



WORKING ON 'DOWNTON ABBEY' WAS OVERWHELMING: LAURA CARMICHAEL
pg 08

CULTURAL FACTORS ARE BEHIND DISINFORMATION PANDEMIC: WHY THIS MATTERS
pg 04

KANYE WEST SAYS HE'S RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT IN 2020 ELECTIONS
pg 08



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Melli check-post closed to returnees

GANGTOK, 05 JUL [IPR]: The State Government today decided to close the Melli Check-Post for returnees. While no explanation has been offered for why this is being done, a press communiqué from the DC-East forwarded by the IPR Department informs that “Melli Checkpost shall not be allowed for returnees, coming from the basis of E-permit from 06 July onwards.”

This, as per the release, was an important decision taken by the State level Task Force Committee which directed that all returnees, irrespective of which district their homes are in, can enter only through Rangpo Checkpost and shall be quarantined in East District only as per Health Department's protocol.

However, screening at Melli Checkpost shall be continued for other purposes, it was also decided.

Darj MP calls for strict lockdown in Siliguri, Darj and Jalpaiguri

SUMMIT REPORT SILIGURI, 05 JUL:

Darjeeling MP, Raju Bista, has pulled up the West Bengal government for its handling of the COVID-19 outbreak in North Bengal, especially Siliguri. He remains convinced that closing down markets piecemeal will not help so long as people are moving around freely. He has called for a strict lockdown in Siliguri and Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts to contain the virus.

In a press statement issued today, he writes, “The rapidly rising COVID-positive cases in North Bengal, and particularly in Siliguri is a case of grave concern. According to the WB Govt official figures [valid as of 9AM 4th of July], as compared to June 15th – positive cases in Darjeeling District have increased from 219 to 577, a sharp rise of 263%, out of which majority of the cases have been from Siliguri sub-division. So far 13 people have died due to COVID in North Bengal, and most deaths have happened under Siliguri sub-division.

Given that Siliguri is the financial capital of North Bengal and also the gateway to North East India, more cases here could lead to Siliguri becoming an epicentre of regional COVID breakout in the coming days.”

In their desperate bid to contain the pandemic, today the WB Govt is ordering shutting down of one market or the other in **turn to pg 02**

22 test positive for COVID in one day

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Twenty-two new positive cases of COVID-19 were reported on Sunday taking Sikkim's tally of positive cases to 125.

Out of the 22 new cases, 20 are SSB jawans stationed in Rhenock. All of them were contacts of the first SSB jawan to test positive in Sikkim on 25 June. While he had 64 contacts and the SSB camp he was stationed in was declared a containment zone after he was confirmed for COVID-19, only 20 of his contacts have tested positive. Three other personnel, meanwhile, have been marked for re-testing since their reports were not conclusive.

Of the other two to test positive in the 24 hours ending 8AM Sunday, one is a recent Delhi returnee and the other a driver who used to ferry returnees to quarantine centres.

All 22 have been shifted to



STNM Hospital.

In his daily health bulletin on Sunday, Health Department DG-cum-Secretary,

Dr Pempa T Bhutia informed that the new detections are from 141 samples tested in the State on the day.

While all contacts of the SSB jawan have now been tested, the Delhi returnee is reported to have had 10 pri-

mary contacts [those who travelled with him in the bus coming in from Siliguri] and five secondary contacts [those

lodged in the paid quarantine centre with him]. His contract tracing has been complete, Dr Bhutia informs.

The Delhi returnee had arrived in Sikkim on Saturday and his sample had been collected in Delhi itself. The report came in while he was under quarantine in Sikkim.

Meanwhile, the wife and child of the other person to test positive have been shifted to a quarantine centre and contact tracing was underway.

In some welcome news, three more patients were discharged from STNM Hospital on Sunday after having made full recoveries.

With today's 22 new cases, Sikkim currently has 51 active cases. Of the 125 who have tested positive thus far, 13 army personnel have migrated out, taken to the Army Hospital in Siliguri, while 61 have been discharged from hospitals here after having beaten the virus.

Justice Subba appointed Chairperson Sikkim Lokayukta

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Justice AP Subba has been appointed Chairperson of Sikkim Lokayukta. A Home Department notification issued today informs that the warrant of Justice Subba's appointment was signed by the Governor on 02 July, Friday.

Justice Subba's appointment will come into effect from the date he assumes charge of his office.

This is the first time that a Sikkimese Judge has been appointed to the post.

Justice Subba has served as a judge in the Sikkim and Assam High Courts and after his retirement on superannuation, worked as Chairperson State Level Committee constituted by the State government under the directions of the National Green Tribunal, New Delhi, in the year 2019 till March 2020.

His last post was that of Chairperson, Law Commission, Sikkim, to which he was appointed in March 2020.

Justice Subba was also the first Sikkimese to be appointed Judge of a High Court in the country in the year 2004.

Born on 01 March, 1948, at Hee-Pechrek in West Sikkim, Justice Subba completed BSc from Kohima Science College in Nagaland and went on to earn an LLB degree from Shillong Law College, Meghalaya under Guwahati University, in 1972.

He enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura in the year 1973 and practised law in Nagaland and Sikkim



for about three years before joining the Sikkim Judicial Service as a Civil Judge cum Judicial Magistrate in 1976.

During his tenure as Civil Judge cum Judicial Magistrate he also worked as Deputy Registrar and Registrar in the High Court Of Sikkim. In the year 1999 he was appointed as the Registrar General of the High Court of Sikkim.

In addition to his normal duties he was also assigned additional duties under various special Acts between 1992 to 2003. He served as Special Judge for Narcotics and Psychotropic substance Aact for Sikkim from 1992 to 1996 and again from the year 2001-2002.

He was Special Judge under Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act from the year 1995 to 1997 and Member Secretary, Sikkim State Legal Services Authority and High Court Legal Services Committee, Sikkim, from the year 1998 to 2004.

He was President, District Con-

sumer Disputes Redressal Forum, East District from the year 1999 to 2004. He was Single Member, Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal from the year 1995 to 1997 and again from the year 2001 to 2004. He was Judge, Permanent and Continuous High Court Lok Adalat, High Court of Sikkim from the year 2002 to 2003.

He was also the first special judge under Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 for the whole State of Sikkim from the year 1995 to 1996.

He also worked as part time lecturer and guest faculty of Sikkim Government Law College for over four years between 1980 to 1984 in addition to his normal official duties.

He was elevated to the Bench of the High Court of Sikkim as a Permanent Judge on 10 April 2004. After a nearly two and half year tenure at Sikkim High Court he was transferred to Guwahati High Court as a Judge in April 2007. After a brief period in the Guwahati High Court he was transferred back to the High Court of Sikkim November 2007.

He retired as Judge High Court of Sikkim in February 2010.

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Record 24,850 COVID-19 cases in single day in India

NEW DELHI, JULY 5 (PTI):

With 24,850 people testing positive for coronavirus infection and 613 succumbing to the disease in a day, the highest so far, India's COVID-19 caseload soared to 6,73,165, while the death toll climbed to 19,268 on Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

This is the third consecutive day that coronavirus infections have increased by more than 20,000 in the country.

The number of recoveries stands at 4,09,082 while one patient has migrated. There are 2,44,814 active cases of coronavirus infections presently in the country, the updated data at 8 am showed.

“Thus, around 60.77 per cent of patients have recovered so far,” an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases include foreigners.

Of the 613 deaths reported in the last 24

hours, 295 are from Maharashtra, 81 from Delhi, 65 from Tamil Nadu, 42 from Karnataka, 24 from Uttar Pradesh, 21 from Gujarat, 19 from West Bengal, 12 from Andhra Pradesh, nine from Bihar, eight from Jammu and Kashmir, seven from Rajasthan, five each in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and Telangana, two each from Goa and Jharkhand and one from Himachal Pradesh.

TPTL high transmission line leak has Ralak and Tibuk residents worried

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

The public of Ralak village have complained against what appears to be current leakage from the TPTL high transmission line at Ralak and Tibuk

wards of Mangshila-Tibuk GPU in North Sikkim.

They informs that one cannot walk using an umbrella at the footpath below the high transmission line or anywhere near it for fear of being

electrocuted.

One of the affected villagers, Man Bahadur Limboo, and ward panchayat Ralak, Bhim Maya Limboo, shared this concern while speaking with SummitTimes today.

The TPTL Deputy Manager, Dr Naresh Sharma, meanwhile, has assured that the company is carrying out an inspection in the area and will resolve the problem at the earliest.

I-T dept amends TDS form

NEW DELHI, JUL 5 (PTI): The income tax department has amended the TDS form, making it more comprehensive and mandating deductors to state reasons for non-deduction of tax.

As per the amended form, banks will also have to report Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) for cash withdrawals above Rs 1 crore.

Through a notification, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has amended Income Tax Rules to include TDS on e-commerce operators, dividend distributed by mutual funds and business trusts, cash withdrawals, professional fees and interest.

Nangia & Co LLP Partner Shailesh Kumar said with this notification, the government has revised the format of forms 26Q and 27Q, where details of TDS amount deducted and deposited on various resident and non-resident payments are required to be filled.

Form 26Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns on any payment other than salary to Indian residents by the government or corporates operating in India.

Form 27Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns electronically on any payment other than salary to non-residents, including NRIs and foreigners. Except for government deductors, it is mandatory for all other deductors to mention their PAN in the form.

Kumar said "the new forms are more comprehensive and require payers to report not only those cases where TDS is deducted, but also cases where TDS is not deducted for any reason. Separate codes have been provided to cover different situations of deduction of TDS at lower rate/non-deduction of TDS."

The revised forms and rules also seek to incorporate reporting for new sections of TDS inserted in the Income Tax Act, such as Section 194N for cash withdrawals, Section 197A permitting non-deduction of TDS in various situations, among others.

In the 2019-20 budget, the government had introduced a TDS levy of 2 per cent on cash withdrawals of more than Rs 1 crore from a bank account in one financial year to discourage business payments in cash.

Area MLA coordinates efforts to promote dairy and livestock sectors in Upper-Burtuk

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Upper Burtuk MLA, DR Thapa, convened a meeting for his constituency today to explore how dairy, poultry, goat rearing and piggery farms can be promoted there to cater to the demands of Gangtok. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry Department.

In his address, Mr Thapa stressed that Upper Burtuk used to be earlier cater to Gangtok's dairy, poultry and mutton requirements and it was time to rejuvenate this sector in more meaningful way.

More than 100 farmers from different areas



participated in the counselling session organised by the MLA to assist

them with technical and other support.

The farmers shared

their views and sought support in marketing, feed supplies and deliv-

ery mechanisms.

Director, Animal husbandry, Dr BN Chettri, shared tips on hygiene and feeding aspects of cows, goats and piggery and how the farmers can earn better from this sector.

He said that the Govt of India was focusing on the animal husbandry and livestock sector and investing Rs 15,000 crore as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission and providing easy loans.

Resource person from NABARD, Bikash Pradhan spoke on the demand and supply chains, importance of local production and supply after COVID-19 outbreak and self employment opportunities.

KB Rai rejects police excuses, demands high-level enquiry into Melli episode



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Sikkim Republican Party president, KB Rai has registered deep dissatisfaction with the excuses offered by Sikkim Police DIG [Range] during a press conference regarding the illegal entry of five persons into Sikkim from Melli check-post.

He alleged today that the details presented during the press conference appear concocted and pre-planned. The people of Sikkim, he contended, are not convinced with the explanation.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, Mr Rai stated that the police cover-up has been shoddy and clearly coordinated to protect an abuse of office by the top brass.

He demanded that the State government constitute a high-level independent enquiry committee headed by either a retired Chief Secretary or Judge to get to the bottom of the matter and find out the truth.

He stressed that the government should suspend the DGP, SHO and all others connected to the matter before starting an enquiry. He added that a question mark still hangs over the Chief Secretary's role in the entire episode so he cannot be involved in any way in an enquiry committee.

He has demanded an enquiry into the telephonic records being presented by the police as well.

He added that if the party's demands were not addressed, they will write to the concerned Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and the Governor on the matter and request them to constitute an enquiry committee.

MLA visits landslide affected areas at Mangshila-Tibuk



SUMMIT REPORT

MANGAN, 05 JUL:

Dzongu MLA, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, accompanied by Zilla member Mangshila-Tibuk GPU, Zomin Thegim, Panchayat President, Meena Subba, and other Panchayat members and officials visited the damaged houses and land at Mangshila-Tibuk GPU today.

The team also visited the different villages and wards of the GPU where damages have occurred due to incessant rain.

The team also visited

the landslide at Gairi Gaon at Tinzey ward where the road, agricultural land as well as some houses have been damaged.

The MLA also visited a house damaged at Tikpo ward of Namok Swayem GPU and the Eklavya Model Residential School at Swayem.

He further informed that the government was leaving no stone unturned in providing relief and carrying out restoration and appealed to the people to stay safe and alert.



78 families quit SDF to join SKM at Upper Rangang

SUMMIT REPORT

YANGANG, 05 JUL:

A new ward-level committee was constituted at Upper Rangang under Rangang Yangang constituency today even as 78 families quit SDF and joined SKM, a press release informs.

The meeting was chaired by area in-charge, Raj Kumar Basnet in the

presence of Confidential Secretary to the CM, Bikash Basnet, CLC president, Tengayla Namka and other party workers.

A WLC has Hari Lal Gurung as president.

SKM is convinced that Upper Yangang Ward, an erstwhile bastion of the SDF, has now been secured.

Cong rejects State's excuses on the illegal entry from Melli episode

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee president, Bharat Basnet, today claimed that the people of Sikkim were not satisfied with the report of the enquiry committees on the illegal entry of five persons into Sikkim from Melli check-post recently.

On the same, he demanded that the State government constitute an Independent Enquiry Committee headed by either a retired Chief Secretary or Judge to enquire into the matter. He asserted that leaders of opposition parties need to come together on such a sensitive matter.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Basnet alleged that the press briefing of Sikkim Police has exposed administrative lapses and revealed that the state administration has made many mistakes just to cover-up one mistake.

He mentioned that such lapses carried serious connotations in a



sensitive border State like Sikkim when the nation was not only battling COVID-19 but was also facing border problems with China.

He informed that the state-unit has been updating the party high command with every detail.

Mr Basnet questioned how a suspension order issued by the Superintendent of Police [South] was being revoked by the Chief Secretary and wondered aloud why the CS was featuring so frequently in this incident.

Mr Basnet alleged that the administrative

lapse has violated all protocols, rules and regulations made for COVID-19.

He highlighted that the people of Sikkim gave the mandate to SKM in the hope that it will give Sikkim a responsible and responsive government.

"To keep its image clear, the State government should take strict action or own up to all the lapses," he said.

He further urged the Governor to take action on the incident. He also demanded that the quarantine of the five persons in question be transformed to custodial quarantine.

Akash becomes India's 66th chess Grandmaster



CHENNAI, JUL 5 (PTI):

Tamil Nadu's G Akash became the country's 66th chess Grandmaster while his statemate M Praneesh and Goa's Ameya Audi earned International Master titles.

Akash's GM title was confirmed at the second council meet of International Chess Federation (FIDE) for the year 2020 held recently.

The Chennai player (FIDE rating 2495) said he was delighted to become a GM and among his immediate aim was to increase his rating to 2600.

"I am delighted to join the list of GMs in India. It is a special moment for me. I have to keep working hard and the aim is to increase my rating to 2600 as soon as I can," he told PTI.

Having won the national title in 2012 and earned the IM title subsequently, Akash took a break to pursue an engineering degree in 2014. He made a comeback in 2018 and worked hard to earn his coveted GM title.

"I took time off from the game to pursue an engineering degree and came back in 2018 and gained my GM norms and the title," he added.

Akash, an electronics and communication engineering graduate, earned his third GM norm at the National 'A' championship in Sikkim last year and the fourth norm in Prague earlier this year.

The Chennai-based player, a former national champion, is trained by K Visweswaran.

Like all sportspersons, he has been forced to remain at home due to the COVID-19 lockdown and said he does miss playing tournaments and is waiting for normalcy to return.

Chennai-based Praneesh earned his IM title with a string of impressive performances in the Chennai Open 2019 and Delhi Open earlier this year.

He did well in the Aeroflot Open earlier where he scored an upset win over GM Boris Savchenko.

Darj MP..

Siliguri, but I feel that as long as people move around freely, shutting the markets alone won't make any difference, he adds.

"These patchwork approach to containment, will only cause further escalation of the pandemic, not only in Siliguri but in other regions of North Bengal also. As people will feel a false sense of security that only markets are COVID prone and not other parts of the city. This is very dangerous.

Other than keeping essential services open, MP therefore requested Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and also the District Magistrate Darjeeling and District Magistrate Jalpaiguri to initiate strict Lockdown of Siliguri Municipal Corporation area and connected Blocks where cases have sharply risen, for the next 15-days.

"I believe this is the only way to break the COVID transmission chain in North Bengal," informs a press release issued by the office of MP Raju Bista.

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

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

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Memorial plantation and cleanup drive by Raigoan Samaj

SUMMIT REPORT

RAIGAON, 05 JUL:

Raigoan Samaj of Lower Burtuk carried out a daylong plantation, cleaning and awareness drive today as a part of Van Mahotsav and the 'A Day for Mother Earth' initiative.

The programme began with a short prayer service and memorial plantation drive in the memory of the late Hem Bahadur Rai (DFO) followed by avenue plantation in which around 50 flowering tree species were planted.

A cleanup drive along roadsides and jhoras were carried out through active participation by



the youth and elderly residents of the village, a release informs.

A short awareness drive was also conducted on the importance of

Van Mahotsav and 'A Day for Mother Earth' Programme scheduled for 07 July.

Waste recycling bins were distributed to five

recently opened shops at Raigoan. Saplings of gurjo, a medicinal plant, were also distributed to the elderly people to take up plantation at

their respective homes. They were also provided gloves and face masks.

The people of Raigoan expressed gratitude to the Forest Department, particularly the Director (ENVIS), BB Gurung; Joint Director (FCA), Blen Tshering Targain; DFO (NTFP), Yangchen Bhutia; ACF (Research), Chewang Tashi Bhutia; Range Officer (Gangtok Territorial), Anuj Gurung for providing essential materials for the campaign.

The programme was conducted and coordinated by Sikkim ENVIS Hub of the Forest Department.

Vice-President launches Elyments app

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 05 JUL:

Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, today virtually launched Elyments, an app billed as an indigenous Social Media Super App.

The launch was streamed live with over 2.48 million people from over 147 countries logging in, a press release informs.

Inspired by Ravi Shankar, the App was conceived and developed

primarily to provide a completely home-grown alternative to the 500 million strong base of Indian users on social media, the release adds.

The app can be downloaded from the iOS App Store and Google Play Store. It is available in 8 Indian languages - Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Gujarati, in addition to English and Spanish.

GNLF calls out quarantine relaxations enjoyed by leaders



SUMMIT REPORT

DARJEELING, 05 JUL:

President of GNLF's Jaanchetna Sangharsha Samity, Manjila Tamang, today alleged that there were two types of rules in the Darjeeling hills - leaders can do whatever they want but the people have to follow the rules made by the government, she alleged.

But the time will come when the people will quarantine such leaders forever, she contended further.

She pointed out that where some leaders have been travelling unin-

dered and even taking flights and continuing with life as usual, the lay people are being forced to stay in 21-day quarantines upon returning.

Meanwhile, GNLF continued its relief work in the hills and today distributed food items to staff of hotels in Darjeeling. The distribution was overseen by GNLF-Darjeeling's chairperson, Ajay Edwards, spokesperson Prabhaskar Blon, chairperson of GNLF's Darjeeling town committee, Robert Chhetri and in-charge of GNLF media cell, Dinesh Sampang.

Two medium-intensity quakes hit Gujarat and Mizoram

AHMEDABAD/ NEW DELHI, JUL 5 (PTI):

Two medium-intensity earthquakes hit Gujarat and Mizoram on Sunday evening, both in a span of 20 minutes, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) said on Sunday.

A 4.2 magnitude earthquake, with its epicentre around 14 kms from Bhachau in Kutch district of Gujarat, was recorded at 5.11 pm, an official of the Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) said. It was preceded by four minor quakes of 1.8, 1.6, 1.7 and 2.1 magnitudes between 1.50 am and 4.32 pm, the official said.

ISR is an institute un-

der the Gujarat government. However, the NCS, an institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said the magnitude of the quake was 3.9.

The same region had on June 14 recorded an earthquake of 5.3 magnitude that was felt across several parts of Saurashtra region, forcing people to rush out of their houses. Kutch district is located in a "very high risk" seismic zone and low intensity earthquakes regularly occur there.

The 2001 earthquake, also known as the Bhuj earthquake, was the third largest and second most destructive in India over the last two centuries.

SRM Hospital chosen for human trials of COVID-19 vaccine



SUMMIT REPORT

KATTANKULATHUR, 05 JUL:

SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCHRC), Kattankulathur has been selected by Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) as a clinical trial site of the country's first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine (BBV152 COVID Vaccine).

SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre is one among the 12 institutions in India to have been chosen. The vaccine has been developed by ICMR- National Institute of Virology, Pune, which has partnered with Bharat Biotech International limited, Hyderabad.

SRM MCHRC is also

the only medical institution to be selected from Tamil Nadu for this purpose. Associate Professor from the Department of Pharmacology, Dr Satyajith Mohapatra, SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre has been chosen as the Principal Investigator for these clinical trials at SRM MCHRC.

SKM forms women and youth wings for Gnathang-Machong

SUMMIT REPORT

PAKYONG, 05 JUL:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party convened a Constituency Level Nari Shakti and Youth Wing body formation program of Gnathang Machong constituency at the Community Hall, Pakyong, today.

The program was chaired by party Vice President cum Area In-charge, Tshering Bhutia,



a press release informs.

During the course of the program, several issues were discussed related to strengthening

the party, future course of party activities, SKM government programmes and policies, the release adds.

Stokes is a bit like Kohli, he will turn out to be an excellent captain: Hussain

MUMBAI, JUL 5 (PTI): Former England skipper Nasser Hussain has compared Ben Stokes' leadership abilities with Virat Kohli, saying the all-rounder will turn out to be an "excellent captain" when he dons the hat in Joe Root's absence during the first Test against the West Indies in Southampton, starting July 8.

England's World Cup hero Stokes was on last Tuesday named captain for the opening Test against the West Indies in place of Root, who has taken leave to be with his wife for the birth of their second child.

England will take on the West Indies in a three-match Test in a "bio-secure environment", which will mark the resumption of international cricket amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Generally, what Ben (Stokes) does is a bit like Virat (Kohli). Everything he does, he does it at 100 mile an hour. So, I think he will be an excellent captain, although he's only a stand-in captain," Hussain, a respected voice in world cricket, said on Star Sports show 'Cricket Connected'.

"Joe Root is off with that baby, his second child. I think as a stand-in captain, I am absolutely behind it, absolutely great choice, very loyal as well to Joe Root. He won't have any kind of grandeur thinking that this is my job for life," added Hussain, who played 96 Tests for England. However, the 52-year-old right-handed batsman was not in favour of handing Stokes full time captaincy at the moment, saying his platter is already full.

"But as a long-term thing, an all-rounder with so much on his plate, plays three formats, IPL possibly coming up, I think there's too much on his shoulders, but never write-off Ben Stokes," he said. "He could make for an exceptional captain, but I am worried a little bit about his workload in the future if he does it full time," Hussain signed off.

40 websites of banned group Sikhs For Justice blocked

NEW DELHI, JUL 5 (PTI): Days after nine individuals linked to Khalistani outfits were declared as terrorists, the government on Sunday announced that 40 websites belonging to Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), an outlawed organisation, have been blocked for supporting secessionist activities.

The US-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) is a pro-Khalistan group.

"Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), an unlawful organisation under the UAPA, 1967, launched a campaign for registering supporters for its cause. On recommendation of MHA, MEITY has issued orders under Sec. 69 A of the I.T. Act, 2000, for blocking 40 websites of SFJ," a home ministry spokesperson said.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) is the nodal authority for monitoring the cyber space in India.

Last year, the home ministry had banned the SFJ for its alleged anti-national activities.

The SFJ had pushed for Sikh Referendum 2020 as part of its separatist agenda.

It openly espouses the cause of Khalistan and in that process challenges the sover-

eighty and territorial integrity of India, another official said.

On July 1, the home ministry had declared nine individuals linked to separatist Khalistani outfits, including four based in Pakistan, as designated terrorists under the provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The individuals belonged to various terrorist organisations.

Among them were Wadhawa Singh Babbar, chief of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI); Lakhbir Singh, who heads International Sikh Youth Federation; Ranjeet Singh, chief of Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZB) and Paramjit Singh, who leads Khalistan Commando Force. All these four are Pakistan-based.

The home ministry had said these nine individuals were operating from Pakistan and other foreign soil and were involved in various acts of terrorism. "They have been relentless in their nefarious efforts of destabilising the country, by trying to revive militancy in Punjab through their anti-national activities and through their support to and involvement in the Khalistan movement," it had said.

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PRESS NOTICE

A Stakeholders Consultation Meeting is being organized for the proposed Remodelling, retrofitting and improvement of Kanchendzonga Plaza surrounding area, Lal Bazar, Gangtok at Kissan Bazaar, ICCO Conference Hall at Level 5, on Thursday, 9th July 2020, Time 11.00 am.

Owing to COVID 19 and restriction of large gatherings, the meeting will be attended by the representatives of the concerned stake holder's association and concerned Department Officials. The details of the proposal shall be made available after the meeting, in the website <http://smartcitygangtok.com> to seek any comments of the general public. Comments received till 16th July 2020 shall be taken into consideration before finalizing the proposal.

Memo No: 173/GSCDL/2020-21

Dated : 4th July 2020

Sd/-
CEO
Gangtok Smart City Development Ltd.

CHIEF MINISTER'S 'A DAY FOR MOTHER EARTH' APPEAL

My beloved citizens, as you may be aware that the Government of Sikkim last year had launched a new green initiative of dedicating "A Day for Mother Earth" on 07 July every year. Likewise, this year also, we will be celebrating the day with great zest and fervour taking up environment friendly activities across the State. The day is also coinciding with the closing day of Van Mahotsav Week i.e. 01 to 07 July.


Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, making sure of social distancing in place, let each one of us spare some time at our homes and neighbourhood to dedicate our green good deeds to the Mother Earth by contributing in whatever small way possible. Clean and healthy environment starts from our homes. During the Van Mahotsav, let us clean and beautify our neighbourhood, plant native saplings, resort to eco-friendly lifestyles and create low carbon footprints.

Hence, it is the duty and responsibility of every citizen to be well aware and be conscious about environmental issues and put green ideas into action.

Last year's seven minute of no vehicular emission was a grand success. Similarly, this year as well, I request all the environment friendly citizens of Sikkim, Government Departments/ Agencies, Taxi Drivers Association and so on NOT to ply any vehicles (except emergency vehicles like Ambulance, Police, Fire services etc) for seven (7) minutes from 11AM to 11.07am on this day (07 July) as our affirmative action towards ameliorating the deteriorating environmental effects.

We all are aware that man animal conflict is on the rise. Wild animals including monkeys are coming out to our homes and farmlands. To tackle this, State Government will be raising seedlings and carrying out plantation of wild edible fruit tree species such as phunchey, bhadrashey, amphi, kattus, okhar and lapsi on mission mode.

I appeal to one and all to resort to reduce, re-use and re-cycle practices and manage our natural resources efficiently and make this a habit and way of life in this beautiful Mountain State which is the need of the hour to safeguard future generation or posterity.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV


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

Treatment

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

If you seek help, you may call :

Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402



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

A Birthday Worth Celebrating

His Holiness leads by example; we should follow

The Dalai Lama turns 85 today. He has been around for longer than any other Dalai Lama. The only other Dalai Lama to live into the eighties was the First who lived till he was 83. While His Holiness' advanced years and good health in themselves are reasons enough for his followers to celebrate his birthday, even the nonbelievers should join the celebrations because the Dalai Lama's contributions to the secular world are as profound as his hierarchical position in Tibetan affairs is supreme. And this sentiment also ties in well with how his followers propose to celebrate his birthday – by dedicating him the 'Year of Gratitude' where His Holiness' teachings and life-work will be promoted and celebrated.

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual and emotional anchor of a displaced people. He keeps their hopes alive and priorities in line with his logical and clear thinking and also keeps them in line with his strong moral core. Few leaders can claim to bring such succour to their people. Although he dismisses any reference to himself as a 'God King', and for long has preferred to introduce himself as a 'Simple Buddhist Monk', the Dalai Lama stands heads and shoulders above most heads of states for his contributions to how the world conducts itself. The Tibetan issue could have snowballed into a cold-war incinerator and imploded like Afghanistan had it not been for the Dalai Lama's commitment to peace and rational approach to a historical wrong. The Dalai Lama was barely 24 when he was thrown into the outside world, of which, not only he, but most Tibetans who joined him in exile, knew very little. While this culture shock would have been too much for lesser minds to handle, the Dalai Lama conducted himself exceptionally. Not only did he learn and adapt well, he also kept his flock together and even managed something that had eluded Tibetans even in Tibet - unity. Religion was influential in Tibet. The next were clans and their attendant hierarchies. The various sects of Tibetan Buddhism had quarreled often while in Tibet and the clans remained parochial and insular. It was with such a baggage that the Dalai Lama found himself in India; a way of life and a culture under threat. There must have been many who tried to influence the young leader, but the only influences that the Dalai Lama allowed were ones which furthered his understanding of the modern world and benefited his people. He is now respected as a great unifier, a savior, and a man of peace. Few can deny him this recognition and China still fears the influence he commands not only over Tibetans in exile, but also those at home.

Where other leaders would have retreated, the Dalai Lama has adapted, improvised and grown. The people who have gained most from this attitude have been the Tibetans, but the world at large too has learnt much from him. The near hysteria that greets his arrival everywhere he goes does not come from blind faith alone, it is triggered because he inspires hope, instills belief and most of all, delivers.

In a world grappling with the rise of extreme right-wing posturing, the Dalai Lama also makes it possible for organized religions to adopt less regressive positions. Even as most religious leaders promote more and more parochial interpretations of their respective scriptures, the Dalai Lama keeps an open mind. In his book, Beyond Dogma, he does not shirk from sharing his opinion on homosexuality, which no organized religion provides a humane answer to. "If the two people have taken no vows [of chastity], and neither is harmed, why should it not be acceptable?" he posits. Few religious leaders will come on record with such open minds, but now that the Dalai Lama has done so, others might follow. While the Dalai Lama records that homosexual behaviour is considered sexual misconduct for Buddhists, he admits to a "willingness to consider the possibility that some of the teachings may be specific to a particular cultural and historic context." Also, for a man who has seen his people suffer in the hands of Communist ideology, he displays no prejudice and has in the past endorsed that of all the modern economic theories, for him, the economic system of Marxism is founded on moral principles. "I think of myself as half-Marxist, half-Buddhist," he says.

The Dalai Lama opens many windows to the world, keeps reminding those who will listen that there are many ways to approach tricky situations. There is much that the world can learn from him, and should, and hence should celebrate his birthday as a first step towards emulating the path he has chosen.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Cultural factors are behind disinformation pandemic: why this matters

HERMAN WASSERMAN
theconversation.com

The prevalence of disinformation about the coronavirus pandemic has prompted Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) to warn that: "We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic."

The infodemic is defined as an overabundance of information, some accurate and some not, during an epidemic. It makes it hard for people to know which sources are trustworthy and reliable. Part of the problem is the widespread occurrence of misinformation.

To fight this infodemic, we need to understand how misinformation spreads in particular host environments. This requires a study of culture, context and lived experience of media users.

To contain and mitigate the virus of misinformation we need multi-levelled, socio-cultural approaches and methods.

One such tool of analysis available in the media and cultural literature is the classic concept of the "circuit of culture". This model explains the complex, interrelated moments and processes involved in the development of socio-cultural phenomena. It can help explain how misinformation travels, is consumed, and amplified or restrained in relation to a range of factors.

In addition to the political and economic contexts within which misinformation is produced and consumed, it is also important to also consider cultural aspects. When we understand how these different moments in the circuit of culture are interlinked, we can design more appropriate interventions. There are the five moments in the circuit of culture that are useful to keep in mind.

FIVE MOMENTS IN THE CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

Representation: Texts are sites of struggle, where meanings are contested and counter-meanings produced. Messages are encoded and decoded in relation to their environments. If information, say about the wearing of masks, is coded by health authorities in a technical manner, to explain how they prevent the spread of the virus, but decoded by audiences as an attack on their liberty, a slippage of meaning has occurred.

It is in these slippages that misinformation can easily insert itself. Cultural studies can help us understand how misinformation is constructed

in ways so as to appeal to people's everyday emotions, fears and anxieties and which political discourses resonate with them.

Identity: How does consuming and sharing misinformation give people a sense of belonging and community? Previous studies have shown that political affiliation, age demographic and similar identity positions might make people more likely to share misinformation.

Production: The digital media ecology has blurred the lines between production and consumption of information. Parody, rumour, memes and jokes have become a lingua franca. Users can find confirmation of their personal biases and beliefs – from conspiracy theories about 5G-towers as a cause of the virus to pseudo-scientific remedies - in "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles". The implications of this shift in media production are important to grasp when dealing with the infodemic.

Consumption: Cultural studies sees media users as active participants in the making of meaning, not passive recipients. Media users don't merely receive misinformation, but shape it, curate it and share it. A high percentage of African social media users admit to sharing a news story that they knew was made up.

WHY IS THIS THE CASE?

We can only answer that question from the perspective of the users' lived experience and context. A lack of trust in official sources of information may lead people to imbue alternative sources of information with more authority.

The legacy of state-owned media in Africa has for a long time turned people to the informal circuits of gossip, jokes and humour to undermine illegitimate sources of authority. Although there has been a global surge in news media consumption during the Covid-19 pandemic, overall levels of trust globally now seem to be at their lowest point ever. Fewer than four in ten (38%) of people surveyed by the Reuters Institute say they trust most news most of the time.

Information overload and "noise" have also led to the erosion of trust and the inability to make informed decisions. The same study found that 56% of people still did not know what online information was real or fake.

In Africa, people who report higher levels of exposure to disinformation also report lower levels of media trust.

Contradictory and speculative reports about treatments and vaccines, or confusing guidance about the use of masks, for example, may have intensified these trends.

Skepticism in official narratives may make people more susceptible to misinformation. A study in the US suggests that the ongoing and systemic failure of the public health system for black people, has made this community "skeptical of government interventions and medical authorities."

This, the study suggests, means these communities might rely instead on community knowledge for their survival. This could also expose them to dangerous misinformation.

Regulation: Attempts by some countries (like South Africa and Brazil) to criminalise disinformation about Covid-19 have met with strong resistance from human rights and free speech watchdogs because of the fear that it would stifle free expression and political accountability.

When we have a better sense of why people do not trust official media, or what their motivations may be for sharing misinformation, we can consider more appropriate interventions. Some motivations suggested in the literature are: financial or political gain, to express one's feelings, cope with uncertainty, build relationships or to mobilise against a political order.

NO PANACEA

A focus group research by my colleagues and I in six African countries show some additional motivations. The most common reason for our respondents to share misinformation was to raise awareness out of a (misplaced) sense of civic duty. The second most common reason was to make others aware of misinformation.

Thirdly, media users in sub-Saharan countries said they shared misinformation "for fun". Humour, gossip and satire seems to be a refuge for media users overwhelmed by serious or depressing news, to create conviviality and community.

It is these contextual, social and cultural differences that emphasise the importance of considering misinformation practices as socio-cultural phenomena. From that perspective we can evaluate what type of responses may be most appropriate for particular contexts, rather than attempting to administer a panacea.

[the writer is Professor of Media Studies and Director of the Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town]



Lockdown 'funnelling': how the pandemic has changed our relationships

EMILIE VRAIN
theconversation.com

The coronavirus lockdown has been a unique social experience that has had significant effects on our social relationships. Some have been strengthened while others have come under severe strain. Many people have found themselves confined for prolonged periods of time with other people and have come into conflict with each other. Others have experienced lockdown alone, resulting in profound social isolation. Some of our everyday interactions have intensified and others have not been possible at all.

And because our relationships are such an important part of ourselves, it is essential to understand how these extreme conditions may have changed them – not just in the short term but potentially also in the months and years ahead.

According to a recent survey by insurance company Aviva, the number of adults aged 25 to 34 who wish to end their relationship has tripled from 2% in December 2019 to 7% in May 2020.

And the preliminary results of a large-scale survey, conducted in France during a highly restrictive lockdown, revealed how lockdown

has had a "funnelling effect" on relationships. Some contacts were prioritised and strengthened through care, support and increased communication, while other connections have fizzled out or been damaged.

Although the sample was skewed towards women and the more educated, the survey's 16,000 respondents provide a fascinating insight into how a significant proportion of the French population experienced the lockdown.

Respondents perceived confinement as having severely tested and sometimes transformed personal relationships. Although the lockdown was short in the grand scale of a lifetime, the reported "radical" changes in relationships during this period indicate that, for some, long-term alterations to their social ties may have occurred. New friendships have been formed and contact with others lost.

Many people turned first and foremost to family or close friends, caring about their health and wellbeing. They offered emotional support, sometimes providing material and practical help and benefited from the same support in return.

Interestingly, age and gender emerge as especially significant factors in how people are managing

their relationships. Women appear to be the communicators during the lockdown and play the main role in maintaining social ties. In particular, women living in couples largely undertake the caring relationships for family or vulnerable friends. They were also more likely to report that they found the lockdown to be a stressful period.

CHANGES IN CONTACT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY DURING LOCKDOWN

Older men in the more affluent groups reported that the lockdown had been a period of calm when they could relax a bit more and enjoy spending time at home. Nonetheless, in general, it was male respondents who were more likely to report that their relationships with their partner had deteriorated during the lockdown.

Age and family life stage were also significant factors. People with young children tended to have increased levels of communication with their parents as sources of mutual support, advice and care. Young adults without caring responsibilities tended to communicate more with friends, rather than their relatives.

WHO HAVE THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS CONTACTED MORE DURING LOCKDOWN?

In general, young adults who were usually quite sociable and accustomed to frequently going out found the lockdown difficult but compensated by engaging more in online activities. Students especially experienced relational instability, often reporting the loss of contacts, unable to maintain their generally larger social networks.

For the older generation (+60yrs), results reveal the majority (59%) neither lost nor made new contacts. Among respondents in this age category, those who did create new relationships, 72% of them were with neighbours. However, this again seemed to be more apparent among female respondents.

Overall, the results of the French survey suggest that lockdown has reinforced strong ties such as family and close friends, but left other relationships sidelined and sifted out, such as colleagues or friends from group activities.

Studying these changing roles and relationships during the pandemic enables us to understand which kinds of social connections are prioritised during times of severe crisis.

[the writer is Senior Research Associate, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia]

E-commerce to drive warehousing demand in Kolkata during FY21, says property consultant



KOLKATA, JUL 5 (PTI): The demand for warehousing space in the city during the current financial year will largely be driven by e-commerce and FMCG companies, an official of a global property consulting firm said.

E-commerce accounted for 27 per cent of the entire warehousing deals in Kolkata and adjoining areas, while FMCG's share was five per cent last year.

Their share in the total warehousing deals in FY21 is expected to jump significantly as there will be a change in demand pattern, he said. "Instead of large

parcel warehousing for industrial and commercial purposes, relatively smaller warehouses will see robust demand driven by e-commerce companies, a segment that continues to expand with new more services," Knight Frank India, Kolkata Director, Swapan Dutta said.

There will be a requirement of mid-size warehouses by e-commerce and FMCG companies in various clusters of Kolkata in FY21, the official said.

However, the shift in demand patterns and enquiries for in-city warehouses may put land prices

in peripheral warehouse clusters under pressure in near-to-mid term, he said. The leasing deals of the last fiscal are witnessing renegotiation of rates following disruptions due to COVID-19.

In 2019-20, Kolkata saw a healthy warehouse leasing of 3.93 million sq ft, according to the India Warehousing Market Report 2020, a drop by 14 per cent over the previous fiscal.

Dankuni and suburban cluster of Kolkata accounted for a 52 per cent share of warehousing transactions in FY 2020, while the National Highway-16 (old

NH-6) has the rest of the deals.

The warehousing market demand in Kolkata has seen a robust compounded annual growth rate of 43 per cent for the FY2017-2020 period. "Only 2019-20 fiscal was an abrasion from the steady year-on-year growth story of warehousing. The traditional warehousing demand in locations like Dankuni, Dhulagarh on NH-6 will shrink during this fiscal," Dutta said.

Kolkata, due to its strategic location, is a major warehousing hub of the eastern belt of the country.

Former RBI governor Patel pens book on dealing with NPA issue

MUMBAI, JUL 5 (PTI): Urjit Patel, whose stint as the head of the central bank was one of the most tumultuous in recent times that ended with the rare event of an RBI Governor resigning, will be releasing a book later this month, his publishers have said.

Titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', the book focuses on the non-performing assets (NPAs) issue that has afflicted Indian banking in recent years, its causes and Patel's efforts as the RBI Governor in dealing with it.

"Urjit Patel invests his thirty years of macroeconomic experience in building strategies to protect our banks from unscrupulous racketeers, ultimately aimed at saving our savings...," publisher HarperCollins India tweeted.

Patel's book description says that sovereigns do not need to earn or save before spending money. They can either print or borrow.

"in our country, where they own banks, they can use our deposits to lend and splurge for goals that may not always be economic in nature. Many rulers have succumbed to the temptation, with dire results - inflation, debased currency, payments crises, bankrupt banks, economic stagnation, loss of public confidence.

"After centuries of ruinous experiences, some governments learnt, others haven't, to control themselves, create self-governing Central banks and let them manage money and regulate banks," it says.

The issue of unsustainable bad debts started as a trickle in 2015 and then became a "flood", it said. "In the forefront were some of India's largest government banks, and a series of tycoons who were running their empires on unpaid debts."

Patel worked with a '9R' strategy which would protect depositors' savings, rescue the banks and protect them from "unscrupulous racketeers", it says.

Books or memoirs written by two of his immediate predecessors -- Raghuram Rajan and D Subbarao -- had shed light on various subjects like the RBI's autonomy, interest rates or its stance on demonetisation.

Patel, under whose governorship the note ban was carried out, surprised all by resigning from the RBI in December 2018.

The resignation came at a time when relations between the government and the RBI had soured, with the former threatening to invoke a never-before used clause to give directions to the central

bank. The RBI under Patel was reportedly averse to the government's wishes on getting extra capital held by the central bank, restructuring loans to small businesses and providing liquidity support to the troubled non-bank lenders.

Patel's resignation was followed by a long period of absence from public gaze.

However last month, in a surprise move, he was appointed as the chairman of the Ministry of Finance-run think-tank NIPFP.

Deputy governor Viral Acharya, who gave a strong speech asserting RBI's autonomy and warned the government of the "wrath of markets", also quit ahead of the completion of his term.

Patel was seen as very strict on the issue of NPAs and governance at banks, especially the private sector ones, where the RBI replaced the heads of ICICI Bank and Axis Bank, and started probing Yes Bank more closely.

The RBI had begun a thorough asset quality review (AQR) to find out the hidden stress on banks' books when Patel was a deputy governor and he carried forward the same work.

Patel's book will be released by the end of July, as per a book selling website.

Total shutdown in till June 8

BHUBANESWAR, JUN 4 (PTI): The Odisha government on Saturday declared complete shutdown in Cuttack till July 8 amid rising COVID-19 cases.

All non-essential shops will be closed and non-essential travel prohibited, the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) said in a notification.

Grocery, vegetable and milk shops can remain open from 5 am to 6 pm, while strictly adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols.

Cuttack's COVID-19 tally surged to 116, including 92 active cases.

Meanwhile, the Sambalpur district administration also announced a one-day shutdown on Sunday to contain further spread of the virus.

Restrictions will be imposed on vehicular movement and non-essential services.

Finmin may review capital requirement of PSU banks after second quarter

NEW DELHI, JUL 5 (PTI): The finance ministry may assess the capital requirement of public sector banks after the September quarter as there would be greater clarity about a spike in bad loans by that time, sources said.

There is widespread fear that non-performing assets (NPAs) of the banks will witness a surge due to the economic slowdown triggered by the COVID-19 outbreak and resultant lockdowns.

This will need higher provisioning by banks as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

However, there could be a silver lining if RBI accepts request of loan restructuring for sectors hit badly by the coronavirus pandemic, sources said.

The pain of NPA will surface only after the extended moratorium ends in August, the sources said, adding it will be appropriate to assess capital requirement only after the second quarter numbers are finalised.

Veteran banker and CII President Uday Kotak had said the public sector banks would need financial support from the government to drive the economy, while private sector banks need to raise capital from various



sources to meet the future challenges.

"The COVID-19 outbreak and resulting lockdown has impacted adversely the real economy, businesses, individuals, government and financial sector.

"While the government is facing the risk of higher fiscal deficit, the banking sector urgently needs the recapitalisation to the tune of Rs 3-4 lakh crore to meet the lending requirements," he had said last month.

Ratings agency Fitch has estimated a shortfall of USD 15 billion (about Rs 1.25 lakh crore) by Indian banks to achieve a 10 per cent Weighted Average Common equity tier-1 (CET 1) ratio under moderate stress and in the absence of which banks would show high risk aversion. The banking sector's NPAs were expected to increase by 450 basis point through FY21 and FY21 under moderate stress.

The government has infused over Rs 3.15 lakh crore into public sector banks (PSBs) in the 11 years through 2018-19.

In 2019-20, the government proposed to make Rs 70,000 crore capital infusion into PSBs to boost credit for a strong impetus to the economy.

However, the government refrained from committing any capital in the Budget 2020-21 for the PSBs, hoping that the lenders will raise funds from the market depending on the requirement.

In the last financial year, Punjab National Bank was given Rs 16,091 crore, Union Bank of India Rs 11,768 crore,

Canara Bank Rs 6,571 crore and Indian Bank Rs 2,534 crore. Merging entities like erstwhile Allahabad Bank was provided Rs 2,153 crore, United Bank of India 1,666 crore and Andhra Bank Rs 200 crore.

Besides, Bank of Baroda got a capital infusion of Rs 7,000 crore, Indian Overseas Bank Rs 4,360 crore, UCO Bank Rs 2,142 crore, Punjab & Sind Bank Rs 787 crore and Central Bank of India Rs 3,353 crore.

In addition, LIC-controlled IDBI Bank too received additional capital of Rs 4,557 crore through the supplementary demands for grants.

In all, the government has infused Rs 65,443 crore in PSBs in the last financial year as both regulatory and growth capital, as per Budget documents.

Fire breaks out at multi-storey building in Kolkata

KOLKATA, JUL 5 (PTI): A fire broke out at a godown packed with plastic items on the second floor of a multi-storey building in Burrabazar area of the city on Sunday.

Eight fire tenders were pressed into service to put out the blaze, which erupted around 10 am, an official said.

It took the fire tenders over 90 minutes to douse the flames, the fire brigade official said.

The blaze had spread to other floors of the dilapidated building, which also houses several other offices and godowns,



most of which were shut on Sunday, he said.

"As the plastic goods godown was located next to a staircase, the

fire spread quickly to the third and the fourth floors. The fire tenders were able to contain the blaze after one-

and-hours hours. They are now busy dousing pockets of smouldering fire in the building," he added.

Three women swept away by Kosi river in U'khand

DEHRADUN, JUL 5 (PTI): Three women were swept away in an overflowing Kosi river in Uttarakhand's Nainital district on Sunday, with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) recovering the body of one of the victims, sources said.

Several roads were damaged as water overflowed from rivers and canal in the state that was lashed by heavy rains in the last 24 hours.

The sudden rise in water levels of the Kosi in Khairna swept away three women, SDRF, the sources said here.

SDRF teams launched search and rescue operations in the area after being informed about the incident by locals, they said.

Despite the river being in spate, a SDRF team recovered one body. The deceased was identified as 30-year-old Kamla Devi. Search for the other two women Lalita Devi (30) and Lata Devi (26) is still on, the sources said.

The three women had gone to a forest to collect firewood and fodder in the morning when overflowing waters of the river swept them away,

they said. Many places in Uttarakhand were lashed by heavy overnight rains over the last 24 hours with Dehradun receiving 94.1 mm of rains.

Roads were also damaged at several places in Kotdwari Pauri district and Yamunotri in Uttarakashi district by the overflowing waters of the rivers and canals.

Similar weather is likely to continue in Uttarakhand with the MeT department predicting light to moderate rains at a number of places in the state over the next 24 hours.

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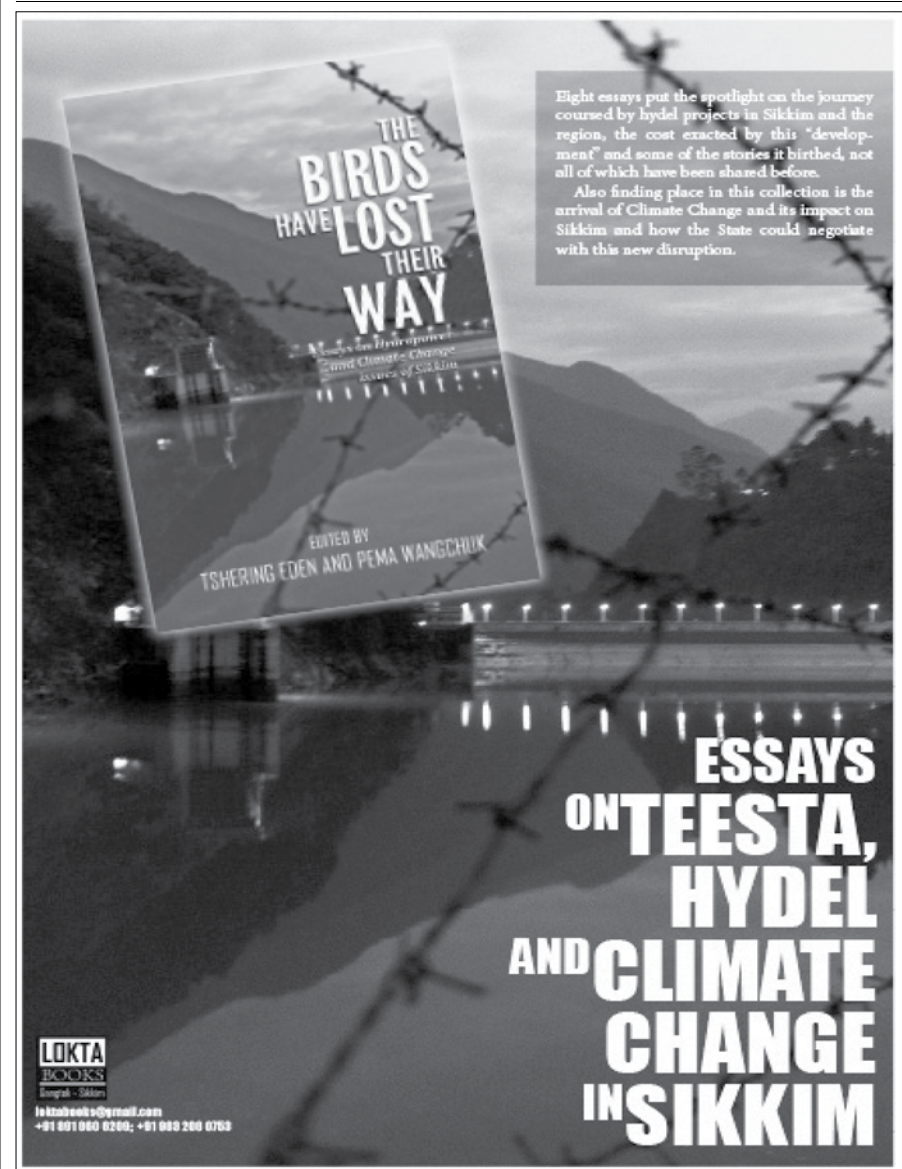
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Mendis arrested for causing fatal motor accident

COLOMBO, JUL 5 (PTI): Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Mendis was on Sunday arrested for knocking down a pedestrian while driving, police said.

Mendis hit a 74-year-old man, killing him in the wee hours, in the Colombo suburb of Panadura. He is to be produced before a magistrate later today, police said.

The 25-year-old wicket-keeper batsman has represented Sri Lanka in 44 Tests and 76 ODIs. Mendis was part of the national squad which had resumed training after the COVID-19 lockdown.

Sri Lanka's international assignments, including a tour by India, have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

Pal gets additional U-23 women's cricket coach role

KOLKATA, JUL 5 (PTI): Bengal senior women's team coach Shib Sankar Pal was on Sunday given additional responsibility of the under-23 side, the Cricket Association of Bengal said.

"I am thankful to president Avishek Dalmiya, secretary Snehasish Ganguly and other office bearers for keeping faith in me. I will give my best and prepare the girls for the trophies. My aim is to become champion with both U-23 and senior Bengal Women's team," Pal said in a statement issued by CAB.

"I think it's great to have the opportunity to train both age groups as we will be able to look after the players from U-23 and prepare them for senior level. The idea is to build a strong bonding and play together as a family," he added.

Pal, who has been the head coach of the senior women's team for past one year, will be assisted by Charanjit Singh and Rituparna Roy in his new dual role.

Rituparna, who coached Vidarbha U-23 and senior team last season, said: "I am excited to be a part of it. I always wanted to get back and work with my home team. Playing and practicing with the senior players will boost the confidence of the junior players. We will aim to become champions in both age groups.

Jamie Vardy plunders Crystal Palace to become Leicester's man of the century

JONATHAN WILSON LONDON, 05 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: It was a struggle, it was not hugely convincing, but it was a win – and given how things have been going recently for Leicester, that is the most important thing. Not much less significant is that Jamie Vardy is scoring again. His first goal, his 100th in the Premier League, was a simple tap-in, but his second was the Vardy of old, a confident, dinked finish in injury time after a classic breakaway. If this is a return to form, it could be decisive in Leicester holding on to third place.

Since scoring at Manchester City just before Christmas, Vardy's only goals had come against Aston Villa in the final game before lockdown. Brendan Rodgers had been keen to stress that Vardy's drought was indicative of a collective failing and that there has been a problem getting players up alongside him. To that end, he selected Kelechi Iheanacho alongside Vardy, with Ayoze Pérez deployed behind them.

Numbers in forward areas, though, do not necessarily equal creativity. James Maddison, absent after aggravating a hip injury, was badly missed.

The lack of confidence was reflected in a lack of imagination and an almost complete unwillingness to take risks,



particularly before half-time. It was all very cautious, all very predictable.

The frustration, though, was broken four minutes into the second half. Youri Tielemans's low cross looked too close to Vicente Guaita, but the Palace goalkeeper dithered before making a strange shovelling gesture at the ball as it passed in front of him, allowing Iheanacho to pounce for his second goal in three days.

That changed the dynamic of the game, forcing Palace to attack, which in turn increased the space Vardy had to run in to. His first goal, though, had little to do with anything but a slip from Mamadou Sakho. Harvey Barnes took advantage and squared for Vardy to knock in to an empty net and become the 29th player to hit

League. "I'm privileged to work with a top striker," said Rodgers. "His speed right at the very end of the game, his thinking and his movement to get in and stay onside – and his finishing.

"It's been hard for him because he hasn't had too many chances. I had a chat to him yesterday about getting back to what he's good at. When he's at his best he hunts everything down."

Characteristically, Vardy refused to talk about the individual milestone, saying that he would reflect on it at the end of the season. He seemed far more concerned about the scrap for Champions League qualification. "We've not been playing our best," he said. "Today was about getting back to basics."

Roy Hodgson, who gave Vardy his England debut, congratulated him on his achieve-

ment while noting that for a long time Palace had kept him fairly quiet. "I don't think at any stage we were being outplayed or under enormous pressure but unfortunately we made mistakes and they were harshly punished. All goals are mistakes, but some are more obvious than others."

The suggestion Leicester have not got going since the restart is only partially true. Leicester have not really recovered from the back-to-back defeats to Manchester City and Liverpool over Christmas.

Before those two reverses, they took 39 points from the 17 games; even with this win they have taken 19 from the 14 games since.

Injuries have been a major factor and Ben Chilwell and Pérez were added to the casualty list. Chilwell required an injection in his heel to start and was withdrawn at half-time while Pérez took a knock to the ankle. Madison is unlikely to be fit for Tuesday.

It was not the most fluent display from Leicester but Palace made two desperate mistakes and Iheanacho and Vardy were sharp enough to capitalise.

The points may have been the result of Palace's generosity but, for now, Leicester retain their grip on third.

Frank Lampard says pressure is on Chelsea 'every game' until season ends

JACOB STEINBERG LONDON, 05 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: Frank Lampard said Chelsea will have to deal with pressure for the rest of the season after boosting their hopes of qualifying for the Champions League with a comfortable 3-0 win over Watford.

Chelsea kept their nerve after seeing Leicester and Manchester United pick up wins earlier in the day, holding on to fourth spot and bouncing back from the midweek defeat to West Ham by swatting Watford aside thanks to goals from Olivier Giroud, Willian and Ross Barkley.

"Every game is going to be pressure now," Lampard said. "West Ham was pressure because we knew we could go third. It's a different kind of pressure. But it's still the same – it's how you focus on the game and the job in hand. We cannot get too caught up in what everyone else does at the moment and we did that well tonight. There was no nonsense. It was good, we

started bright and we carried on and got the small details right at both ends of the pitch."

Lampard argued Chelsea should be pleased to be two points above a team as talented as United with five games left. "They're a very good team," Chelsea's manager said. "I watched their game earlier. I think they have individual quality when you look across their front line and see players on 20 goals and Mason Greenwood scoring regularly and [Bruno] Fernandes and [Paul] Pogba in midfield.

"The fact we're two points ahead of them, we have to be pretty happy. We know they're going to be contesting right until the end because of the form they're in. So respect to Manchester United and others around us. At the same time, can we focus on ourselves and try and keep picking up results? That's what will be the main importance to us."

Lampard expects N'Golo Kanté to miss Tuesday's trip to Crystal Palace after the midfielder went off with a hamstring injury in the second half. "We'll have to scan tomorrow and see how bad it is," he said. "We hope it's small. That's what I've been told so far. After the scan we'll know. I'm guessing it will be a problem for Palace on Tuesday."

Lampard praised Kepa Arrizabalaga after the goalkeeper responded to criticism of his performance against West Ham by making a late save to deny Watford's Danny Welbeck. "I thought we defended pretty well when we needed to but the moment when we slipped and they got in, he makes a really good save," Lampard said. "That's what you want from your goalkeeper. You want them to stay alert and be ready to make that sort of save. It's going to be great for his confidence."

Bayern Munich win German Cup as Buffon sets Serie A appearance record



LONDON, 05 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich kept their hopes of a treble alive after beating Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 at the Olympiastadion in Berlin on Saturday to win the German Cup for the 20th time.

David Alaba gave Bayern the lead with a free-kick in the 16th minute after Robert Lewandowski was fouled at the edge of the box.

Bayern doubled the lead when Joshua Kimmich released Serge Gnabry down the right channel and the winger's uncontested shot nestled into the bottom corner for the 24-year-old's 20th goal of the season.

Lewandowski made it 3-0 when he let fly a thunderous strike from range straight at Lukas Hradecky and the Finnish goalkeeper fumbled, to give the Polish striker his 50th goal of the season in the 59th minute.

Leverkusen opened their account four minutes later when Sven Bender headed home at the far post from a corner kick but it was too little, too late as Lewandowski grabbed a second with a

chip over the keeper in the 89th minute.

There was late drama when VAR spotted a handball in the box in stoppage time to award Leverkusen a penalty. Kai Havertz's consolation strike into the top corner proved to be the final kick of the game.

In Serie A Cristiano Ronaldo finally scored with a free-kick to help Juventus beat Torino 4-1 in a match in which Gianluigi Buffon set the Serie A appearance record.

Ronaldo scored Juve's third goal to take his tally to 25 league goals this season, four behind Lazio forward Ciro Immobile who leads the Serie A goalscoring charts. It was the 46th club goal Ronaldo had scored in his career direct from a free-kick but his first in nearly two seasons with Juventus and on his 43rd attempt. He became the first Juventus player since 1961 to score 25 league goals in a season.

"We knew it wasn't going to be easy but we deserved to win," said Ronaldo. "I was waiting to score on a free-kick, I'm happy, but it's important to win regardless

of who scores. We are improving."

Paulo Dybala and Juan Cuadrado had scored in the first half before Andrea Belotti's penalty reduced the deficit. Torino defender Koffi Djidji netted an own goal late on.

The Turin derby was Buffon's 648th appearance in Italy's top flight, moving the 42-year-old keeper one ahead of the Milan great Paolo Maldini, who set the record in 2009.

"It wasn't a problem to wait for the record game: I would have waited even longer, because this is a delicate moment of the season," said Buffon. "I am well and I can still play at a good level. And if you are enthusiastic, it is right to continue. I think of the future month after month. The Champions League? It is something that buzzes in the head, having often come close."

Buffon had only a couple of saves to make before being beaten by Belotti's penalty in first-half stoppage time.

A good day for Juventus was made even better when second-placed

Lazio were beaten 3-0 at home by Milan in the evening kick-off, meaning Juve's lead is seven points with eight games remaining. Goals by Hakan Calhanoglu, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Ante Rebic sealed the points for Milan, who leapfrog Napoli into sixth place.

In Spain, Celta Vigo were held to a 1-1 draw by Real Betis after the visitors were denied a second-half penalty by VAR.

Nolito gave Celta the lead in the first half with a clever free-kick from a tight angle. Betis were awarded a penalty in the second half when Rafinha made contact with Andrés Guardado's foot as he took his shot at the edge of the box but the referee overturned the decision following a three-minute VAR review.

However, Betis were the better side and Zouhair Feddal controlled a deep cross from a set-piece play to fire home the equaliser.

Meanwhile, Real Valladolid beat Deportivo Alavés 1-0 in a mid-table clash, while Valencia drew 2-2 at Granada.

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Amid furore over monuments, Trump seeks 'garden' of US heroes

WASHINGTON, JUL 5 (AP): President Donald Trump has a vision for his second term, if he wins one, of establishing a National Garden of American Heroes that will pay tribute to some of the most prominent figures in U.S. history, a collection of the greatest Americans to ever live.

His idea, conveyed in a speech Friday night at Mount Rushmore and expanded on in an executive order, comes as elected officials and institutions are reckoning with whether it is appropriate to continue to honor people, including past presidents, who benefited from slavery or espoused racist views, with monuments or buildings and streets named after them.

The group of 30-plus features Founding Fathers and presidents, civil rights pioneers and aviation innovators, explorers and generals.

Absent from Trump's initial list are any Native American, Hispanic or Asian-American individuals. The White House and Interior Department declined to comment on how the list was assembled.

Trump on Saturday spoke glowing about his selections as an incredible group, but also noted they are just a few of the people he is considering and are subject to change. But once we make that decision, those great names are going to be up there and they're never coming down, Trump said in a speech at his "Salute for America" celebration at the White House to mark Independence Day. To be certain,



the monument is far from a done deal and Trump's plan could be dashed if presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden denies him a second term in November or Congress balks at allocating funding for the project.

Trump's list includes George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr., all already represented on or near the National Mall in Washington, along with Susan B. Anthony, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Frederick Douglass, Amelia Earhart, Billy Graham, Douglas MacArthur, Christa McAuliffe, Jackie Robinson, Betsy Ross, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington and Orville and Wilbur Wright.

But Trump also is looking to put an ideological stamp on the idea of American greatness with the inclusion of conservative stalwart Antonin Scalia, the late Supreme Court Justice.

Trump in recent weeks has repeatedly condemned the desecration and toppling of historic statues by demonstrators during protests over racial injustice and police brutality following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

We will raise the next generation of American patriots, Trump said at Mount Rushmore.

We will write the next thrilling chapter of the American adventure. And we will teach our children to know that they live in a land of legends, that nothing can stop them, and that no one can hold them down.

His executive order says the garden should open before July 4, 2024, and he leaves it up to a federal task force to make recommendations about the use of federal money and a proposed site. The order specifies a site of natural beauty that is near at least one major population center.

The order says priority should be given to

monuments to former presidents, to individuals and events relating to the discovery of America, the founding of the United States, and the abolition of slavery.

None will have lived perfect lives, but all will be worth honoring, remembering, and studying, according to the order.

The order includes language to make clear that non-U.S. citizens who played significant roles in American history also could be honored in the garden.

As examples of individuals who made substantive contributions to America's public life or otherwise had a substantive effect on America's history, it cites: Italian explorer Christopher Columbus; Junipero Serra, a Roman Catholic priest who established Spanish missions in California; and the Marquis de La Fayette, a French officer who fought in the American Revolutionary War.

A statue of Columbus, who has been criticized

for brutal treatment of Native Americans, was removed this past week from outside the city hall in Columbus, Ohio.

Last month, protesters toppled a statue of Serra in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Some historians say that Serra, who was canonized by the Catholic Church, had a mixed history that included him acting as an agent of the Spanish Empire's colonization efforts in the 18th Century.

Trump on Friday again lashed out against a left-wing cultural revolution that he says is teaching American children that the men and women who built the country "were not heroes, but that were villains.

The radical view of American history is a web of lies all perspective is removed, every virtue is obscured, every motive is twisted, every fact is distorted, and every flaw is magnified until the history is purged and the record is disfigured beyond all recognition, Trump said.

Israeli leader's son takes center stage in corruption sagas

JERUSALEM, JUL 5 (AP): As scandal-plagued Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stands trial for corruption, his 28-year-old son has emerged as a driving force in a counterattack against critics and the state institutions prosecuting the longtime Israeli leader.

A favourite of the prime minister's nationalistic base and far right leaders around the world, Yair Netanyahu has become a fixture in the news, clashing with journalists on social media, threatening lawsuits against his father's adversaries and posting online content deemed so offensive that Facebook briefly suspended his account.

In the past month alone, he has called to banish minorities from Tel Aviv, tweeted a discredited conspiracy theory that former President Barack Obama was born in Kenya and intimated that a critical Israeli broadcast journalist slept her way up to her coveted job.

But his toughest broadsides have been directed at the Israeli media, judiciary and law enforcement for conducting what he has called a leftist, ideological crusade to topple his father.

He's called for the attorney general to be investigated for his crimes, compared the police chief to fictional mob boss Tony Soprano and described investigators as the Stasi, Gestapo and the political police of the Israeli junta.

It's part of a campaign, echoed to a lesser degree by his father, that critics warn is eroding public faith in Israel's democratic institutions.

We would love to just disregard him as a curiosity, as this difficult kid who keeps embarrassing his father. But the truth is there is evidence that he is very influential, said Raviv Drucker, a well-respected investigative TV reporter and favorite target of the Netanyahu, whom both father and son recently tweeted they would like to see imprisoned.

He holds very extreme positions and it affects the prime minister's

actions. Though he holds no official position, Yair Netanyahu is considered a key adviser and the mastermind of his father's increasingly confrontational social media strategy.

Netanyahu faces charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in a series of corruption cases stemming from ties to wealthy friends. He denies the charges, which follow years of scandals swirling around the family.

For years, it was his wife, Sara, who drew most of the fire because of her extravagant tastes, misuse of state funds and alleged abuse of her staff. But recently, his eldest son has taken center stage. He's figured prominently in various scandals while earning a reputation of living a life of privilege at taxpayers' expense.

Australian billionaire James Packer, one of the figures in the prime minister's corruption indictments, reportedly gave the younger Netanyahu gifts that included stays at luxury hotels in Tel Aviv, New York and Aspen, Colorado, as well as the use of his private jet and dozens of tickets for concerts by Packer's former fiancée, Mariah Carey.

Nir Hefetz, a former Netanyahu aide turned state witness against him, told police that Yair Netanyahu was the major instigator of the bribery case against his father.

Yair Netanyahu has also sparked controversy by posting an anti-Semitic caricature aimed at his father's critics, vulgarly confronting a woman who told him to pick up after his dog at a park, and tweeting that he hoped elderly leftist protesters would die of COVID-19.

The prime minister has been forced to denounce some of his son's behavior, like a particularly lewd outing to a strip club with wealthy friends. But generally, he staunchly defends his son.

Anshel Pfeffer, a columnist for the Haaretz daily and author of a recent biography of the prime minister, said Yair

Netanyahu enables his father to test boundaries of what the public will accept.

If he goes too far, they can say it's only Yair," he said. "It gives him deniability, creates a gray area and blurs the lines on what the prime minister is saying on record.

Yair Netanyahu was only 4 when his father first became prime minister in 1996 and has grown up in the limelight. During his compulsory army service, he was assigned as a liaison to foreign media. He was once court-marshaled for taking an unauthorized furlough.

He's volunteered for local animal welfare organizations and briefly worked as a social media director for an Israeli NGO providing legal services to victims of Palestinian attacks. But he was put on leave after attacking Israel's figurehead president for advocating Jewish-Arab coexistence.

As a private citizen, Yair Netanyahu has published op-eds for Breitbart, gone on U.S. and European speaking tours and voiced support for right-wing extremists in the U.S. and Europe. He has earned their praise in return.

Supporters claim he is a victim of the same people targeting his father. But the media have largely ignored his older half-sister Noa and his younger brother Avner, an unassuming 26-year-old university student who generally keeps to himself.

Yair Netanyahu, who still lives with his parents and declined to comment, claims to have no political aspirations. In his lone interview to Israeli media, he lamented last year to the pro-Netanyahu Channel 20 about the cost his family pays for their status. He said the three years his father was out of politics in the early 2000s were their happiest ever.

My father decided to put the good life he had aside and get back into all this mud because of his calling, he said. My only political involvement is what you see on my private Facebook and Twitter.

China says Beijing's coronavirus outbreak wanes

BEIJING, JUL 5 (AP): Chinese officials have reported eight new confirmed COVID-19 cases as a recent outbreak in Beijing appears to have largely run its course.

China's capital had two new cases, the seventh straight day of single-digit increase. Authorities have confirmed 334 infections during the city's outbreak, which was detected about three weeks ago and is the largest in the country since March. No deaths have been reported.

Beijing government

spokesperson Xu Hejian said at a news conference Saturday that the situation keeps improving and is completely controllable.

The six cases outside Beijing were people arriving from abroad. Three were in Gansu province in the country's northwest.

China has reported 83,553 confirmed cases and 4,634 deaths since the pandemic began. Its case count does not include people who test positive for the coronavirus but show no symptoms.

Japan floods leave some 20 dead, many in nursing homes

TOKYO, JUL 5 (AP): Deep floodwaters and the risk of more mudslides that left about 20 people confirmed or presumed dead hampered search and rescue operations on Sunday in southern Japan, including at elderly home facilities where more than a dozen perished and scores are still stranded.

Rescue helicopters plucked more people from their homes in the Kumamoto region. Up to 10,000 defense troops, the coast guard and fire brigades are taking part in the operation.

Large areas along the Kuma River were swallowed by floodwaters with many houses, buildings and vehicles

submerged almost up to their roofs. Mudslides smashed into houses, sending people atop rooftops waiving at rescuers.

At a flooded elderly care home in Kuma Village, 14 residents were presumed dead after rescuers reached them on Saturday, officials said. Three others had hypothermia. The rescue continued Sunday for dozens of other residents and caregivers who were still at the riverside care facility Senjuen, where about 60 people were trapped when floodwaters and mud gushed in, officials said.

In Hitoyoshi City, the deluge poured into houses near the main train station.

Croats vote in close parliamentary race as virus spikes



ZAGREB, JUL 5 (AP): Amid a spike of new coronavirus cases, voters in Croatia cast ballots on Sunday in what is expected to be a close parliamentary race that could push the latest European Union member state further to the right.

The ballot is expected to produce no clear winner as neither the ruling conservatives nor their main liberal opponents appeared set to win a majority in the 151-member parliament.

This means that a newcomer right-wing party led by a popular folk singer could play a key role in the future government. Miroslav Skoro's Homeland Movement has polled third despite public outrage over some of his staunchly hard-line and nationalist views.

Skoro's party is believed to have chipped away votes from the rul-

ing Croatian Democratic Union, a conservative party that has dominated the political scene in Croatia since the independence in 1991.

The HDZ is bidding for reelection while faced with a renewed surge in virus cases that followed reopening of the country's borders and easing of lockdown rules. Croatia is struggling to salvage its main source of revenue tourism along the Adriatic Sea coast.

A country of 4.2 million people, Croatia has kept the outbreak largely under control, reporting around 113 deaths and some 3,100 confirmed infections. But Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic was criticized over an outbreak at a tennis tournament organized by top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the coastal town of Zadar.

Plenkovic's main opponents are Restart coalition led by the center-left Social Democratic Party, the main liberal group. They say the government is plagued by corruption and voters should choose a new beginning if they want the country to move forward.

Restart could also ally with a new green-left alliance further on the left, if they gain enough seats. The group led by Mozemo, or We Can, party is strong mostly in the capital Zagreb but not so much in other parts of Croatia.

Some 3.8 million people are eligible to vote but analysts say virus fears could keep many at home. Voters have been advised to take own temperature and stay away if they have a fever. Those who vote should bring their own pen and wear a mask.

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MANHATTAN BOUND! Actress Katie Holmes wore a mask amid the coronavirus pandemic as she was spotted out in NYC.

Kanye West says he's running for President in 2020 elections

LOS ANGELES, JUL 5 (PTI): Rapper Kanye West has announced that he is running for the office of President this year.

The multiple Grammy winner took to social media on country's 244th Independence Day (July 4) to share the news.

"We must now realize the promise of America by trusting God, unifying our vision and building our future. I am running for president of the United States!" West wrote on Twitter using a hashtag #2020VISION.

If he were to launch a campaign for the upcoming elections on November 3, West will go up against President Donald Trump, of whom he has been a vocal supporter, and Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden.

According to NBC, during a speech at the MTV Video Music Awards in 2015, West said he was planning on running for president in 2020.

The recording artiste also opened up about taking a political plunge as recently as November 2019.

"When I run for president in 2024, we

would've created so many jobs that I'm not going to run, I'm going to walk," he had said at an event.

The "Power" hitmaker and his wife, real-



ity TV star Kim Kardashian have often visited Trump at the White House in the last few years.

West has also often been spotted wearing the signature Trump campaign 'Make America Great Again' cap.

On his announcement, he received backing from Kardashian, who retweeted his post with an emoji of the American flag, and Tesla and SpaceX founder Elon Musk.

"You have my full support!" tweeted Musk.

Working on 'Downton Abbey' was overwhelming: Laura Carmichael



LONDON, JUL 5 (PTI): Actor Laura Carmichael says working with the likes of Hugh Bonneville on "Downton Abbey" was initially daunting as the hit period drama was her first acting job.

The 33-year-old actor, who played Lady Edith Crawley on the ITV series, said all in all she remembers the experience as an "incredible ride".

"Downton Abbey' as my first job was overwhelming. It was mad, but it was also with the kindest group of people. I grew up with them. That first

day was terrifying. "I had to do a two-hander with Hugh Bonneville and cry. I thought, 'Oh God, what am I doing?' But we got through it. We've had such an incredible ride with it," Carmichael told The Times magazine.

Her other work includes television series "Marcella" and the feature film "A United Kingdom".

She later went on to star with Bonneville, who plays Robert Crawley, in the big screen adaptation of the award-winning British drama. The

film, which released in 2019, also starred other series regulars Carmichael's partner, Michael C Fox, Michelle Dockery, Maggie Smith, Elizabeth McGovern, Allen Leech, Matthew Goode, Joanne Froggatt, among others.

Michael Engler directed the movie from series creator Julian Fellowes' script.

After the release of the film, "Downton Abbey" producer Gareth Neame said the team has a few ideas for a second film in the series if there is an "appetite".

McQuarrie says new film with Cruise will see him play 'a very un-Tom character'

LONDON, JUL 5 (PTI): Hollywood star Tom Cruise's frequent collaborator, filmmaker Christopher McQuarrie says he has an idea for a new film that features the actor in a completely different avatar.

The director, who has worked with Cruise on the "Mission: Impossible" and "Jack Reacher" franchise, said he had discussed about making an R-rated Reacher movie with the action icon following the success of "Deadpool" and "Joker".

"Tom and I were talking about, had the series continued, to take 'Reacher'

to a place where, in the post-'Deadpool', post-'Joker' world, 'Reacher' could have been an R-rated movie and an R-rated franchise and really fed into the brutality of those books. We were fully ready to lean into that.

"It's a very un-Tom character, and we have plans for an even more un-Tom character that we've been talking about, which I'm hopeful about in the future," McQuarrie told Empire magazine.

The director is currently looking forward to restarting work on "Mission: Impossible 7" which was put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Will Ferrell got to my Irish vanity: Pierce Brosnan on signing 'Eurovision'

LONDON, JUL 5 (PTI): James Bond star Pierce Brosnan says actor-comedian Will Ferrell convinced him to come on board "Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga" by playing on his "vanity".

The Irish actor, who plays Ferrell's father in the Netflix movie, said he gave his nod to the project when he saw that his character was described as "possibly the most handsome man in Iceland".

"Will Ferrell is a grand man. I adore the fella. And he's so adept at playing those middle aged men acting like children.

"My agent sent me the script one morning, and by lunchtime I said yes. My character was introduced in parenthesis as 'possibly the most handsome man in Iceland'. So Will Ferrell got to my Irish vanity," Brosnan, 67,

told The Irish Times. "Eurovision Song Contest..." is set around the long-running global singing competition of the same name.

The contest, first held in 1956, pits each participating nation from the European Broadcasting Union against one another, challenging them to write and perform an original song for a live TV and radio performance.

Ferrell and Rachel McAdams are set to play an Icelandic songwriting duo, Lars Ericksson and Sigrít Ericksdóttir. Brosnan will essay the role of Erick Ericksson, Lars' father and Demi Lovato will portray Katiana, one of the best and most angelic singers in Iceland.

David Dobkin of "Wedding Crashers" and "The Judge" fame is directing the film, penned by Ferrell and Andrew Steele.

Sushmita Sen, Ram Madhwani announce season two of 'Aarya'

MUMBAI, JUL 5 (PTI): Filmmaker Ram Madhwani has announced season two of Sushmita Sen-starrer series "Aarya" and said the second installment will see the titular character facing new obstacles.

The Disney+Hotstar series, an official remake of popular Dutch crime-drama "Penoza", revolves around Aarya Sareen, played by Sen, a happily married woman whose world turns upside down when her husband is shot.

She gets to know that he may have been involved in an illegal drug racket which now threatens her family.

The show co-created by Madhwani and Sandeep Modi marked Sen's return to the screen, a decade after her last Hindi film "No Problem".

During an Instagram live session on Saturday, Sen asked Madhwani about the future of Aarya's character and if she would get "more dangerous."

"Does she take control in season two? Let's look at like this, why is it that the audience has loved Aarya so much? It's because of what she wants: to leave the business and protect her children. She then pays the price of what she wants.

"Now in season two, what will she want... the obstacles we are going to put in her way, so that you can root for her more. Watch out for season two," Madhwani said revealing that the team is already working on an idea for the show's sophomore run.

Aarya premiered last month and was well-received for its taut narrative and effective performances. The season one also featured Chandrachud Singh, Namit Das, Manish Chaudhary and Sikander Kher.

ARIES:

Take charge of your destiny, Aries. Stop playing rookie when the Universe wants you to join the big league. This is a time of movement and transition. You have the opportunity to enter into a new dimension, one that comes with a promising position. Trust in your abilities to lead the team. Remember, the key is to empower, rather than disempower them. Your crew will be ready to move mountains when they're reminded of their potential.

TAURUS:

What if we said your words were spells that had the power to not just influence, but also direct your life? Would you speak more mindfully if you knew you were creating your reality? Something to think about when you find yourself cursing your circumstances. We're not saying that circumstances aren't chaotic. We're saying you have the power to choose how much you want to be affected by this. Redirect your energy towards the activities that make you feel good instead of repeating the never-ending story in your head. Your soul crew is ready to offer support. Make space for them.

GEMINI:

Inauthenticity is a big theme right now. But the conversation is between you and you, Gemini. Where are you being dishonest with yourself? What's keeping you from speaking your truth? Don't brush things under the carpet for the sake of maintaining peace. The more you avoid confrontation, the more things will spiral out of control. Today, you're being asked to strip down the masks. Breathe into

the fears and know that the outcome will be in your favour.

CANCER:

What happens when we give without boundaries? We go into a space of depletion ourselves, which disables us from serving ourselves or those around us. Today, you're being asked to confront the demon of codependency, and to set certain rules even with those you love. This will help you differentiate between what's yours and what's not and prevent you from getting enmeshed in somebody else's drama.

LEO:

What if the ideas we channel are not random? What if they are coming through from a higher plane of consciousness? Today, you're being asked to be present to these ideas as they're opening the gateway to what you are meant to be creating over the next six months. Leo, let 'thoughts to things' become your mantra as you go forth. Some of you might feel drawn to creative writing or other forms of communication. Forget about the rules of grammar and pen down that story. There will be plenty of time to edit the script once you're through.

VIRGO:

What happens when we focus on the feeling of not having enough? We end up giving it more power. Virgo, the cards are asking you to become aware of where you are vibrating at. The story of lack you're constantly repeating to yourself. It's time to change that poverty mindset and bring forth the energy of

abundance. You can't make drastic changes overnight, but you can take a step in the right direction—starting now! PS: The Universe is helping you manifest the life you deserve.

LIBRA:

Big manifestation energy surrounds those who are in the mood for love. What do you desire in a partner? How would you like to feel when they're around? Write the five most important qualities on paper and surrender this proposition to the Universe. Remember, to call in the energy of miracles, you must believe the mysterious forces above are co-creating with you. As such, creative projects of all kinds are taking centre stage.

SCORPIO:

"The gates of mystery stand ever ajar, and those who will may pass through into the spacious domicile of spirit." These words by Canadian-born author and mystic Manly P Hall accurately describe the inner illumination you are experiencing at this moment. Exploring the space between Spirit and Science is a major theme in the Scorpio HQ. Indulge your inner seeker. Turn to your own library for resources to delve into

SAGITTARIUS:

Having a plan of action is a good thing. It helps you focus on what's important while keeping the distractions at bay. But, how much is too much? Is your need to follow the road map becoming borderline obsessive? Replace rigidity with flow,

Sagittarius. This will help you move closer to the finish line without experiencing a burnout in the process.

CAPRICORN:

At any point of time, you have two options: to complain about what's on your plate or work that to-do list with a smile. If the signs are anything to go by, you're going to be adopting that sunny disposition as your signature style. So, redirect your attention to what's good in your life, Capricorn. Trust that this will give the good power to grow manifolds. Wellness is also going to be a big theme. But it's not about following fad diets

AQUARIUS:

Aquarius, you're the perfect expression of heaven and earth, made of both stardust and soil. Today, the cards are asking you to worship the sensual and the spiritual aspects of your personality, and celebrate who you are minus the guilt and shame that has been tainting the beautiful canvas of your life. The portal of bliss doesn't lie outside of you. It can be accessed by honouring your own body temple.

PISCES:

Big manifestation energy surrounds Pisceans who are in the mood for love. We are talking about a deep, soulful connection, the kind that gets written about. Open your heart and allow yourself to receive the love that has always been yours. For coupled Pisceans, this is a time of deepening your intimacy and commitment. Tell your partner exactly how you feel knowing that these feelings will be reciprocated by them.