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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Incessant rain damages several houses and roads in North Sikkim

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 27 JUN:

Incessant rain over the past four days has damaged several houses and roads in North Sikkim. Mangan has been cut off as landslides have blocked the road at Namok Khola, Ambithang and Dzongu. Beyond Mangan, the road is blocked at Rafong khola where a bridge has been washed out. The alternate route via Dzongu is blocked at Lingdong and Mani Khola.

The Dikchu-Gangtok road which was blocked at Sokpay was restored on Saturday afternoon. The road at Namok khola which was blocked since Thursday is being restored and will take some days more.

The rain also triggered landslides at several places in Upper Dzongu and damaged houses belonging to Pemthee Lepcha and



Othey Tshering Lepcha of Upper Hee Gyathang. Rain has damaged part of Sonam Choda Memorial School at Lingdong.

The Panchayats have been advised to ensure

that people residing in vulnerable areas are shifted to safer locations and to avoid movement in vehicles at landslide prone spots.

Likewise, the road leading towards Mangan Senior

Secondary school, Malling ward, Mission Kothi, Ringhim and other wards above Mangan are also under threat of landslides.

District Magistrate, North, Tenzing T Kaleon,

informs that the entire district has been affected and more than 12 families have shifted to safer locations after their houses were damaged by landslides.

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Jang's forgotten couple

SUMMIT REPORT

MANGAN, 27 JUN:

Chandra Maya Limboo had never thought that one day nature would force her to leave the house she has been living in since the past many decades at Jang village in East Sikkim. She has had to face many challenges to eke out a living and support her ailing husband who has been bed-ridden for some years now.

The elderly couple could not construct a pukka house since the land where their house is belongs to someone else and was acquired by the



NHPC for Teesta Stage V. The decrepit thatched house developed cracks and sunk to one side.

Chandra Maya managed to shift her ailing husband to a safer location with help from police per-

sonnel of the Dikchu Police outpost this morning.

No local representative or official has arrived to extend support probably because the couple does not have voter cards.

Contact tracing of SSB COVID patient completed

4 MORE MAKE FULL RECOVERIES IN EAST SIKKIM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 JUN:

The contact tracing of the 22-year-old SSB jawan from Rhenock in East Sikkim who had tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday has been completed and all contacts placed under quarantine and will be tested after five days. Among the patients, four more have made full recoveries.

In his daily health bulletin on Saturday, Health Department DG-cum-Secretary, Dr Pempa T Bhutia, mentioned that the patient had reportedly completed 14 days of quarantine at the SSB camp in Siliguri and was presently at the quarantine facility at the SSB camp at Rhenock.

He further informed that the patient

had come to Rhenock PHC complaining of back pain and when the doctor learned that that he had come from the quarantine facility, he directed that he be tested for COVID.

Dr Bhutia added that the doctor, dentist and lab technician at the PHC who had come in contact with the patient have also been placed under quarantine.

He informed that the 50 SSB personnel at the camp have also been placed under quarantine and the barrack declared a containment zone.

On a more positive note, the Secretary informs that three patients were discharged from STNM Hospital this morning after having made full recoveries and one more patient is scheduled to be discharged on Sunday after having tested negative. He is a Mumbai returnee.

Petrol and diesel prices hiked, again

NEW DELHI, JUN 27 (PTI):

Petrol price on Saturday was hiked by 25 paise per litre and diesel by 21 paise, taking the cumulative increase in rates in three weeks to Rs 9.12 and Rs 11.01 respectively.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 80.38 per litre from Rs 80.13, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 80.40 a litre from Rs 80.19, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies. Rates

have been increased across the country but the final retail selling price differs from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

In Mumbai, petrol price went up from Rs 86.91 per litre to Rs 87.14, while diesel rate was hiked to Rs 78.71 from Rs 78.51.

While diesel rates have been hiked for the 21st straight day, petrol price has been raised

on 20 occasions in three weeks. The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle on June 7 now totals to Rs 9.12 for petrol and Rs 11.01 for diesel.

On June 7, oil companies had restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus during which they adjusted steep excise duty hikes by the government against the fall in benchmark international oil rates.

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India's records highest single-day COVID-19 spike with over 18,000 cases; death toll rises to 15,685

NEW DELHI, JUN 27 (PTI):

Six days after it recorded four lakh infections, India's COVID-19 tally raced past five lakh on Saturday with the highest single-day surge of 18,552 cases, while the death toll climbed to 15,685, according to Union health ministry data.

The COVID-19 case-load zoomed to 5,08,953, while 384 fatalities were recorded in the last 24 hours, the updated figure at 8 am showed.

It took 110 days for coronavirus infection in the country to reach one lakh while just 39 days more to go past the five lakh-mark on June 27

This was the fourth consecutive day when coronavirus infection increased by more than 15,000 fourth day while there has been a surge of 3,18,418 infections from June 1 till 27.

The number of active cases stands at 1,97,387 while 2,95,880 people have recovered and one patient has migrated. "Thus, around 58.13 per cent patients have recovered so far," an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases include foreigners.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), cumulative total of 79,96,707 samples have been tested up to June 26 with 2,20,479 samples being tested on Friday, the highest in a day since the beginning of the pandemic.

Of the 384 new deaths reported till Saturday

morning, 175 were in Maharashtra, 63 in Delhi, 46 in Tamil Nadu, 19 in Uttar Pradesh, 18 in Gujarat, 13 in Haryana, 12 in Andhra Pradesh, 10 each in West Bengal and Karnataka, seven in Telangana, four in Madhya Pradesh, two in Punjab, one each in Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

Of the total 15,685 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra tops the tally with 7,106 deaths, followed by Delhi with 2,492 deaths, Gujarat with 1,771, Tamil Nadu with 957, Uttar Pradesh with 630, West Bengal with 616, Madhya Pradesh with 546, Rajasthan with 380 and Telangana with 237 deaths.

The COVID-19 death toll reached 211 in Haryana, 180 in Karnataka, 148 in Andhra Pradesh, 122 in Punjab, 91 in Jammu and Kashmir, 58 in Bihar, 37 in Uttarakhand, 22 in Kerala and 17 in Odisha.

Chhattisgarh has registered 13 deaths, Jharkhand 12, Assam, Puducherry and Himachal Pradesh nine each, Chandigarh six, Goa two and Meghalaya, Tripura, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh have reported one fatality each, according to the health ministry

More than 70 per cent deaths took place due to comorbidities, it said.

Maharashtra has reported the highest number of cases at 1,52,765 followed by Delhi at 77,240, Tamil Nadu at 74,622, Gujarat at 30,095, Uttar Pradesh at

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Landslide collapses on Teesta Stage-V dam



SUMMIT REPORT

DIKCHU, 27 JUN:

A massive landslide occurred at the NHPC Teesta Stage-V dam at Dikchu on the left bank of the river on Friday night.

The landslide has cut off Lum and Lingtyang villages of Lower Dzongu. Transshipment is also not possible at this spot as the road has been completely blocked by

boulders and debris. The people of Jang and Aapdara have alleged the landslide could have been avoided if NHPC had carried out proper protection work in time.

Great Mates: a Jorethang youth collective with aims to serve society

GRACE KEREN GURUNG

GANGTOK, 27 JUN:

This pandemic surely has brought out the worst and the best in us. Some of us have been avoiding human interaction meanwhile some of us are building bridges to bond with people amidst these difficult times. Hats off to the frontline heroes battling the virus, but let us take time to acknowledge those who have voluntarily taken the initiative to help others in need.

One such group of individuals who have set out to do good, is Great Mates (GM), an independent organization formed by unemployed youth of Jorethang. They started with 15 members, were later joined by other friends and have now grown to become a 30-member group.

"At first it started with friends pulling in pocket money to provide essentials to a few houses by the river-



side and remote areas. Hearing about our initiative a lot of people started to contact us for support when they had hardly anything to eat during the complete lockdown. We then decided to take a big step and formed this

union among us friends, dedicated to do social work," said president of GM, Arpan Subba.

Great Mates has been active since 05 May 2020 and have provided more than 1500 families with food supplies

in the South and West Sikkim during lockdown. He also added that they have been delivering medical supplies to the senior citizens at remote villages and even admitted some of them to STNM

turn to pg 02

SPCC thumbs down petrol-diesel price hike, blames Centre

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee has alleged that the Central government has put more burden on the people of the country in this period of pandemic by increasing the price of petrol and diesel. This shows that the central government led by BJP is not concerned with the pain of the public, the party further alleges.

An SPCC press release informs that the Centre has increased the price of petrol and diesel ten times between 01 to 23 June. The release also mentions that the government has worked against the interest of the

people by increasing the price in the present situation and has also gone against its election promise to decrease the price of diesel and petrol to Rs 30-35 per liter after forming the government.

SPCC has further said that people of Sikkim are unhappy with the alliance government of SKM party and BJP due to mass transfers in this time of pandemic. The State government has transferred employees to Delhi where there is high risk of COVID19 infection, the party adds.

SPCC has demanded that the state government immediately revoke the transfer orders of these employees.

Free quarantine only for economically weaker section from 1 July

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

The State Government has formulated new Standard Operating Procedures for returnees entering Sikkim after 30 June 2020 according to which free quarantine facility will now be available only to those belonging to economically weaker sections.

In an order issued today by the East District

Administration, it is stated that "All Sikkimese belonging to economically weaker section of the society such as AAY/PHH/OPH categories will be allowed to be accommodated in free quarantine centres. All other returnees shall be accommodated only in paid quarantine centres."

The order will come into force from 01 July and remain in place till further notice.

Locust clouds over Gururgram, likely to spare Delhi



GURUGRAM/NEW DELHI, JUN 27 (PTI): The skies over many parts of Gurugram turned dark on Saturday as swarms of locusts descended on the town, but the migratory pests are likely to spare the national capital for now, officials said.

The dark cloud of locusts, spread across two kilometres, crossed the suburban city, touched the Delhi-Gurugram border but did not enter Delhi. "The swarms moved from west to east. They entered Gurugram around 11.30 am," K L Gurjar of the Locust Warning Organisation, Ministry of Agriculture, told PTI.

The pests, he said,

were headed towards Palwal in Haryana.

Alarmed at the invasion of the locusts, which settled on trees, rooftops and plants, many residents of Gurugram shared videos from their high-rise perches.

Swarms of locusts were seen in condominiums such as Beverly Park, Garden Estate and Heritage City as well as buildings in Sikanderpur in the high-rise town bordering Delhi.

In May, India battled a devastating desert locust outbreak. The crop-destroying swarms first attacked Rajasthan and then spread to Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

India's records...

20,943, Rajasthan at 16,660 and West Bengal at 16,190, the ministry data stated.

The number of COVID-19 cases has gone up to 12,884 in Haryana, 12,798 in Madhya Pradesh, 12,349 in Telangana, 11,489 in Andhra Pradesh and 11,005 in Karnataka.

It has risen to 8,716 in Bihar, 6,762 in Jammu and Kashmir, 6,607 in Assam and 6,180 in Odisha. Punjab has reported 4,957 novel coronavirus infections so far, while Kerala has 3,876 cases.

A total of 2,725 people have been infected by the virus in Uttarakhand, 2,545 in Chhattisgarh, 2,290 in Jharkhand, 1,325 in Tripura, 1,075 in Manipur, 1,039 in Goa, 946 in Ladakh and 864 in Himachal Pradesh.

Puducherry has recorded 502 COVID-19 cases, Chandigarh has 425, Nagaland has 371 and Arunachal Pradesh has 172.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu together have reported 163 COVID-19 cases.

Mizoram has 145 cases, Sikkim has 86, Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 72 infections so far while Meghalaya has recorded 47 cases.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)," the ministry said, adding that 8,023 cases are being reassigned to states.

State-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation, it added.

BJP delegation calls on Governor to discuss social, political and economic issues

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

A Bharatiya Janata Party delegation led by Sikkim-BJP president, DB Chauhan, called on Governor Ganga Prasad here at Raj Bhawan on Saturday.

During the meeting, the delegation discussed social, political and economic issues of the State and those related to the COVID-19 situation with the Governor, informs a BJP press release.

The release informs

that the delegation also submitted a memorandum to the Governor registering the party's appreciation of the state government's initiatives to contain COVID-19 in the State and the active role of the State government and Raj Bhawan during this pandemic.

The release mentions that the delegation also discussed on various political issues of the State and possible solutions with the Governor.

Issues which figured

in the discussions related to seat reservation for Limboo and Tamang communities in the State Legislative Assembly, tribal status to the eleven leftout communities, protection to the Article 371F etc.

The release adds that there was an alliance between SKM and BJP in the bye-elections to address these issues and BJP was committed to these issues of the State.

The release adds that

the Governor gave a positive assurance and stated that work between the State government and BJP in the interest of the people would be notable for the State.

The Governor is also reported to have asked the BJP delegation to work with the State government on all issues and appealed to everyone to make individual contributions towards the State during this COVID crisis, the release adds.

Tourism Dept team inspects projects in Rangang Yangang



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

A Tourism Department team conducted an inspection drive of Rangang Yangang Constituency wherein they surveyed the status of various ongoing tourism projects in the constituency.

The team was led by Tourism Department, Principal Chief Engineer, Prakash Chettri, Additional Chief Engineer, Project, Thupden Gyatso Bhutia and the Engineering team. They were

joined by Rangang Yangang Constituency Area In-charge, Raj Kumar Basnet, Confidential Secretary to HCM, Bikash Basnet, CLC President, Tengayla Namka and others.

The team inspected the following projects: Ziplining and Angling Infrastructre at Menglee; Lepcha Heritage Center at Kaarongthang; Tourism Recreation Center at Helipad; Tourism Facilitation Center at Selemthang and; Rope-way Project at Dhappar, Upper Yangang.

The team strictly advised the concerned contractors to ensure timely completion of the project.

CIPLA Rorathang to reinstate terminated employees after SKM intervention



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

Labour Front of Sikkim LKrantikari Morcha party has come forward to support the terminated workers of CIPLA-II unit near Rorathang in East Sikkim. An SKM press release informs that due to intervention of labour front, the management of CIPLA-II has agreed to take back the terminated workers from the month of July.

The release mentions that the management of CIPLA-II had terminated temporary employees in March and they were facing lots of problems during this pandemic

period. It is added that after the matter came to the party, the Labour Front's Chief Coordinator, Prem Raj Gurung met the affected workers and assured to provide them justice.

On the direction of the Chief Minister, PS Tamang, the labour front also placed the matter to the Area MLA, Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada and urged him to take up the matter seriously with the management to support the affected workers. The release mentions that chief coordinator, Mr Gurung and coordinator, Samsher Gurung of labour front discussed the

matter with CIPLA-II on Friday and after discussions the management agreed to take back all terminated employees from the month of July.

The release mentions that affected workers have expressed their gratitude to the State government, Area MLA, SKM party and its labour front for providing them justice.

It is added that Area MLA, Mr Khatiwada and Mr Gurung have also congratulated the workers. Mr Gurung expressed that the labour front would work continuously in the interest of workers of Sikkim.

SMIT Facility Quarantine Centre closes



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JUN:**

The facility quarantine centre established at SMIT Majhitar, East Sikkim, closed today. Additional Director Education Department, Sagar Nirola who was the Head of this Centre has handed over the key to the management of SMIT, a press release informs.

Mr Nirola mentioned that the facility quarantine centre was started from 05 May, 2020 and acknowledged the support provided by SMIT.

In-charge SMIT, Tenzing Chopel Bhutia, Roman Gurung, Mahindra Sharma, Ro-

shan Das, police personnel and doctors' team worked hard in the centre, he said.

There used to be yoga classes every morning and entertainment programs were held in the evening. Mr Nirola also informed that MP, Indra Hang Subba and many other leaders came to the centre.

Incessant rain...

He also informed that upper reaches of North Sikkim, especially Chungthang, Lachen, and Lachung areas have also been disconnected due to landslides at Ramfong. The Sub-Divisional Office at Chungthang is currently assessing the damages.

The DM further informed that the Mangan-Rangrang road is closed at Old Church area below Mangan, adding that the road at Hee-Gyathang and Goam Samdong in Dzongu is blocked at Samdong in middle Dzongu. The road leading towards Ridhang at Dzongu is also blocked. Meanwhile, the road towards Gangtok from Ramthang to Tashi View Point is clear.

At Dikchu, a huge landslide at Aap Dara crashed on the Teesta Stage-V dam, blocking the connecting road leading into Dzongu.

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Great Mates...

hospital at Socheythang when treatment was required. They travelled to the east and provided the children with sports equipment, ration and other essential commodities at Child Care Institute Bojoghari Children Home. At an era when youths are engaged with self-oriented activities, to see some youths come up with such selfless acts leaves us at awe.

"Jorethang being a border area we see a lot of ups and downs. Since our childhood we have seen the hardships of our people and some of us have even faced it. There were many before us to help the needy ones like our mothers, sisters and our employed friends who made contributions. So seeing such act of kindness it inspired us to take initiative to help the members of our society," shared Arpan Subba.

General secretary of GM, Yogen Tamang informed us that they have not asked any individual or organization for donations and the funds were contributed by the members. He added that few people outside the organization contributed ration and fuel to support the cause.

Great Mates through their zeal to help others, demonstrates compassion and care which is hard to find in this busy world. The members of the organization hope to do more for the people of Sikkim. The vice president of GM, Karma Kunsang Lama stated that the organisation has not yet been recognized as an NGO but they are in the process of registering themselves as one.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
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Price negotiable
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9641878315, 9593262407

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).
Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

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

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COVID-19 triggering panic attacks, depression and suicides, say experts

CHENNAI, JUNE 27 (PTI): As the COVID-19 wave sweeps strongly across the country, including in Tamil Nadu, mental health experts say the pandemic has triggered panic attacks among those who tested positive for the virus, causing bouts of depression and even driving some to the brink of suicide.

According to experts, nervousness, fear of contamination, panic attacks, constant reassurance seeking behaviour, sleep disturbance, excessive worry, feelings of helplessness and probability of an economic slowdown are the major factors leading to depression and anxiety among the people.

Potential job losses, financial burden, uncertainty about the future and fears of running out of food and necessities add to the worries.

Online platforms too have seen a growing number of people seeking help for mental health issues, ranging from anxiety and loneliness to concerns over productivity and job loss since the outbreak of COVID-19.

Director of Institute of Mental Health here, Dr R Purna Chandrika said towards April end about 3,632 calls were received and psychiatric counselling was provided to 2,603 callers.

"We have dedicated services at our centres in the districts and the calls meant for government medical college hospitals are routed to the respective institutions," she said.

Due to heavy virus case-loads, making this city the major contributor to the state's tally, the Greater Chennai Corporation too started a free helpline to help residents cope up with stress during the pandemic.

"From the psychological perspective, we don't find a single



human being who is not feeling some degree of stress or anxiety due to coronavirus. The intensity and impact varies from person to person," said Lt Col N T Rajan, director of Chennai-based Mastermind Foundation.

The organisation is involved in free counselling throughout India ever since the first case of the deadly virus was reported in the country.

The foundation's recommendation on not to deploy the vulnerable in the police force, especially those above 50 years and women personnel with children below five years for COVID-19 related duty, was accepted and implemented by the Punjab government. Psychiatrists feel that further worsening situations could lead to severe mental health issues, even triggering suicidal tendencies.

"Further worsening depression may lead to severe mental health issues and suicidal tendencies," said Dr S Senthil Kumar, a psy-

chiatrist. However, not all of them require medicines, he added.

"The situation is serious. There should be counselling at three stages--on coping with the virus, how to face it if tested positive and how to face life once treated and discharged from the hospital," Rajan said.

Awareness was of paramount importance, he said and warned the pandemic could cause panic attacks while in hospital or drive them to the brink of suicide.

Tamil Nadu, one of the worst affected states with a virus count in excess of 74,000 as of Friday, has witnessed a few instances of suicides allegedly related to COVID-19.

Hari Singh, owner of popular 'Irruttu Kada' halwa shop in Tirunelveli, allegedly died by committing suicide on Thursday after being tested positive for COVID-19. He was 80. Earlier in May, two COVID-19 patients in their 50s allegedly committed

suicide in separate instances, at the government hospitals they were admitted to for treatment.

In the city corporation limits, a three-member team comprising a psychiatrist, counsellor and a social worker work for the respective zones.

"We direct certain sections of people like those with withdrawal symptoms and people requiring pills, to visit the doctor at their corporation zonal at a specific time, for medicines," a health worker of the civic body said.

Health platform, Lybrate reported an increase of 180 per cent in online patient consultations related to mental health on its platform between March 1 and June 20 across the country.

The largest increase came from Mumbai and Delhi, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Bengaluru.

The biggest jump was witnessed in the age group of 25 and 45 years.

Odisha FC and assistant coach Thangboi Singto part ways

BHUBANESWAR, JUN 27 (PTI): Indian Super League club Odisha FC and its assistant coach Thangboi Singto have parted ways.

Singto had joined the club ahead of 2019 ISL and was also the head of club's youth development.

"It was a great and wonderful experience for me at Odisha FC and

would like to thank everyone at the club for their support. It was great to work with Head Coach Josep Gombau.

"I would like to wish the club, management, staff and players all the best for the upcoming ISL season. Will miss Odisha, its peace loving people and the cheers of the Juggernauts. Dhanyabad OFC," said Singto.

Mizoram to have FIFA certified football ground soon

AIZAWL, JUN 27 (PTI): Mizoram sports minister Robert Romawia Royte on Saturday said that the state will soon have a FIFA certified football ground at Kolasib town near the Assam border.

Royte paid a visit and inspected the ongoing construction of Sports Authority of India (SAI) sports academy at Kolasib's Saidan and the laying of artificial turf at the football ground there.

He was accompanied by supply minister and Kolasib MLA K Lalrinlana and Serlui MLA Lalrinsanga Ralte.

Royte said that the artificial turf, which is being laid at the SAI academy ground at Saidan, was certified by FIFA and is on the verge of completion.

"Mizoram will soon have its first FIFA certified football field," he said, adding that apart from football, three more disciplines will be added at the under construction

SAI sports academy at Saidan at Kolasib.

He expressed hope that the football field will greatly benefit sports persons in the state.

The sports minister also visited Kawnpui and Vairengte in Kolasib district and inspected the feasibility of new sports infrastructure and upgrade of the existing infrastructure there.

He said that the existing football ground at Kawnpui will be upgraded to a standard ground by laying artificial turf. He inspected the feasibility of a standard basketball court and a standard volleyball court at Kawnpui, which are in the pipeline.

Royte said that the Mizo National Front (MNF) led state government would set up sports training centre at Vairengte on the Mizoram-Assam border in order to fulfil its pre-poll promise.

Cheating case:ED opposes closure of probe against Naresh Goyal

MUMBAI, JUN 27 (PTI): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has objected to the Mumbai Police filing a closure report in a cheating case registered earlier against now-defunct Jet Airways, its promoter Naresh Goyal, and his wife.

Stating that the police didn't consider crucial facts of the case, the ED has filed an intervention application before a court.

Jet Airways, Goyal and his wife Anita were booked on charges of cheating and a criminal breach of trust in February this year by MRA Marg police on a complaint filed by city-based Akbar Travels India Private Limited alleging that they were cheated of Rs 46 crore by the Goyals.

In its closure report

filed before a court a month later, the police stated that there was no evidence to probe the case further.

In its application, the ED stated that the police had failed to consider the facts that were crucial in establishing the case against the Goyals.

Meanwhile, the Akbar Travels has decided to challenge the closure report in court.

"The report by the city police seemed to have been filed without any proper investigation. No investigation has been done on our allegations of personal assurances by the director (of Jet Airways) and also on foreign account details provided by the complainant," Akbar Travel's counsel Dharmesh Joshi said on Saturday, adding

that they will file a petition on July 6.

As per the complaint filed with the police earlier, Jet Airways had done business worth Rs 900 crore with Akbar Travels between 2018-19.

It alleged that the airline and its promoter have failed to pay Rs 46,05,68,036 to the travel company.

Despite knowing the financial crisis at Jet Airways, which was in position of no return, Naresh Goyal made false promises. He willfully induced the travel company to take booking on behalf of the airline, the complaint stated.

The ED is conducting a probe against the Goyals and the defunct airline under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and Foreign Exchange Management Act.

Facebook, Twitter shares as European giant pulls ads



SAN FRANCISCO, JUN 26 (AP): Shares of Facebook and Twitter dropped sharply Friday after the giant company behind brands such as Ben & Jerry's ice cream and Dove soap said it will halt U.S. advertising on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram through at least the end of the year.

That European consumer-product maker, Unilever, said it took the move to protest the amount of hate speech online. Unilever said the polarized atmosphere in the United States ahead of November's presidential election placed responsibility on brands to act.

Shares of both Facebook and Twitter fell roughly 7% following

Unilever's announcement.

The company, which is based in the Netherlands and Britain, joins a raft of other advertisers pulling back from online platforms. Facebook in particular has been the target of an escalating movement to withhold advertising dollars to pressure it to do more to prevent racist and violent content from being shared on its platform.

We have decided that starting now through at least the end of the year, we will not run brand advertising in social media newsfeed platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in the U.S.," Unilever said. Continuing to advertise on these platforms at this time would

not add value to people and society. Facebook did not immediately respond to a request for comment. On Thursday, Verizon joined others in the Facebook boycott.

Sarah Personette, vice president of global client solutions at Twitter, said the company's mission is to serve the public conversation and ensure Twitter is a place where people can make human connections, seek and receive authentic and credible information, and express themselves freely and safely.

She added that Twitter is "respectful of our partners' decisions and will continue to work and communicate closely with them during this time."

LAND FOR SALE

Riverside land [General] along Ranipool-Rumtek Highway near Adam Pool, stretching from the roadside down till the river bank. Total area measuring 0.2348 Hectares [approximately 25,274 sq ft].

Ideal for developing a Resort.

Parties interested in purchasing the entire plot can contact 9083826462 and 9832556698

Brokers will not be entertained.

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 JUN: Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba visited STNM Hospital to extend his gratitude to 45 Medical Professionals (5th

batch) who had been treating COVID-19 patients of Sikkim and will be going for quarantine.

"On behalf of people of Sikkim, for the sacrifices you make every day,

especially at this time of pandemic. Humanity shall ever remain grateful to you. My sincere appreciation for your selfless service," the MP wrote in a brief thank you note.

Single portal for info on govt, pvt job vacancies in Goa

PANAJI, JUN 27 (PTI): Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that a portal has been created to provide information about the job vacancies in government and private sectors, which will help the common people in the state amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The portal is part of a number of measures announced by the state government on Friday to help the industrialists and common people in the state recover from the situation created by COVID-19.

"A portal has been launched to allow notification of job vacancies by the private establishment, government departments, autonomous bodies, educational insti-



tutes for the registered job seekers," Sawant told reporters on Friday.

It is meant for those who have registered their names with the employment exchange in the state, he said.

"The employment exchange has so far recommended the names of qualified job seekers to 19 private companies through the portal," he added.

Sawant added that

the government will waive the late payment surcharge on electricity bills with the due date is between March 24 and June 30, provided the payment is made by July 15.

The chief minister also announced that those who have taken loan from ecredit societies have been granted three months moratorium on payment of EMI for the period between April and June.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Treatment

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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



If you seek help, you may call :

-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297800
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Proper Rules for Temp Appointments

Such clarity would have avoided a lot of heartburn

It was almost exactly twelve years ago, in July 2008, that the State Government lifted the 'ban' it had imposed on itself on the appointment of personnel on ad hoc basis.

The ban, one must bear in mind, was not imposed because the State did not need ad hoc personnel any more. If that had been the case, it would have just stopped hiring more people on ad hoc or contract basis, not imposed a ban on it. An official ban was required for two reasons – unplanned hiring and rampant favouritism. The administration has danced around this regulation throughout and even a change in government is unlikely to change the pick and choose approach to temp employments, handing out contract naukari as a favour and then claiming the best of intentions even for the most nepotistic hiring.

For some context, remember that ineffective manpower planning had straddled the State exchequer with too many personnel with unclear job specifications. And then there was growing resentment among the "left-out" for what they saw as rigged appointment processes where "contacts and recommendations" mattered more than requirement or employability while making ad hoc/ MR/ work-charge and then the consolidated pay appointments. Obviously, all efforts to make the departments observe fair-play had failed and a 'ban' was the only option left. But that was never the solution, and hence the lifting of the ban a decade ago.

Governments frequently require time-bound services of professionals for project-specific responsibilities and with the ever increasing roles that the government is undertaking, a ban on sourcing professionals for specific projects was a serious hindrance to deliverability. But that definition of temporary appointments is turned over so often on its head with the regularization of such services like is being worked at present. Those hired on ad hoc when the ban was lifted in 2008 were always vying [along with thousands hired before them] for regularization. And the government conceded eventually and service regularization has been underway for some years now. The expectation is so normal now that not getting regularized is seen as victimization.

Back in 2008, when the ban was lifted and talk of service regularisation en-bloc started making the rounds, one had hoped that that the temp employees had been hired because they were good and the ban not lifted just because the pile of "recommendations" had become too enormous to ignore any more. Since temporary employment has a knack of becoming permanent, it is also time that the State laid down proper guidelines for even temporary appointments so that merit is not compromised and everyone provided a level playing ground.

This is necessary because the experience of such employments has been that they are processed on recommendation and contacts and not necessarily merit or employability. What this means is that those who decide to play by the rules end up getting punished, twice. First, when they avoid making the rounds to curry favour and land a temp employment, and then again when a vacancy/post which should have been open to all qualified unemployed goes to someone whose services are being regularized. Apart from the individual who stands so denied, even the State loses the opportunity to select the best from a pool of hopefuls. At a time when the roster of prospective candidates was short, this was not much of a worry for Sikkim. But that is not the case anymore. An increasing number of youth do not only have the qualifications and the ambitions, but also the self-respect not to kowtow. As more of them keep getting sidelined, there will be that many more of them of who will be resentful and disappointed. That cannot be healthy for Sikkim and is a situation which can be as easily avoided as implementing the rules for temporary employment properly. Give such personnel clear job descriptions and make the conditions of their service clear as well. This is done on paper already, sure, but does anyone take them seriously since they have been sidestepped so often?

WRITE US:

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Five ways Jürgen Klopp's leadership style helped Liverpool to the top

MATTHEW SMITH & SEAN FIGGINS
theconversation.com

It is 30 years since Liverpool FC were last crowned champions of English football. In those three frustrating decades, there have been highs as well as lows, including last year being tantalisingly close to topping the table.

But their time (slightly delayed by a pandemic) has finally come. Under Jürgen Klopp, their charismatic German manager, Liverpool have won the Premier League.

So how have Liverpool's fortunes been transformed? Here are five leadership tools that help to explain how Klopp has inspired his team to become champions again.

1. CREATE A CLEAR VISION AND IDENTITY

When Klopp first arrived at Liverpool in October 2015, he outlined a positive and exciting blueprint identity to inspire players and fans at a time when Liverpool were not performing well.

"I believe in a playing philosophy that is very emotional, very fast and very strong," he declared.

He added: "My teams must play at full throttle and take it to the limit every single game. It is important to have a playing philosophy that reflects your own mentality, reflects the club and gives you a clear direction to follow."

Clearly outlining a unique playing identity that aligns with the club's values was a shrewd move. Leaders who are able to create a shared identity have been seen to motivate teams to greater performance.

2. REPRESENT THIS IDENTITY

Klopp's own behaviour reinforces his managerial approach. He demonstrates confidence, authority and consistently demonstrates an intense, passionate approach.

It is key for a leader to represent the core values of their team or group. This leads players to trust in their leader, and respond positively. At Liverpool, this can be seen in a number of ways, not least in

Klopp's passionate – and sometimes controversial – celebration of goals and victories.

These displays of emotion, happiness and positivity seem to have a contagious effect throughout the team. Such celebrations also create a strong connection with fans who see how much success means to him.

3. REINFORCE BELIEF AND CREATE TRUST

Klopp came in to Liverpool after enjoying success at the German side Borussia Dortmund, and with a specific style of high-tempo play. This kind of reputation and experience can create a strong belief in players.

Klopp's charismatic communication reinforced trust in his methods and competence as a coach, and so the messages Klopp passed on were believed. In turn, and while recognising his own limitations, Klopp demonstrates a high level of trust in his players and support staff.

He has said: "I know I'm good in a couple of things, really good in a few things, and that's enough. My confidence is big enough that I can really let people grow next to me, it's no problem.

I need experts around me. It's really very important that you are empathetic, that you try to understand the people around you, and that you give real support to the people around you."

Having the trust of others, and reciprocating such trust, is at the heart of a coach's ability to inspire their players. One of Klopp's major strengths has been his ability to do this. As forward Sadio Mané commented: "He's great as a person. I trust him blindly, like most of the dressing room."

4. DEVELOP STRONG CONNECTIONS WITH PLAYERS

Klopp is renowned for his hugs, but alongside this he shows genuine interest in, and care for, his players. Midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum cited this as a major reason for choosing to sign for Liverpool over other clubs:

He said: "In the meeting with Jürgen we had a laugh and did not speak only about football. He was interested in my personal life and that was good for

me. He was not only interested in Wijnaldum the footballer but Wijnaldum the person."

Soon after signing Andy Robertson, Klopp was reportedly confused that another member of staff had no idea his new left back was due to become a father, saying: "How can you not know that? That's the biggest thing in his life now. Come on!"

Our research highlights how showing genuine interest in players strengthens the trust between coaches and players which, in turn, enhances a coach's inspirational capabilities.

Klopp's emotional displays are important to developing connection, as coaches who display "harmonious passion" (showing a strong desire to engage in an activity they love) have higher quality relationships with athletes.

5. PROMISE BIG – AND DELIVER

When Klopp first arrived at Liverpool, he stated that Liverpool would win the title in four years. (This is his fifth year, but fans will no doubt forgive him for being a year late.)

But reputation needs to be backed up by results on the pitch, and Klopp reinforced this belief with early success. The team reached the final of the Europa League in his first season, the final of the Champions League in the third, and then won the Champions league in his fourth.

Progression in the Premier League was also evident. Liverpool finished fourth in Klopp's first full two seasons, second in the third, and are now champions in his fourth full season.

Ultimately, leaders need to demonstrate improved performance for players and fans alike to buy into their approach. Klopp has certainly achieved this, and will no doubt have enjoyed an emotional celebration as his team clinched the coveted league title.

[Matthew Smith is Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology, University of Winchester; Sean Figgins is Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology and Research Methods, University of Chichester]

How religions and religious leaders can help to combat the COVID-19 pandemic: Indonesia's experience

HAKIMUL IKHWAN & VISSIA ITA YULIANTO
theconversation.com

Many have attacked religions as a part of the problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was initially in South Korea where nearly 5,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were traced back to "patient 31", an infected individual who worshipped in Shincheonji Church of Jesus in Daegu.

In the US, a California megachurch of a Slavic congregation was an epicentre of the virus after public health officials connected it with 71 cases.

In Malaysia, 513 people tested positive with COVID-19 after attending a religious gathering, pushing the country to a lockdown.

However, with the intense and durable role of religions in modern society, we argue that science and religion should not be separated amid our struggle with the pandemic. Religion and religious leaders may make the best out of this pandemic by becoming part of the solution to curb the spread of the virus.

WHAT CAN RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS DO?

Classical theories of modernisation claim that secular values in modern society have massively replaced traditional and religious values.

However, rather than declining, religion is growing and becoming

more durable worldwide.

Although churches are indeed empty in Western Europe and church buildings even go on sale, 70% of the population in North America identifies as Christian. Islam is growing rapidly in Russia. The latest global research shows 84% of adults say religion is important.

During the pandemic, religions have also played important roles in helping to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Muslims have quoted the hadist (the speech and practices) of Prophet Muhammad to promote quarantine and travel bans during the pandemic. Prophet Muhammad said: "If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; and if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place."

In Taiwan, religious leaders are collaborating with the government's epidemic command centre to respond quickly to the health crisis and protect the people. Taiwan is lauded as a leading example of a country with good COVID-19 management.

The Vatican has changed its liturgies online and provided guidelines for new prayers to deal with the pandemic.

In Bangladesh, religions have responded to the health crisis by offering both spiritual and material relief. THE ROLES OF RELIGIONS IN INDONESIA

Indonesia hosts the world's large

est Muslim population and religiosity is the heart beat of its citizens' life. Religious leaders are the dearest and most respected leaders in the society.

The government has acknowledged other religions: Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

The country has shown religions can be used as realistic means to help combat the spread of COVID-19.

In March 2020, during the very early spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia, Hindus modified the rituals of Nyepi (Day of Silence). They celebrated the ritual without the Ogoh-Ogoh Carnival, which used to be part of the festivities. As the virus is highly contagious, religious leaders decided to cancel the carnival to avoid large gatherings.

Protestants and Catholics modified their Easter celebrations, the greatest Christian ritual, in April. Most churches have resorted to virtual services to convey religious messages to their adherents since then.

Indonesian Muslim organisations have issued a fatwa (religious order) to substitute the mass Friday prayer, which should be held in a mosque and is mandatory for male Muslims, with the midday prayer (Dzuhur) at home.

During the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslims were also asked to pray at home, instead of communal worship in the mosque or yard.

But huge challenges persist. To prevent coronavirus from

spreading, the Indonesian government had banned the religious ritual of "mudik" an annual ritual of reconnecting, remembering and recharging, during which Muslims return to their ancestral and family homes to celebrate the end of fasting month.

But, many have not listened, increasing the risks of other people contracting the virus.

By now, we know the spread of the virus follows the pattern of movements of people, goods and services. It's not only cross-border mobility but people's movement at any level that spreads the virus.

Religion has a role here in persuading people that preventing the loss of tens of thousands of lives realistically requires more efforts than just prayers.

As the vaccine is still a long way from becoming available, it is realistic to demand religious leaders use the language of religion to warn people of the risks they face during this devastating global pandemic.

Science and faith may not be separated amid this pandemic.

This crisis should be the time for religions as well as religious leaders to get involved in explaining and supporting rational scientific findings to save human lives.

[Hakimul Ikhwani is Lecturer, Universitas Gadjah Mada; Vissia Ita Yulianto is Socio-cultural anthropologist, Center for Southeast Asian Social Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada]

273 new COVID-19 cases in Assam; number rises to 6,919

GUWAHATI, JUN 26 (PTI): As many as 273 more people tested positive for coronavirus in Assam on Friday, raising the tally in the state to 6,919, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Among the fresh cases, 203 are from the Guwahati city alone, where a complete lockdown will be imposed from June 28 midnight, he said.

"273 new #COVID19+ cases detected in Assam today. Guwahati city alone sees a surge of 203 cases today and time for us to follow lockdown instructions. Your cooperation is vital", Sarma tweeted.

Out of the total 6,919 positive cases in the state, 965 alone are in Guwahati.

There are 2,660 COVID-19 active cases in the state presently, while nine patients have died of the disease. Three others have migrated out of the state.



A total of 214 more patients were released on Friday from different hospitals across the state, taking the total number of discharged persons to 4,247 and the recovery rate to 63.4 per cent, the minister said.

The number of hospital beds in Guwahati currently is 890 and at the

rate in which the cases are increasing, it 'will be filled up in four days and we will have to take the patients to COVID hospitals in other towns,' Sarma said.

"A 800-bed temporary hospital for #COVID19 patients is under construction at Khanapara field in Gu-

wahati and will soon be functional, adding up to our treatment capacity," he said.

A total of 3,62,713 samples have been tested so far in different laboratories in the state, Sarma said.

We are leaving no stone unturned in order to contain #COVID19 in

Assam", he added. Currently, 30,750 people are in institutional quarantine and 1,26,960 people in home quarantine, according to the bulletin issued by the state health department. There are at present 395 containment zones in the state with Kamrup (Metro) having the highest at 207, it added.

Odisha: 218 new COVID-19 cases; tally crosses 6,000

BHUBANESWAR, JUN 26 (PTI) Odisha's COVID-19 tally crossed the 6,000-mark on Friday, with 218 more people, including seven NDRF personnel, testing positive for the infection, a health department official said.

With these patients, the number of coronavirus cases in the state rose to 6,180, he said.

Of the fresh cases, 191 were reported from different quarantine centres where returnees from other states are lodged for preliminary observation.

The seven National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel, who had returned from West Bengal after taking part in Cyclone Amphan restoration work, were also in the quarantine facilities and tested positive for COVID-19, while the remaining cases were detected during the contact-tracing exercises, the official said.

A total of 289 personnel of the NDRF, ODRAF

and Odisha Fire Service and nine jawans of the Border Security Force have been infected with the virus in the state, he said.

The highest number of 49 fresh cases, excluding the NDRF personnel, were reported from Ganjam district.

Jagatsinghpur (29), Gajapati (27), Bhadrak (25), Khurda (17), Sundergarh (11) and Puri (10) were among the districts where new cases were found.

Ganjam is the worst-hit district with 1,137 cases and the local administration has declared a four-day shutdown in the Berhampur Municipal Corporation area from Saturday, the official said.

A shutdown has been imposed to carry out contact tracing and door-to-door survey, Ganjam District Collector V A Kurlange said, adding that 70 teams have been formed for these purposes.

They will examine the health condition of citizens and take stock of the home quarantine status, he said.

However, emergency medical services and milk delivery have been kept out of the purview of the shutdown, the collector said.

The administration of Gajapati district also announced a shutdown in two blocks, one gram panchayat and Parlakhemundi town for three days starting June 28.

With 131 more patients recovering from the disease, Odisha now has 1,734 active coronavirus cases, while a total of 4,291 people have been cured of it. Seventeen people have succumbed to the disease in the state, while seven persons, who had tested positive for the infection, died due to "non-COVID reasons", the official said.

The state conducted 4,773 COVID-19 tests on Thursday, he added.

Fresh COVID-19 case in Mizoram; count rises to 148



AIZAWL, JUN 27 (PTI): A 32-year-old man has tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, taking the northeastern state's tally to 148 on Saturday, officials said.

The new patient, a resident of Champhai district, had recently returned to Mizoram from Delhi, a statement issued by the state Information and Public Relations Department said. He is asymptomatic and has been admitted to a COVID-19 care centre in Champhai, it said.

Of the 148 cases, 101 are active while 47 people have recovered and were discharged from hospi-

tals. Also, nine COVID-19 patients in Mamit district have tested negative for the infection twice but they will be officially declared as "recovered" once they are discharged from hospitals, it added.

Lunglei district has reported the highest number of cases so far, at 47, followed by Aizawl (37), Mamit (18), Kolasib (11), nine each in Siaha and Champhai, eight in Lawngtlai and three each in Serchhip, Khawzawl and Saitaul districts.

A total of 12,753 samples have been tested for COVID-19 till Friday, health officials said.

Mizoram govt eases lockdown norms



AIZAWL, JUN 26 (PTI): The Mizoram government on Friday eased lockdown norms in Aizawl municipal area, district headquarters and containment zones following a dip in coronavirus cases in the past two days, officials said.

The new order came into effect from Friday and will be valid till June 30.

On June 21, the state government had extended the complete lockdown in these places till June 30 to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Shops can open and commercial activities will be normal in Aizawl

municipal area, district headquarters and containment zones, the state government notification said. However, outlets in commercial hubs and shopping complexes will open on alternate days based on the arrangement made by district deputy commissioners in consultation with local/village-level task forces, it said.

In the case of Aizawl municipal area, commercial and private vehicles will be allowed to ply on "odd-even" system, the order said.

The state government also lifted the ban on public movement.

Jharkhand extends lockdown till July 31

RANCHI, JUN 26 (PTI): The Jharkhand government announced an extension of the lockdown till July 31 on Friday to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"Considering the seriousness of the situation, the state government has decided to extend the lockdown till July 31," Chief Minister Hemant Soren said in a tweet.

The extension order shall come into force with immediate effect, Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh said, adding that the movement of individuals shall continue to remain prohibited between

9 pm and 5 am.

"All activities permitted prior to this order shall remain permitted. The activities to remain prohibited are closure of schools, colleges, educational, training and coaching institutions, cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, bars, auditoriums, assembly halls, shopping malls...", the order said.

Interstate and intra-state bus services, hotels, lodges, inns and dine-in restaurants will not be in operation during this pe-

riod, it added.

Spas, salons and barber shops will continue to remain closed till July-end.

Face masks have been made compulsory at public places, workplaces and during transport, the order said.

"Movement of individuals into the state by private vehicles, taxis shall continue to require an e-entry pass. There shall be no requirement of an e-pass for any other movement of individuals within the state or for leaving the state," it added.

No oil flow from Baghjan gas well site to water bodies: OIL



GUWAHATI, JUN 26 (PTI): PSU major Oil India Limited on Friday said that no oil is flowing into water bodies from a gas well in Assams Baghjan following a blowout last month, as claimed in a video clip which has gone viral on social media.

Floodwaters have entered the gas well fire site in Tinsukia district affecting efforts of the OIL authorities to cap the well and douse the blaze, the company said.

"There is a video clip in circulation in the social media wherein it has been claimed that lot of oil is flowing into nearby water bodies/river from Baghjan blowout well. This is totally false since all hydrocarbon coming out of the well is completely burnt at the well head," OIL said in a tweet.

A release by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) also said that the well head area is dry and no oil is flowing into any waterbody.

"Before the fire occurred, condensate was

falling in nearby area as it was coming out along with gas. But once the well caught fire on 9th June, all condensate and gas is getting burnt," the release said.

Well number 5 at Baghjan has been spewing gas uncontrollably since the blowout on May 27 and it caught fire on June 9, killing two of OIL's firefighters at the site.

Meanwhile, it has been raining continuously and various parts of Baghjan gas well site and three roads leading to the spot from Tinsukia were inundated making it difficult to move personnel and equipment, OIL said in a statement.

The site of helipad earmarked earlier cannot be used now because of the presence of floodwater on the road and efforts are on to identify a new site to set up a helipad.

Due to damage of Doomdooma-Baghjan Bridge, all movement on the bridge has been sus-

pended. OIL had contacted the Army for construction of a Bailey bridge but it can be done only after the water level recedes, the company said.

Another bridge over Daisajan near Daisajan Tea Estate on Tiphuk Kordaiguri road is deteriorating too due to the flood.

However, environmental Impact Assessment by M/s ERM is continuing with collection of samples of air, water, soil from different parts of the area since June 4 as a part of a study.

Due to agitation by people, there was production loss of 88 MT of crude oil and 0.14 million metric standard cubic meters (MMSCM) of natural gas as on Thursday, the company said adding that operations were disrupted in 13 oil wells and one gas well.

OIL said cumulative production loss since May 27 due to bandhs and blockades was 8570 MT crude oil, 10.99 MMSCM of natural gas.

LUCKNOW, JUN 27 (PTI): Uttar Pradesh on Saturday reported 19 novel coronavirus fatalities and 605 infections, as the state's virus count reached 21,548 while the death toll rose to 649, a senior official said.

Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health, Amit Mohan Prasad said 14,215 people have so far been discharged from hospitals after recovering from the infection, leaving 6,684 active COVID-19 cases in the state.

The recovery percentage of the state is 65.96 per cent, Prasad said.

Referring to the sample testing, Prasad said the state touched a new benchmark on Friday by testing 20,028 samples in a day.

In view of the continued cases being reported from the Meerut division, Prasad said almost 47 per cent of the total cases reported on Friday were from that region and a separate work plan is being pre-



pared to break the chain of infection in that region.

"A campaign on the lines of pulse polio campaign will be launched in the state between July 5 and 10 for breaking the chain of infection. In Meerut division, this campaign will start earlier in the first week of July," Prasad said.

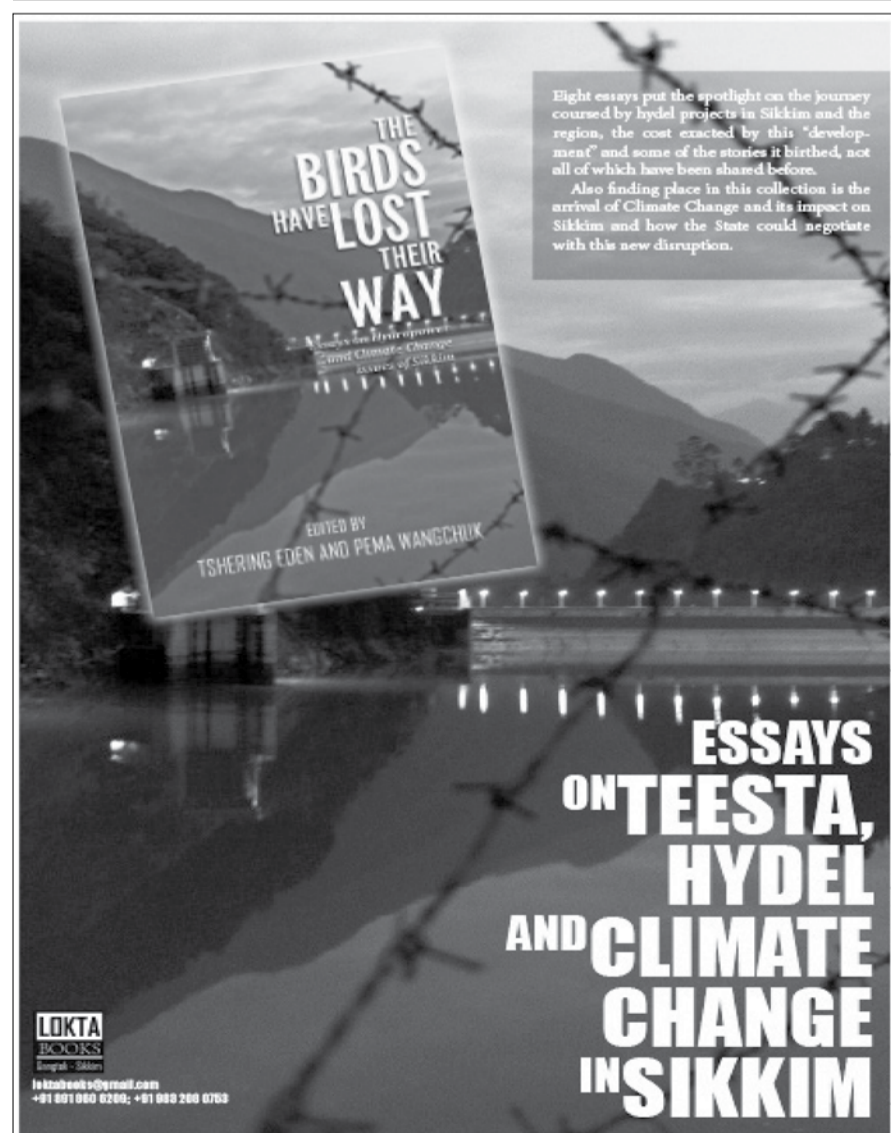
Under this, door-to-door surveillance and screening of infection would be undertaken in the rural and urban areas, Prasad said.

He said the rapid antigen testing has also been started in the state and on Friday it was carried out in 10 districts -- six of them in Meerut division, Lucknow, Go-

rakhpur, Prayagraj and Varanasi. The official said the testing began in Kanpur on Saturday.

He said a unique initiative is being taken in the state for crowdsourcing of ideas by encouraging people to make one-minute video on the coronavirus, precautions and what more needed to be done to check the spread of the disease and 100 best videos will be given a prize of Rs 10,000 each.

Besides, 10 best ideas in 150 words will also be given a prize of Rs 10,000 each, he said, adding this will help get fresh ideas and involve people in breaking the chain of infection.



Ronaldo back in form as Juventus beats 10-man Lecce 4-0



ROME, JUN 27 (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo is back in form. He set up two goals and converted a penalty to help Juventus beat 10-man Lecce 4-0 on Friday and boost its chances of claiming a record-extending ninth successive Serie A title. Ronaldo had struggled since soccer resumed in Italy, but his return to form pushed Juventus seven points clear

of second-placed Lazio, which hosts Fiorentina on Saturday. What's important is that we continue to get results, Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri said when asked about their increasing advantage at the top of the table. We struggled at the beginning and then we managed to get going at the end of the first half. But I saw a good mentality because even when

the match was over, we still continued to attack. Lecce remained in the relegation zone but is level on points with Genoa, which occupies the last position of safety. Lecce started brightly but its chances of getting anything from the match diminished when defender Fabio Lucioni was shown a straight red card for a last-man challenge on Rodrigo Bentancur, leaving the visiting side

in 10 men for nearly an hour. Until the sending off the match was balanced, said Lecce coach Fabio Liverani, who also bemoaned the number of players he is missing through injury. Maybe if we had had every player available I could have made different moves. At the moment I have a maximum of 14 players available. But I am sure that with a bit of fortune, get-

ting some players back, we can have our say in matches against direct rivals. Juventus scored all of its goals after the red card and in the second half, but struggled to break down the visitors. Ronaldo had several chances but sent an overhead kick past the left post and somehow headed over an empty goal from two yards out. However, the Portugal international set up Juve's opener eight minutes after the break as he cut the ball back to Paulo Dybala who curled into the roof of the net from the edge of the area. Ronaldo then got on the scoresheet himself with his second penalty in as many matches after he was tripped by Luca Rossetini. Ronaldo also set up Juve's third in the 83rd minute, back-heeling the ball for Gonzalo Higuain to score shortly after coming off the bench. Matthijs de Ligt headed in a Douglas Costa cross two minutes later to cap a great night for Juventus.

Dravid taught me importance of switching off from cricket: Pujara



NEW DELHI, JUN 27 (PTI): India's Test batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara cannot describe in words the influence that Rahul Dravid has had on his life but says he will always remain grateful to him for teaching the importance of switching off from cricket. Often compared to Dravid, who was considered the 'wall' of Indian cricket, Pujara said he is thankful to Dravid for teaching him how to keep personal and professional lives separate. "He helped me understand the importance of switching off from cricket. I had the same thought, more or less, but when I spoke to him, it gave me a lot of clarity about it and I was sure of what I needed to do," he

told ESPNcricinfo. "I also saw in county cricket how they keep personal and professional lives separate. I value that advice a lot. Many people consider me to be focused. Yes, I am focused, But I also know when to switch off. There is life beyond cricket." In his illustrious international career, Dravid amassed 13288 runs in 164 Tests and 10889 runs in 344 ODIs. He also captained India in 79 ODIs, winning 42 of them, which includes the world record of 14 successive wins while chasing. "I cannot say in one line what Rahul bhai means to me. He has always been an inspiration, and will remain one," Pujara said. His mental for-

titude and batting technique is often compared to Dravid but Pujara said "despite my enchantment with him" he never tried to "copy him." "There is a similarity in our games, but that's not because of my fascination with him. That came mainly through my experiences with Saurashtra, where I learned that scoring a hundred alone isn't enough, you have to carry your team," he said. "That is how I learned responsibility - it is about helping my team to raise a big total, and for that I ought to attach importance to my wicket. I learned that from my junior cricket days with Saurashtra, which was a weaker team in domestic cricket.

Welcome back: The NBA sets the schedule for season restart

WASHINGTON, JUN 27 (AP): Zion Williamson is about to get another chance at opening night. Injury kept him out of New Orleans' appearance in the first game of this NBA season when the Pelicans started the year at Toronto, but now the big-name rookie will be in position to be on center stage at Disney when play resumes against the team that was the first to find itself in the middle of the NBA's coronavirus situation.

New Orleans will be in the first game of the resumed NBA season on July 30, taking on Utah at the Disney World complex near Orlando, Florida in the opener of a doubleheader. And just as the initial first night of this season-like none-other did, the second game of nationally televised twinbill will pit the Los Angeles Lakers against the Los Angeles Clippers. The Jazz were a logistical storyline for the first game back, after Utah's All-Star center Rudy Gobert was the first player in the league to test positive for the coronavirus a development that forced the league to suspend the season on March 11. More than four and a half months will have passed between game nights in the NBA, but the league officially completed talks Friday with the National Basketball Players Association on the terms for restarting the season and therefore could release the 88-game slate of what are being called seeding games. Finally, play will resume in a season that started with political strife between the NBA and China in October, the deaths of David Stern and Kobe Bryant in January, a pandemic breaking out in March and racial issues surrounding police brutality and other forms of inequality dividing the country once again during much of the league's shutdown.

Mickelson leads Travelers in first event since turning 50



CROMWELL (US), JUN 27 (AP): Phil Mickelson figures age might be an asset. Playing his first tournament since turning 50 this month, the five-time major champion shot a 7-under 63 in the Travelers Championship to take a one-stroke lead into the weekend. Lefty said said it was perhaps the wisdom that comes with his age that made him stay within himself instead of going toe-to-toe with his long-hitting playing partners, top-ranked Rory McIlroy and Bryson DeChambeau. There's some holes I can open it up and try to hit driver, but really I just want to get it in play on a lot of holes and let my wedges take over, and I've hit a lot of good wedge shots this week, said Mickelson, the 2001 and 2002 tournament winner. Two more players withdrew because of the coronavirus Friday Denny McCarthy for a positive test, and Bud Cauley, who tested negative, but decided to pull out after playing alongside McCarthy on Thursday. There have been seven COVID-19-related withdrawals. Mickelson was at 13-under 127. First-round leader Mackenzie Hughes followed an opening 60 with a 68 to drop into a second-place tie with 23-year-old Will Gordon, who led most of the day after shooting an early 62. Since winning at Pebble Beach early last year for his 44th PGA Tour title, Mickelson has mostly struggled, with far more missed cuts than good finishes. On Friday at tree-lined TPC River Highlands, Mickelson made a bogey on his second hole before moving up the leaderboard. He made the first of his eight birdies from a green-side bunker on No. 5 and shot 30 on the back nine.

While Mickelson is making his 624th PGA Tour start, Gordon is in his eighth tour event on a sponsor's exemption. He had nine birdies and just missed a few others, including on the fourth hole where his 35-foot birdie putt came to rest on the edge of the cup. The former Vanderbilt star is carrying on a long tradition of young players who received a break at TPC River Highlands. Since 1996, 77 of the tournament's 98 unrestricted sponsor invitations have gone to players with fewer than 15 starts on the tour and those players have gone on to combine for 90 victories. I was supposed to play in three events that got canceled over COVID, so for those guys to take a chance on me and believe in me means the world, he said. McIlroy followed his first-round 63 with a 68. He was tied for fourth, four strokes off the lead and happy to be in contention. I know what it feels like to go low out here, so I'll need a couple of good ones over the weekend, he said. "But the game feels in decent shape, and obviously get out early tomorrow and try to get back in the mix. DeChambeau, the third member of the marquee trio, had the most entertaining round of the three. He was 8 under after a 67 that included the strangest bogey of the day. His tee shot on the par-4 10th hole hit the cart path, rolled and rolled and ended up 428 yards from the tee and 48 yards from the hole. But after pitching over the green, then chipping back well short of the hole, he missed a 7-foot putt. I tried to hit a 35-yard shot

and it came out 50 yards, and I'm like, "What is going on?" he said. There's some things I've still got to work out and some stuff I clearly don't understand yet with the wedding." McCarthy, who shot an opening-round 67, said he began feeling sick Thursday night and tested positive for the virus Friday morning. I woke up in the middle of the night with additional aches and soreness and sensed something was off," he said. "I felt like the only thing to do was get tested at that point before I went to the course. Cauley, who opened with a 69, had two negative tests Friday. He withdrew "out of an abundance of caution for my peers and everyone involved with the tournament, he said. Matt Wallace, the third member of their group, teed off by himself early Friday, shot a 72 to miss the cut. I haven't felt better myself," he said. I'm playing with a chance to change my career if I win, so why wouldn't I play? It's black and white for me. I tested negative and I can go play. McCarthy was the third PGA Tour player to test positive for the virus since its restart and the second this week, joining Cameron Champ, who withdrew Tuesday. Nick Watney withdrew just before the second round of last week's RBC Heritage Championship. Webb Simpson, Graeme McDowell, Brooks Koepka and his brother Chase also withdrew from the Travelers after coming into contact with people who had the virus. McDowell and Brooks Koepka's caddies both tested positive. Simpson cited the positive test of a family member. Collin Morikawa, also is heading home, but not because of COVID-19. The 23-year-old Californian missed the cut for the first time in his PGA Tour career after rounds of 72-71. Morikawa had made 22 straight cuts since turning pro, the longest such streak since Tiger Woods began his PGA Tour career with 25 consecutive cuts. It was bound to happen at some point, Morikawa said. Who knows when that was going to be. But now I guess we're going to stop talking about it and I can go and just go on to next week. I'm going to learn a lot from this week. There is rain in the forecast for Saturday, with the players grouped in threesomes and started on the first and 10th tees.

England's spin prospect Viridi eyeing a Test spot in WI series



SOUTHAMPTON, JUN 27 (PTI): He might not have experience on his side but young off-spinner Amar Viridi remains confident of cutting through the competition and earning a place in England team for the three-Test series against the West Indies beginning on July 8. The 21-year-old has featured in only 23 first-class games in his career and will have to beat more experienced spinners like Jack Leach, Dom Bess, Matt Parkinson and Moeen Ali to get into the Test squad. "Obviously I'm here so I want to be playing Test cricket whenever that comes, so I'm going to keep on trying my hardest to make sure that I'm playing," the Surrey spinner, who was included in England's 30-man squad earlier this month, said on Friday. "I don't really try to impress as such - I want to do my own thing and be who I am. That's what I want to show people and show people what I'm capable of doing, rather than doing other

things or try to forcefully show my skills." Viridi said he is focussed on working hard to get into the squad for the opening Test. "I definitely do want to be playing in the first Test match, or at least be in the squad. If I didn't want to do that I probably shouldn't be here. I'm very proud of myself that I've got to this stage. The next stage is about pushing for a Test place, so whenever that does happen I'm going to keep working hard." Viridi, who has taken 69 wickets in his 23 first class matches at an average of 28.78, says his strength lies in his aggression as he is always looking for wickets. "I think you've got to be aggressive and you've got to be looking to take wickets. Maybe the pitches aren't always going to be suited to you but as a spinner even if you are looking to keep it tight, my eyes are always on taking wickets regardless. "Obviously being young, I'm still learning my skills and getting better at my skills, so you

will bowl the odd loose ball or you might not get six balls in the perfect space. But I think you'll bowl a lot more wicket-taking deliveries and that's what makes you dangerous: when a batsman knows that you can get them out on any wicket." If he makes it to the squad, Viridi will become only the third Sikh to represent England after Monty Panesar and Ravi Bopara. He says Panesar has been a role model as he is also state-educated and spent his formative years at the Guru Nanak Sikh Academy in Hayes. "Growing up I watched Graeme Swann and Monty and that was very inspirational to me. Obviously with Monty as well because he looks very similar to me, especially being from the community that I am," he said. "We're in a minority in a lot of industries and to see someone progressing and doing well in the field you're in really motivates you and shows you that you can do it.

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Pak's anti-graft body files corruption case against Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE, JUN 27 (PTI): Pakistan's anti-graft body has filed a corruption case against deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif and three others for their alleged involvement in the illegal allotment of land in Punjab province about 34 years ago. An arrest warrant has been issued against the 70-year-old three-time premier who is in London for medical treatment.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has approached an anti-corruption court to declare Sharif a proclaimed offender since he did not respond to any of its summons.

The three other accused named in the case filed by the NAB are Jang/Geo media group owner Mir Shakilur Rahman, former Lahore Development Authority (LDA) director Humayun Faiz Rasool and former director (land) Mian Bashir.

In 1986, when he was the Punjab chief minister, Sharif had allegedly allotted 54-'kanal' (canal) land in Lahore to Mir Shakilur Rahman in violation of rules.

Rahman, who was arrested on March 12, is on judicial remand.

In the reference, Sharif and the two officers were accused of the misuse of authority in allotting the precious land along the canal to Rahman in violation of the rules.

Sharif had left for London in November after the Lahore High Court granted him a four-week permission to go abroad for treatment.

He had submitted an undertaking to the court to return to Pakistan, citing his record of facing the law and justice, within four weeks or as soon as he is declared healthy and fit to travel by doctors.

Last month, a fresh picture of ailing Sharif having tea at a London cafe along with his family went viral on social media, sparking a debate on his health with the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf members demanding his return to face corruption cases.

In the picture, he was seen sitting at a roadside caf with his granddaughters. He sported a blue shalwar kameez and a cap and apparently looked in better health.

Sharif was given bail in the Al-Azizia Mills corruption case, in which he was serving a seven-year prison sentence in Kot Lakhpat Jail. He was also given bail in a money-laundering case to facilitate his travel abroad.

Sharif was diagnosed with "complicated coronary artery/ischemic heart disease with significant disease burden".

His daughter Maryam Nawaz had said that her father was a high-risk patient therefore his cardiac catheterisation/coronary intervention had been postponed due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Judge orders ICE to release migrant children held with their families, citing coronavirus



Citing new coronavirus cases at detention facilities for migrant families, the federal judge overseeing litigation surrounding protections for undocumented minors in U.S. custody on Friday ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to release children the agency is holding with their parents or legal guardians.

U.S. Judge Dolly Gee of the federal district court in Los Angeles gave ICE a July 17 deadline to release all minors who have been in the agency's custody for more than 20 days. Gee, who oversees the government's compliance with the Flores Settlement Agreement, which governs the care of minors in U.S. immigration custody, cited the first coronavirus cases among the migrant families ICE holds at its three Family Residential Centers, or FRCs.

"Given the severity of the outbreak in the counties in which FRCs are located and the Independent Monitor and Dr. Wise's observations of non-compliance or spotty compliance with masking and social distancing rules, renewed and more vigorous efforts must be undertaken to transfer (children) residing at the FRCs to non-congregate settings," Gee wrote in

her order. "The FRCs are 'on fire' and there is no more time for half measures," she continued.

Gee said ICE has two ways to release minors in its custody before July 17. The agency can release them to other family members if their parents consent to being separated from them. Or ICE can remove families from detention together, allowing them to continue their immigration proceedings within communities in the U.S.

For the latter option, ICE would have to exercise its broad release authority to free the parents, who are not entitled

to any of the protections in the Flores Settlement, including its hallmark mandate that the government promptly remove migrant children from custodial settings.

Peter Schey, the co-counsel in the original lawsuit that paved the way for the Flores consent decree, praised Friday's order.

"We are grateful that the federal court has again stepped into this crisis and ordered the release of all minors to relatives in the U.S. in the next three weeks as long as the parent detained with the child wants their child re-

leased," Schey wrote in a statement to CBS News. "Some detained parents facing deportation brought their children to this country to save them from rampant and unchecked violence in their home countries and would prefer to see them released to relatives here rather than being deported along with the parent to countries where children face harm, and sometimes death."

In addition to the 11 coronavirus cases among migrant families at the Karnes detention facility in Texas, more than 2,500 adult ICE detainees have tested pos-

itive for COVID-19. Two immigrants have died of coronavirus complications while in the agency's custody.

ICE detains adult immigrants and families with children the government seeks to deport. An order by Gee in 2015 generally prohibited the agency from detaining minors with their families in unlicensed facilities for more than 20 days, barring limited exceptions.

The agency is currently holding approximately 124 children with their parents or legal guardians at three family detention facilities in

Texas and Pennsylvania. In response to another order from Gee in April, ICE officials recently conducted a parole review of all the children in its custody, but it denied most of their requests for release. Among other reasons, ICE said it did not grant parole to most of the families because the parents did not agree to be separated from their children so the minors could be released to sponsors.

In her order Friday, Gee required ICE to provide "detailed individualized" explanations if the agency does not release minors who have been

held for more than 20 days. Saying that families are named in federal litigation or have pending adjudications by immigration judges or asylum officers would not be "acceptable explanations," she said.

"For each minor who remains detained at an FRC for more than 20 days, the absence of a suitable sponsor, a parent/guardian's declination of waiver of Flores rights, or a prior unexplained failure to appear at a scheduled hearing would be a satisfactory explanation for continued detention if that explanation is verified in a declaration by an ICE representative under penalty of perjury," Gee continued in her order.

Gee also ordered ICE to "urgently enforce" measures to contain the spread of coronavirus within the family detention centers. She cited a recent report in which the independent monitor tasked with reviewing ICE's compliance with the Flores agreement said that officials at the two family detention facilities were not fully enforcing social distancing or mask wearing guidelines.

ICE did not immediately respond to a request to comment on Friday's order.

Reopening reverses course in Texas and Florida as coronavirus cases spike

SAN ANTONIO — Texas and Florida — whose leaders were praised by President Trump for being among the first to end coronavirus restrictions — abruptly reversed course Friday as virus infections soared to record levels, slamming the door shut on bars and imposing other measures in a bid to contain the pandemic.

Both states are backtracking amid a crisis of rising hospitalizations and skyrocketing infection rates. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) ordered bars to close and restaurants to reduce occupancy, and he gave local governments authority to ban outdoor gatherings of more than 100 people. The changes came as statistics show 1 in 10 Texans tested is positive for the novel coronavirus and the state's largest hospital is at capacity in its intensive care unit.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) ordered bars to close immediately Friday because of "widespread noncompliance" with rules regarding capacity and social distancing. The surprise announcement came as state health officials reported a record 8,942 infections Friday. Average cases are up nearly 77 percent from a week ago.

In Texas, the current surge of cases reflects the activity of recent weeks, including Memorial Day gatherings and summer activities that were permitted under Abbott's reopening plan, which began May 1.

"Wishful thinking got us here," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo.

The county, which includes Houston, leads the state in infections and is reaching maximum hospital capacity. Texas Medical Center, the state's largest hospital, had 100 percent of its ICU beds occupied Friday. The county elevated its color-coded threat meter to its highest level on Friday.

"Consider us the canary in the coal mine. You can look at what is happening here and know there are no shortcuts for getting around the crisis," Hidalgo said.

Nationwide, about 45,000 coronavirus cases were reported Friday — the third day in a row the country has had a record high number of cases, according to Washington Post data. Record seven-day case averages were reported by 13 states: Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Washington.

New York officials have begun to contact Arizona, Florida, Texas and other states where coronavirus cases are swelling. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo (D) told reporters Friday. Jonah Bruno, a spokesman for the state health department, said his state would be able to provide "equipment, ventilators, staff, our experience and knowledge, whatever they need."

New York's largest hospital system, Northwell Health, which by early May had discharged more than 10,000 coronavirus patients, will begin polling its employees next week to see whether they can be deployed in other states. It would be the return of a favor, of sorts: Clinicians from as far away as Salt Lake City traveled to New York to help this spring, said

hospital spokesman Terry Lynam. Other municipalities halted reopenings Friday. California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) ordered Imperial County, where cases are skyrocketing, to shut down. San Francisco Mayor London Breed is temporarily delaying the reopening of businesses because of a rise in cases, as is Marin County to its north. Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Giménez plans to sign an emergency order closing all beaches from July 3 to July 7.

In Washington, Vice President Pence attempted to put a positive spin on the situation, claiming "remarkable progress" despite a surge in cases.

"As we stand here today, all 50 states and territories across the country are opening up, and safely and responsibly," Pence said.

At the same time, Abbott and DeSantis announced they would reverse course. The governors — both prominent supporters of Trump — had moved swiftly to lift lockdowns, even as some local leaders pleaded with them to keep restrictions in place.

Squeezed by pressure from the conservative wing of his party, skyrocketing unemployment numbers and the business sector, Abbott reopened most of Texas's businesses, with adapted safety measures, by mid-to-late May — but he bypassed the metrics he established as crucial thresholds to dictate the pace.

The governor warned repeatedly that if numbers began to surge, his administration would rethink the reopening. In an interview Friday with KVIA, Abbott said he regrets allowing bars to quickly reopen.

"If I could go back and redo anything, it probably would have been to slow down the opening of bars," he said, adding the "bar setting, in reality, just doesn't work in a pandemic."

Leaders of the state's population centers warned the reopening was too abrupt. Hidalgo was one of the earliest elected officials to threaten constituents with jail time if they did not comply with a mandatory mask ordinance. The Abbott administration quickly banned local governments from imposing penalties on people who violate mask or social distancing orders.

As the state reopened, life in Texas began to return to some kind of normal — as epidemiologists were starting to see a gradual uptick in cases. As Texas families flocked to swimming holes, young adults imbibed happily at their favorite honky tonks and public parks flourished with big family cookouts, the numbers climbed. Individual Texans, confused by mixed messaging, judged their own risks but little stopped them from behaving as they wanted. "All of this was predicted and is predictable," said Peter Hotez, dean for the National School of Tropical Medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine, "given the fact we relaxed social distancing before modelers said we could do it without putting in place a public health response that was commensurate with the economic recovery."

Now, hospital beds are filling so rapidly in cities such as Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio that the governor has called on them to stop elective surgeries, said Diana Fite, president of the Texas Medical Association.

The EU will bar American travelers because of US coronavirus spread

The European Union is trying to reopen — but not too many US visitors.

The European Union will reportedly block most Americans from traveling to the bloc even as those countries reopen to other travelers, a policy that reflects the United States's failure to fully control the coronavirus pandemic.

The European Union restricted nonessential travel to most of its member-states under rules in effect until at least June 30. But starting July 1, European countries are loosening some of those measures and allowing travel again from more than a dozen countries — including China (if Beijing allows EU travelers too) — that meet certain criteria, including their ability to contain the coronavirus. Right

now, the United States doesn't make the cut.

This is not altogether surprising. Europe was once the epicenter of the coronavirus crisis, with Italy, Spain, and France some of the hardest hit countries in the bloc. Aggressive lockdown measures drove down cases, and many European countries have slowly reopened. And while there have been spikes across the continent, overall, Europe's cases have declined. The United States had long since overtaken Europe as the epicenter of the crisis. And, unlike its allies overseas, America is now seeing a massive surge in cases in some states. As of June 26, the United States has confirmed more than 2.4 million coronavirus cases and recorded more than 124,000 deaths, according to data from

Johns Hopkins University. On Friday, the United States confirmed a record 40,000 new coronavirus cases nationwide.

The New York Times's Matina Stevis-Gridneff first reported Friday that EU officials had finalized the list of acceptable countries Friday after what she described as "tortuous negotiations".

The list was backed in principle by most E.U. ambassadors and does not require unanimous support, but still needs to be formalized in member states' capitals as well as in the central European Union bureaucracy before taking effect July 1. Diplomats did not expect the list to change.

The United States is not alone in being excluded, and travelers from other countries, including Russia, are also barred from visiting.

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FEELING JUST BEACHY! Singer Shakira enjoyed a sunny afternoon in the water off a beach in Barcelona, Spain.

Justin Bieber files \$20 million defamation lawsuit against women who accused him of assault

(CNN): Justin Bieber has filed a \$20 million defamation lawsuit against two women who accused him earlier this week of sexual assault.

The two women posted the allegations on their respective Twitter accounts. Bieber's lawsuit, which was filed Thursday, calls the allegations "fabricated." CNN has obtained a copy of the lawsuit.

One of the women, who is listed in the suit as Jane Doe-2 and identified as "Kadi" on Twitter, claims Bieber assaulted her early on the morning of May 5, 2015 at a hotel in New York City.

Bieber's complaint calls the allegations "factually impossible" and says they are "contradicted by her own prior written statements, are supported only by falsified or faked texts, and her allegations are a complete fabrication for the self-stated purpose of garnering fame and attention, and there are numerous witnesses to contradict Kadi's malicious lies." CNN has reached out to "Kadi" via Twitter for comment.

The second woman, listed as Jane Doe-1 and identified as "Danielle" in the complaint, accused Bieber of assaulting her on March 10, 2014 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Texas. She has since deleted her tweets. Bieber's lawsuit refutes the allegation.

"Danielle fabricated her sexual encounter with Bieber at the Four Seasons Hotel because it was publicly reported that Bieber had dinner at the Four Seasons Restaurant on March 10, 2014 and presumed that Bieber was at the hotel because of the public reports of him dining at the restaurant," the filing continues.



"However, even though Bieber went to the restaurant, he did NOT stay at the Four Seasons Hotel."

Bieber has also taken to social media to deny the allegations.

"Every claim of sexual abuse should be taken very seriously and this is why my response was needed," Bieber wrote in a tweet earlier this week. "However this story is factually impossible and that is why I will be working with twitter and authorities to take legal action."

Twinkle Khanna Adds Green To Her House By Recycling Old Bottles

Twinkle Khanna, who loves gardening and describes herself as someone with a "green thumb," shared glimpses of how she's been adding more and more green to the nooks and corners of her house. In a post on Saturday, Twinkle Khanna wrote about growing money plants, mint, rosemary and philodendrons in glass bottles and jars. She also shared photos a few pretty corners of her house and encouraged her followers to give this a try: "The monsoon is getting ready to rain on my parade but I have a few green umbrellas ready. This is a new pursuit - Growing plants in water. All trial and error at this point, though money plant as we all know does well in water. Now trying out Mint, Rosemary and some Philodendrons. Give it a shot. Use up all your old bottles and jars. Yes, some of those on my shelf are recycled bottles that once held a precious liquid - gin," Twinkle wrote in her post.

Earlier, in a post dipped in her signature sense of humour, Twinkle had revealed that while she can't cook or

dance, she's incredibly good at nurturing plants: "I am inordinately clumsy and butterfingers could be my middle name but my thumb is a spectacular green. Can't cook, can't dance, can't even



make small talk, but give me a tiny piece of land and I will give it so much love that it can't help but love me back."

Twinkle Khanna believes in the con-

cept of growing your own food as she shared this post earlier: "What you sow, you shall reap and I planted a love for gardening in the hearts of my children. This is my harvest-their help in digging,

watering and this large bowl of Ceylon Palak. It grows like a weed and is easily propagated by planting the stem back after taking out the leaves."

'The Last Of Us Part II' Is The Fastest-Selling PS4 Exclusive Ever

The PS4's days are numbered now that we know the PlayStation 5 will hit shelves and entertainment centers later this fall, but it's certainly going out with a bang thanks to The Last Of Us 2. The highly-anticipated sequel to the Neil Druckmann classic officially went on sale last week and has been one of the fastest-selling games in the console's history.

Sony announced on Friday that The Last Of Us 2 was the fastest-selling PS4 exclusive title in history, with more than 4 million copies sold as of June 21. That means it hit the 4 million mark in just three days, easily eclipsing the pace of other PS4 exclusives like God of War (3.1 million) and 2018's Spider-Man (3.3 million) over the same mark.

"We are so immensely grateful to the millions of fans around the world that

have played The Last of Us Part II and shared their experiences with us over the last week. We set out to tell a new kind of story, one that deals with difficult themes and would challenge you in unexpected ways," Druckmann said according to the Sony blog. "Hearing how the experience has resonated with so many of you and witnessing the type of thoughtful discussions it has sparked has been so incredible."

The sequel to 2013's The Last Of Us took years to develop and saw some significant delays, but the way appeared to be well worth it. The first game sold 1.3 million copies in its first week, but plenty of buzz and rave reviews for the sequel saw it smash that mark to sell more than 4 million copies in its first few days of release.

Christina Ricci, Tom Hopper & David Dastmalchian to star in indie action-thriller

LOS ANGELES, JUN 27 (PTI): Actors Christina Ricci, Tom Hopper and David Dastmalchian have boarded the cast of indie action-thriller "Can't Stop the Dawn".

The film will be directed by Mariana Palka and produced by Tony Armer, Marty Poole, Michael E. Brown, Ramfis Myrthil and Jory Weitz, reported Variety. Armer has penned the screenplay, based on an original concept by Dale Poppe.

The story is about a terminally ill single mom (Ricci), who is recruited by

a mysterious agent (Hopper) to assassinate a ruthless leader (Dastmalchian) of a human trafficking ring for the promise of a better future for her son.

"I am so passionate about 'Can't Stop the Dawn'. The story grips me, life is unpredictable and this film hauls this truth out and examines it in a way no film ever has before. I'm excited to be making an intersectionally feminist action movie that is truly female gazed in its vision," Palka said in a statement.

Joseph Fiennes to play extreme athlete Wim Hof in 'The Ice Man'

LOS ANGELES, JUN 27 (PTI): "The Handmaid's Tale" star Joseph Fiennes will essay the role of Dutch extreme athlete Wim Hof in Genesis Pictures' upcoming biographical movie "The Ice Man".

The film has a script from "Philomena" and "Stan & Ollie" scribe Jeff Pope, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Hof, 61, is remembered for his ability to withstand freezing temperatures. He has set Guinness world records for swimming under ice and prolonged full-body

contact with ice. The athlete has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in shorts, ran a half marathon above the Arctic Circle barefoot, and stood in a container while covered with ice cubes for more than 112 minutes.

He also came up the Wim Hof Method, a combination of breathing, cold therapy and commitment, that he teaches to people from all over the world. Debbie Gray will produce "The Ice Man" for Genesis Pictures, with Fiennes and Pope serving as executive producers.

Margot Robbie to star in female-led version of 'Pirates of the Caribbean'

LOS ANGELES, JUN 27 (PTI): Hollywood star Margot Robbie is set to play the lead role in Disney's female-led Pirates of the Caribbean movie.

The film's script will be penned by Birds of Prey writer Christina Hodson. Jerry Bruckheimer, who produced all five Pirates movies -- "Curse of the Black Pearl", "Dead Man's Chest", "At World's End", "On Stranger Tides" and "Dead Men Tell No Tales" -- is attached to produce the untitled film which is in early development at Disney.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the new film won't be a spin-off of the long-running franchise that had Johnny Depp's pirate Jack Sparrow at its centre, but rather a completely original story with new characters under the Pirates moniker.

The project is also different from another Pirates of the Caribbean reboot that was announced last year in October with franchise veteran Ted Elliott and Chernobyl creator Craig Mazin developing a story.

Matthew A Cherry to direct comedy heist film for New Line

LOS ANGELES, JUN 27 (PTI): Filmmaker Matthew A Cherry will be directing the upcoming heist comedy "The Come Up" for New Line Cinema.

Cherry is best known for directing animated short film "Hair Love", which won him the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film at the 92nd Academy Awards. Michael Starrbury has penned the script for the film from an original idea by Jermaine Fowler, reported Deadline.

The project is being described as "Friday" meets "Ocean's 11" story.

Fowler will also star in the film alongside "Get Out" star Lil Rel Howery and The Lucas Brothers of "22 Jump Street" fame. "I am super honoured to be working with Jermaine Fowler, Michael Starrbury, John Rickard and New Line on "The Come Up".

ARIES:

It's not about the destination, Aries. It's about your commitment to the path. Thursday is bringing with itself the reminder that it's time to retreat into your studio and expand your skill set. Have you utilised your time away from the matrix to rediscover your gifts? This is a good time to nurture those too. You may or may not be able to find a lucrative opportunity that involves the given gift immediately. Trust that many doors will open for you in the future. But that's not something you're meant to worry about now.

Tip: Daily practice is the secret to everything.

TAURUS:

Every great artist knows that inspiration strikes unexpectedly. Today, instead of chasing the metaphorical Muse, you're being asked to step back and focus on everything else, including the so-called mundane tasks. Who knows? You may channel the best idea of your life when you're busy doing the dishes. Already have an idea you want to share with the world? Retreat into your sacred space, Taurus. Stay connected to the cosmic currents of creativity.

Tip: Let inspiration strike unexpectedly.

GEMINI:

If you feel like you're stuck in a rut, you probably are. But getting through your to-do list doesn't have to be an uphill task. The cards are reminding you that it's time to reconnect with your mission. To remember why you began this journey in the first place. Instead of burying yourself under a pile of work for the sake of being busy, consciously choose the projects you resonate with. This could be the secret to

waking up with a spring in your step, Gemini.

Tip: Reconnect with your mission.

CANCER:

There's a part of you that's still stuck in the past, and that part of you continues to rule your present. But, what you need to keep in mind is that, what is gone is gone. You attracted certain experiences into your life in order to face your fears. There is no need to go back into that space of insecurities again. Have faith in yourself, Cancer. Have faith in the divine forces that are co-creating with you on this journey. Today, you're being asked to journal five reasons why you started walking this path.

Tip: Remember why you came here, Cancer.

LEO:

We spend so much time worrying about what other people will think and say that we end up suppressing our own feelings in the process. But these voices in our head, they're all just us. A manifestation of our monkey mind. Your fears do not paint an accurate picture of how another person may perceive this situation and even if they do, it doesn't matter. What matters is your truth. Your mission. What you came to the earthly realm to fulfil. PS: Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself today.

Tip: Make that transition from fear to love.

VIRGO:

If you think the world works outside-in, you've got it all wrong, Virgo. Try taking care of yourself for a change, and then approaching others from this space of fullness. You'll find that the Universe reflects the energy of joy and love back at you. Some of you may feel inspired to tap into the

wisdom of ancient beauty rituals. Did you know that the milk and honey pack was a favourite in Cleopatra's Egypt?

Tip: But first, let's self-care.

LIBRA:

You need to take a break from everything, including the BS in your own head. So, don't wait until the weekend to put your feet up and devour your favourite book, cover to cover, as you sip on a glass of iced latte. Remember to follow a gadget-free policy in your sanctuary, and yes, your Instagram followers will live without your daily updates. Have you been working on a book or a creative project of some sort?

Tip: You need a break.

SCORPIO:

There's an inner awakening within you, one that's making you realise you're too much of a star to be playing a supporting role in this film called life. You're ready to take this cloak of invisibility off. You're ready to take the centre stage. Remember, learning to move past the judgements in your own head is the first step on this journey. If and when the voice of fear whispers, acknowledge it, but choose to move forward despite it. You have many mountains to move on your path.

Tip: It's time to take centre stage.

SAGITTARIUS:

The Universe speaks to us in mysterious ways. What if the song on the radio or the Instagram post that caught your attention holds a potent message? Still your mind and you will be able to receive the answers you seek, Sagittarius. Those who work in the media or performance arts space could be struggling to reach out to the right audience or

hustle lucrative gigs.

Tip: Get a manager on board.

CAPRICORN:

The energy of the new moon is providing you with a wonderful opportunity to start a new venture or take a step towards something you believe in. Is there a project you parted ways with a while ago or an idea you thought wasn't quite ready to be shared with the world? A lot has changed since you first penned down your thoughts, Capricorn.

Tip: Revisit the vision board.

AQUARIUS:

There's a part of you that's still stuck in the past. A part of you that's unwilling to let go of the memories from a time long gone. What you need to recognise is that this narrative is not supporting you, Aquarius. It is in fact hindering your growth. Today, take a break from the chaos and commotion of the outside world to look within and be present to your wounds.

Tip: It's time to release the old story.

PISCES:

Thursday brings with itself the wonderful opportunity to revisit your goals and connect with your soul's mission on a deeper level. Let's start with the vision board, shall we? Are the visuals in alignment with the life you want to create for yourself in the now, or do they bear testimony to a version of you that you were yesterday? Update wherever necessary. Remember to stay true to your vision as you do. You are not here to pander your audience. You're here to create from a place of truth and authenticity.

Tip: Update your vision board in accordance with who you are now.