



MAREN MORRIS REACTS TO MISTAKE CLAIMING LUKE BRYAN IS HER BABY'S FATHER
pg 08

COVID-19 IN BRAZIL: HOW JAIR BOLSONARO CREATED A CALAMITY
pg 04

GAL GADOT SPOTLIGHTS WOMEN'S STORIES IN NEW DOCUSERIES
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 06 | Issue 109 | Gangtok | Sunday 25 April 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Odisha seals border with West Bengal

BHUBANESWAR, APR 24 (PTI): The Odisha government sealed its border with West Bengal where a triple mutant variant of COVID-19 has reportedly surfaced, and intensified vigil along the inter-state boundary, officials said.

The state government on Friday sealed the routes to the neighbouring state which pass through Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts, a senior official said.

The state police has also intensified vigil at three major check posts. However, there are many porous village routes through which people can enter the coastal state from West Bengal, he said.

People who are crossing the border through the three check posts are asked to furnish their negative reports of RT-PCR, done 48 hours before travelling, or their vaccination certificates.

After entering Odisha, they have to be quarantined for 14 days.

Balasore district magistrate-cum-collector K Sudarshan Chakravarty inspected several border areas and supervised the arrangements. He said that all those returning from West Bengal will be quarantined either in institutions or paid facilities for not having RT-PCR negative reports or complete vaccination certificates.

Those carrying the required documents will also have to undergo home quarantine for 14 days, he added. Meanwhile, the sealing of the border sparked tension in certain areas as the sudden closure inconvenienced the local people, who had gone to the neighbouring state.

At least two marriage parties were stopped by the police on NH-60 in Balasore as they did not possess COVID-19 negative reports.

Debasis Dey of Dantan in West Bengal was on his way to Motiganj in Balasore when the bridegroom's family was stopped at the Lakhannath check post on NH-60, police said.

Abas Senapati of Belda in West Medinipur district of West Bengal was on his way to Paradip when his family members were also stopped. The police have also intensified vigil at bus stands and railway stations, Bhubaneswar railway station director Chittaranjan Nayak said.

Exit from platform no. 6 of Bhubaneswar railway station has been stopped while arrangements for both entry and exit have been made through platform no. 1, Nayak said. A total of 30 trains from West Bengal cross Odisha daily. Nine such trains come to Bhubaneswar with around 5,000-7,000 passengers, he said.

Active cases surge to 798 with 121 new cases

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 APR:

The number of active cases of novel coronavirus in Sikkim has jumped to 798 with 121 new cases reported in the last 24 hours. Of the 121 new cases, 97 were reported in East District, 10 in West District and 14 in South District. It has to be mentioned here that 121 samples returned positive for COVID-19 during the testing of 566 samples on Friday.

In his daily health bulletin on Saturday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia mentioned that 92 samples were found positive for COVID-19 in RT-PCR testing of 434 samples, while all four samples tested through TrueNat returned positive and 25 more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 128 samples.

New cases reported from in and around the capital are six persons from Development Area, two from Kazi Road, two from Sichey, two from Bojoghari, one from Shyari, one from Upper Burtuk, one from Upper Shyari, one from Burtuk, one from near Hospital Dara, one from Army quarter Libing, one from Namnang, one from 2nd Mile JN Road, one from Chongay, one from SIB quarter Baluwakhani, one from Tibet Road and one from Deorali.

Mr Bhutia informed that a 68-year-old lady and 19-year-old man from below Rongyek School in Decheling, one 42-year-old man and another 46-year-old man from Development Area and another two men tested at Emergency Ward were also found positive for COVID-19 but have been untrace-

able at present and are urged to immediately contact the authorities. Likewise, fourteen new cases were reported

near Tadong college, one from Daragaon, one from Bahai School Road, one from Metro Point, one from Joredhara in

from SMIMS hostel.

Mr Bhutia added that one 56-year-old man from 6th Mile Tadong and another 54-year-old

not be contacted on the given phone numbers and urged them to immediately contact the authorities.

two persons from Upper Aho, two from Central Pendam, two from Singtam, two from Baghey Khola, two from Dikchu, two from IBM Rangpo, two from NHPC Singtam, two from Majhitar, Rangpo, two from Rongli, two from Rangpo, two from Loosing Pacheykhani, one from Ranipool, one from Duga Perbing, one from Nandok, one from Lower Rakdong, one from Dhamala Colony, Singtam, one from Dungdung Khamdong, one from SMIT Majhitar, one from Dugalakha Pakyong and one from Ranka have tested positive.

Likewise, three persons from Namthang, three from Mamring, two from Namchi, two from Boomtar, two from Turung, one from Kewzing Road, Rabongla, one from Rangrang, one from Rabi Khola, one from

turn to pg02



COVID IN SIKKIM

Positive Cases to date : **7,158**
Recovered Cases : **6069**
Cases detected on 24 April : **121**
Active Cases at present : **798**
New Recoveries : **14**

Total tests
90,211

from Tadong area, which includes three persons from 6th Mile, two from

5th Mile, one from Gairi Gaon, one from near Brand Factory and one

man from Bahai School Road, who tested positive for COVID-19, could

In East District, eight persons from NHPC Ama-ley, six from Ranipool,

All educational institutions to remain closed till 31 May

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 APR:

Four days after a Circular directed that government schools and colleges remain closed till 31 May in light of the surge in Covid-19 infections in the country, the Education issued another Circular today informing that all educational institutions - central and state government, government-aided and private - will remain closed till 31 May as well.

The first circular had triggered a lot of confusion in the State since it addressed only government schools and colleges and students

enrolled in private institutions were left wondering whether their institutions were to reopen on 30 April till when all schools had earlier been ordered closed for allow teachers above 45 years of age to get their vaccine shots.

The Education Department Circular issued today also details that while students are not required to go to school, teachers and non-teaching staff are required to be at their workplaces on 50% attendance system. Gazetted officers are to attend office regularly as per guidelines issued by the Home Department,

the new circular informs.

Government employees are not allowed to leave their station without prior permission.

While online classes are to continue, where online mode is not feasible, "homeschooling may be continued as per the consent of the parents and duly maintaining all covid-19 related safety protocol," the Circular adds.

Senior students can attend school for specific activities like practical assesment, uploading of marks and other matters related to board examinations which are not possible on the online platform.

National Panchayati Raj Day 2021

GANGTOK, 24 APR (IPR):

The National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated through virtual mode duly addressed by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Panchayati Raj, Narendra Singh Tomar.

The virtual meeting at the State level was attended by Zilla Adhakshya, East, Samsher Bokhim, Pr Secretary, CS Rao, RDD, Sabhapati, Karma Bhutia, Budang Kamarey Gram Panchayat, East, Prabhakar Rai, Director Panchayat from NIC, Gangtok, with participation of award-ee Panchayats and officials of South and North Districts from their re-



spective district headquarters.

The Prime Minister in his address congratulated all the Panchayats and functionaries of the

country on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day. He requested the elected bodies to concentrate on the schemes meant for the welfare

of the people. The cash awards to the awardees were also transferred electronically by the Prime Minister.

turn to pg02

Singhik-Sentam first GPU from Mangan to receive national award



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 24 APR:

Singhik Sentam GPU has become the first GPU to receive a national award from Mangan block. On the occasion of Panchayati Raj Day, the GPU was presented the Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar 2019-2020 today.

Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award 2019- 2020 went to Tingvong GPU under Passingdang Block. The GPU has received the award for the third time [2016, 2018 & 2021].

Speaking to the North District media, Panchayat President, Tingvong congratulated, Zilla Panchayats, Gram Panchayats, PRI functionaries, SHGs, NGOs, Youths, Volunteer, Standing Committees, Gyapon and public of the GPU for their continued support.

Further, he thanked the BDO, BAC Officers/ Official, PRI Member Passingdang Block, Line Departments for their cooperation. He also congratulated Singhik Sentam Gram Panchayat for receiving NDRGG-SP-2021.

Nakul Das Rai pens his journey from the village to Parliament

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 APR:

Former Member of Parliament Nakul Das Rai's autobiography, 'Mero Jiwan Katha - Gaon Dekhi Sansad Samma,' was released on Saturday at his residence at Assam Lingzey, about 20KM from Gangtok.

Former civil servant and respected litterateur, KN Sharma, launched the autobiography penned in Nepali at a simple function attended by Assam Lingzey elders and Mr Rai's family members.

Mr Rai is presently based in Chennai undergoing medical treatment and had reportedly desired that the book's first edition was released and made available to his well wishers, family members and close acquaintances of his political journey.

Mr Rai had served Sikkim as its Lok Sabha representative for one term from 2004 to 2009 in the 14th Lok Sabha elected to the Parliament on an SDF ticket.



"Despite his ill-health, Nakul Das showed strong determina-

tion to work on his memoirs and I congratulate him for coming up with his autobiography. We all wish him speedy recovery," said Mr Sharma.

Mr Sharma had assisted the former Parliamentarian in putting the autobiography together. In his book, Mr Rai, apart from sharing his life's story, devotes deep meditation on the need to preserve one's culture and language, and how politics has evolved in Sikkim.

In his message, Mr Rai shares

that his family members and close friends had been urging him to pen his autobiography covering his political journey.

"I have written about good and bad times of my life. Apart from that, many true incidents have been brought to life about the SDF regime," Mr Rai shares.

The book further aims to bring awareness among the people of Sikkim about the history of Nepali/Gorkha community, said Mr Rai.

The book also presents Mr Rai's take on the "failure" of po-

litical leadership in Sikkim since the time of late LD Kazi to Pawan Chamling.

Messages from Chief Minister PS Tamang and MoS (Youth Affairs) Kiren Rijiju are also published in the autobiography.

"Our association dates a long way back and as I fondly reminisce those days, I appreciate our moments of challenges, hardships that we faced and which, perhaps, has moulded us to what we are today. We had probably joined politics at the same time and matured over time, simultaneously. Besides his laurels as a Parliamentarian, I have seen many admirable qualities by which Sikkim has gained from his philanthropic contributions," the Chief Minister writes.

During the event, a brief introduction of the book was presented by JP Rai who commented that the former MP was an eternal optimist and has proven this again by penning and publishing his memoir despite his severe health problem.

turn to pg02

Bengal reports 14,281 Covid cases in 24 hours in biggest single-day spike

KOLKATA, 24 APR [NDTV]: Bengal reported 14,281 new Covid cases on Saturday - the most in a day since the pandemic began two years ago - and nearly double the 7,713 reported just one week ago, as the state experiences a frightening surge in infection rates with two phases of elections still to come.

The state also reported 59 Covid-linked deaths in the past 24 hours - up from 34 one week ago and two on April 1 - and its active caseload has increased from 45,300 to 81,375 in just eight days.

State capital Kolkata reported 2,970 new cases in 24 hours - an increase of 48.7 per cent from the 1,998 reported on April 17. Twenty deaths were reported today, compared to the 10 on April 17.

The positivity rate is now 7.2 per cent.

On Friday the state said air passengers from Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Mad-



hya Pradesh and Gujarat have to carry Covid-negative certificates, not older than 72 hours, to enter Bengal from April 26. A similar rule already exists for passengers from Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka and Telangana.

The spike in cases comes as Bengal holds

an eight-phase Assembly election, the campaigning for which medical experts have flagged as a likely reason for the rapid spread of the virus.

Senior political leaders - including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee - have held massive rallies,

roadshows and campaign events where social distancing is almost entirely absent and many were seen without face masks.

These rallies have been held - despite warnings from experts - as the country records a massive and daily spike in numbers; this morn-

ing India reported nearly 3.5 lakh new cases in 24 hours.

Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Banerjee have since said they will reduce the number of campaign events and cap the number of attendees at their rallies.

On Thursday the Chief Minister ruled out the pos-

sibility of a lockdown, and said that a universal vaccination programme for all those over 18 would start from May 5. The centre's vaccination programme for all those over 18 starts May 1.

Ms Banerjee also urged people to adhere to COVID-19 norms - wearing faces masks, maintaining social distance and using sanitisers. She also said she would write to the centre on vaccine pricing. Last week the Chief Minister wrote to the Prime Minister about the need for vaccines and Covid medication in a state where the pandemic has become a poll issue, with the ruling Trinamool accusing "outsiders" coming to campaign of driving the Covid spike.

Earlier she had also requested the Election Commission to club the remaining phases of the election into a single phase - a possibility the poll body had turned down earlier that day.

Sikkim Idol awaits Covid normalcy for mega auditions

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 APR:

R K Waling, the coordinator for Sikkim Idol organized by Hamro Varta Television, informed today that auditions for the event have been completed in all four districts to a tremendous response.

He informed that a total of 2,226 singers participated in auditions in

the districts from whom 1,525 were shortlisted for the mega audition to be held in Gangtok.

Of these 1,525, there are 186 singers in the junior category and 1,339 seniors.

The mega auditions will be organized as soon as the COVID situation gets some normalcy in the State, Mr Waling informs.

Delhi Diagnostics Lab sounds caution over Covid testing material shortage



NEW DELHI, 24 APR

[NDTV]: A large diagnostic chain has sounded caution over an impending shortage of material used in testing for COVID-19 amid a surge in cases across the country in what is now being called a deadly second wave.

Thousands and thousands of people have been scrambling every day to send their samples for Covid testing. This surge in testing volume has added to the pressure of diagnostics labs across towns and cities.

"As the city grapples for oxygen and hospital beds, the latest update regarding shortage of supplies of essential testing reagents for inflammatory marker tests such as IL6 (interleukin 6), D Dimer and CRP is becoming another problematic area," Dr Arjun Dang of Dr Dangs Lab said in a statement.

"These are important tests that directly dictate management of Covid positive patients and empower physicians to take timely decisions regarding next steps and also to advice hospital admission," said Dr Dang, whose lab founded in 1983 is counted among India's best.

"We humbly request the authorities concerned to step in immediately and help diagnostic labs across India to expedite supplies of these reagents from manufacturers so that the labs

can give timely reports to patients," Dr Dang said.

Another top diagnostics chain, Dr Lal PathLabs, in a tweet on Friday denied allegations by some people on social media that it had stopped taking samples for Covid testing.

"Dr Lal PathLabs would like to clarify on the misinformation being circulated regarding discontinuing the RTPCR testing in Delhi NCR. Please note that this information is not true and we continue to test to the best of our ability and capacity," Dr Lal PathLabs tweeted.

"Our teams are working hard to collect and test within reasonable turnaround time. We continue to remain focused on the task at hand and fully support the effort in fighting the pandemic," it said.

The caution over a possible shortage of material needed for testing comes amid a tragic shortage of medical oxygen in hospitals in several states, including Delhi.

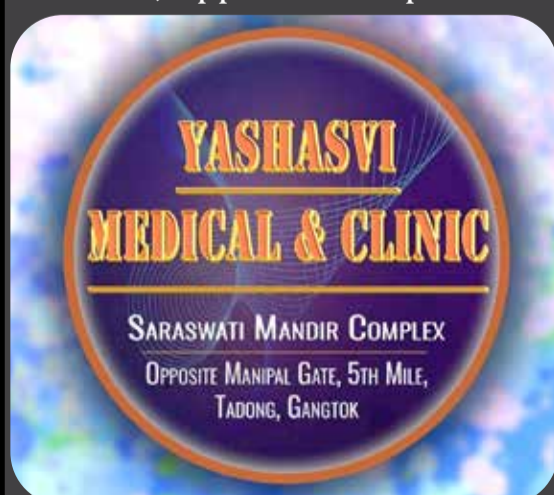
Social media is full of stories of desperate people trying to find oxygen or a hospital bed for their friends and family.

More and more people this time are complaining of breathlessness, which needs oxygen support. However, the supply of oxygen has become severely limited due to the sudden jump in demand across cities and towns.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

4 katha land available for sale at Middle Palas, Siliguri. Price negotiable. Interested buyer may contact: 9647889596

YASHASVI MEDICAL & CLINIC, 5th Mile, Opposite Manipal Gate.



NEW CLINIC TIMING.

Doctor Available: (Monday- Saturday)

- 1.General Physician: 7 AM-9AM,
- 2.OBG & Gynecologist: 9-10AM.
- 3.Pediatrician: 8:30-9:30 AM.
- 4.Skin Specialist: 5-7PM.
5. Orthopaedic : 5-7 PM.
- 6.Cardio Specialist: 4-6PM.
- 7.Medicine (Gastrointestinal Specialist) :5-6PM.

Call For Appointment : 6294683018 / 7908242665

Nakul Das Rai...

What is more, the account is also truthful since he has also spoken frankly about his personal shortcomings in the book, Mr JP Rai said.

On the occasion, some family members and villagers of Assam Lingzey also shared the nature of their association with Mr Rai and the values they have imbibed from the politician and all extended their wishes for his speedy recovery.

Family member Rashmi Rai presented the welcome address while the vote of thanks was proposed by AP Rai.

Active cases surge...

Singhithang, one from Assangthang and one from Lower Ghurpisey in South District tested positive for COVID-19. In West District, four persons from Upper Fambong, Sombaria, two from Pelling, one from Yulsom, one from Dalapchand, one from Lower Lingchum and one from Okharey Sombaria reported COVID-19 positive.

Mr Bhutia informed that four tourists, who have left Sikkim, also tested positive for COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the figure of recovered cases COVID-19 has improved to 6069 with the release of 14 more persons from home isolation after completing their isolation period.

Likewise, a total of 4,792 persons were vaccinated for COVID-19 in different parts of Sikkim on Friday, in which 1884 persons have received the first dose of vaccine and 2908 persons have completed the vaccine schedule with the second dose.

National Panchayati...

The Prime Minister mentioned about the SVAMITVA project launched for providing property cards, and also released the property cards to those states covered in the first phase. He directed all states to follow up for early execution of the project meant for welfare of the people. He highlighted upon the Drone survey of properties and focused on the activities of the Panchayats like Jal Jeevan Mission, Mission Antodaya, Public Finance Management System and Online Audit of works for transparency. Further mentioning about India moving ahead towards 75th Independence, he laid emphasis upon the development time fixed by the Gram Panchayats and fulfilment of the same.

Touching upon Covid, he requested all to be vigilant and careful with proper dissemination of information regarding protective measures to be adopted. He said that all should follow the initiative "Dabai Bhi and Kadai Bhi" in view of preventing all from contagion.

Similarly, Chief Minister of Sikkim, PS Tamang and Minister for RDD, Sonam Lama have also congratulated the awardee Panchayats of the state and extended their greetings and good wishes to all on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day-2021.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at GANGTOK:

For circulation details Contact: (Sandeep) 9734152451 & for Advertisement booking at 9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp. Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri – 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

Irshad Ali/ Imteeyaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezine – 2, 2nd floor. Kolkata – 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. 9830547774/ 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/ irshad_ali123@rediffmail.com

"Treat this as SOS": Arvind Kejriwal writes to Chief Ministers for Oxygen

NEW DELHI, 24 APR

[NDTV]: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has sent out an SOS to all chief ministers amid a crippling shortage of medical oxygen triggered by the massive coronavirus surge. He said he was writing to his counterparts seeking help to resolve the crisis by diverting spare oxygen to the national capital.

"I am writing to all CMs requesting them to provide oxygen to Delhi, if they have spare. Though the Central govt. is also helping us, the severity of corona is such that all available resources are proving inadequate," he tweeted.

Delhi, currently the worst-hit city, has been reporting over 20,000 daily Covid cases for the last few days. On Friday, it recorded the highest-ever 348

deaths in a day.

Delhi's over 90,000 active cases are exerting tremendous pressure on its health infrastructure. Acute shortages of medical oxygen, medicines and intensive care beds have been reported in the city.

"I would be grateful if you could provide us with any oxygen, along with tankers, from your state or any organization in your state. Kindly treat this as an SOS," Mr Kejriwal wrote in the letter.

Calling for a united front against the pandemic, Mr Kejriwal said the virus didn't recognise borders.

"We must also move beyond them and work together. We need to show the world what good and efficient governance looks like," he added.

Several big and small

hospitals treating Covid patients in Delhi have said their oxygen supplies are running dangerously low.

A hospital in Delhi today witnessed 25 deaths within a few hours because of the shortage of oxygen.

"We had been allotted 3.5 metric tonnes of oxygen from the government. The supply was to reach us by 5 in the evening, but it reached around midnight. By then, 25 patients had died," Dr DK Baluja, Medical Director at Jaipur Golden Hospital, told NDTV.

The centre had last week increased Delhi's oxygen quota to 480 metric tonnes. The Delhi government today told the High Court that the medical system in the national capital would collapse if it didn't receive

the promised amount of the live-saving gas.

Earlier this week, the court had asked the centre to provide the required amount of oxygen to Delhi. "Beg, borrow or steal," the judges had said, warning that "all hell would break loose" if hospitals ran out of oxygen.

In a meeting of chief ministers with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, Mr Kejriwal had warned that a "big tragedy" could happen because of the oxygen shortage. He had also said that some states were stopping tankers carrying oxygen to Delhi.

PM Modi later appealed to all states to fight the pandemic together. He also said no states should stop oxygen supply meant for other states.

63 new cases push Mizoram's COVID-19 tally to 5,283

AIZAWL, APR 24 (PTI):

Sixty-three fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in Mizoram in the last 24 hours, taking the state's tally to 5,283, an official said on Saturday.

The new cases were reported from Aizawl district (52), Lawngtlai (7) and two cases each from Lunglei and Champhai districts, the official said. Fifty-four cases were detected during contact tracing while nine patients have travel history, he said. Mizoram now has 644 active COVID-19 cases while 4,627 patients have recovered from the disease, the official said.

The state's COVID-19 death toll so far is 12. Mizoram has tested 2,87,694 samples for COVID-19 till date, including 1,992 on Friday.

According to state Immunisation officer Dr Lalzawmi, a total of 1,62,463 people, including 39,906 senior citizens have been administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.



caseloads have triggered critical shortages of hospital beds, medicines and life-saving oxygen.

Disquieting visuals showing the family members and friends of Covid patients scrambling to arrange beds and medical supplies have emerged from worst-hit states. In Delhi, several hospitals treating coronavirus patients said they have just a few hours of oxygen left.

On Saturday, a Delhi hospital reported that 25 patients had died in a few hours because of the oxygen shortage. Chief Minis-

ter Arvind Kejriwal today sought help from all chief ministers to plug the widening demand-supply gap of the life-saving gas. "I am writing to all CMs requesting them to provide oxygen to Delhi, if they have spare. Though the Central govt. is also helping us, the severity of corona is such that all available resources are proving inadequate," he tweeted.

Several countries, including the United Kingdom, European Union and France, have expressed solidarity with India.



Hamro Varta to cycle wider awareness about Covid

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 APR:**

Hamro Varta Television, a Gangtok-based media house, has announced plans to organise a Cyclothon to generate wider awareness against Covid-19. The event, 'Ride Against COVID-19,' will have cyclists pedal from Gangtok to Rangpo on 30 April.

An organizing committee headed by

RK Waling as chief coordinator has been formed to organize the cyclothon.

Addressing a press conference here today, the chief coordinator explained that Hamro Varta Television came up with a cycling event to reach out to the masses with awareness on coronavirus and its prevention.

He added that the event was also an attempt to encourage people to stay fit and

strong by adopting healthier lifestyles.

Likewise, general secretary of the organizing committee informed that a link for the event was available in the Hamro Varta Facebook page for interested participants to register for cyclothon.

Registration is free.

She added that the event will take in only 40 cyclists who will be registered on first come-first served basis.

Bengaluru reports over 17,000 Covid cases in biggest single-day surge

BENGALURU, 24 APR [NDTV]: Karnataka reported nearly 30,000 COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours - the biggest single-day surge in the state. The state reported 208 deaths due to Covid in during the same period.

The positivity rate is 15.52 per cent and case fatality rate is 0.7 per cent, according to government data.

The state capital Bengaluru also reported its biggest ever single-day Covid surge with over 17,000 new cases. The total active cases in the state are now 2.3 lakh.

The Karnataka technical advisory committee on Covid has asked the state government to impose stringent restrictions, including lockdown for two weeks to break the chain of infections. The members

of the panel have asked the state government to increase the number of hospital beds to tide over the crisis.

"There are two main strategies. First, we need to reduce the number of cases and that will happen only by a stringent lockdown for at least 14 days. And second, we should expand the bed capacity by taking as much as possible beds from all private medical colleges, nursing homes and hospitals," Public Health Foundation of India's Giridhar Babu told news agency PTI.

The Bengaluru civic body BBMP's chief Gaurav Gupta said their officials are working overtime at the Covid war room.

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa in a video conference told Prime Minister Narendra Modi

that the state needs 1,500 tonnes of medical oxygen and two lakh vials of the anti-viral drug remdesivir.

The state has imposed night and weekend curfews, and ordered shops and business to remain shut.

The surge in Covid cases in recent weeks have led to what is now being called a deadlier second wave of the pandemic. Social media is full of stories of desperate people trying to find oxygen or a hospital bed for their friends and family.

More and more people this time are complaining of breathlessness, which needs oxygen support. However, the supply of oxygen has become severely limited due to the sudden jump in demand across cities and towns.

Faced with staff shortage, AIIMS discontinues contact tracing of exposed healthcare workers

NEW DELHI, APR 23 (PTI): The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here has decided to discontinue contact tracing of exposed healthcare workers and quarantine of asymptomatic contacts amid the current COVID-19 situation that has led to insufficient resources and shortage of staff. Only symptomatic healthcare workers (HCWs) will be tested and only those testing positive will be isolated and managed as per the clinical condition.

The decisions were taken at a COVID-19 review meeting held under the chairmanship of AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Thursday. "In view of the current situation

of COVID-19 leading to insufficient resources for contact tracing, and shortage of staff, the risk assessment and contact tracing of exposed HCW and quarantine of asymptomatic contacts should be discontinued. Only symptomatic HCW should be tested and only those testing positive be isolated and managed as per the clinical condition," the AIIMS said.

It has been further decided that asymptomatic healthcare workers may be able to join work after 10 days period from the onset of symptoms provided that they are afebrile for at least last 24 hours without the use of antipyretics and symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

Those who are asymptomatic may join work 10 days from the date of the first positive test.

Amid an alarming rise in the number of COVID-19 patients at the premier facility, Dr Naveet Wig, the head of the department of medicine at AIIMS, who is also the chairperson of the COVID-19 Task Force, on Wednesday had requested all his colleagues from other departments to provide 80 per cent of residents and 80 per cent of faculty members for COVID-19 management.

Dr Wig had said that in view of an alarming rise in number of COVID-19 patients and the opening of multiple COVID-19 facilities in the hospital, the need of manpower has increased multi-fold.

42 new COVID-19 cases in Andamans, tally rises to 5,569

PORT BLAIR, APR 24 (PTI): The COVID-19 tally of Andaman and Nicobar Islands rose to 5,569 as 42 more people tested positive for the infection, a health department official said on Saturday.

Thirty-four new COVID-19 cases in the union territory were detected during contact tracing while eight were airport arrivals, the official said.

Passengers arriving by flight from other places have to take Rapid Antigen Test at the airport here.

The archipelago now has 146 active COVID-19 cases with 138 patients in South Andaman district and eight in North and Middle Andaman district. The Nicobar district has no active COVID-19 case at present, he said.

Forty-nine more people have been cured of the disease, taking the total number of COVID-19 recoveries in the union territory to 5,358.

The COVID-19 death toll remained at 65 as no fresh fatality was reported in the last 24 hours, he said.

The administration has so far tested over 3,60,595 samples for COVID-19. The test positivity rate is 1.55 per cent, he said.

More than 97,00 people have been vaccinated in the union territory so far, the official added.

CONTACT

**SUMMIT TIMES
REPORTERS
SINGTAM
8170070813**

**MANGAN/ DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213**

**GANGTOK
9800571148**

8116388176

9832424750

8016270440

Agra COVID crisis deepens as cases surge

AGRA (UP), APR 24 (PTI): Renu Singhal had been seeking hospital admission for her husband, gasping for breath. She was turned away by three-four private hospitals and after being denied an ambulance, she reached a government facility here in an auto-rickshaw. She even performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on her husband, but could not save his life.

The incident took place on Friday. Eyewitnesses to the incident said Renu Singhal, resident of Awasthi Vikas Sector 7, had brought her husband Ravi Singhal (47) at the Sarojini Naidu Medical College (SNMC) and Hospital. Her husband was facing breathing problems and in desperate attempts to save him, Renu gave

mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to him, they said. He was declared dead by SNMC doctors. Reports of hospitals refusing admissions to patients have become common in the city of the iconic Taj Mahal. The denials pose hazards to those who are critically ill. The city residents are running from pillar to post either to get their ailing family members admitted to hospitals or to procure medical oxygen and medicines. Or, as some said, it was a combination of the two factors.

When contacted, Agra Chief Medical Officer RC Pandey said the district is reeling under the shortage of medical oxygen. "We are managing it according to the availability," he said. The CMO, however, claimed that beds are available for serious patients in

Agra hospitals. Many people complained that they are forced to wait for hours, roaming from hospital to hospital in search of a bed.

On Saturday, a resident complained that his mother-in-law was denied admission to hospital and claimed that the delay led to her death.

Meera Devi, a 52-year-old patient from Gari Bhadoria, died due to unavailability of ventilator at a private hospital. She was coronavirus positive and was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Agra.

According to her son Mahendra Pal Singh, "It took several efforts to admit my mother to a private hospital, but due to unavailability of ventilator, she could not be saved." "My mother was denied admission by

three-five private hospitals and she did not get admission to government hospitals as well. She was, however, admitted to a private hospital, where she died due to lack of ventilator," Mahendra Pal Singh said.

According to the CMO, Agra has 34 dedicated hospitals for COVID-19 patients and the government-run SNMC has about 290 beds in COVID ward.

Agra on Saturday reported 530 new cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the infection count to 16,726. The district has an active case count of 4,136 and death toll of 217. A total of 12,373 people have so far recovered from the infection in Agra, which has a COVID-19 recovery rate of 73.97 per cent, according to official data.

TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

PARYATAN BHAWAN
TADONG - EAST SIKKIM

Website: www.Sikkimtourism.gov.in

Phone no. 03592-232218, Fax: 03592-232216

Email: secy_tourism@yahoo.com

No:-

Dated:

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed quotations are invited from interested parties and local educated unemployed youth(s) for taking on lease "New Cafeteria at Bakthang Waterfalls" situated at Bhojoghari, East Sikkim of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department on AS IT IS WHERE IT IS BASIS". The details of the properties/assets and additional information can be obtained from the Office of Under Secretary (Assets), Paryatan bhawan, Tadong East Sikkim during office hour.

SL. No.	Name of the property	Rent per months(Rs.)	TDR(Security Deposit) (Rs.)	Cost of tender form(Rs.)
01	New Cafeteria at Bakthang Waterfall, Bhojoghari, East Sikkim	26000	1,56,000	1300

Time Schedule:-

1. Sale of Tender form : Dated 03.05.2021 office hour.
2. receipt of Tender Form along with the relevant documents : Date 18.05.2021 Time : 01.00 p.m.
3. Opening of Tender Documents in Office of Additional Secretary, Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim. : Dated 18.05.2021 Time : 02.00 p.m.

The intending contractors/bidder may visit the website of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department i.e. www.sikkimtourism.gov.in for information and further details or contact Office of the "under Secretary (Assets)) in Paryatan bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim.

R.O. No. 34/IPR/Pub/Classi./21-22
Dated: 22.04.2021

Sd/-
Additional Secretary
Tourism & Civil Aviation Department

File No.235/GSCDL/20-21/09
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited,
5th Floor Kisan Bazaar, Lall Bazaar Road,
Sikkim - 737102
E Mail - gangtoksmartcity@gamel.com
CIN - U93090WB2017SGC23807

No.55/GSCDL/21-22 Date:20/04/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of general public residing within the Municipal Limit of Gangtok Municipal Corporation that Gangtok Smart City Development Limited is going to conduct property survey within Gangtok Municipal Corporation wef 25th April 2021. The main purpose of conducting property survey is to capture the details of property within the city and to create a GIS based layer for future planning of water supply, sewerage, electricity, other developmental schemes and other scientific purposes.

In this regard it is hereby appealed to all the citizens residing within the city to kindly co-operate with the surveyors and enumerators by way of providing accurate information so that a robust city level database can be created.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited

Government of Sikkim
Department of Information & Public Relations

"I appeal to everyone to get vaccinated for the safety of oneself and others against COVID-19"

- Ganga Prasad
Governor of Sikkim

Do not believe in rumours being spread about the vaccine

Focus on the 5 fold strategy

Follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour

Thankyou Govt. of India for making this possible

I did not hesitate

#SikkimFightsCorona

#VaccineSavesLives

#Unite2FightCorona

Let's come together to make the Hon'ble Prime Minister's initiative "Dawai Bhi Kadai Bhi" successful and beat COVID-19

Make Corruption a Dirty Word Again

Let's stop finding excuses to justify it

Corruption is clearly not a dirty word any more. In fact, it is now routine, and even expected. Almost everyone has been at either the receiving or the bribing end of this social exchange, and this dilutes the disdain one would expect for this permanent feature of “official work”. The supporters of corruption assume that it is in fact beneficial. This goes with “greasing the squeaky wheel” or simply “grease money” argument. As a 20th century thinker put it: “Had corruption not been beneficial it would never have been so common.”

On a more serious note though, the problem with the “beneficial” argument of corruption is that the benefit is limited to a few, and what is worse, this comes at the cost of the larger community. Moreover, corruption aggravates the issue of haves and have-nots and hurts the poorest of the poor, since, once bribing becomes routine, they get cut off from even the due processes because they do not have “show money”. And it is not us who say this. A study by the World Bank has revealed that “grease money” does not speed up the bureaucratic delays to iron which out most people offer bribes; instead it creates more hurdles on the way.

The firms that pay more bribes are not necessarily more efficient, rather they are more likely to spend more, not less, management time with bureaucrats negotiating regulations, and face higher, not lower, cost of capital, the World Bank report details.

The reason behind this is simple to understand. Bribes are designed by the bureaucrats to extract rents [for the rules they sit on]; therefore, more bribes call for more regulations so that more rent can be extracted. This is also the reason why we say corruption breeds corruption. This, perhaps, also explains why governments are more keen on enacting rules and regulations and not as excited about the prospect of facilitating or even governing.

No matter how much we play around with words, fact remains that corruption has an element of perverse incentive. It not only rewards the cheater but also penalises the honest, thereby decaying the whole system. While there are those who might still argue that the problem of corruption is “too big” or “too pervasive” to be solved by the effort of an individual or an individual agency, the society has tackled many bigger problems to let this one continue without a fight. It is time the people started priming themselves to deliver this malaise the knock-out punch. Once they are so convinced, they could also brainstorm the ways and means to achieve that goal as well.



COVID-19 in India: an unfolding humanitarian crisis

MICHAEL HEAD
theconversation.com

There have been many predictions about how many people have had COVID-19 and whether or not this or that country has reached herd immunity. We have seen this before in Manaus, Brazil, and in India. The optimism is alas always misplaced and occasionally used irresponsibly.

We have seen approaches to naturally acquired herd immunity proposed as high-profile ideas for public policy in the UK and internationally, such as the Great Barrington declaration. These proposals have been widely decried by health experts, including in the John Snow memorandum. The World Health Organization described the idea as “scientifically problematic and unethical”.

There is no doubt that a humanitarian emergency is unfolding in India right now. India is a catastrophic example of a population that has certainly not reached herd immunity against COVID-19. The stories of a collapsing health system are numerous, with reports of a lack of oxygen for hospitalised patients and bodies burning on pyres in the streets.

India has locally made vaccines, which are being rolled out, including the AstraZeneca vaccine. But the proportion of the population that is immunised is still very low, and alas, there are more than enough susceptible people for the virus to keep spreading.

The numbers are stark too. The Financial Times put together a sobering review of the data, with unwanted new world records being set for new confirmed cases in one day. One of the most worrying aspects is the level of under-counting that will be happening.

The test positivity rate (the proportion of people tested for COVID that return a positive test) in India is high – around 18%. This is well above the WHO threshold of 10%, suggesting that a lot of positive cases are being missed because of a lack of

testing capacity and timely reporting.

Indeed, one of the key concerns is the lack of high-quality real-time data to give an informed picture of the scenarios that are unfolding in India. The numbers of deaths are starting to rise on a steep trajectory, and that graph will surely soar further over the next few weeks.

When there was speculation around a possible reaching of herd immunity, India was relatively becalmed with much lower levels of COVID-19, vaccines becoming available and a pandemic that was appeared to be under control in South East Asia.

So what changed all that? There has been a lot of focus on the B1617 variant, which was first detected in India. There is still a lot to learn about this variant, such as whether it is more transmissible and thus contributing to an increased community transmission. It is a plausible theory, but as yet unknown.

But it is the mixing of susceptible populations that ultimately drives the transmission of respiratory infectious diseases. There were bold declarations from senior political figures, with Health Minister, Harsh Vardhan, saying in early March that India was in “the pandemic end game”.

SUPER-SPREADING EVENTS

Since then, there have been mass gatherings in India. In March and April, there were state-level elections across several Indian states, which comes with associated campaigning and population mixing. Fans attended the international cricket matches between India and England, with full stadiums and few wearing masks. And there have been several large religious festivals, such as the Kumbh Mela, an event that occurs once every 12 years and is attended by millions.

There are recent examples from China, Saudi Arabia and Israel where key religious calendar events have been cancelled or scaled-back, to reduce the mixing of infectious and susceptible people during the pandemic. This includes the Hajj and Chinese New Year.

India may have scaled back on their celebrations a little, but millions have been gathering for Kumbh Mela across different sites, and thousands of new coronavirus cases are already confirmed in revellers.

KNOCK-ON EFFECTS

The Serum Institute of India is one of the most important buildings in the world at the moment. It is producing the AstraZeneca vaccine in large numbers, and is a key provider to many countries including the Covax Initiative. However, exports from India have fallen in recent weeks and it would not be a surprise to see the Indian government move to keep even more of the precious vaccines within India.

This will affect the supply for other lower-income countries. There will be a significant knock-on effect from the humanitarian crisis within India that sustains the pandemic for even longer. It shows how reliance on few manufacturing sites for such vital products is vulnerable to lethal consequences.

This highlights the importance of global preparedness. When the fire service is summoned to the burning building, it has already bought and fitted the hose beforehand. Public health fire-fighting during the pandemic is close to impossible when the main tool to put out the fires (vaccines) is not available for the first 12 months and in short supply thereafter.

The world needs all the vaccines it can get, so factors such as equity of distribution and public confidence have to be addressed to ensure that AstraZeneca and other vaccines are made available far and wide and not just to wealthy countries.

For while countries around the world look on, we may easily have “the next India” just around the corner. How much excess death must we see before global cooperations overcome the “me first” approaches from the wealthier countries?

[the writer is Senior Research Fellow in Global Health, University of Southampton]

COVID-19 in Brazil: how Jair Bolsonaro created a calamity

ALFREDO SAAD FILHO
& FERNANDA FEIL
theconversation.com

Brazil has had what is arguably the worst pandemic policy response in the world, driven by its far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro. The president's choices in handling COVID-19 have triggered an unparalleled tragedy in the country, with potentially catastrophic implications worldwide.

Matters have deteriorated considerably since the emergence of a new and more contagious variant in the country, known as P1. The death toll in Brazil has been rising relentlessly, reaching 4,250 on April 8 – the highest number of daily fatalities from the disease on Earth.

The health system has collapsed in numerous cities. There, oxygen supplies are rationed, ICU beds are fully occupied, and both staff and equipment are lacking.

There are reports of patients being tied up in order to be intubated, for want of anaesthetics. Hundreds have died on trolleys, hospital floors or at home, even when their families could procure much-needed oxygen tubes in the parallel market,

Three factors have converged to create this living hell.

First, Brazil is one of the most unequal countries on Earth, and deep and overlapping inequalities have created vulnerabilities among disadvantaged populations. These vulnerabilities have become more entrenched since 2016, when president Dilma Rousseff was removed from office in an impeachment that amounted to a parliamentary coup d'état.

The pandemic provides further evidence of the country's inequality: COVID-19 disproportionately affects black Brazilians, the poor and the unemployed.

Second, Brazil has always suffered from acute political and institutional limitations, which have gotten worse since Rousseff was ejected from office. The two governments since 2016 have sponsored neoliberal reforms that increased labour

precarity, eroded social security, and left public services dramatically underfunded. These reforms were underpinned by a constitutional amendment, which froze non-financial expenditures of the federal government in real terms for 20 years.

The new fiscal regime has legitimised brutal funding cuts in the name of an arbitrary fiscal rule. Brazil's universal health system, inspired by the British NHS, has

created a patchwork of rules in the country, which Bolsonaro used as an argument against any and all restrictions. The president has also forced the country's ministers of health – of which there have been four over the past year – to focus on unproven cures like ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine, all the while leaving the health system to implode.

DECLINING SOCIAL SUPPORT

boosted his popularity significantly.

However, with the start of the new fiscal year, in January, the income support programme ended just as the latest wave of COVID-19 infections was ramping up. It was replaced in April by a much smaller grant of 250 reais a month for up to three months, conditional on deeper reforms of the public administration and fiscal cuts elsewhere.



been degraded in recent years under this programme of austerity.

Finally, there is the role played by Bolsonaro himself. As COVID-19 spread, the president systematically downplayed the risks and blocked any centrally coordinated response. He also undermined mayors and state governors when they tried to impose their own lockdowns, social distancing rules or mask mandates.

Administrative confusion inevitably

The only significant measure to protect the poor was initiated by the left in Congress: an emergency income support of 600 reais (US\$108) a month during the pandemic, together with other expansionary measures including credit lines for small and medium enterprises. These measures were approved as part of a “war budget” bypassing the fiscal deficit limits. Bolsonaro then presented the income support as his own grant to the poor, which

The lack of federal support has made it impossible for the states and municipalities to impose local lockdowns, virtually guaranteeing that the pandemic would get worse.

NECROPOLITICS IN ACTION

The situation in Brazil is a prime example of “necropolitics” in action. Necropolitics is the use of political power to dictate whether people live or die. In this iteration, COVID-19 is taken to be a fact of nature that only affects the weak.

This is factually wrong, but this politics of resentment, conspiracy and misinformation is typical of the world's current cohort of authoritarian leaders, who often spin falsehoods in order to create conflict, shift attention and block alternative policies.

Bolsonaro has declared that he is avoiding serious COVID measures in order to protect the economy. However, this trade-off does not exist. International experience shows the economies that tackled coronavirus decisively had both lower death tolls and smaller contractions of economic activity (for example China, South Korea, Vietnam). Those that sought to avoid lockdowns suffered the highest death tolls and the worst economic shocks. Brazil's economy is currently nosediving.

Bolsonaro's neglect of the pandemic has allowed the government to roll out, virtually unnoticed, a range of initiatives that remove protections for labour and the environment, all the while opening up indigenous lands for agriculture and mining. It has also diverted attention from corruption scandals involving the president's family.

Bolsonaro bears direct responsibility for the Brazilian tragedy in a manner that goes beyond the incompetence or mendacity of his response. The president has deliberately promoted the spread of COVID-19 to polarise the political atmosphere for his own gain, and to facilitate the roll out of a wholly destructive programme of government.

In the meantime, the population has been left exposed to coronavirus. The neoliberal reforms, the dismantling of the state and the destruction of the environment remain top of the government's agenda. The outcome has been a skyrocketing death toll, the worst economic contraction in Brazilian history, and increasing social and political chaos.

[Alfredo Saad Filho is Professor of Political Economy and International Development, King's College London; Fernanda Feil is Assistant researcher, Universidade Federal Fluminense]

Aizawl to be in railway map in next two years

AIZAWL, APR 24 (PTI): Mizoram capital Aizawl will be on the railway map in the next two years as construction of the 51.38 km long stretch of the broad gauge railway line between Sairang and Bairabi on the Mizoram-Assam border is expected to be completed by December 2023, a railway official said.

Sairang is about 20 km from Aizawl.

The Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR) official said on Friday that work is in progress at different stages and almost all tenders for various works have been finalised.

He said that 89.55 per cent of earthwork, 37 per cent of major bridges and about 73.26 per cent of minor bridges have been completed.

Twenty one per cent of the construction of cut and cover tunnels has also been completed, he said.

There are 32 tunnels (12.67 km total length), 16 cut and cover tunnels (2.58 km total length) along the 51.38 km long stretch of the broad gauge railway line, which traverses through Thingdawl and Tlangnuam



Blocks of Kolasib district and Aizawl district.

There are 55 major bridges of which six are tall bridges having a height of more than 70 m (the tallest being 101.4 m), 87 minor bridges, five road overbridges and eight road underbridges.

Apart from Bairabi, the railway line will pass through four stations - Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang and Sairang. Mizoram chief secretary Lalnunmawia Chuauango on Friday visited

various construction sites of the BG line and interacted with railway officials.

He shared positive feedbacks with the NFR officials and urged them to expedite the construction.

Chuauango assured the commitment from the state government to tackle any issue that might hamper the construction works.

He exuded hope that the project when completed will unlock the

untapped economic potential of the state.

The foundation stone of the Sairang-Bairabi broad gauge line was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2014.

The project was started in 2015 and was initially scheduled to be completed by 2018.

The project could not be completed on time due to several hurdles, including hilly terrain, deep valleys and gorges, frequent landslides,

short duration of working season due to monsoon and lack of labour and construction materials in the state.

The project when completed will open good economic opportunity as commodities will be transported in much cheaper, cost-effective, and eco-friendly way and state farmers will be able to send their produce to the wider market of the various states at a cheaper rate and in a time-bound manner.

Arunachal Pradesh reports 134 new COVID-19 cases

ITANAGAR, APR 24 (PTI): At least 134 more people, including 10 security personnel have tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, pushing the tally in the northeastern state to 17,430, a senior health official said here on Saturday. This is the highest single-day spike recorded in the state so far during the second wave of the pandemic, he said.

The death toll remained at 56 with no fresh fatality reported, State Surveillance Officer (SSO) Dr Lob-sang Jampa said.

Of the fresh cases, 123 were detected through rapid antigen test while eight through RT-PCR and three through TrueNAT method.

Barring 38, all the fresh cases were asymptomatic, the official said.

Thirty eight new cases were reported from Lower Dibang Valley district, Capital Complex Region (37), West Kameng (18), Papumpare (11) and six from East Siang district.

Four cases each were also detected in West Siang and Changlang, three each in Lower Subansiri and Lohit, two each in Namsai and Tirap and one in Leparada district, the SSO said.

The state now has 453 active COVID-19 cases.

Five army personnel, two CRPF jawans and three officials of the NDRF are among the fresh cases.

As many as 34 labourer of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and two health care workers have also contracted the disease, Dr Jampa said.

Sixty-one more persons recuperated from the disease on Friday taking the total recoveries in the state to 16,921, the SSO said.

The COVID-19 recovery rate is 97.08 per cent and the positivity rate 2.60 per cent.

The Capital Complex Region -- comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, has the highest number of active cases at 137, followed by Lower Dibang Valley district (110), West Kameng (55), East Siang (35), Papumpare (24), Namsai (17), Lower Subansiri (16) and Changlang (12).

Tawang district accounted for 11 active cases, Lohit (10), Tirap (8), six each in Leparada and West Siang, two in East Kameng and one each in Upper Siang, Pakke Kessang, Upper Subansiri and Lower Siang district respectively, the official said.

A total of 4,31,231 samples have been tested for COVID-19 so far, including 3,029 on Friday, Dr Jampa said. According to State Immunization Officer Dr Dimong Padung, a total of 1,99,918 people have been inoculated in the state so far since the vaccination drive began in January this year.

The state Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday approved procurement of four lakh Covishield vaccines to be administered for free on people in the age group of 18 to 44 years.

The cabinet also approved an allotment of Rs 65 crore for procurement of the vaccine.

The amount is above the budget allocation for the health department.

Jadavpur University to remain closed till May 3

KOLKATA, APR 24 (PTI): Jadavpur University authorities on Saturday announced that the institution will remain closed till May 3 due to sudden spike of COVID-19 cases in West Bengal.

JU Registrar Snehanjanu Basu told PTI only basic emergency services, required for giving logistical support to on-line classes and running administrative work on the virtual mode for the time being, will be run from the campus with the presence of very few staff who will be given all necessary protection to avert contamination.

The institution will

remain closed from April 24 to May 3, officials said.

The move followed several members of the university faculty and other staff being infected with the virus in past couple of days as the varsity had opened its administrative building which is the hub of academic activities and many faculty members and top official's attended the office as COVID-19 cases had dipped in the state in past months.

"With the sudden rise, we need to break the chain.

Hence the decision. We are also sanitising all

the buildings and blocks in an extensive manner," Basu said.

All the senior functionaries including Vice-Chancellor Prof Suranjan Das, Basu herself, faculty members are working from home.

A senior functionary of Jadavpur University Teachers Association said to their knowledge university authority will review the situation on May 3 and take decision about whether the campus can be opened for academic and administrative works with 50 per cent attendance, based on the emerging situation.

8 dead in avalanche in Uttarakhand's Chamoli



GOPESHWAR (U'KHAND), APR 24 (PTI): Eight Border Roads Organisation (BRO) workers were killed in an avalanche near the Indo-China border in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, officials said on Saturday.

Two bodies had been recovered from the site in Sumna area of Niti Valley on Friday night, while six more were recovered on Saturday, District Magistrate Swati Bhauria said.

Four injured have been rescued from the site, where rescue operations are on, Chief Min-

ister Tirath Singh Rawat told reporters at Joshimath.

Around 391 BRO personnel out of over 400 who were at work when the avalanche occurred on on Friday are said to have reached the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) camps safely, said Rawat, who undertook an aerial survey of the area to assess the damage.

Sumna, where the avalanche occurred is approximately 25 km from Malari village and located near the confluence of Girthigad and

Kiogad, two streams that originate from Dhauli Ganga, which witnessed a calamitous avalanche in February in which 80 people were killed and 126 went missing.

Heavy snowfall in the area is hampering the rescue operations, which is being carried out jointly by the ITBP, NDRF and the SDRF, the chief minister said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured of all help in the rescue operations, Rawat said.

A similar avalanche at Sumna had killed eleven ITBP personnel in 1991.

Jerusalem tension triggers Gaza-Israel fire exchange

JERUSALEM (AP): Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired some three dozen rockets into Israel overnight Saturday, while the Israeli military struck back at targets operated by the ruling Hamas group. The exchange came as tensions in Jerusalem spilled over into the worst round of cross-border violence in months.

The barrage of rocket fire came as hundreds of Palestinians clashed with Israeli police in east Jerusalem. The clashes, in which at least four police and six protesters were injured, have become a nightly occurrence throughout the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and show no signs of stopping.

The U.N. envoy to the region, Tor Wennesland, condemned the violence and said the United Nations was working with all sides to restore calm.

"The provocative acts across Jerusalem must cease. The indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centers violates international law and must stop immediately," he said. "I reiterate my call upon all sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further escalation, particularly during the Holy month of Ramadan and this politically charged time for all."

The U.S. also appealed for calm, while neighboring Jordan, which serves as the custodian for Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites, condemned Israel's actions.

Jerusalem, home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, has long been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2014, similar tensions erupted into a 50-day war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group.

The Israeli military said a total of 36 rockets were fired into Israel throughout the night. It said six rockets were intercepted, while most of the others landed in open areas. There were no reports of injuries or serious damage, but the incoming rocket fire set off air-raid sirens throughout southern Israel.

In response, the army said fighter jets and helicopters struck a number of Hamas targets in Gaza, including an underground facility and rocket launchers. Hamas did not claim responsibility for the rocket fire, but Israel considers the group responsible for all fire emanating from the territory.

The military imposed limits on outdoor gatherings in southern Israel early Saturday but lifted the restrictions several hours later and allowed people to resume their normal routines.

Israel and Hamas, an Islamic group sworn to Israel's destruction, are bitter enemies that have fought three wars and numerous skirmishes since Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007.

Although neither side appears to have an interest in escalating tensions, Hamas sees itself as the defender of Jerusalem and may feel obligated to act, or at least tacitly encourage rocket attacks by other groups, ahead of upcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections. Hamas' armed wing has warned Israel "not to test" its patience. At dawn, hundreds of people in Gaza challenged nightly curfews imposed by Hamas to curb the coronavirus outbreak and took to the streets in an act of solidarity with fellow Palestinians in Jerusalem, burning tires.

The Palestinians want east Jeru-

salem to be the capital of their future state. Its fate has been one of the most divisive issues in the peace process, which ground to a halt more than a decade ago.

Palestinians have clashed with Israeli police on a nightly basis since the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan nearly two weeks ago.

The tensions began when police placed barricades outside the Old City's Damascus Gate, where Muslims traditionally gather to enjoy the evening after the daytime fast.

The clashes intensified Thursday evening when hundreds of Palestinians hurled stones and bottles at police, who fired a water cannon and stun grenades to disperse them. Dozens of Palestinians were wounded in the melee.

At the same time, a far-right Jewish group known as Lahava led a march of hundreds of protesters chanting "Arabs get out!" toward the Damascus Gate. The group, led by a disciple of the late racist rabbi Meir Kahane, is allied with elements of a far-right party elected to Israel's parliament last month.

The show of force came in response to videos circulated on TikTok showing Palestinians slapping religious Jews at random. Other videos made in response to them appear to show Jews assaulting Arabs. After keeping them a few hundred yards (meters) away from Damascus Gate, police used water cannon, stun grenades and mounted police to push far-right protesters back toward mostly Jewish west Jerusalem.

In all, police said 44 people were arrested and 20 officers were injured.

There were concerns the violence could reignite following Friday noon prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, but thousands of worshippers dispersed peacefully after Muslim religious leaders called for restraint.

But in the evening the clashes resumed as dozens of Palestinians marched toward an entrance to the walled Old City of Jerusalem. Police said the protesters threw stones and fireworks and damaged both civilian and police cars.

Palestinian medical officials said six Palestinians were injured, with two hospitalized. Israeli police said four officers were hurt.

Early on Saturday, Jordan strongly condemned "the racist attacks on Palestinians." Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi tweeted: "As the occupying power under international law, Israel is responsible for stopping these attacks & for the dangerous consequences of failing to do so." Jordan has had a peace agreement with Israel since 1994, but relations in recent years have been chilly, in part because of recurring disputes over Israeli actions in Jerusalem.

The U.S. Embassy said it was "deeply concerned" about the violence in recent days. "We hope all responsible voices will promote an end to incitement, a return to calm, and respect for the safety and dignity of everyone in Jerusalem," it said.

The Old City is home to a sensitive holy site known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as the Temple Mount. The site, home to the Al Aqsa mosque compound, is the third-holiest site in Islam. It also is the holiest site in Judaism, revered as the spot where the biblical Temples once stood.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

It's easy to relax... When you can trust the News.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK: For circulation details Contact: +91-9749876495, +91-9647102692 & for advertisement booking at +91-9733427905 or at office no 03092 208498. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI: Mr. Mani Rai, M/A. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No 7, 1st fl. 983082977, E-mail: contact.summit@gmail.com/irahad_at123@gmail.com

KOLKATA OFFICE: Irshad Ali/ Imteyaz, Synapse, 4, Madon Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 933-2212448/ fax 933-2212437/ mob. +91-9836547714/ +91-98322080753

Phone 03592-208698 +91-98322556698 +91-98322080753

www.summittimes.com news@summittimes.com summittimes@gmail.com advertise@summittimes.com

Address: Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road Near Diesel Power House (DPH) Gengtok, East Sikkim, 737001

Nets back atop East after beating Celtics 109-104

NEW YORK (AP): After Kyrie Irving piled up the points in two previous games against Boston, his shot wasn't there Friday night. He made up for it with every other aspect of his game.

Irving just missed a triple-double despite an awful shooting night, Joe Harris scored 20 points and the Brooklyn Nets regained first place in the Eastern Conference with a 109-104 victory over the Celtics on Friday night. "We know that we're not going to have it right away some games, so we've just got to battle through," Irving said.

He had torched his former team for 77 points in 67 minutes in a pair of victories this season, but this time shot just 4 for 19 and missed all six of his 3-pointers.

But he scored 15 points, including the finishing free throws with 1.6 seconds left, and added 11 assists, nine rebounds and four steals as the Nets finished a season sweep of the Celtics, just the third in their franchise history.

"He didn't have his typical scoring night, but it's few and far between that he doesn't score the ball at a prolific rate," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "He didn't, but he definitely disrupted the basketball defensively and overall he draws a lot of attention, so I thought he was great in a lot of different ways than we're accustomed to."

Jayson Tatum had 38 points and 10 rebounds but was doing it mostly alone in the first half, when he had 25 of the Celtics' 51 points.

Payton Pritchard (22 points) and Marcus Smart (19) got it going after halftime, but the Celtics couldn't overcome 19 turnovers that gave Brooklyn a whopping 32-0 advantage in fast-break points.

"Any time you turn the ball over a lot and you give a team like Brooklyn opportunities to get out in transition, get easy shots and stuff like that, it's going to be tough to win games," Pritchard said.

Both teams were without two of their three best players. Kevin Durant missed a third straight game with a bruised left thigh, remaining sidelined along with James Harden (right hamstring).

Jaylen Brown missed his second straight game with left shoulder bursitis, while Kemba Walker rested his left knee on the second night of Boston's back-to-back after beating Phoenix on Thursday.

Boston cut Brooklyn's 17-point lead to 98-95 with about 3 1/2 minutes left after consecutive 3-pointers by Pritchard and Tatum. But Harris answered with a 3-point and Irving passed ahead to Jeff Green for a dunk to quickly push the lead back to eight.

Green had 19 points for Brooklyn, which won for only the third time in six games. But that's good enough to move back ahead of idle Philadelphia, which has dropped three in a row.

'It's tubular right now': A's win 12th in a row, top O's 3-1

BALTIMORE (AP): Leave it to a guy from SoCal to describe what's happening with his team from NoCal.

"It's tubular right now," A's pitcher Cole Irvin said.

The Oakland Athletics earned their 12th consecutive victory -- the club's longest winning streak in almost two decades — defeating the Baltimore Orioles 3-1 on Friday night. Irvin, from Anaheim, California, took a shutout into the sixth inning to keep the A's rolling.

Oakland's string is its longest since it won a franchise-record 20 in a row in 2002. It is the Athletics' third-longest winning streak since moving to Oakland in 1968, and is the longest in the majors since Houston's 12-game run from June 6-18, 2018.

Ramón Laureano homered and Irvin won consecutive starts for the first time in nearly two years as the A's improved to 13-1 since dropping their first six games.

"We are absolutely in this thing and we're having a lot of fun," Irvin said. "Even when we went on that little six-game skid, there was no panic in the locker room. In years past, I've seen it definitely encompass a room. The guys were more together during those six games. "Right now, the vibes are really now.



They're high. We're enjoying riding the wave right now," he said. Baltimore has lost seven of its eight home games.

Irvin (2-2) had won back-to-back starts just once before, his first two career starts for Philadelphia in May 2019. Coming off six shutout innings against Detroit on Saturday, he stymied the Orioles for five innings. But Baltimore stitched together four singles in the sixth, capped by Pedro Severino's RBI single, to end Irvin's night.

Reliever Yusmeiro Petit then retired the next two hitters to strand the bases loaded. Petit has allowed just one

run over 10 innings in his last nine appearances.

"Key to the game, again," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said. "We've seen him do it I don't know how many times. It's not an easy thing to do, especially when you're not throwing 98 miles an hour, you don't have a wipeout, strikeout pitch. He's just very aware of what hitters like and don't like and puts it just out of reach."

Irvin allowed eight hits and a run in 5 1/3 innings. He struck out six.

Jake Diekman worked the ninth to earn his second save in as many tries. The Orioles

were 2 for 9 with runners in scoring position and left 10 men on base.

"We had opportunities," Baltimore manager Brandon Hyde said. "We had an opportunity in the first inning, an opportunity in the sixth with the bases loaded. Just didn't get the big hit. We have to move the ball with runners in scoring position. We're punching out too often."

Oakland tagged Baltimore starter Jorge López for two runs in the second inning. The first two batters of the inning walked and both moved up on a wild pitch. Seth Brown's grounder scored the first run,

and Stephen Piscotty followed with an RBI single. Laureano chased López (1-3) with a solo shot to lead off the fifth. López allowed three runs and five hits while striking out one in four innings.

TRAINER'S ROOM
Athletics: OF Mark Canha was out of the lineup for the first time this season but is expected to play Saturday. "He's just maybe a little under the weather," Melvin said. "Nothing to do with COVID or anything. Just feeling a little funky today." ... Melvin said LHP A.J. Puk (strained biceps) was shut down for a few days, but is expected to resume

throwing before the end of the weekend. ... INF/OF Chad Pinder (sprained left knee) began a running progression Wednesday but has yet to resume full baseball activities.

Orioles: LHP John Means (1-0, 1.52 ERA) will receive an additional day of rest and start Sunday's series finale. Means threw seven shutout innings Sunday at Texas in his last outing.

CAMDEN YARDS ADDS COVID-19 TESTING

Camden Yards began providing voluntary COVID-19 tests to fans Friday as part of a partnership between the club and the Maryland Department of Health. Free PCR tests will be available on the lower-level concourse at Camden Yards on each game day between when the gates open and either 2 ½ hours after first pitch or the top of the eighth inning, whichever comes first. The Orioles will not require testing to enter the stadium.

UP NEXT
Athletics: RHP Chris Bassitt (1-2, 4.43 ERA), who is 2-0 with 2.18 in three career starts against Baltimore, receives the nod as the three-game series continues.

Orioles: Hyde said the Orioles will go with either a bullpen game or add a starter from the team's alternate training site on Saturday.

Liverpool fans protest at Anfield against American owners



LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND (AP): Banners bearing slogans calling for the removal of Liverpool's American ownership were on view outside Anfield before the team's Premier League match against Newcastle as English soccer fans continued to show their dissatisfaction about the aborted Super League project on Saturday.

The protests on Anfield Road were muted compared to those by several hundred Arsenal fans outside Emirates Stadium on Friday ahead of its game against Everton. The sentiments were similar, however, with club owners the targets of criticism.

"Enough is Enough FSG Out" and "Henry, You have blood on your hands," were the words on some of the banners, referencing Fenway Sports Group and principal owner John Henry.

There were around 150 Liverpool fans out-

side the stadium and they greeted the players and management with warm applause as the team bus arrived at Anfield.

That highlighted the separation supporters were making between the owners of England's so-called "Big Six" clubs who were behind the Super League, and the rest of the club.

"The part I have struggled with is seeing this club, a place I love and am now proud to call my home, trashed — and done so in a manner which suggests no redemption is possible. That I can't take," Klopp said in his notes in the matchday program.

"It was right to take apart the concept and it was fair to criticize it, along with those who came up with it and also how it was presented. All legitimate in my view. The anger and disappointment was justified but there were times when the distinction be-

tween 'club' and this decision (and yes, those responsible for it) were too quickly blurred into one."

Chelsea is among the clubs that attempted the breakaway and more protests are expected before its game against West Ham later Saturday. A statement published late Friday by Chelsea expressed "regret" at members of its hierarchy getting involved in the Super League proposals, though there was no apology.

It promised to involve supporters in any future discussions about "new mechanisms or structures" and to "safeguard fan representation in the club's work."

"The club does ask, however, that this dialogue is conducted in a respectful way," the Chelsea statement said. "The abuse which some club representatives have been the target of over the past few days is not acceptable."

Nets' Durant remains out; Celtics' Brown, Walker sidelined

NEW YORK (AP): Kevin Durant missed his third straight game Friday against Boston after Nets coach Steve Nash said the forward's bruised left thigh hadn't healed enough to play.

The Nets had listed Durant as questionable earlier in the day but ruled him out a couple hours before the game. Nash said the All-Star

was close and possibly could return Sunday against Phoenix, but acknowledged that it may not be until next week.

They are already playing without James Harden because of a strained right hamstring.

The Celtics also remained short-handed, with Jaylen Brown missing his second straight game with left shoul-

der bursitis and Kemba Walker sitting out the second of back-to-back games to rest his left knee. "It's the NBA in 2021. You're going to both have people out. It's the way it goes," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said.

Boston did get back Evan Fournier after he missed the last nine games for health and safety protocol reasons.

Stephen Curry, Warriors welcome back fans and beat Nuggets

SAN FRANCISCO (AP): Stephen Curry's pregame warmup had a little added flair with so many more people watching again. He loved seeing all the familiar ushers as he drove up to the arena three hours early. He thanked the fans before tipoff for being patient and persistent through a pandemic.

Curry scored 32 points, Draymond Green added 19 assists and 12 rebounds, and the Golden State Warriors welcomed back fans for the first time since the pandemic began by beating the Denver Nuggets 118-97 on Friday night.

"Just a little bit different of a buzz inside and outside the arena," Curry said. "I know you got to take it slow and obviously keep everybody safe but ramp up how many people can get in the building and slowly but surely get back to a full, packed house where that energy is second to none.

Us on the floor, we live off of that. You try to bring it when it's an empty arena, you do your best but it makes such a difference with fans."

Nikola Jokic scored 19 points for Denver in a matchup of MVP candidates with Curry, who received a rare technical with 33.7 seconds left in the third when he wanted a foul call. Michael Porter Jr. led the Nuggets with 26 points, hitting seven 3-pointers. Denver forward Will Barton went down 59 seconds into the game with a strained right hamstring and didn't return. He hit the floor awkwardly on the baseline beneath the Nuggets basket.

"Our guys regrouped," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "Will went down. He went down early and then we had to find other guys to step in and play. But I think



all of you guys are fishing for we lost this game because of Will's injury. Don't make that excuse for us. Will Barton went down, he's hurt and we feel for him. But we all get paid on the first and 15th, do your job. We didn't do our job tonight — I didn't, the players didn't, and it's unacceptable."

Fans chanted "M-V-P! M-V-P!" for Curry, who shot 11 for 18 with four 3s and also grabbed eight rebounds in his 12th 30-point performance over the past 13 games and 29th of the season.

"I'm not surprised. I think it's a no-brainer," Mychal Mulder said.

Jordan Poole knocked down a corner 3-pointer to beat the buzzer ending the third as Golden State got another big boost from its bench to win a third straight home game. Poole finished with 15 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. 23 in his new reserve role.

"It's a new role for Kelly but you can see how he's embraced it, how he's handled it," coach Steve Kerr said.

The Warriors began a stretch with nine of their final 13 games at home — where they hadn't played with fans in the building for 409 days. Attendance was 1,935, with the team having hoped

for about 2,000 people. Fans were greeted with a special video board message — welcome home — limited number of player family members and guests had been the only ones in attendance.

The depleted Warriors welcomed back Juan Toscano-Anderson from the concussion protocol after he took a dangerous fall and cut his head at Boston last week. He entered at the 6:08 mark of the first quarter to loud cheers and contributed nine points and eight rebounds.

"Having fans is always fun, especially after playing in empty gyms," Toscano-Anderson said. "I appreciate all the fans. Shoutout to all the essential workers who have made this possible." Golden State shot 53.6% and had 39 assists.

"You have to find a way to get stops and we were just unwilling to do that tonight," said a disgusted Malone, whose Denver team shot 38.6%.

CURRY THE ENTERTAINER

Curry clearly loved having fans to entertain again, going through a dazzling warmup in which he kicked basketballs high toward the enormous video scoreboard and had fun — waving to a cheering group above the tunnel

once done with his pregame work. The two-time MVP took a moment before tipoff to thank the fans for their patience during this "unprecedented situation."

"There was such a great energy in the building tonight and a reminder of what we've missed," Kerr said. "Only I guess a couple thousand but it felt like a lot more. Just such a welcome sight."

FIRST FAN
Anthony Calvo, 27, of San Ramon, was honored as the first fan back at Chase Center. New Warriors COO Brandon Schneider greeted him at the door about 4:50 p.m. after Calvo arrived to take his COVID test at 10:30 a.m.

An employee of the City of Redwood City who helps secure school supplies for teens in need, he planned to connect after the game with wife Kerissa for their planned Big Sur weekend getaway. He received a No. 1 First Fan Back uniform and signed gear from the team.

TIP-INS
Nuggets: Barton was injured on Golden State's home floor after Jamal Murray tore the ACL in his left knee late in the game here against the Warriors on April 12 and needed surgery. ... Denver had won its previous two on the road.

ASEAN leaders meet Myanmar coup leader amid killings

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (AP): Southeast Asian leaders met Myanmar's top general and coup leader in an emergency summit in Indonesia Saturday, and are expected to press calls for an end to violence by security forces that has left hundreds of protesters dead as well as the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political detainees.

There is little hope for an immediate breakthrough in the two-hour gathering in Jakarta between Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing and the six heads of state and three foreign ministers representing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. But his decision to face them offers a rare chance for the 10-nation bloc to directly deal with the general who ousted one of its leaders in a Feb. 1 coup.

"The unfolding tragedy has serious consequences for Myanmar, ASEAN and the region," Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said on the eve of the summit.

One proposal, which has been discussed in preliminary meetings, is for Brunei Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah, the current ASEAN chair, to travel to Myanmar to meet the military leadership and Suu Kyi's camp to encourage dialogue. He would be accompanied by ASEAN Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi — also from Brunei — if the junta agreed, a Southeast Asian



diplomat told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Another diplomat said humanitarian aid could be offered to Myanmar if conditions improved. The diplomat also spoke to AP on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss such plans publicly.

Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi of Indonesia expressed hopes that "we can reach an agreement on the next steps that can help the people of Myanmar get out of this delicate situation."

Following the coup, ASEAN, through Brunei, issued a statement that did not expectedly condemn the power grab but urged "the pursuance of dialogue, reconciliation and the return to normalcy in accordance with the will and interests of the people of Myanmar."

Amid Western pressure, however, the regional group has struggled to take a more forceful position on issues but has kept to its non-confrontational approach.

All ASEAN states agreed to meet Min Aung Hlaing but would not address him as Myanmar's head of state in the summit, the Southeast Asian diplomat said. Critics have said ASEAN's decision to meet him was unacceptable and amounted to legitimizing the overthrow and the deadly crackdown that followed. Daily shootings by police and soldiers have killed more than 700 protesters and bystanders, according to several independent tallies.

Amnesty International urged Indonesia and other ASEAN states to investigate Min Aung Hlaing over "credible allegations of responsibility for crimes against hu-

manity in Myanmar." As a state party to a U.N. convention against torture, Indonesia has a legal obligation to prosecute or extradite a suspected perpetrator on its territory, it said.

"The Myanmar crisis triggered by the military presents ASEAN with the biggest test in its history," said Emerlynne Gil of the London-based rights group. "This is not an internal matter for Myanmar but a major human rights and humanitarian crisis which is impacting the entire region and beyond."

Police dispersed dozens of protesters opposing the coup and the junta leader's visit.

More than 4,300 police have fanned out across the Indonesian capital to secure the meetings, held under strict safeguards amid the pandemic. Indonesia has reported the highest number of COVID-19

infections and deaths in Southeast Asia. The leaders of Thailand and the Philippines skipped the summit to deal with coronavirus outbreaks back home. Laos, which has the least number of infections in the region but this week imposed a lockdown, also canceled at the last minute. The face-to-face summit is the first by ASEAN leaders in more than a year.

ASEAN's diversity, including the divergent ties of many of its members to either China or the United States, along with a bedrock policy of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs and deciding by consensus, has hobbled the bloc's ability to rapidly deal with crises.

Aside from Myanmar, the regional bloc groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Chinese official in Xinjiang slams UK genocide declaration

URUMQI, CHINA (AP): A spokesperson for the Xinjiang region called accusations of genocide "counter to the facts" as China came under more pressure this week over its treatment of the Uyghur ethnic group in the remote border area.

The British Parliament approved a non-binding motion Thursday that said China's policies amounted to genocide and crimes against humanity. Human Right Watch appealed to the U.N. earlier in the week to investigate the allegations of crimes against humanity.

"The motion adopted by the British side was totally groundless," Xu Guixiang, the deputy director-general of the Communist Party's publicity department in Xinjiang, said Friday. "The decision was made on the basis of remarks by some politicians, some so-called academic institutes, some so-called experts and scholars and some so-called witnesses."

In recent years, an estimated 1 million people or more have been confined in camps in

Xinjiang, according to foreign governments and researchers. Most are Uyghurs, a largely Muslim ethnic group. Authorities have been accused of imposing forced labor, systematic forced birth control and torture.

The Chinese government has flatly rejected the allegations. It has characterized the camps, which it says are now closed, as vocational training centers to teach Chinese language, job skills and the law to support economic development and combat extremism. China saw a wave of Xinjiang-related terrorist attacks through 2016.

Xu said that hotels in Kashgar, a historic Silk Road city in Xinjiang, were empty a few years ago and entrepreneurs unwilling to invest as tourism fell off because of terrorism fears. The government organized a trip for foreign media to Xinjiang this week to defend its policies and show off what Xu called hard-won stability, which he said is bringing growing prosperity to the region.

The Foreign Ministry

labeled the genocide allegations "a monstrous lie concocted by international anti-China forces."

"The U.K. already faces a number of problems at home. Those British lawmakers should mind their own business and do something tangible for their own constituency," ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing Friday.

Britain was the latest Western country to make a genocide declaration. The U.S. government and the parliaments of Belgium, the Netherlands and Canada have also accused Beijing of genocide, although Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been reluctant to use the term.

Human Rights Watch, in a report that recommended a U.N. commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations and identify the perpetrators, said it had not documented genocidal intent.

However, "if such evidence were to emerge, the acts being committed against Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang ... could also support a finding of genocide," the report said.

HIV drugs run short in Kenya as people say lives at risk



NAIROBI, KENYA (AP): Kenyans living with HIV say their lives are in danger due to a shortage of anti-retroviral drugs donated by the United States amid a dispute between the U.S. aid agency and the Kenyan government.

The delayed release of the drugs shipped to Kenya late last year is due to the government slapping a \$847,902 tax on the donation, and the U.S. aid agency having "trust" issues with the graft-tainted Kenya Medical Supplies Authority, activists and officials said.

Activists on Friday dismissed as "public relations" the government's statement on Thursday that it had resolved the issue and distributed the drugs to 31 of Kenya's 47 counties. The government said all counties within five days will have the drugs needed for 1.4 million people.

"We are assuring the nation that no patient is going to miss drugs. We have adequate stocks," Kenya Medical Supplies Authority customer service manager Geoffrey Mwangi said as he flagged off a consignment. He said those drugs would cover two months.

The U.S. is by far the largest donor for Kenya's HIV response.

Kenya's health minister, Mutahi Kagwe, told the Senate's health com-

mittee earlier this week that USAID had released the drug consignment that had been stuck in port. Patients are expected to receive them during the week.

He said USAID had proposed using a company called Chemonics International to procure and supply the drugs to Kenyans due to "trust issues" with the national medical supplies body.

Bernard Baridi, chief executive officer of Blast, a network of young people living with the disease, said the drugs would last for just a month.

He said the delay in distributing the drugs, in addition to supply constraints caused by the coronavirus pandemic, meant that many people living with HIV were getting a week's supply instead of three months.

Many of those who depend on the drugs travel long distances to obtain them and may find it difficult to find transport every week, and if they fail to take them they will develop resistance, Baridi said.

"Adherence to medication is going to be low because of access. ... If we don't get the medication, we are going to lose people," he said.

According to Baridi, children living with HIV are suffering the most due to the shortage of a drug known Kaletra, which comes in a syrup

form that can be taken more easily. Parents are forced to look for the drug in tablet form, crush it and mix it with water, and it's still bitter for children to ingest.

Baridi urged Kenya's government and USAID to find a solution on who should distribute the drugs quickly, for the sake of the children.

On Thursday, about 200 people living with HIV in Kisumu, Kenya's third largest city, held a peaceful protest wearing T-shirts reading "My ARV's My Life" and carrying posters that read "A sick nation is a dead nation" and "A killer government."

Some 136,000 people live with HIV in Kisumu, or about 13% of the city's population, said local rights activist Boniface Ogutu Akach.

"We cannot keep quiet and watch this population languish just because they can't get a medicine that is lying somewhere, and that is happening because the government wants to tax a donation," he said.

Erick Okioma, who has HIV, said the government's attention has been diverted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected even community perception.

"People fear even getting COVID than HIV," Okioma said, asserting that local HIV testing and treatment centers were empty.

Indonesia navy finds items from lost sub, indicating it sank

BANYUWANGI, INDONESIA (AP): Indonesia's navy on Saturday said items were found from a missing submarine, indicating the vessel with 53 crew members had sank and there was no hope of finding survivors.

Navy Chief Yudo Margono said rescuers found several items from the KRI Nanggala 402, which disappeared after its last reported dive Wednesday off the resort island of Bali, including parts of a torpedo straightener, a grease bottle believed to be used to oil the periscope and prayer rugs.

"With the authentic evidence we found believed to be from the submarine, we have now moved from the 'sub miss' phase to 'sub sunk,'" Margono said at a press conference in Bali where the found items were displayed. Officials previously said the submarine's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday. Indonesia had considered the submarine as just missing.

An American reconnaissance plane, a P-8 Poseidon, landed early Saturday and was set to join the search, along with 20 Indonesian ships, a sonar-equipped Australian warship and four Indonesian aircraft.

Singaporean rescue ships were also expected later Saturday, while Malaysian rescue vessels were due to arrive Sunday, bolstering the underwater hunt, Indonesia military spokesperson Djawara Whimbo said earlier Saturday.

Dispute over Russian pipeline tests Biden's Europe outreach

WASHINGTON (AP): Pressure is growing on President Joe Biden to take action to prevent the completion of a Russian gas pipeline to Europe that many fear will give the Kremlin significant leverage over U.S. partners and allies. Yet such action could provoke an enormous rift in trans-Atlantic relations, notably with Germany, at a time when Biden has made restoring good ties with Europe a priority.

As the Nord Stream 2 pipeline nears completion, U.S. lawmakers from both parties have stepped up demands on a reluctant White House to impose new sanctions on Russian and European companies to halt the project. But prospects of that happening would seem slim: Germany continues to support the project as it steps up consumption of natural gas, and the pipeline is roughly 95% finished.

Biden has said he opposes the pipeline, which is owned by Russian state company Gazprom, with investment from several European companies. He has been keen to portray himself as tough on Russian President Vladimir Putin while being a strong supporter of Eastern European countries like Poland and Ukraine that are dead set against it as it bypasses both.

Of potentially greater concern to the U.S., the Russia-to-Germany pipeline would increase Western Europe's already heavy dependence on Russian energy while U.S.-Russian tensions are soaring over a number of issues, including Ukraine, election interference, cyber intrusions and the crackdown on opposition figure Alexei Navalny and his supporters.

At the same time, the administration is seeking broad European support, especially from Germany, the continent's economic powerhouse, for its planned withdrawal from Afghanistan, climate change

measures and efforts to counter China's increasingly global assertiveness. It's not clear if sanctions targeting businesses from Germany and elsewhere would undermine efforts to advance those goals and repair relations that were frayed during Donald Trump's presidency.

On Wednesday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously signed off on legislation that would require the administration to either impose sanctions on 20 companies involved in the pipeline's financing and construction or explain why they deserve exemptions. In January, the Trump administration hit several Russian firms and ships with penalties for their involvement, but Biden has not expanded the list.

The legislation was sponsored by vocal administration critic Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas. But it also won support from some of Biden's strongest Democratic foreign policy supporters in the Senate, like committee chair Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Chris Coons of Delaware and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.

"I think, right now, as we see Putin trying to eliminate his biggest opposition leader, Navalny, in prison, the best shot we can make is to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, if we are going to get his attention," Shaheen said.

Democrats agreed to support the sanctions after Republicans promised to drop opposition to two of Biden's top State Department nominees. The bipartisan support suggests the administration will be hard-pressed to ignore it. Biden was already stung by criticism in February for not expanding on the Trump administration's sanctions.

"We share an overall attitude towards Nord Stream 2 with many

on Capitol Hill, and that is the position that it is a bad deal," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Thursday. "We will continue to do everything we can, including consistent with legislation that's already on the books, to oppose its construction and finalization."

But the administration has yet to take a position on the new legislation, which congressional aides on both sides of the aisle believe has a good chance of passing. It would give Biden 15 days from the date of passage to make a determination on whether to hit the 20 companies and vessels with sanctions. The sanctions — which would apply to German, Russian, Polish and Austrian entities — would freeze their assets, make it difficult for them to do any international business and possibly affect their executives.

Even if Biden vetoes the legislation, he will face another deadline for action in mid-May when the State Department must submit to Congress an update on the administration's compliance with previous laws aimed at protecting European energy security that require sanctions on unspecified companies involved in the construction of the pipeline that bypasses both Poland and Ukraine. On Tuesday, Chancellor Angela Merkel defended Germany's cooperation with Russia on Nord Stream 2. She noted that Russian gas already flows freely into Europe along other routes, including the existing Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

"I would like to point out that the gas delivered through Nord Stream 2, which isn't yet flowing, is no worse than the gas from Nord Stream 1, that which flows through Ukraine, and that which comes across Turkey from Russia," Merkel said.

Maren Morris Reacts to Mistake Claiming Luke Bryan Is Her Baby's Father

Despite a news article claiming otherwise, Maren Morris and Luke Bryan did not have a child together. See "The Middle" singer's hilarious response to the misprint. Note to self: Ryan is not the same as Bryan.

While minding her own business on her tropical vacation, Maren Morris encountered what must have been a rather jarring news article about her love life. On Friday, April 23, The Sun erroneously claimed that American Idol judge Luke Bryan was the father of Maren's 1-year-old son, Hayes Andrew.

The publication wrote, "Earlier this month the hot mama, who gave birth to her first child with husband Luke Bryan in March 2020, shared a thoughtful post about her post-baby body." The problem? Maren is married to a different country musician altogether: Ryan Hurd. (The Sun has since swapped out his name in the story). Though it's fair to say Maren was probably pretty shocked to see the mistake, she was a really good sport about it.

The Grammy winner, 31, posted a screenshot of the article on her Instagram Story and turned it into a joke between friends. "I guess the cat's outta the bad @lukebryan," she wrote with a crying-laughing emoji. "The Bones"

singer also posted a GIF of a woman laughing while holding a glass of rosé.

Yet, it was Ryan's reaction that took the cake. He shared two screenshots of the

she's been posting carefree bikini pics ever since. "Tan almost everywhere. Jan almost everywhere," she captioned a gallery of photos, showing herself enjoying a



article, and joked, "DAMN YOU @LUKEBRYAN I DEMAND A PATERNITY TEST."

Five days ago, both Maren and Luke were among the winners of the 2021 ACM Awards. At the ceremony, her and Ryan's love was on full display when the couple delivered the world premiere performance of their romantic duet, "Chasing After You."

After the show, Maren and Ryan set off for a couples' retreat in Mexico, and

cocktail on the beach. They tied the knot in Nashville in 2018, and she recently described Ryan as her biggest fan.

"I really trust his opinion, especially if I have a new song that maybe we didn't write together, I always play him the mix the second I get it back, because I really trust his ear," Maren told Country Living two days ago. "I love that we're such different artists... But he's always been my biggest fan when it comes to my music and vice versa."

Shock G, off-kilter Digital Underground leader, dead at 57

LOS ANGELES (AP): Shock G, who blended whimsical wordplay with reverence for '70s funk as leader of the off-kilter Bay Area hip-hop group Digital Underground, has died. He was 57. Nzazi Malonga, a longtime friend who served as head of security and helped manage the group, said the rapper-producer was found unresponsive Thursday in a hotel room in Tampa, Florida. Malonga said the performer, born Greg Jacobs, had struggled with drug addiction for years.

The group found fame with the Billboard Top 10 hit "Humpty Dance" in 1990, as Jacobs donned a Groucho Marx-style fake nose and glasses to become one of his many alter egos, Humpty Hump. He initially maintained the flamboyant Humpty was a separate person, doing in-character interviews and sometimes having his brother Kent Racker play the part.

"Same Song" a year later served as 2Pac's introduction to music fans, with Shock G handing the baton to the future megastar, who had been working as a roadie for Digital Underground. "2Pac, go 'head and rock this."

Jacobs was an introverted "technical wizard" adept at arranging samples who played keyboards and drums, said Digital Underground co-founder Jimi Dright, known as Chopmaster J. Dright met his future bandmate while buying equipment at a music store in San Leandro, California, where Jacobs was working.

Big Boi, Chuck D, Snoop Dogg and Busta Rhymes were among those posting online tributes to Jacobs, with many expressing pain after the deaths earlier in the month of rappers DMX and Black Rob. "Our brother Shock G was a GIANT. There's not one aspect of what we do musically that this man has not influenced," wrote Talib Kweli. "The Humpty Dance" invited an

audience of awkward youth into hip-hop with its embrace of misfits and outcasts. "Stop whatcha doin' / 'Cause I'm about to ruin / The image and the style that ya used to," Shock G rapped with lighthearted bravado. "I'm crazy / Allow me to amaze thee / They say I'm ugly but it just don't faze me."

"The Humpty Dance" spoke to all the people that were like him — the fat people, the unattractive people. If you moved like him, you could be whatever you want," said Malonga.

The group's platinum-selling debut album "Sex Packets" was titled after an imagined "sex in a pill" product that Dright said was a response to the AIDS crisis. It was followed by the gold-selling "This is an EP Release" and "Sons of the P."

Jacobs, whose partner-in-rhyme was the smooth-voiced Money-B, was most comfortable performing in disguise and often struggled privately with the spotlight. "He got to be the star of a production that we had assembled and it ate him up. He didn't want to be that guy," Dright said.

Malonga said Jacobs had lived with him in the Los Angeles area for several years to get sober in the early 2000s, but had relapsed and been recently living with family in Florida. He gave away much of his wealth and worked on many unfinished side projects, struggling to find validation from those around him.

"He had hundreds of things he could create. He could draw, he could write music, play piano, he could score things, he could write stories and scripts," Malonga said. "But unless someone was telling him he was OK, he would never present that."

"I was very disappointed that he didn't really see his own talent," he added. "He was far more humble and insecure than people thought."

Lindsay Lohan's dad accused of taking kickbacks from rehab

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. (AP): The estranged father of actor Lindsay Lohan was arrested Friday on charges that he illegally took kickbacks for referring patients to a substance abuse treatment center.

Michael Lohan, 60, was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail on five counts of patient brokering and one count of conspiracy to commit patient brokering, The Palm Beach Post reported.

Authorities said a Delray Beach-area drug treatment center called Pride Recovery paid more than \$27,000 in kickbacks to either Lohan directly or to a business he was associated with, Lola Recovery Ventures of Palm Beach Gardens.

Under Florida law, it is illegal for a health care provider to pay a commission for the referral of patients. The practice has been linked to numerous instances of fraud in which rehab centers get reimbursed for performing costly and unnecessary tests on patients who have health insurance.

"Patient brokering corrupts our health care system because decisions are motivated by greed instead of a patient's needs," Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg said in a statement Friday. Aronberg said Lohan is the 117th person arrested in connection with a task force's ongoing probe into patient brokering in the area.

Lohan's attorney, Heidi Perlet, says her client denies Aronberg's allegations.

"Michael Lohan has helped countless individuals suffering from addiction issues," Perlet said in a statement to The Associated Press. "Michael should be applauded for his efforts in saving lives, not arrested for them. ... Michael is looking forward to having his day in Court where the whole truth, not the narrative put forth by the State Attorney's Office, comes out."

Lohan has had several prior run-ins with the law, including allegations of domestic violence. He appeared on season 5 of "Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew," which aired on VH1 in 2011.



GLAMMED UP! The makeup mogul, Kylie Jenner looks stunning in a yellow print dress with white boots and purse while arriving at Nobu in West Hollywood.

Gal Gadot spotlights women's stories in new docuseries

NEW YORK (AP): Gal Gadot is using her Hollywood stardom to spotlight remarkable women from around the world.

The "Wonder Woman" actor is host and executive producer of a new documentary series that follows six women who made a positive impact on their communities despite dealing with poverty, violence, discrimination and natural disasters.

The 35-year-old says "National Geographic Presents IMPACT with Gal Gadot" grew from her quest to "do something good with my fame and my social media" after the success of 2017's "Wonder Woman." She and her husband Yaron Varsano, who is also an executive producer on the series, watched a short documentary from music video director Ryan Pallotta about a dancer from the favelas in Brazil.

"We completely fell in love with the story, and we decided that we're going to build a concept around the story," Gadot said. The first episode follows a young Black figure skating coach in Detroit who has dedicated her life to coaching young girls of color to empower them.

"She's not only she's empowering them, but she's giving them a skill ... that is familiar or familiar with white people doing it, which is ice skating," Gadot said.

Another episode tells the story of Kayla, who helps create a safe community for homeless transgender women of color in Memphis, Tennessee, by building homes.

The series debuts April 26, a day after the Academy Awards. Gadot said she's encouraged by the inclusion at this year's ceremony: "Nomadland" director Chloé Zhao and "Promising Young Woman" director Emerald Fennell became only the sixth and seventh women ever to be nominated for best director.

"Women that are used to be only in front of the camera are now going to the other side of the camera and developing stories that

they're passionate about and that they care about and that now it's becoming a norm, almost. You know, you see it with the Oscars," she said. "There's a great change. But at the same time, I got to say that the change can only happen when we include the men. It's



never like you can just empower the women and not educate the men." She said that's what her DC cinematic universe superhero was able to accomplish for a new generation.

"The girls can go and be inspired by the girl and imagine themselves doing these amazing things as girls. But also, it gives them a role model for boys to admire as well and to understand that women can be strong and great and just like men," she said. "So, for me, it's educating both women and men in order to reach this place that we always talk about gender and equality and all of that. We have to do this together."

THE DAY AHEAD

Aries:
Here's the thing about closure: we don't always get it in the way that we want to. So holding onto the idea of how things should be, or should've been, isn't going to do you any good, Aries. Word for the wise: forgive, forget, and let go. Remember, what is meant for you will always find a way to work out despite the challenges, the resistance, and the opposition.
Tip: Forgive, forget, and let go as you recognise what isn't in alignment with your truth.
Taurus:
Just when you think the worst is behind you, the Universe sends yet another karmic lesson your way. It's been a rollercoaster ride with no reprieve, Taurus, and quite frankly, you just need a breather. The bad news is you may not have the opportunity to take one right away. The good news is, hidden secrets will come to the fore, giving you a sense of who is friend and who is foe. Word for the wise: take the next step cautiously.
Tip: Hidden secrets are likely to come to the fore.
Gemini:
Gemini, you've been wanting to change things around here for a while, but circumstances haven't been aligning in your favour. The not-so-good news is that you're being asked to hit the pause button once again and refrain from taking any big decisions, especially

those that involve your finances. Speaking of finances, money issues may be a constant for some of you. Continue to focus on the abundance in your life (rather than what's lacking) and know that a shift in your attitude will eventually make space for miracles.
Tip: Abundance, not lack.
Cancer:
Take a moment, Cancer. Pause, breathe and look within. As you do, reflect on the things that truly make you happy. The things that awaken a sense of joy and purpose. This simple exercise will help you realise that none of these things have anything to do with your position in Society, where you come from or the amount of money in your bank. Word for the wise: send out a prayer of gratitude for the abundance you are experiencing and the soul connections that uplift you in a multitude of ways.
Tip: What are the things that awaken a sense of joy and purpose within you?
Leo:
They're really into you, Leo, and they're going to do what it takes to let you know. A hot, steamy adventure is on the cards—the kind that involves only the two of you. As such, passion is a big theme on the professional front too. You're drawing from your personal experiences and going after that which is

sacred to you. Yes, you will face opposition on your path, but you're willing to do what it takes to get to the top.
Tip: They're into you, honey, and they're going to do what it takes to let you know.
Virgo:
The trouble is, we hold on to our material possessions tightly because we fear we may not have enough when we need it the most. The Great Spirit wants you to know that your life will be taken care of now and for the rest of your life—that there will always be more than enough to go around. So, loosen your grip just a little bit. Redirect your attention from 'lack' to 'abundance'. A Louise Hay affirmation to repeat: "I think big, and then I allow myself to accept even more good from my life."
Tip: Take that metaphorical leap from lack to abundance.
Libra:
There are periods of doing and there are periods of being. Finding a balance between the two is essential to our well-being. So, honour this as a time of dreaming. A time of floating between the realms and bridging the gap between the real and the surreal. PS: The ideas that are likely to come through at this time are nothing short of divine.

Tip: Libra, you're dreaming a new world into being.
Scorpio:
The planning and strategising phase is over, Scorpio. It's time to get into action mode. What the cards want you to remember is that you are prepared for this great change. Don't waste a single second undermining yourself or doubting your potential. If you've been looking for an investor in order to take your business to the next level, expect the unexpected very soon.
Tip: It's time to move to the next level.
Sagittarius:
It's easy to glorify change or talk about how it sets the stage for a better world. What happens when we're faced with situations that require us to let go of the old? Our resistance finds a way to get the better of us, Sagittarius. Today, you're being asked to observe this resistance closely, to loosen the grip wherever necessary, and express your gratitude for the glorious lessons learned. As you do, repeat the mantra, 'The best is yet to come'.
Tip: Loosen the grip wherever necessary.
Capricorn:
The weekend finds you love-drunk for all the right reasons, Capricorn. It hasn't been easy to get to a point where you're vibing at each other's frequency, but

your persistence helped you work through the troubles. So raise a toast to all the beautiful memories you have created thus far and all the magical moments that are yet to come. PS: Something tells us this is going to be for the long haul.
Tip: The weekend finds you intoxicated by love.
Aquarius:
It's time to reconsider the 'sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll' act. Who and what are you escaping from, Aquarius? How is numbing your pain helping you in any way? It's time to face your demons head on, beautiful. Consider working with a healer or a therapist who can provide you with much-needed perspective. Remember, there are healthier ways to deal with the fluctuations in your emotional landscape.
Tip: Face your demons instead of choosing the path of escapism.
Pisces:
Your success is no accident, Pisces. It has taken a whole lot of blood, sweat and tears to get to this point in your existence. So soften your gaze a little. Look at your victories through the lens of love. What the cards want you to remember as you march forward: it does get easier from here and you will soon be blessed with the fruits of your labour.
Tip: It's all coming together for you.