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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM chairs introductory session with GMC councillors



GANGTOK, 04 MAY [IPR]: A short introductory programme was held with the newly elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Councillors adhering to the strict Covid protocols at Samman Bhawan, in the capital, today.

At the outset, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang paid his respects on the untimely demise of Late Raju Tamang who was recently elected as the Councillor from Arithang-II ward and expressed his solace to the family and friends of the departed soul.

The Chief Minister congratulated the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Councillors on being handed the charge to lead and guide the public and assist in the upliftment of society.

He also acknowledged the Councillors for their collective support and belief in the selection process of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The non-partisan based election system has laid the foundation for aspiring future leaders to independently contest based on their ability and will to serve the

people.

Highlighting the ideologies of women empowerment and upliftment of women in the state, the Chief Minister reiterated that more than 50% of the seats were reserved for women candidates with the liberty to contest on the remaining.

He also mentioned the State government's intention to relentlessly work towards women empowerment and safety, and provide an impartial and congenial environment for them.

He also stated that the Government is committed to promoting the women, safeguarding their rights and supporting them in their endeavours.

The Chief Minister urged the Councillors to be people-centric and soft-spoken and work as a team to achieve their outcome, as their goal remains the same, that is the welfare of the society.

He especially appealed to them to be sensible and compassionate towards the needy and always be available to help them.

Sikkim's Covid death-toll goes past 150; Daily cases stay above 230

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 MAY: With both the VRD Labs in the State returning to testing after a Sunday break, daily cases today returned to the above-200 mark they have settled into in Covid-19's second wave. As per the daily Covid Chart released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department, 230 new cases of novel coronavirus were detected in the last 24 hours [as of 8AM 04 May] taking the state's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to 8,698.

As per the chart, one more death was recorded in the State during the same 24 hours, taking the State's official death toll to 151. This passing away of a Covid-positive person was reported from Rangpo PHC, it is informed.

Sources at the STNM Hospital also inform that there were more fatalities in the Covid Ward of the hospital later in the

evening, but these will be officially communicated and confirmed in the Covid Chart tomorrow.

Meanwhile, there are now 1,930 active cases of coronavirus in Sikkim. Of these, 10 patients are admitted in the ICU facility of STNM Hospital. As for hospitalisation, 29 more Covid-positive people were admitted to hospital today after developing symptoms requiring medical intervention. While 15 of them were admitted into CRH-Tadong, 12 were admitted to STNM Hospital and two at Namchi District Hospital.

There are currently 160 Covid patients in hospital at present, 106 of them at STNM Hospital, 45 at CRH-Tadong and nine at Namchi District Hospital.

There are also 1,610 Covid-positive people in home isolation across the State at present.

Of the 230 new cases, 186 were detected in East District, 17 in West



District, 19 in South District and eight in North Sikkim.

The new cases were picked up from the 799 samples tested on Monday - 174 were detected

in RT-PCR testing of 645 samples, three in CB-NAAT of five samples and 53 in rapid antigen testing of 149 samples.

On the other hand, 22 more persons were

released from the home isolation after completing their isolation period and with this the figure of recovered cases of COVID-19 in Sikkim stands at 6,426.

Coordination meeting reviews Mangan's COVID-19 situation



MANGAN, 04 MAY [IPR]: A coordination meeting was held at the conference hall to review the situation of COVID-19 at Mangan headquarters today.

The meeting was chaired by DC (North), Tenzing T Kaleon in the presence of Additional Political Secretary to CM (North), Tshering Wangyal Bhutia, SP (North), Ongmu Bhutia, CMO (North), Tempo T Kaleon and HODs from various line departments.

DC (North) briefed the gathering about the current scenario of COVID-19 and the preparedness in handling the pandemic by the District Administration.

He said that 9 beds are available for Covid patients in North District Hospital and in case of rise in the district, Zilla Bhawan Mangan has been converted into a Covid Care Centre.

There are 60-70 beds available at Zilla Bhawan and DPO (Zilla) has been appointed in charge of Zilla Bhawan covid care centre. Transit guest house will be another covid care centre and DFO (North) will be in charge. Forest guest house will be the care centre for Dzongu area if and when required.

All primary health centres have been marked out as isolation centres. Phodong Secondary School and Chungthang guest house will be covid care centres for their respective areas.

Singhik Secondary school hostel and Mangan Senior Secondary School Auditorium will be paid quarantine centres.

At present, 85 beds for Covid patients are available in the District. All the SDMs and BDOs have been instructed to monitor for Covid cases.

All the Government Officers and Employees have been directed to be available and on duty in case of any emergency regarding COVID-19.

PHE Department has been assigned to take care of water supply for the care centres and for Quarantine centres. Lastly, he added that North District Administration will start a helpline number for any enquiry.

CMO (North) briefed the meeting about COVID-19 cases in North District. The total number of positive cases in North District is 90 with 59 active cases and 42 people in home isolation.

Currently there are 10 Covid patients in the District Hospital Mangan and seven from the district have been referred and admitted at STNM Hospital and CRH-Tadong.

There are 163 under home quarantine. There are 2 ICU beds and 5 ventilators available in the district, he informed, based on the data and figures from 01 Jan till 03 May, 2021.

SP-North urged every government officer and public to avoid unnecessary use of vehicles in North District, unless for emergency reasons. She also requested everyone to follow the new guidelines notified by the state government.

Police Department will also conduct miking in various areas of the district for awareness of new SOPs notified by the State government, she said.

Additional Political Secretary to CM (North) suggested that Lall bazar vendors would operate on alternate days, to avoid rush and to prevent Community spread.

COVID-19 protocols and SOPs were maintained during the meeting.

COVID-19 HELPLINE NUMBERS FOR THE STATE OF SIKKIM

STATE- (03592) - 201145 / 205256 / 220070, 1070

EAST DISTRICT - (03592) - 204995

WEST DISTRICT - 8768664356 / 9635054731

SOUTH DISTRICT - 9339624796 / 9564226981 / 8653456458

NORTH DISTRICT - 9635833880 / 9635833888

Issued by - Secretary, State Level Covid-19 Management Group, Government of Sikkim.

2,417 more vaccinations on Tuesday

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 MAY:

The 56 vaccination sites open across the State today administered a total of 2,417 vaccine doses today, the CoWIN website informs. With this, the number of doses administered in Sikkim now stands at 2,10,281.

Of this total number, 47,615 people have completed their vaccine schedule having received both shots of Covishield while 1,62,666 have already received their first shot.

Today, East Sikkim led in the number of vaccines jabbed at 1,676 while North Sikkim, for some reason, went for a second consecutive day without any vaccines being administered. In West Sikkim, 604 vaccine shots were administered while in South district, 137 people received the vaccine today.

When it comes to the above-60 population, 53,397 vaccine doses have been administered to that section of the society while 89,208 vaccine shots have been received by those in the 45-60 age-group.

Nell Bahadur Chettri is the new Gangtok Mayor



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 MAY:

Nell Bahadur Chettri, the councillor representing Burtuk ward in Gangtok Municipal Corporation, was today elected Mayor for Gangtok during the election and swearing-in ceremony of the 18 newly elected Councillors held at the Conference Hall of Gangtok Municipal Corporation today.

Similarly, Tshering Palden Bhutia from Development Area ward was elected Deputy Mayor.

Mr Chettri's election as Mayor comes in the

wake of the councillors electing Lower Sichey councillor, Kala Rai, as Mayor on Monday only for her to reject the post since it was only for half a term. The councillors, as per their original resolution, had elected Ms Rai to the post for a two and a half year term, something she rejected via a Facebook post as "insulting" since the conditional election was not based on any precedence or provision of the law.

Today, District Magistrate, East, as the Presiding Officer of the swearing-in-ceremony, Ragul K, administered the oath

of office to the 18 newly elected Councillors in the presence of Secretary UDD, Sarala Rai, Additional District Collector (HQ), Hemant Rai, Commissioner GMC, Hem Kumar Chettri and the officials of GMC. A total of 17 Councillors were present during the programme, wherein one Councillor Ms Kala Rai had joined virtually.

Earlier, a two-minute silence was observed in the memory of Arithang-II councillor Raju Tamang who passed away recently.

It was also informed that the election for the

post of five Executive Members of GMC will take place in the second meeting of GMC.

Similarly, the swearing-in-ceremonies of the 10 Councillors of Singtam Nagar Panchayat and Rangpo Nagar Panchayat were also conducted at the Community Hall, Singtam.

ADC East cum AMERO for Singtam and Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, Tushar G Nihare administered the oath of affirmation to the newly elected Councillors of Singtam Nagar Panchayat and Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, respectively. Suresh Kr Tamang

from Chisopani ward was unanimously elected as the Municipal President and Bindhya Subba from Mandir Line ward as Municipal Vice President of Singtam Nagar Panchayat. Likewise, Sanjeev Kumar Khatri from Mandi Bazar ward was elected as the Municipal President and Radha Pradhan from Mining ward as the Municipal Vice President of Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, respectively. The elections were conducted as per reservation of seats in Singtam and Rangpo Nagar Panchayat duly notified vide notification of UDD.

Gyalshing Nagar Panchayats take oath of office, Devendra Psd Sharma is GNP President

GYALSHING, 04 MAY [IPR]: Complying with the Covid-19 protocols, the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected members of Gyalshing Nagar Panchayat was conducted on virtual mode today.

District Collector West, Karma R Bonpo, administered the oath to the five elected members: Kyong-sa ward- Rinzing Bhutia, Byadong ward- Praveen Darjee, Nayabazaar ward- Laki Doma Bhutia, Central Gyalshing ward- Khina Maya Tiwari, New Gyalshing ward- Devendra Prasad Sharma.

Similarly, District Collector dictated the oath to all the elected members and asked to submit the oath letter after finishing formalities, which will be given to all the elected members today itself.

District Collector also nominated the President and Vice-president of Gyalshing Nagar Pan-



chayat in the consent of all five elected members. This is followed as the President, Devendra Prasad Sharma and the Vice-president, Laki

Doma Bhutia.

Later, District Collector West, congratulated all and expressed the reason of doing oath taking ceremony virtually.

198 new cases take Mizoram's COVID-19 tally to 6,556

AIZAWL, MAY 4 (PTI): At least 198 people, including 24 security personnel, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, pushing the tally in the northeastern state to 6,556, an official said on Tuesday.

Of the fresh cases, 148 were reported from Aizawl district, followed by Siaha at 31, Kolasib at nine, Lunglei at four, Serchhip and Saitual at two each, Mamit and Lawngtlai at one each.

As many as 120 new cases were detected through Rapid Antigen Test, 76 through RT-PCR and two through TrueNat method, the official aid.

Twenty-two Central Reserve Police Force per-

sonnel, two Border Security Force jawans and four health workers are among the new patients, he said

Forty-three fresh COVID-19 patients have travel history, and others were detected during contact tracing.

Mizoram now has 1,427 active cases, while 5,112 people have recovered from the virus and 17 died.

The state has so far conducted 3,13,575 sample tests, including 3,517 on Monday.

State immunisation officer Dr Lalzawmi said that 2,13,526 people have been inoculated till Monday, with 46,231 of them having received both doses of the vaccine.

The government had imposed a lockdown in Aizawl and other district headquarters from Monday and issued fresh guidelines regarding the restrictions.

The lockdown will remain in force till 4 am on May 11.

The night curfew has been imposed between 7 pm and 4 am in all district headquarters during the period, it said.

Places of worship, educational institutes, parks, picnic spots, gymnasiums, community halls, restaurants and shopping malls will remain closed in the state capital and the district headquarters during the lockdown, the order said.

Norkit Lepcha is Mangan Nagar Panchayat president



Mangan, 04 May [IPR]:

The oath-taking ceremony of the five newly elected councillors of Mangan Nagar Panchayat took place in the District Collector's office in the presence of DC-North, who is also the Municipal Returning Officer, at

Mangan today.

Norkit Lepcha has been elected President of Mangan Nagar Panchayat (UR, W) and Ugen Palzor Kazi has been elected Vice President (ST).

COVID-19 protocols and SOPs were followed during the event.

ULB reps of South Sikkim take office



BIKASH CHETTRI NAMCHI, 04 MAY:

Ganesh Rai, the councillor representing Upper Singhithang in the Namchi Municipal Council, was today chosen by his fellow councillors to head the urban local body as the Chairperson. He will be assisted by Sabitri Tamang, elected

from Upper Boomtar, as Vice-Chairperson, and Nima Choden Lepcha, representing Gangyap, as Member Executive Authority.

The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected councillors of Namchi Municipal Council and Nayabazar Jorethang Nagar Panchayat took

place at the District Administrative Centre here today.

Nayabazar Jorethang Nagar Panchayat will have Pabitra Kumar Sharma, elected from Daragaon, and Manjari Rai from Trikaleshwar Ward as President and Vice-President.

Israel's Netanyahu faces midnight deadline to form coalition

JERUSALEM (AP): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a midnight deadline on Tuesday to put together a new coalition government — or be looking at the possibility of leading his Likud party into the opposition for the first time in 12 years.

Netanyahu has struggled to secure a parliamentary majority since March 23 — when elections ended in deadlock for the fourth consecutive time in the past two years. Despite repeated meetings with many of his rivals and unprecedented outreach to the leader of a small Islamist Arab party, Netanyahu has not been able to close a deal during a four-week window.

That window was to expire at midnight, at which point the matter returns to President Reuven Rivlin in the absence of an agreement.

A failure to reach a deal would not immediately push Netanyahu out of office.

Rivlin could give him

an additional two weeks to form a coalition. He could give one of Netanyahu's opponents an opportunity to form a government, or in a final move of desperation, send the matter straight to parliament.

That would give lawmakers a chance to choose one of their own as a prime minister. If all options fail, the country would face another election this fall, meaning months of continued political paralysis.

In the March 23 election, Netanyahu's Likud emerged as the largest single party, with 30 seats in the 120-member parliament. But to form a government, he needs to have the support of a 61-seat majority.

That task has been complicated in large part by members of his own religious and nationalist base.

The New Hope party, led by a former Netanyahu aide, refuses to serve under the prime minister because of deep personal differences. Religious Zionism, a far-right party that espouses an openly racist platform, supports Netanyahu but has ruled out serving in a government with the Arab partners he has courted. Yamina, another right-wing party led by a former Netanyahu aide, has refused to commit to either him or his opponents.

On Monday, Netanyahu said he had offered the head of Yamina, Naftali Bennett, the chance to share the job of prime minister in a rotation, with Bennett holding the post for the first year.

Bennett responded: "I never asked Netanyahu to be prime minister. I asked to form a government. Unfortunately, he does not have that."

Looming over Netanyahu has been his ongoing corruption trial. Netanyahu has been charged with fraud, breach of trust and bribery in a series of scandals. The trial has moved into the witness phase, with embarrassing testimony accusing

him of trading favors with a powerful media mogul. Netanyahu denies the charges.

In recent days, he has appeared increasingly frustrated, coddling potential partners one day and then lashing out at them with vitriol the next. Last week's deadly stampede at a religious festival, in which 45 ultra-Orthodox Jews were killed, has only complicated his task by creating an unwelcome diversion and calls for an official investigation into possible negligence on his watch.

Netanyahu's opponents, meanwhile, have been holding meetings of their own in an effort to cobble together a possible alternative government.

Netanyahu has also suffered a series of embarrassing — and uncharacteristic — defeats in parliament.

Earlier this month his opponents gained control of the powerful Arrangements Committee, which controls the legis-

lative agenda until a new government is formed. Last week, he was forced to abandon his appointment of a crony as the interim justice minister, just before the Supreme Court appeared set to strike down the move.

Despite all of Netanyahu's vulnerabilities, it remains unclear whether his opponents can form an alternative government. The opposition includes a vast spectrum of parties that have little in common except for their animosity toward Netanyahu.

If Netanyahu fails to put together a coalition by midnight, he will do his utmost to prevent his opponents from reaching an agreement in the coming weeks.

That would keep him in office until the next election, allowing him to battle his corruption charges from the perch of the prime minister's office and giving him yet another chance to win a new term, along with possible immunity from prosecution.

Washington prisons to resume in-person visits

OLYMPIA, WASH. (AP): In-person visits will soon resume at Washington state correctional facilities, the state Department of Corrections announced Monday.

The state suspended all visitations at correctional facilities on March 13, 2020 due to COVID-19, so it's been over a year since in-person visits were allowed, the Bellingham Herald reported.

"With the number of vaccinations rising, the department has finalized months of planning for operations to safely reopen structured in-person visitation," a Corrections press release said.

Approved visitors — those who have gone through the process to get on an incarcerated person's "Approved Visitor List" — can now submit an appointment request form online. Visits are scheduled to start May 9, which is Mother's Day.

One-hour visits with people 16 years old or older will be allowed once per month, and visitors will need to pass a COVID-19 screening.

Visits will be scheduled by cohort, with incarcerated people grouped based on living units and programs, as an outbreak mitigation

strategy, according to the DOC. Visiting stations will be sanitized between visits and visits won't be allowed at facilities "under outbreak status."

"The pandemic has been hard on many people, including family members — spouses, parents, and children — of our incarcerated individuals who have not been able to visit in person for over a year," said Deputy Secretary Julie Martin in a statement. "We're eager to reopen visitation safely to protect visitors, incarcerated individuals and staff, especially on Mother's Day."

"Let down by management": Air India pilots demand vaccine, threaten strike

NEW DELHI, 04 MAY [NDTV]: The pilots of Air India have threatened strike if pan-India vaccination camps are not held for them. In a letter to the management today they have questioned why they were excluded from the vaccination camps for 18-45-year age group held by the management.

The vaccine camps at a few bases, they said, were held for employees doing desk jobs and the majority opting to work from home.

Accusing the top

management of making a "mockery of pilots discharging their duties in a risky environment", the pilots said they have gone "above and beyond during this pandemic, risking life and limb to ensure our citizens' well-being".

The pilots said they feel "let down by the self-serving approach" of the management which only handed them "a massive discriminatory pay cut" in return for their services.

Air India has been operating flights since the lockdown was partially

lifted last year, bringing in Indian nationals stranded abroad during the pandemic. They also ferried supplies of medication and hospital equipment, including PPE kits and other items -- to remote corners of the country.

The pilots said the disease has taken a toll on them too.

"Many crew have been diagnosed Covid positive and are struggling to get oxygen cylinders. We are left to fend for ourselves for hospitalisation," their letter read.

Paris Hilton Sets the Record Straight on the "Truth" About Her "Stop Being Poor" Shirt

For years, Paris Hilton has been maligned for wearing her "Stop Being Poor" shirt, so she took to social media on May 3 to offer her side of the story.

Paris Hilton is clearing the air about a certain shirt that she never actually owned.

Years ago, a photo made the rounds online of the star rocking a sleeveless top that appeared to read, "Stop Being Poor." But on Monday, May 3, she took to TikTok to confirm she never really wore such a top, as it was all the result of a sly Photoshop user.

"So there's this photo online of me—I'm sure you've seen it," Paris, 40, said in the new footage. "I never wore that shirt. This was completely photoshopped. Everyone thinks it's real, but that's not the truth."



She then shared what she maintained is an actual pic of herself, revealing that a choice word is different. "This is what it really said: 'Stop Being Desperate,'" Paris continued. "Don't believe everything you read."

This is certainly not the first time that this explanation has been

shared. As widely reported by a number of media outlets, Paris was indeed photographed in the "Stop Being Desperate" shirt at a Las Vegas event in April 2005, and an image was later doctored to appear she was making a comment on socioeconomic differences.

Her TikTok video isn't

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COVID-19 tally in India crosses 2-crore mark

NEW DELHI, MAY 4 (PTI): India's total tally of COVID-19 cases crossed the 2-crore mark with over 50 lakh infections being added in just 15 days.

The total tally of coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 2,02,82,833 with 3,57,229 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll increased to 2,22,408 with 3,449 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

India's total COVID-19 infections had surpassed the one-crore

mark on December 19 after which it took 107 days to reach 1.25 crore on April 5. However, it only took 15 days for the cases to cross the 1.50 mark.

Registering a steady increase, the active cases have increased to 34,47,133 comprising 17 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 81.91 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,66,13,292,

while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.10 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 23, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of 1.50 crore on April 19.

According to the

ICMR, 29,33,10,779 samples have been tested up to May 3 with 16,63,742 samples being tested on Monday.

The 3,449 new fatalities include 567 from Maharashtra, 448 from Delhi, 285 from Uttar Pradesh, 266 from Chhattisgarh, 239 from Karnataka, 155 from Punjab, 154 from Rajasthan, 140 each from Gujarat and Haryana, 129 from Jharkhand, 128 from Uttarakhand and 122 from Tamil Nadu.

A total of 2,22,408 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 70,851 from

Maharashtra, 17,414 from Delhi, 16,250 from Karnataka, 14,468 from Tamil Nadu, 13,447 from Uttar Pradesh, 11,637 from West Bengal, 9,472 from Punjab and 9,275 from Chhattisgarh.

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

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

Bengal reports 17,501 fresh COVID cases, 98 new deaths

KOLKATA, MAY 3 (PTI):

West Bengal's COVID-19 tally went up to 8,80,894 on Monday after 17,501 more people tested positive for the virus, while Kolkata reported its highest one-day spike of 3,990 cases, the health department said in a bulletin.

It said that 98 fresh fatalities took the death toll to 11,637.

In the last 24 hours, 15,937 recoveries have been registered in West Bengal, taking the total number of cured people to

7,49,296.

The number of active cases now is 1,19,961, the bulletin said.

Of the new deaths, 23 were reported from North 24 Parganas district and 21 from Kolkata. The remaining casualties were registered in several other districts of the state.

Out of the 98 deaths, 36 were due to comorbidities where COVID-19 was incidental.

The fresh positive cases included 3,965 from North 24 Par-

ganas and 962 from South 24 Parganas district, besides 3,990 from the city.

Since Sunday, at least 55,287 samples were tested for COVID-19, taking the total number of such tests to 1,06,00,346, the bulletin said.

Meanwhile, 1,74,559 people were inoculated and two minor AEFI (adverse event following immunisation) cases were reported on Monday, an official of the health department said.

Staggered office hours, 50 per cent attendance till may-end: Centre To All Departments

NEW DELHI, 04 MAY

[PTI]: All central government departments will continue with staggered office hours and 50 percent attendance of Under Secretary and below level employees till this month-end as the COVID situation has not improved to a desirable level, according to a Personnel Ministry order.

It said the guidelines announced last month for government establishments in the wake of a fresh surge in COVID-19

cases will remain effective during this period.

"Since the situation has not yet improved to a desirable level, it has been decided with the approval of competent authority, that the validity of the OM (official memorandum issued in April) may be extended up to May 31, 2021," it said in an order issued to all central government departments.

The Personnel Ministry cited its last month's order that said "physical

attendance of the officers of the level of Under Secretary or equivalent and below to be restricted to 50 percent of the actual strength".

It had said that all officers of the level of Deputy Secretary, equivalent and above are to attend office on a regular basis.

The officers/staff shall follow staggered timings -- 9 AM to 5.30 PM, 9.30 AM to 6 PM and 10 AM to 6.30 PM -- to avoid overcrowding in offices, the order had said.

The persons with disabilities and pregnant women employees may be exempted from attending office, but they shall continue to work from home, until further orders, it had said.

All officials who attend office shall strictly follow COVID-19-appropriate behaviour including wearing a mask, physical distancing, use of sanitiser and frequent handwashing with soap and water, the order had said.

India's total tally of COVID-19 cases crossed the 2-crore mark with over 50 lakh infections being added in just 15 days.

The total tally of coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 2,02,82,833 with 3,57,229 new infections being reported in a day, while the number of deaths increased to 2,22,408 with 3,449 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday morning.

Assam revises night curfew timings, imposes restrictions on movement

GUWAHATI, 04 MAY

[NDTV]: The Assam government on Tuesday advanced the night curfew to 6 pm from the current 8 pm with restrictions imposed on the movement of people at public places from Wednesday, to contain the surge of COVID-19 cases.

Chief Secretary Jishnu Baruah who is also the Chairperson of Assam State Disaster Authority issued the order after reviewing the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the state.

He directed that total restrictions from 6 pm to 5 am be imposed with District Magistrates and Commissioner of Police, Guwahati to issue or-

ders under Cr.PC (Section 144) to the same effect.

The order will come into effect from Wednesday and remain in force till further orders.

Night curfew was imposed on April 27 till May one and on April 30, it was further extended to May seven.

All shops and commercial establishments shall shut down at 2 pm on all days and no meeting/gathering at any open or closed spaces shall be allowed.

All offices both private and government shall shut down at 2 pm on all days and this will not be applicable for organizations rendering essential and emergency

services, law enforcing services and election work.

No meeting/gathering at any open or closed spaces shall be allowed, and for marriages, only the religious part will be allowed with a presence of maximum of 20 persons with no reception parties allowed before or after the marriage.

At all religious places, congregation of not more than five persons shall be allowed at any time.

Restaurants, dhabas and other eateries can entertain dine-in guests only up to 2 pm. Take-away including home delivery of food is allowed till 6 pm after which only

home delivery of food will be allowed.

Restaurants operating within a hotel or resort can allow outside guests up to 2 pm only though in-house guests may be allowed to dine-in up to the usual time of operation.

Delivery of essential goods through e-commerce may continue with observance of COVID appropriate behaviour.

Cold storages and warehouses may continue after 2 pm.

However, sale counters, showrooms, etc, attached to these warehouses or cold storages shall not operate after 2 pm.

District Magistrates

will declare an area or a city or district or well defined parts thereof as containment zones if the test positivity of COVID-19 in such areas reaches 10 per cent or more in the last one week or bed occupancy either oxygen supported or ICU beds crosses 60 per cent.

In the event of declaration of containment zones, the district administrations have been directed to enforce strict restrictions as per directives issued by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on April 25, 2021.

Court recalls order over Covid facility for lawyers after wrong statement

NEW DELHI, 04 MAY

[PTI]: The Delhi High Court today took strong note of a wrong statement made by an advocate without any authority on the basis of which a judicial order was passed relating to a plea to provide COVID-19 medical facilities to lawyers.

The high court cautioned the advocate about such conduct in future and said it was dismayed that he appeared in the matter without any authority and made a statement.

It recalled its order passed on Monday asking a non-operational private hospital to handover its keys to the Bar Council of Delhi (BCD) to inspect and make necessary arrangements for making it functional for providing COVID Care facilities to lawyers and their families.

During the hearing yesterday, advocate Yashvardhan S Soam claimed that he was representing Rockland Hospital in Dwarka and offered

to handover keys of the non-operational institute to Bar Council of Delhi to inspect and make necessary arrangements for making it functional for providing COVID Care facilities to lawyers and their families.

However, on Tuesday, an application was filed on behalf of the hospital, which is now known as Medeor Hospital after being taken over by another entity in 2016, submitting that advocate Soam had no authority to appear on behalf of the hospital.

Advocates Abhishek Singh and Prateek Singh, representing Medeor Hospital, said they are seeking modification of the May 3 order as the other lawyer had misrepresented the hospital and made a false statement on their behalf.

Allowing the plea, the high court recalled its May 3 order to the extent that it asked the hospital to handover keys to BCD

chairman and senior advocate Ramesh Gupta.

"Advocate Soam who appeared for Rockland Hospital (on May 3) went on to say he had keys and will handover to BCD Chairman Ramesh Gupta. Now it has been transpired that he had no authority to state so or offer the keys to Gupta. We are dismayed that without any authority lawyer appears and makes such a statement. We have cautioned him not to indulge in such conduct in future," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said.

When Yashvardhan Soam tried to explain his conduct, the court questioned him saying how can he make a statement without any authority and that he should not have done so.

During the hearing, senior advocate Rahul Mehra for the Delhi government, said on Monday evening he got to know that this young lawyer

had no authority to make the statement.

He said people are just coming here in the hearing without authority and are making any statement.

The court was hearing a petition by advocate Manoj Kumar Singh, represented through senior advocate Ramesh Gupta, seeking appropriate direction for setting up COVID health facility for the exclusive use by advocates registered with BCD and their family members.

He said he has again requested the Delhi government to attach the guest house, shortlisted by the lawyers, with a hospital having ICU hospitals.

He said BCD has the arrangement of medical and paramedic staff, medicines and ambulances and has also acquired 100 cylinders and they only require Delhi government's help in refilling oxygen in them.



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
(SNT DIVISION)**

DATE CORRIGENDUM

RO. NO:31/IPR/PUB/CLASSI/21-22,Dated:- 20.04.2021
Name: VEHICLE AUCTION NOTICE

Terms & condition vide SL Nos. 4&5,the date of opening of tenders for condemned Govt. Vehicles has been fixed on 4th June 2021 instead of 12th May 2021 and last date of submission of tender forms postponed to 3rd June 2021 instead of 11th May 2021,due to present pandemic situation.

*Deputy General Manager(Mech)
Central Traffic Workshop, SNT Division,
Transport Department*

R.O. No. 44/IPR/Pub./Classi./21-22 Date: . 04.05.2021



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Secretariat Annexure – I, Sonam Tshering Marg Gangtok, Sikkim**

Notice Inviting Tender for "Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Servers, Server Operating Systems & tablets and Maintenance for a period of 5 (Five) Years" for implementation of e-Cabinet Project.

Department of Information Technology, Government of Sikkim invites Tenders for "Supply, Installation & commissioning of Servers, Server Operating Systems & Tablets and Maintenance for a period of 5 (five) years" for the implementation of e-Cabinet Project. The last date of receipt of Tender is 17th May 2021. For further details please visit www.sikkim.gov.in.

*Sd/-
Additional Director
Department of Information technology
Government of Sikkim*

R.O. No. 37/IPR/Pub./Classi./21-22 Date: . 26.04.2021



**SIR THOTUB NAMGYAL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
GANGTOK SIKKIM 737101
WALK IN INTERVIEW**

A walk-in interview will be held for local eligible candidates for filling up two (2) post of Laboratory Technician on contractual basis under the project "Establishment of Network Of Research Laboratories for Managing Epidemics and Natural Calamities" in the Dept. of Microbiology STNM Hospital Gangtok.

Details of the Post is as furnished under:

Sl no	Name of post	No of post	Essential qualification	Preferential qualification	Monthly emolument
1.	Laboratory technician	02	Intermediate/12 th pass in science stream with two-year Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technician from recognized Institute	Experiencein working in a Microbiology Laboratory	Rs. 18,000/-

The following documents (attested by the competent authority) should be submitted on the day of the interview

1. Age proof: birth certificate/Class X mark sheet
2. Degree certificates of Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technician (DMLT)
3. Sikkim Subject/Certificate of identification
4. Employment card (renewed) in case of unemployed candidate.
5. No objection Certificate (NOC) in case of in-service candidate
6. Two recent passport size photos

No TA/DA will be admissible for attending the interview.

Date: 18th May 2021 (Tuesday)
Reporting Time: 9:30 AM
Venue: Seminar Hall, Department of Medicine, 4th Floor, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, Gangtok.

**Principal Investigator
VDL Network (ICMR Project)
Department of Microbiology
STNM Hospital, Gangtok**

**RO NO. 43/IPR/Pub/Classi./2021-22
Date. 03.05.2021**

Police + Public or Police vrs Public?

Get this relationship worked out and many things will fall in place

Well-meaning cops have been spotted scolding solitary labourers because their masks have slipped. What has also been seen often is a troop of cops descend on people outdoors with challan books and demanding Rs 300 per slipped mask. Where one episode shows khakhi that is concerned, the other, which is the more common experience, has them playing to a stereotype in which the police sees everyone else as a criminal and engages with them as they would with people in contravention with the law. Given that we are in the midst of a pandemic, a health emergency, and the law & order approach is not the best prescription.

Cops, who see themselves the world over as the custodians of law & order and personnel ensuring security for the people, have rarely invoked confidence as such, and of late, have found themselves at the receiving end of rebuke from the very public they are paid to protect. While such a situation would visit only rarely in the past, it has become worryingly frequent of late, everywhere – from the streets of Gangtok, to the suburbs in USA, to the Assam-Nagaland border villages. Policing is increasingly, and not always without reason, attracting allegations of atrocities and excessive use of force.

People are the most comfortable when cops are in the background, it is when police presence is overt and overpowering that public responses can turn hostile. Even if not hostile, then at least discomfiting and uncomfortable. Overt and overpowering are not always about sheer numbers and can also manifest through attitudes, and no one will contest that cops tend to swagger around with an overbearing air. While people let this slide during “normal” times, when a situation turns tense, the backlash can be strong. Sikkim saw this in how the college situation collapsed and the nation witnesses this in the continuing trouble along the Assam-Nagaland border. Listen to the debates and discussion around the public-police confrontation at Ferguson in distant USA, and one will notice many echoes of the emotions and situations seen here as well. Agreed, the severity of the situation and the history of atrocity, perceived or otherwise, is much deeper there than here. Returning then to the point that people are most comfortable when cops are in the background, one realises that this is not always the case and sometimes not even possible, neither in Sikkim, nor anywhere else in the world any more. Khaki meanwhile ends up inspiring more discomfort than security because just about every business activity operates on the borderline of legality, not only in Sikkim, but in most parts of the country.

The police, which is authorized to investigate and take cognizance of misdemeanors makes people uncomfortable because the moment the cops start digging, something ‘illegal’ will turn up. There was a time not so long ago when a police raid ran from MG Marg to Ranipool early in the morning to ‘nab’ people dumping waste at unauthorized locations. Perhaps in the over-zealousness, but most probably because they were not even briefed properly, the constables “arrested” even people who were waiting by the roadside waiting for the garbage truck to arrive.

The point being made here is the force is in desperate need to be trained and briefed better. Police wields enormous powers, there was never any doubt of that, and clearly shoulders enormous responsibilities as well; it is thus in its interest, and more so in public interest, for the personnel to be better trained and routinely briefed about their role in society. Closer community participation in the managing of neighbourhood outposts and police stations is perhaps an involvement which can now be taken up formally and at an official level so that the police and public learn to work together instead of, what is increasingly becoming against each other.

Indians are forced to change rituals for their dead as COVID-19 rages through cities and villages

NATASHA MIKLES

THECONVERSATION.COM

In the past several weeks, the world has looked on in horror as the coronavirus rages across India. With hospitals running out of beds, oxygen and medicines, the official daily death toll has averaged around 3,000. Many claim that number could be an undercount; crematoriums and cemeteries have run out of space.

The majority of India's population are Hindu, who favor cremation as a way of disposing of the body. But the Muslim population, which is close to 15%, favors burying its dead.

Generally, tradition holds that the body is to be cremated or buried as quickly as possible – within 24 hours for Hindus, Jains and Muslims, and within three days for Sikhs. This need for rapid disposal has also contributed to the current crisis.

Hundreds of families want their loved ones' bodies cared for as quickly as possible, but there is a shortage of people who can do the funerals and last rites. This has led to a situation where people are paying bribes in order to get space or a furnace for cremation. There are also reports of physical fights, and intimidation.

As a scholar interested in the ways Asian societies tell stories about the afterlife and prepare the deceased for it, I argue that the coronavirus crisis represents an unprecedented cultural cataclysm that has forced the Indian culture to challenge the way it handles its dead.

CREMATION GROUNDS AND COLONIAL RULE

Many Americans think of cremation happening within an enclosed, mechanized structure, but most Indian crematoriums, known as “shmathana” in Hindi, are open-air spaces with dozens of brick-and-mortar platforms upon which a body can be burned on a pyre made of wood.

Hindus and Sikhs will dispose of the remaining ashes in a river. Many shmathana are therefore built near the banks of a river to allow for easy access, but many well-off families often travel to a sacred city along the banks of the river Ganges, such as Hardwar or Benares, for the final rituals. Jains – who have traditionally given significant consideration to humanity's impact on the envi-



ronmental world – bury the ashes as a means to return the body to the Earth and ensure they do not contribute to polluting rivers.

The workers who run shmathana often belong to the Dom ethnicity and have been doing this work for generations; they are lower caste and subsequently perceived as polluted for their intimate work with dead bodies.

The act of cremation has not always been without controversy. In the 19th century, British colonial officials viewed the Indian practice of cremation as barbaric and unhygienic. But they were unable to ban it given its pervasiveness.

However, Indians living in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Trinidad often had to fight for the right to cremate the dead in accordance with religious rituals because of the mistaken and often racist belief that cremation was primitive, alien and environmentally polluting.

RITUALS AND A LONG HISTORY

The earliest writings on Indian funerary rituals can be found in the Rig Veda – a Hindu religious scripture orally composed thousands of years ago, potentially as early as 2000 B.C. In the Rig Veda, a hymn, traditionally recited by a priest or an adult male, urges Agni, the Vedic god of fire, to “carry this man to the world of those who have done good deeds.”

From the perspective of Hindu, Jain, and Sikh rituals, the act of cremation is seen as a sacrifice, a final breaking of the ties between the body and the spirit so it may be free to reincarnate. The body is traditionally bathed, anointed, and carefully wrapped in white cloth at home, then carried ceremonially, in a procession, by the local communi-

ty to the cremation grounds.

While Hindus and Sikhs often decorate the body with flowers, Jains avoid natural flowers for concern of inadvertently destroying the lives of insects that may be hidden within its petals. In all of these faiths, a priest or male member of the family recites prayers. It is traditionally the eldest son of the deceased who lights the funerary pyre; women do not go to the cremation ground.

After the ceremony, mourners return home to bathe themselves and remove what they regard as the inauspicious energy that surrounds the cremation grounds. Communities host a variety of postmortem rituals, including scriptural recitations and symbolic meals, and in some Hindu communities the sons or male members of household will shave their head as a sign of their bereavement. During this mourning period, lasting from 10 to 13 days, the family performs scriptural recitations and prayers in honor of their deceased loved one.

THE CHANGING TIMES OF COVID-19

The wave of death from the COVID-19 pandemic has forced transformations to these long-established religious rituals. Make-shift crematoriums are being constructed in the parking lots of hospitals and in city parks.

Young women may be the only ones available to light the funerary pyre, which was previously not permissible. Families in quarantine are forced to use WhatsApp and other video software to visually identify the body and recite digital funerary rites.

Media reports have pointed out how in some cases, crematorium workers have been asked to read

prayers traditionally reserved for Brahmin priests or people from a higher caste. Muslim burial grounds have begun to run out of space and are tearing up parking lots to bury more bodies.

THE WORK OF THE DEAD

While other important rituals such as marriage and baptism may take on a new appearance in response to cultural changes, social media conversations or economic opportunities, funerary rituals change slowly.

Historian Thomas Laqueur has written on what he calls “the work of the dead” – the ways in which the bodies of the deceased participate in the social worlds and political realities of the living.

In India's coronavirus pandemic, the dead are announcing the health crisis that the country believed it had conquered. As recently as April 18, 2021, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was holding crowded political rallies, and his government allowed the massive Hindu pilgrimage festival of Kumbh Mela to proceed a year early in response to the auspicious forecasts of astrologers. Authorities began to act only when the deaths became impossible to ignore. But even then, the Indian government appeared more concerned about removing social media posts that were critical of its functioning.

India is one of the world's largest vaccine-producing nations, and yet it was unable to make or even purchase the needed vaccines to protect its population.

The dead have important stories to tell about neglect, mismanagement or even our global interdependence – if we care to listen.

[the writer is Lecturer in Philosophy, Texas State University]

Here's why students don't revise what they write – and why they should

NARMADA PAUL

THECONVERSATION.COM

When high school students get into the habit of revising their writing, it has a positive impact on the quality of their work.

Despite the proven benefits of revision, students often resist making changes to the initial versions of what they wrote – because it requires additional effort. Or, if they do revise, they only do it in a mediocre way.

Finding ways to motivate students to revise their writing is crucial given that only 27% of 12th graders in the U.S. write at a level that is “proficient.” Proficiency in writing refers to correct spelling and grammar, logical presentation of ideas and appropriate use of details and evidence.

Learning how to revise one's writing is something that will serve students well in a variety of ways. Research shows that while writing is an effective way to help students learn content in different subject areas, revision helps them to develop a deeper conceptual understanding of the topic on which they are writing.

COLLEGE AND CAREER

Revision is also a vital part of preparing a college application essay. Students who have made it through the college admission process say that they spent considerable time and effort revising their essays. In light of the fact that many colleges have made the ACT or SAT optional – especially during the pandemic – these essays have become all the more important for a student's college application.

Writing is also recognized as an important professional skill beyond high school. Digital forms of written communication are used in 80% of blue-collar and 93% of white-collar jobs. Revision is key to mastering the writing skills required in a world where virtual work

is increasingly common.

DIVERSITY IN STUDENT MOTIVATION

Given the clear benefits of learning how to revise one's work, how can students get motivated to invest the time and effort it takes to do a meaningful revision? As a researcher who focuses on motivation, I did a study with colleagues in 2021 that offers insights. I found that it all comes down to the reasons a student has to write well.

Some students want to improve their writing skills, while others worry about how well they are performing in relation to their peers. Keeping these motivational differences in mind, here are five ways to create the best conditions for students to revise their written work.

1. REDUCE ANXIETY

Anxiety is accompanied by negative thoughts and physical discomfort, which can diminish a student's ability to concentrate during writing. Writing anxiety can also make students reluctant to review their writing. It is important for students to accept that writing well takes effort and that feeling anxious about writing is normal. Creating a classroom environment that encourages students to seek help can make students less anxious and lead them to improve their writing.

2. SELECT TOPICS OF INTEREST

Unless students see writing as a personally useful activity, they may not feel motivated to revise their work. Writing genres that allow students to explore their interests can motivate them to write well. Research shows that structuring enjoyable writing experiences in the classroom can make students open to revising their writing.

3. BUILD CONFIDENCE

Students' beliefs about their ability to write well can influence whether they revise their writing. One of the most effective ways to make students feel confident about their writing

ability is to provide them with opportunities to experience success as they develop their writing skills. Students are likely to feel successful when they achieve their individual goals through writing, overcome personal obstacles to writing and receive positive feedback.

Writing assignments that require significantly more skills than a student currently has may make them doubt themselves. But if challenging writing tasks are designed to build on previously mastered skills, they can increase students' confidence.

4. FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

Research indicates that students who focus on learning and improving their writing skills tend to revise more than students who focus on comparing themselves to others. Whether students choose to focus on improving or outperforming others is influenced by the direct and indirect messages they receive in the classroom from their teachers. Teacher efforts to promote learning and improvement are especially critical given the inherently competitive and stressful nature of high schools, where social comparisons are inevitable.

5. RETHINK GRADING PRACTICES

Grading practices that go beyond simply giving students a final letter grade or a score on a writing assignment are effective in reducing anxiety and encouraging revision. When writing assessments involve purposeful feedback, it can help students understand how to revise their writing to reach classroom learning goals.

In the case of complex writing tasks, breaking the task down into mini assignments can give teachers the chance to provide feedback at each step of the way before students submit the complete written product for a final grade.

[the writer is Postdoctoral Scholar in Educational Psychology, University of Kentucky]

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While state-run hospitals are overwhelmed in Nepal, private ones are turning away patients

ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, 04 MAY [KATHMANDUPOST]:

When the government launched the immunisation drive against Covid-19 in January, frontline workers—health workers, sanitation workers, supporting staff of the hospitals—were given the first priority.

No discrimination was made between the frontline workers serving at private and state-run hospitals.

But as the second wave of the pandemic grips the country and beds in state-run hospitals have been fully occupied with seriously ailing patients, most private hospitals are not taking in Covid-19 patients. They are instead referring patients to government hospitals without ensuring that beds are available for them.

“We have dozens of patients, who were referred by private hospitals,” Dr Sagar Rajbhandari, director at the Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, told the Post. “Some patients sent by private hospitals are waiting at the emergency ward and on the premises of the hospital for beds.”

“But it is not possible to provide care to the infected patients only from government hospitals.”

The Ministry of Health and Population has directed all private hospitals not to refer patients without ensuring there are beds in the hospitals designated for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The ministry has also directed all hospitals to set aside 20 per cent of the beds for such patients.

However, only a few private hospitals have been providing care to Covid-19 patients.

“They take in only non-Covid-19 patients and if such patients test positive for Covid-19 during screening, the hospitals immediately send the patients to government hospitals,” said



Rajbhandari. “Screening of patients should be done as a standard procedure but they should stop screening patients for financial conditions and stop sending those from poor economic backgrounds to us.”

According to Rajbhandari, some private hospitals have been providing care to Covid-19 patients but have been referring those who cannot afford to pay their exorbitant fees to state-run hospitals.

As Covid-19 infections have already penetrated deep in society, chances of many more testing positive are high and if the private hospitals keep sending the patients it will not be possible for state-run hospitals to accommodate all the patients, doctors say.

Designated Covid-19 hospitals are already under enormous strain. “I too want to request the authorities concerned to stop the private hospitals from expelling patients when they test positive,” Dr Ravi Shakya, director at Patan Hospital, told the Post.

On Monday the Ministry of Health and Population reported that of the 16,658 polymerase chain reaction tests conducted 7,388 were positive. This is the record for a single day beating the high of 7,137 on Sunday. The positivity rate on

Monday stood at 44, the same as on Sunday.

The Health Ministry said 37 deaths were recorded in the last 24 hours, which is also the highest death toll in a single day, taking the toll to 3,362.

Of the total new cases, 3,666 are from Kathmandu Valley with 2,922 from Kathmandu, 522 from Lalitpur and 222 from Bhaktapur districts.

The Health Ministry said 578 patients are in intensive care units and 142 on ventilator support throughout the country.

Experts say all the health facilities, whether they are state-run or private, with oxygen supply facilities should provide care to the infected.

“This is a time of disaster and no agency should shirk their responsibilities. The logic behind providing vaccines to the frontline workers is also that they would serve to save lives,” Dr Biraj Karmacharya, an epidemiologist, who is also the chief of the Department of Community Programme at Dhulikhel Hospital, told the Post.

With the surge in new cases, most of the hospitals have stopped providing out-patient department services. While the beds allocated for the treatment of Covid-19 cases by some

state-run hospitals are all occupied by infected patients, hundreds of general beds, which have been vacant due to the surge in Covid-19 cases, remain unused.

“Apart from emergency, all services should be focussed for the treatment of coronavirus infections,” added Karmacharya. “Even at primary-level health-care facilities and health posts, treatment should be provided to Covid-19 patients.”

As infections have already been rampant, all hospitals should be asked to provide treatment to the infected. Even those patients who are poor and cannot afford to pay the treatment costs at private hospitals should not be deprived of treatment, doctors say.

“The government should reimburse the private hospitals for the treatment they provide to the patients from poor economic backgrounds,” Dr Mingmar Gyelgen Sherpa, former director general at the Department of Health Services, told the Post. “This is an emergency situation, and all agencies concerned should be responsible.”

The Ministry of Health and Population has set the costs for Covid-19 treatment at hospitals—Rs 3,500 per day for normal patients,

Rs 7,000 for moderately ailing patients and Rs 15,000 for those needing intensive care.

But due to lack of monitoring, private hospitals have been fleeing the patients, according to doctors serving at the government hospitals.

Thapa says that the prices fixed by the government may not be remunerative for private hospitals so they have been charging patients for the personal protective equipment too.

Meanwhile, representatives of private hospitals said that most of the private hospitals have their own limitations—limited beds and limited human resources to treat the infected patients.

“If any private hospital refuses to treat Covid-19 patients in the time of disaster, such hospitals should be shut down,” said Kumar Thapa, senior vice-president of the Association of Private health Institution Nepal. “If the hospitals have some problems, they should be addressed by the authorities concerned.”

Thapa, who is the chairman of Alka Hospital in Lalitpur, said that his hospital has allocated 31 general beds and 17 intensive care unit beds for the Covid-19 patients. “We are holding a meeting to discuss allocating more beds for Covid-19 patients.”

Maoist Centre decides to withdraw support to Nepal government

KATHMANDU, 04 MAY [KATHMANDUPOST]: The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) has decided to withdraw its support to the KP Sharma Oli government.

Maoist Centre spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha said Tuesday’s Standing Committee meeting of the party decided to withdraw the support.

The decision to pull out the support it lent the government back in February 2018 comes two days after Oli decided to seek a vote of confidence in the House.

Oli on Sunday told his Cabinet members that he would go for a floor test on May 10. Accordingly, the President on Sunday evening summoned the House meeting for May 10.

“We will submit a letter to the Parliament Secretariat on Wednesday regarding the party’s decision to withdraw support to the government,” said Shrestha.

Even though the Maoist Centre and the CPN-

UML were revived by the Supreme Court on March 7, two weeks after it overturned Oli’s House dissolution decision, the Maoists had not withdrawn their support to the government.

Oli was elected prime minister in February 2018 with the support of the Maoist Centre.

Ever since the two parties were revived, Oli had challenged the Maoist Centre time and again to withdraw its support if it really wanted to unseat him.

The Maoist Centre, however, was in a bid to form a coalition government under the leadership of the Nepali Congress. But for that, they needed the support of the Janata Samjwadi Party, which was already in talks with Oli.

Just as Oli was questioned over not stepping down on moral grounds even after the Supreme Court overturned his decision to dissolve the House, the Maoist Centre too faced criticism for not

withdrawing its support, as many said it should have done so as soon as the court invalidated the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) and revived the UML and the Maoist party.

According to Dev Gurung, a Standing Committee member of the Maoist Centre, his party was “trying to save the Parliament”, hence had not withdrawn its support to the government.

“We had decided to withdraw our support to the government long ago, but were waiting for the opposition parties [Nepali Congress and Janata Samajbadi] to register a no-confidence motion,” Gurung told the Post. “But with Oli himself now going for a floor test, there is no point in continuing the support. We will inform the Parliament Secretariat about our decision to withdraw support to the government. We will explore options to unseat Oli based on our discussions with the opposition pirates.”

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Mamata holds meeting on post poll violence in WB

KOLKATA, MAY 4 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday held a meeting with the top administrative and police officers of the state on the post poll violence in the state, an official said.

In the meeting, which was held at Banerjees Kalighat residence, she took stock of the situation, he told PTI.

Present in the meeting were Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay, Home Secretary H K Dwidevi, Director General of Police P Nirajnanan and Kolkata Police Commissioner Soumen Mitra, the official said.

The state has witnessed a number of incidents of violence since

Sunday when the results of the assembly election was declared and rivals TMC and BJP have traded charges for it.

At least six people were killed in post poll violence in different parts of the state including one in the city, police said.

BJP has alleged that TMC-backed goons have killed a number of its workers, attacked its woman members, vandalised houses, looted shops of the party members and ransacked party offices.

TMC has denied the charges.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said Prime

Minister Narendra Modi had telephoned him and expressed anguish over the law and order situation in the state following reports of post-poll violence from several districts.

Banerjee had on Sunday asked people to show restraint and not be involved in any form of violence.

The union home ministry had on Monday sought a factual report from the government on attacks on opposition workers and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar had summoned state Home Secretary, DGP and Kolkata Commissioner of Police and directed them to restore peace.

Bihar imposes lockdown till May 15 amid COVID crisis

PATNA, MAY 4 (PTI): Lockdown was imposed in Bihar till May 15 amid a surge in COVID-19 cases with the state facing a positivity rate of around 10 per cent, officials said on Tuesday.

The decision for the lockdown, which will come into effect on Wednesday, was taken at the meeting of the Crisis Management Group presided over by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, they said.

Soon after the meeting, the chief minister announced the decision, following which Chief Secretary Tripurari Sharan along with senior police and administration officers held a press conference to announce the modalities.

The chief secretary said that all government and private offices will remain closed during the period.

However, essential services such as civil defence, electricity supply, water supply, fire services, veterinary work,

postal and telecommunication will continue to operate.

Hospitals, medical laboratories, ambulance services and other health-related outlets have been kept out of the ambit of the lockdown.

Principal Secretary of Health, Pratyaya Amrit, clarified that the vaccination drive will continue during the lockdown.

Banking, ATMs and insurance services have been kept out of the purview of the lockdown.

Industrial and construction work, besides agricultural activities, e-commerce and courier services have also been exempted.

Operations of print and electronic media have also been allowed during the period.

Petrol pumps, LPG and outlets connected with retail services of petroleum products will also continue to operate.

The shops dealing with grocery items and retail outlets dealing with

vegetables, fruits, non-veg items, milk and PDS outlets will remain open from 7 am to 11 am daily during the lockdown, the chief secretary said.

Schools, colleges and private coaching centres will remain completely shut during the lockdown, Sharan said, adding that no examination will be held during the period.

Religious places will also remain closed during the period.

Cinema halls, parks, gyms and hosting of other functions have been suspended during the lockdown.

Though the movement of vehicles has been prohibited, public transport for the passengers heading to railway stations, airports, and bus terminuses will be allowed with 50 per cent sitting capacity, the chief secretary said.

Restaurants and hotels will remain closed but home delivery has been allowed, he said, adding that similar is the norm for dhabas and eateries

along the highways.

Weddings are allowed with only 50 guests but the use of DJs and taking out ‘barat’ processions are prohibited.

The chief secretary said an advance notice of three days has to be given to the local police station regarding weddings.

For the performance of the last rites and ‘shraddh’, not more than 20 people will be allowed.

The chief secretary informed that all the districts have been ordered to organise community kitchens to feed the needy.

He said the ration card holders will be given allotted foodgrains from PDS shops free in the month of May, the cost of which will be borne by the state government.

He said the lockdown has been promulgated under relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act and those violating the orders will be punished accordingly.

The Patna High Court had on Monday came

down heavily on the state government over handling the second wave of the pandemic. It had asked Advocate General Lalit Kishore to talk to the chief minister on the urgent need of the lockdown.

Bihar had reported 11,407 new COVID-19 cases on Monday and 82 more deaths.

Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Chaitanya Prasad told reporters that Nitish Kumar held a detailed discussion with deputy chief ministers Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi, and Health Minister Mangal Pandey, among others on Monday night.

The chief minister also crisscrossed the state capital for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation, he said.

The health secretary said the state witnessed 10 per cent positivity rate over the last one week and the department will monitor whether this is coming down during the lockdown.

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Randle, Rose lead Knicks to win over Grizzlies



MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP): Julius Randle scored 28 points, Derrick Rose added 25, converting 11 of 15 shots and the New York Knicks held off the Memphis Grizzlies 118-104 on Monday night for their 12th win in 13 games.

"I like the toughness of the team," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said. "They persevered and just found away."

With the win, the Knicks are assured of their first winning record in a season since going 54-28 in 2012-13.

"It's really good," Randle said of the team's recent play, adding that the Knicks "need to keep doing it to get better."

While the Knicks continued their successful run – winning their 12th in the last 13 – one of the prime spots of the four play-in teams in the West is becoming more elusive for Memphis. The loss was the Grizzlies fourth in the last five. Coupled with Golden State's win over New Orleans earlier Monday night, the Warriors moved into eighth place, a half-game ahead of Memphis, now in ninth.

"All these games are big," said Dillon Brooks, who had 25 points for Memphis. "We've got to realize that. Our attention to detail, our intensity, our attention to everything has got to be heightened. We've just got to be ready every single game."

Rookie Desmond Bane added 22 points while Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 15 points for the Grizzlies.

Memphis, which trailed by as many as 17 in the second half, tried to rally in the fourth quarter and cut the New York advantage to 101-96 with 5:28 left. Randle answered with a 3-pointer with 3:57 remaining.

But with Memphis still within five points as the game headed down the stretch, the Grizzlies received five technicals in a span of 18 seconds to seal the loss.

Asked about the technicals, Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins, who received two of them and was ejected, avoided the question, saying: "I'm really excited about how hard our guys played, and we have to build on this. We've got a lot of basketball left and we're turning in the right direction."

RJ Barrett added 15 points for the Knicks.

"They made tough shots. You've got to tip your hat to that squad and take the positives out of this game," Brooks said. But he also realizes the importance of the rest of the games as the

Grizzlies maneuver for the best postseason position.

The Knicks shot 77.3% in the second quarter to build the lead to 69-58 at the break. Rose, who played his one season of college basketball at the University of Memphis, missed only one of his seven shots in the half to lead New York with 15 points.

New York couldn't maintain that shooting pace, but still kept its lead through the third. Brooks pushed the Grizzlies closer, pulling Memphis within six at one point of the period.

"We built a good lead in the third," Thibodeau said. "We struggled a little in the fourth, but we found a way to win."

TIP-INS

Knicks: C Nerlens Noel, who suffered a left ankle sprain in Sunday's win over the Rockets, was out. Taj Gibson started at center for New York, his third start of the season. ... Randle missed his first four shots and was 1 of 7 in the first quarter. ... Gibson had 12 rebounds and five blocks.

Grizzlies: G Grayson Allen, who missed the previous two games with an injured left hand, returned to action and started. ... Brooks tied his season-high with five 3-pointers. ... Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins was ejected with 1:20 left when he received a pair of technicals arguing a no-call on a drive to the basket by Morant. Then Brooks got a technical 18 seconds later and Morant got two technical and he was ejected also.

MVP TALK:

While he may not be at the top of the list, Randle is getting some mention as an MVP candidate because of his play. Asked if he deserves to be part of such discussions, Randle replied: "For sure. I'm not going to shy away from it. For me, it's about getting better from game to game and improving as a player."

MEANWHILE, 10 YEARS AGO

Monday was the 10-year anniversary of Rose winning the 2011 MVP – the youngest player to win the award. Asked about the memory, the veteran reminded everyone that he is now 32 years old. "It is crazy. I mean the story is crazy. I'm just happy to be here and still playing decent basketball. I'm very appreciative."

UP NEXT

Knicks: Continue a six-game swing through the Western Conference in Denver against the Nuggets on Wednesday.

Grizzlies: Face the Timberwolves in Minnesota on Wednesday.

Davis scores 25 as short-handed Lakers defeat Nuggets 93-89

LOS ANGELES (AP): Anthony Davis came up with a huge game when the Los Angeles Lakers needed it the most.

Davis scored 25 points and had key plays on both ends of the floor in the final minute as the short-handed Lakers snapped a three-game losing streak with a 93-89 victory over the Denver Nuggets Monday night.

The Lakers — who had lost six of their last seven going into the game — won without two key pieces. LeBron James did not play in the second game of a back-to-back after he ankle soreness during the fourth quarter of Sunday's loss Toronto. Dennis Schröder will be out more than a week after entering the NBA's health and safety protocol.

"I know with LeBron and Dennis out the team counts on me more. I made the effort to come out and play with pace," Davis said. "It was good to see us play our style of basketball. We have to feed off this game."

This was Davis' seventh game back since he missed more than two months with a strained right calf, but the first where coach Frank Vogel said that the All-Star forward has been decisive on offense and defense.

"He's getting more and more in rhythm each game and getting his legs under him. He's at his best when he's assertive on both sides of the floor," Vogel said.

The Lakers led by 14 points midway through the fourth quarter before



the Nuggets got within 89-87 with a late rally.

Davis hit a jumper with 41.8 seconds remaining to give the Lakers a four-point lead. Nikola Jokic hit a pair of free throws to cut it in half but Talen Horton-Tucker hit a reverse layup with 15.1 seconds left to push the advantage up to 93-89.

After a Denver timeout, Davis blocked Facundo Campazzo's 3-point attempt to end any hopes of a Nuggets' comeback and end their five-game winning streak.

"We were running pick-and-roll, just trying to open up the floor. I made a shot that I shoot all the time — going left and hit a floater," Davis said. "On the block, I was trying to read where the pass was going from Jokic and tried to contest the shot."

Jokic led the Nuggets with 32 points and Michael Porter Jr. added 19.

"We had a chance. The problem is we didn't shoot well," Jokic said. "They are a good team. It is not a shame to lose to a good team."

The game had impact in respects to the third thru seventh seeds in the Western Conference. Denver (43-22) fell back into a tie with the LA Clippers for the third seed while the Lakers (37-28) are half-game in front of Dallas and one game ahead of Portland for the fifth spot.

"Tonight was an ugly game. The Lakers were in a funk and they pulled it out. We have to find a way to get healthy when he get home," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said.

Los Angeles was up by five going into the fourth quarter when it started period on a 13-4 run with Wesley Matthews leading the way with eight points, including a pair of 3-pointers. The Nuggets trailed

87-73 with 6:09 remaining when they rallied with a 14-2 run. Porter Jr. had nine points, including a running layup to get them within a basket with 1:37 remaining, and Jokic supplied the other five.

The Nuggets led most of the first half, but the Lakers closed the second quarter on an 11-3 run, including six points by Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, to go into halftime with a 45-42 advantage.

A pair of Jokic free throws gave the Nuggets a 56-55 lead midway through the third quarter when the Lakers responded with a 9-2 spurt to go up by six.

TIP INS

Nuggets: G PJ Dozier was injured in early in the fourth quarter. He was taken to the locker room with left hip tightness and did not return. ... With Portland's loss, Denver is assured of finishing in the top six in

the conference and will not have to worry about the Play-In Tournament. ... JaVale McGee received his 2020 NBA championships ring from the Lakers before the game. McGee signed with Cleveland during the offseason and was traded to Denver on March 25. This was his first trip back to Staples Center this season. He had eight of his 10 points in the second quarter.

Lakers: Marc Gasol, who had not played in two of the past three games, entered in the second half and played 17 minutes. He had 10 points with all three of his field goals coming from the perimeter. ... Alex Caruso started for the second straight game and scored 11 points.

UP NEXT

Nuggets: Host the Knicks on Wednesday.

Lakers: Will be the visiting team against the Clippers at Staples Center on Thursday.

Welcome to Top 10, Melo: Anthony joins elite scoring list

ATLANTA (AP): Carmelo Anthony looked like he was all done just a couple of seasons ago.

Now, he's part of a truly exclusive club in the NBA. Welcome to the Top 10, Melo.

Anthony scored 14 points Monday night in Portland's 123-114 loss to the Atlanta Hawks, moving him past Elvin Hayes for 10th place on the career scoring list with 27,318.

"If you're in the top 10 of anything of all time, it's a special moment," said Anthony, who's in his 18th NBA season and turns 37 before the month is out.

Anthony cruised past Hayes early in the second quarter, hitting a 3-pointer while getting fouled by Danilo Gallinari and knocking down the free throw to complete a four-point play.

Anthony was fully aware of how many points he needed to surpass Hayes.

"I knew this moment," he said. "I didn't know those other moments — 15, 13, 11. But 10 is something I knew."

It appeared Anthony was headed for a forced retirement after he played just 10 games during the 2018-19 season.

He parted ways with



Houston, was waived by Chicago and didn't hook up with Portland until the next season was several weeks old.

Even though he went more than a year without playing a game, Anthony found new life and a new role with the Trail Blazers.

A starter his entire career, he's now coming off the bench, playing a supporting role to younger stars, players who still look up to him, such as Damian Lillard.

"Being in the top 10 in a really special accomplishment," Lillard said. "For him, it's probably a little more special. A lot of people counted him out and tried to finish him."

During his time with the Trail Blazers, Anthony has passed nine players on the career scoring list.

He knocked off Alex English, Kevin Garnett, John Havlicek and Paul Pierce last season. He's taken down Tim Duncan, Dominique Wilkins, Oscar Robertson, Hakeem Olajuwon and now Hayes this season.

Next up for Anthony: Moses Malone at 27,409 points.

Melo's got a good chance at catching him, too, by the end of the regular season.

"For Melo to be out a year and come back makes it even more remarkable," Portland coach Terry Stotts said.

"I always appreciate greatness, whether it's a player I'm coaching or coaching against. Melo is a great player. He's a Hall of Fame player."

Lillard went on and on about what a pleasure it's been to have Anthony as a teammate, disputing those who have described him over the years as a selfish player who was never quite good enough to lead his teams — most notably, Denver and New York — to a championship.

"I appreciate him more as a friend than I do as a teammate, and I really appreciate him as a teammate," Lillard said. "I think that really speaks to the kind of person he is."

Afterward, Stotts pre-

sented Anthony with a game ball in the locker room.

"We need to acknowledge milestones," the coach said. "This is a big one. Top 10 of all time. That's big time."

After his teammates finished clapping, Anthony said, "A couple of years ago, I didn't think I was gonna be in this moment right now. I was out the league for whatever reason. I'm back. I persevered. I stayed strong, I stayed true to myself and now I'm here in the top 10."

He's not done yet.

"I'm still enjoying the game," Anthony said. "I'm still loving the game. I'm still approaching the game the same way."

UEFA details Euro 2020 rules for teams hit by virus issues

GENEVA (AP): Teams hit by COVID-19 cases or mandatory quarantine at the European Championship can have their games postponed for up to 48 hours to get new players in, UEFA said Tuesday.

UEFA published extra rules for the June 11-July 11 tournament, including raising squad sizes from 23 players to 26 to help teams cope amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Euro 2020 is scheduled to play 51 games in 31 days with few days available as back-ups. Matches will be played on schedule if each team has at least 13 players, including one goalkeeper, available for selection.

UEFA said teams with fewer than 13 players could have their game "rescheduled within the next 48 hours of the date of the relevant match" and possibly at a different venue.

"Any additional player called up to meet the minimum of 13 players requires that an equivalent number of quarantined players are definitively withdrawn from the 26 players list," the European soccer body said.

The team responsible for a game not being played will forfeit it as a 3-0 loss and the national federation will face disciplinary action by UEFA.

The emergency rules are similar to those enforced by UEFA this season in its club competitions and Nations League, and upheld in several appeal cases at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Ukraine and Norway forfeited Nations League games as 3-0 losses last year. Ukraine's squad was put in quarantine by public health officials in Switzerland. Norway's squad was stopped from traveling to Romania by a decision of its own health officials.

Euro 2020 is being played with 24 teams in 11 cities across Europe with at least 25% of stadium capacity set to be available for all games.

Dublin was dropped by UEFA last month after public authorities did not give assurances on how many fans could attend games, and Bilbao was replaced by Seville.

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As Lebanese cry for justice, politics paralyzes the system

BEIRUT (AP): Even after she was taken off an investigation into alleged financial crimes by a money transfer company, the defiant Lebanese prosecutor charged ahead. She showed up at the company's offices outside of Beirut with a group of supporters and a metal worker, who broke open the locked gate.

Ghada Aoun obtained data from Mecattaf Holding Company that she contends will reveal the identities of people who sneaked billions of dollars out of Lebanon amid the financial meltdown that has hit the country.

The move was part of a public feud between Aoun and Lebanon's state prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat, who had dismissed her from the case, saying she'd overstepped with two earlier raids. Their feud has turned into scuffles between their supporters in the street.

Aoun, an investigating judge for the Mount Lebanon district, presents herself as a crusader against corruption and accuses higher-ups of trying to stop her. But to her critics, she's a tool of her backer, Lebanon's president, who they say uses her to punish his political opponents and protect his allies.

That is the problem in Lebanon: The judiciary is so deeply politicized it paralyzes the wheels of justice, mirroring how factional rivalries have paralyzed politics.

Political interference

in the judiciary has for years thwarted investigations into corruption, violence and assassinations. But mistrust of the judiciary is thrown into even starker relief now, when Lebanese are crying out for politicians to be held accountable for the disastrous crises in their country — not only the financial collapse but also last August's massive explosion in Beirut's port that killed scores and wrecked much of the capital. The explosion has been blamed on incompetence and neglect.

Lebanon's political posts are split up in a power-sharing system among sectarian-based factions. Judicial appointments are subject to the same sectarian allotment and horse-trading.

Ghada Aoun is a Maronite Christian, like the country's president, Michel Aoun, and her supporters are mainly members of the president's Free Patriotic Movement. The two are not related. The state prosecutor, Oueidat, is a Sunni Muslim, like the prime minister-designate, Saad Hariri. The country's top financial prosecutor is a Shiite Muslim, chosen by the country's top Shiite factions, Amal and Hezbollah. Positions all through the judicial hierarchy are similarly divided up.

"Those who hold on to power have set up a judiciary that is loyal to them in order to fight their opponents and protect their interests," retired state prosecutor



Hatem Madi told The Associated Press.

President Aoun and Prime Minister-designate Hariri have been locked in a power struggle that has prevented the formation of a Cabinet for more than six months. As a result, there is no leadership to carry out reforms to rescue the country even as the currency collapses in value.

Lebanese watched in fury as their own savings and salaries plummet in value and prices skyrocket. The central bank is struggling to gather enough hard currency to ensure fuel for electricity or other key imports, much less maintain its longtime peg of the currency to the dollar.

Even more galling for the public, the wealthy and politically connected transferred billions of dollars to safety outside Lebanon even after banks imposed informal capital controls at the beginning of the crisis. Most people have been unable

to access their dollars in bank accounts since late 2019.

Ghada Aoun, the judge, was probing Mecattaf Holding on suspicion it helped in that flight of capital. Mecattaf, one of Lebanon's largest money and gold-trading companies, denied any links to suspicious transfers, saying all business it does is legal.

Skeptics note that Mecattaf's owner, Michel Mecattaf, is the publisher of Nidaa al-Watan, a daily newspaper that is harshly critical of President Aoun and his main ally, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Ghada Aoun has also pursued cases against Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh and former Prime Minister Najib Mikati, both of them opponents of the president.

In tweets, Aoun said she was being sidelined "because I dared to open a major file and tried to establish the truth with evidence." She accuses

her opponents of using "false accusations" against her to "politicize a case of justice, a case where an oppressed people wants accountability."

After her previous raids, Oueidat ordered her taken off financial cases. Then on April 20, both he and Aoun appeared at a session of Lebanon's top judicial body, where they upheld the order. Outside, supporters of the president and the prime minister got into scuffles and nearly into fist-fights before the army separated them. The next day, she carried out her third raid on the company.

Sami Kara, a Hariri supporter, said Aoun ruined her long reputation by breaking into the company. "She was used for political purposes and now they threw her away," said the 61-year-old shop owner.

Lebanese are also closely watching the investigation into the Aug. 4 explosion of nearly

3,000 tons of ammonium nitrates poorly stored at Beirut's port. The explosion killed 211, wounded more than 6,000 and devastated nearby neighborhoods.

The first investigating judge accused two former Cabinet ministers of negligence, but was then removed from the case after the former ministers raised legal challenges against him. Many worry his replacement, Judge Tarek Bitar, will be prevented by politicians from holding anyone accountable for the blast.

Judges know that if they want senior posts, they must be loyal to a political leader, said Bushra al-Khalil, a prominent Lebanese lawyer.

Knowing this, some people go straight to politicians and ask for their help in cases, rather than go through judicial authorities, she said. Others hire a lawyer with strong political connections to intimidate judges.

Madi said the long-term solution is for the judiciary to be given independence under the constitution. Currently, it comes under the authority of the government.

Lebanon "is proving incapable of fighting corruption," said outgoing Justice Minister Marie-Claude Najm, pointing to the divisions demonstrated in the feud between Aoun and Oueidat.

"After all that has happened," she said, "how can people feel they respect and trust the judiciary?"

Mexico City metro overpass collapses onto road; 23 dead

MEXICO CITY (AP): An elevated section of the Mexico City metro collapsed and sent a subway car plunging toward a busy boulevard late Monday, killing at least 23 people and injuring about 70, city officials said. Rescuers initially searched a car left dangling from the overpass for anyone who might be trapped.

Those efforts were suspended early Tuesday, however, because of safety concerns for those working near the precariously dangling car. A crane was brought in to help shore it up.

"We don't know if they are alive," Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said of the people possibly trapped inside the car following one of the deadliest accidents for the city's subway system, which is among the busiest in the world.

Earlier Sheinbaum said someone had been pulled alive from a car that was trapped on the road below. She said 49 of the injured were hospitalized, and that seven were in serious condition and undergoing surgery.

"There are unfortunately children among the dead," Sheinbaum said, without specifying how many.

The overpass was about 5 meters (16 feet) above the road in the borough of Tlahuac, but the train ran above a concrete median strip, which apparently lessened the casualties among motorists on the road below. "A support beam gave way" just as the train passed over it, Sheinbaum said. The Mexico City Metro has had at least two serious accidents since its inauguration half a century ago. In March of last year, a collision between two trains at the Tacubaya station left one passenger dead and injured 41 people. In 2015, a train that did not stop on time crashed into another at the Oceania station, injuring 12.

Hundreds of police officers and firefighters cor-

doned off the scene Tuesday as desperate friends and relatives of people believed to be on the train gathered outside the security perimeter. Despite the fact that the coronavirus situation remains serious in Mexico City, they crowded together as they waited for news.

Adrián Loa Martínez, 46, said that his mother called him to tell him that his half-brother and sister-in-law were driving when the overpass collapsed and that a beam fell onto their car.

He said that his sister-in-law was sent to a hospital, but that his half-brother José Juan Galindo was crushed and he feared he was dead. "He is down there now," he told journalists pointing toward the site.

Gisela Rioja Castro, 43, was looking for her husband, 42-year-old Miguel Ángel Espinoza. She said that her husband always takes that train after finishing work at a store, but he never arrived home and had stopped answering his phone. When she heard what happened, she immediately feared the worst but has received no information from the authorities.

"Nobody knows anything," she said.

The collapse occurred on the newest of the Mexico City subway's lines, Line 12, which stretches far into the city's south side. Like many of the city's dozen subway lines, it runs underground through more central areas of the city of 9 million, but then runs on elevated concrete structures on the city's outskirts.

The collapse could represent a major blow for Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Marcelo Ebrard, who was Mexico City's mayor from 2006 to 2012, when Line 12 was built, and who is considered a potential presidential candidate in 2024 elections. Allegations about poor design and construction on the subway line emerged soon after Ebrard left office as mayor. The line had to be partly closed in 2013 so tracks could be repaired.

Ethiopia 'at a crossroads' amid spiraling ethnic conflict

GONDAR, ETHIOPIA (AP): Aba Yosief Desta preferred not to discuss the ethnicities of victims in the widening conflicts threatening Ethiopia's unity.

A wooden cross in hand, the Orthodox monk in yellow robes insisted that victims of massacres "have the same face."

Speaking to The Associated Press from the city of Gondar, where he manages a diocesan office, he reflected on the first known massacre of the conflict in the neighboring Tigray region. Ethiopia's government says ethnic Amhara were killed, but ethnic Tigrayan refugees have told the AP they were also targeted.

"It's better to say Ethiopians were killed," the bearded monk said. "If one Amhara is killed and one Tigrayan is killed, it means Ethiopians are killed." He hopes young people will shun ethnic-driven politics, which he calls "the source of all problems" in this country with more than 90 ethnic groups.

Africa's second-most populous country, with 110 million people, faces a crisis of ethnic nationalism that some fear could tear it apart as the federal government asserts its authority in regions such as Tigray, where a military operation launched in November to capture the fugitive regional leaders has escalated into a war

in which widespread atrocities are reported and thousands have been killed.

As that war reaches the six-month mark on Tuesday, there is no sign of how it might be resolved for the Tigray region's estimated 6 million people. The United Nations human rights office has said all sides are accused of committing abuses against civilians, although far more of the killings, rapes, and mass expulsions are attributed to Ethiopian forces, allied Amhara regional forces, or, especially, troops from neighboring Eritrea.

Over the weekend, Ethiopia's Council of Ministers almost certainly ended hopes of negotiations for peace when it designated as a terrorist organization the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, the regional party which dominated a coalition of groups that ruled Ethiopia from 1991 until Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in 2018.

The TPLF, like some others in Ethiopia, is an ethnic-based party that has long represented the people of Tigray in accordance with the 1995 constitution, which enshrines ethnic federalism. Under that constitution, regional leaders have been accused of asserting the rights of majority

ethnic groups at the expense of minorities.

Tigrayans and the United States government allege ethnic cleansing in western Tigray, where Amhara authorities assert they are reclaiming land that Tigray leaders seized in the 1990s. The term "ethnic cleansing" refers to forcing a population from a region through expulsions and other violence, often including killings and rapes.

Members of other ethnic groups elsewhere say they have been targeted, too. Scores of people have been killed in clashes this year between the Amhara and the Oromo, Ethiopia's two largest ethnic groups. In the country's west, the Gumuz have been accused of massacring people from both the Amhara and Oromo groups.

With the rising violence, some in Ethiopia wonder how the government will pull off national elections on June 5. The decision to delay voting from last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic helped to spark the Tigray conflict when the region's leaders objected, asserted that Abiy's mandate had ended and held a regional vote of their own.

The European Union this week canceled its election observation mission, saying requirements for its indepen-

dence and the import of communications equipment were not met.

Abiy will keep his post as prime minister if his Prosperity Party wins a majority of seats in the national assembly.

But there will be no voting in Tigray, where witnesses say fighting persists and local authorities can reject decisions made by the federal government. An AP team that was granted permission to visit Mai Kadra was turned back in nearby Humera by soldiers who said they recognized the authority of Amhara leaders.

The winding road to western Tigray displays the ruins of war: the charred remains of armored personnel carriers, the mangled bed of a truck, the pockmarked walls of an industrial park. There is no phone or internet service. Humera looked deserted. A soldier with a gun slung over his shoulder crossed one street while a lone woman brewed coffee on her veranda.

Amhara authorities' annexation of a vast part of western Tigray has forced hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans to seek refuge elsewhere, including in nearby Sudan.

Some Ethiopians said they believe the country must overcome its ethnic politics by forging a new federation in which ethnicity is not the most important factor.

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SummitTIMES
PIONEER IN THE NEWS

Bill and Melinda Gates announce they are getting divorced



SEATTLE (AP): Bill and Melinda Gates said Monday that they are divorcing but would keep working together at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the largest charitable foundations in the world.

In identical tweets, the Microsoft co-founder and his wife said they had made the decision to end their marriage of 27 years.

"We have raised three incredible children and built a foundation that works all over the world to enable all people to lead healthy, productive lives," they said in a statement. "We ask for space and privacy for our family as we begin to navigate this new life."

Bill Gates was formerly the world's richest person and his fortune is estimated at well over \$100 billion. How the couple end up settling their estate and any impact on the foundation will be closely watched, especially after another high-profile Seattle-area billionaire couple recently ended their marriage.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos

and MacKenzie Bezos finalized their divorce in 2019. MacKenzie Scott has since remarried and now focuses on her own philanthropy after receiving a 4% stake in Amazon, worth more than \$36 billion.

The Gateses were married in 1994 in Hawaii. They met after she began working at Microsoft as a product manager in 1987.

In her 2019 memoir, "The Moment of Lift," Melinda Gates wrote about her childhood, life and private struggles as the wife of a public icon and stay-at-home mom with three kids. She won Bill Gates' heart after meeting at a work dinner, sharing a mutual love of puzzles and beating him at a math game.

She also detailed the ways they navigated imbalances in their marriage and parenting journey and noted how working together at the foundation made their relationship better.

"Bill and I are equal partners," Melinda Gates said in a 2019 interview with The Associated Press. "Men and

women should be equal at work."

The Seattle-based Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the most influential private foundation in the world, with an endowment worth nearly \$50 billion. It has focused on global health and development and U.S. education issues since incorporating in 2000.

While both are global figures, Melinda Gates has increasingly built her profile as a champion of women and girls. The former tech business executive launched her private Pivotal Ventures investment and incubation company in 2015 and recently partnered with Scott for a newly announced equity challenge.

David Callahan, founder of the Insider Philanthropy website and author of "The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age" says it's too early to know how the divorce will affect the Gates foundation and the wider philanthropic community.

Although the couple say

they will continue to work together at their foundation, Callahan suggests Melinda Gates could still pursue her own philanthropic work.

"You can imagine two separate tracks where they're both working together at the foundation, and each is pursuing their own independent philanthropy outside the foundation," Callahan said.

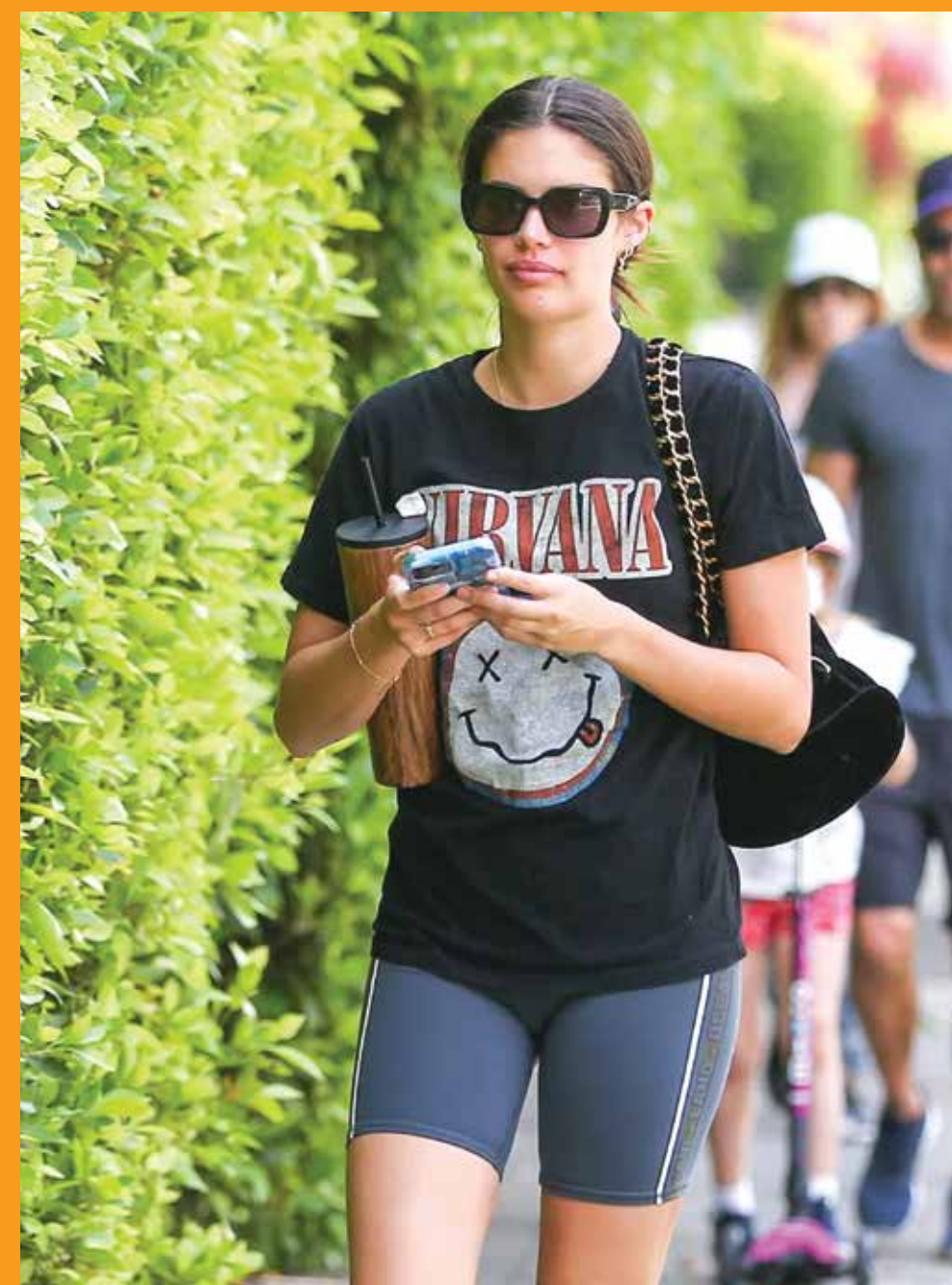
He said the possibility of Melinda Gates opening another philanthropic foundation would have a dramatic impact.

"Nobody knows what the terms are of their divorce agreement. But if Melinda Gates ends up with just some portion of that wealth and turns to creating her own foundation, it would be among one of the biggest foundations probably in America," Callahan said.

As the public face of the foundation's COVID-19 grants and advocacy work, Bill Gates has come under fire for being a staunch supporter of intellectual property rights for vaccine makers. While the tech icon says protecting the shots' recipes will ensure incentives for research and development, critics claim that mentality hampers supply in favor of drug company profits.

Last year, Bill Gates said he was stepping down from Microsoft's board to focus on philanthropy.

He was Microsoft's CEO until 2000 and since then has gradually scaled back his involvement in the company he started with Paul Allen in 1975. He transitioned out of a day-to-day role in Microsoft in 2008 and served as chairman of the board until 2014.



KEEPING IT CASUAL! Model Sara Sampaio took a stroll in Los Angeles.

Costa Rica priest sings public health message amid pandemic

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA (AP): A Roman Catholic priest better known for his outreach to the poor is winning new fans with his catchy public health-focused lyrics set to a popular 1990s salsa tune as Costa Rica experiences its worst moment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the past two Sundays, Sergio Valverde has performed his song and choreographed dance at the front of Cristo Rey church south of San Jose. His aim is getting people to wear protective masks and continue being careful.

"Without the mask, there's COVID for you, COVID for me," goes Valverde's reworked chorus for the song "Sopa de Caracol" or "Snail Soup."

Valverde said he hadn't even written down his rendition, but rather was improvising. Its viral spread on social media surprised him.

"The issue of COVID is affecting the entire world, there's pain, there's suffering," Valverde said. "I, as a priest, see so many people



suffering, sick, in pain, people without work and who are dying of hunger and I wanted to help a little."

Valverde's timing couldn't be better. Costa Rica tallied more than 2,700 new infections one day last week, a record. The intensive care units of its public hospitals have reached 95% capacity. In total, the country has recorded more than 3,200 COVID-19 deaths.

On Monday, the government forced nonessential businesses in the country's central region to close and imposed restrictions limiting vehicular traffic.

Valverde is known for his ministry to abandoned children and for giving food to

the poor. The economic crisis deepened by the pandemic has meant he's seeing more need than ever before, he said.

His performance has made it to Honduran Pilo Tejada, the composer of the Spanish version, who now says he will record Valverde's new version with him.

"The whole world is so crazy that they looked for another nut," Valverde said, admitting that he has enjoyed the experience.

Sopa de Caracol itself is an adaptation of the Garifuna song written and performed by Belizean Hernán "Chico" Ramos. The song performed by Honduran group Banda Blanca took off in 1991.

have been disregarding as a mere hobby could help you build a million dollar empire when the world resumes to normalcy again.

CANCER: Taurus season sees you ushering in a new chapter of wealth and prosperity into your existence. The truth is, you haven't always enjoyed a healthy relationship with money, but you're transmuting the lack mentality in order to make space for the abundance you truly deserve. The Universe is applauding your breakthrough and wants you to remember 'the best is yet to come'.

LEO: Reality check, Leo: you could have the best ideas in the world, but they would mean nothing until you're willing to put things into action. How and where are you letting the demon of complacency get the better of you? What are the ways in which you are limiting your own growth? The cards are urging you to exercise a little more faith in your own power and potential as you get ready to take a giant leap in the right direction. Remember, your task is merely to show up for what you believe in. 'The how' and 'the why' will be taken care of by the Universe.

VIRGO: Virgo, if you think about it—really, really think about it—you'll find that there are a million reasons to say 'no'. And then, when you think about it some more, you will realise that the voice of fear is getting the better of you. So, consider changing your approach just a little. Instead of thinking and overthinking your decisions, move into that space of unconditional love within. When you allow your

decisions to be guided by your heart, you'll find that there are no wrong decisions.

LIBRA: Inner turmoil is showing up strongly in your cards, Libra. What do you suppose is the reason behind the fluctuations in your emotional landscape? Could you be cutting yourself off from the stream of love when the Universe wants you to receive all the blessings in the world and then some? Move into your heart space, beautiful. Move into that space of compassion within as you tap into the power of your breath to transmute the blocks.

SCORPIO: We tend to glorify our romantic relationships to a point where we end up placing them on a pedestal. But this life of ours allows us to experience love in many forms. So take a moment to honour all of your connections. The soul ties that uplift you in your most vulnerable moments. Now, visualise them in a circle of trust through your mind's eye as you send them waves and waves of love to each and every individual. What you will realise in the process is that you have oh-so-much to be grateful for despite the storm.

SAGITTARIUS: Today, the cards are bringing your attention to the ancient Hermetic principle: "As above, so below, as within, so without, as the Universe, so the soul..." in order to remind you of your own magical abilities. You are a master manifestor, Sagittarius, one who possesses the potential to manifest their dreams into their physical reality. So, set your intentions with clarity and begin to take inspired action. Something tells us you are about to change the

Hart and daughter Willow.

"I said, 'I just need you to tell Willow how much I loved her,'" she recalls. "It was really, really scary and really bad."

The singer continues, "As a parent, you think about, you know, what am I leaving for my kid? What am I teaching them? And are they going to make it in this world, this crazy world that we live in now? And what do I need to tell them if this is the last time I ever get to tell them anything?"

Pink and Jameson ultimately pulled through, and she lived to write her new song, "All I Know So Far." The single is dedicated to Willow, as it's filled with the life lessons she wanted to pass down to her daughter if she hadn't survived.

The song also shares the name of Pink's upcoming documentary, which she calls the "most authentic" music

documentary she's seen.

It's unclear if Pink: All I Know So Far will highlight her family's battle with coronavirus, but Pink has previously detailed just how frightening the illness truly is.

Last April, she talked to Ellen DeGeneres about how she and Jameson contracted COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic, when doctors were still figuring out how to treat patients. She recalled how quickly their symptoms worsened, saying, "That's the point where you are just kind of like, OK are we going to the hospital? Like what are we doing right now? Because this is the scariest thing I've ever ever been through in my whole life."

After recovering, the artist donated \$1 million to COVID relief efforts in acknowledgement of the need for testing.

course of your life.

Tip: You are a master manifestor and you don't even know it yet!

CAPRICORN:

You can't always expect the truth from others, but you can expect it from yourself. We repeat: you can't always expect the truth from others, but you can expect it from yourself. So, take a moment. Take a moment to observe what's taking place in your emotional landscape. And then, without bringing guilt or shame into the equation, come into a space of truth and integrity within yourself.

AQUARIUS:

Nothing that takes place in our reality is truly random. Every event, major and minor, is connected to our pre-birth plan that we carefully co-weave with our guides in the spirit realm. So, instead of playing the blame game, accept what your circumstances are showing you. Honour each challenge as an opportunity to grow. Remember the mantra 'this too shall pass' and know that you have all the help and support you need in order to power through the lessons.

PISCES:

Truth tea, Pisces: things are not as complicated as you have made them out to be in your head. You believe in this love story just as much as they do. So, instead of looking for reasons to say 'no' or shut down, unlock that door of unconditional love within you. It's true that there is a lot you will be putting at risk here. Trust that what you will gain is far greater than anything you could potentially lose in the process.