, a feeling of relaxation will lead you toward a quiet evening.

LIBRA:

Like a brand-new sponge, your brain is eager to soak up everything in sight today! You always thought learning was fun, but today you could have so much fun learning something new that you may need a few days to recover! Get ready for a shocking revelation, intriguing announcement, or delightful declaration to stir up your imagination and make your energy skyrocket. There's some good news coming your way, and it could involve a major transition.

SCORPIO:

You could wake up feeling a little directionless today, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing. You're probably in a holding pattern of sorts, waiting for the right time to come in for a landing, so to speak. There are things moving around you in unpredictable ways. Rather than going forward and hoping for the best, you'd be smart to stay back and let things settle on their own first. You have a very interesting view on things, one you should keep in mind for later.

SAGITTARIUS:

Your engine could have some trouble getting started today. If today's events aren't inspiring enough for you right now, take some initiative and mix them up a bit. While you're waiting for things to come together later, do something unexpected now. Surprise someone with a phone call or e-mail. Every day is yours to paint whatever color you choose, so exercise this power by making today the way you want it to be!

CAPRICORN:

Your luck is changing today, which could be good or bad. If you've recently been blessed with a large cash windfall, the well of good fortune could start to dry up for you (but don't worry, it's temporary). But if you've felt like nothing has been going your way for quite a while, get ready for a change in direction! From unexpected money to getting that phone call you've been hoping for, things are definitely starting to look up!

AQUARIUS:

You can expect to start this day with a lot of high energy, so much so that you might leap out of bed and dance around the room. There are a lot of emotions, ideas, and hopes swimming around in your head right now, and they're giving you a blast of physical strength that can carry you through the day. There is no question that you have the drive and endurance to tackle all tasks and complete them with the efficiency of a supercomputer.

PISCES:

If you think you can fake your way through an intimidating situation today, think again! You can't bluff your way to the top right now, so don't even try. It's wisest if you just admit to any anxieties or insecurities you might have up front. If you let everyone involved know that you're feeling like a fish out of water, they'll respect you for it. A key mark of your intellect is that you know when you don't know something and you're willing to admit it.