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SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 259 | Gangtok | Wednesday | 30 September 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

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Four destinations ban entry of tourists

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

While the State Government announced its decision to end all restrictions on entry into Sikkim starting 10 Oct, rural bodies at several places in the state have begun announcing their own counter-decisions to restrict entry of tourists. Lachung in North Sikkim was the first to make such an announcement on 25 Sept banning tourists till 30 Nov.

Today, Ribdi-Bhareng GPU under Daramdin constituency, West Sikkim banned entry of tourists till 30 Nov 2020. A notice issued on 29 Sept

by the Panchayat President, Phur Lhamu Sherpa, informs that the panchayat along with villagers and homestay stakeholders have decided to restrict entry of tourists into Hilley, Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary and Pattharey from 01 Oct till 30 Nov 2020.

On 28 Sept, Assam Lingzey GPU in East Sikkim issued a notice declaring restrictions on entry of international, national, domestic and local tourists till 31 Dec 2020. Prior to that on 27 Sept, Yuksam in West Sikkim had announced its decision to ban entry of tourists till 30 Nov 2020.

Single-day COVID-19 cases in India below 75,000



NEW DELHI, SEP 29 (PTI): Daily COVID-19 cases in India dropped below 75,000 and less than 1,000 deaths were reported in a day after nearly a month, while total recoveries crossed the 51 lakh-mark, according to the Union Health Ministry's data updated on Tuesday.

The total coronavirus cases in the country mounted to 61,45, 291 with 70,589 new infections, while the death toll reached 96,318 after 776 people succumbed to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The total recoveries surged to 51,01,397 pushing the recovery rate to 83.01 per cent.

There are 9,47,576 active cases in the country which comprise 15.42 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate was recorded at 1.57 per cent.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16 and crossed 60-lakh mark on September 28.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 7,31,10,041 samples have been tested up to September 28 with 11,42,811 samples being tested on Monday.

The 776 new fatalities include 180 from Maharashtra, 70 from Tamil Nadu, 59 from Karnataka, 58 from Uttar Pradesh, 56 from West Bengal, 46 from Punjab, 37 each from Andhra Pradesh and Delhi and 35 from Madhya Pradesh.

Total 96,318 deaths reported so far in the country include 35,751 from Maharashtra followed by 9,383 from Tamil Nadu, 8,641 from Karnataka, 5,745 from Andhra Pradesh, 5,652 from Uttar Pradesh, 5,272 from Delhi, 4,837 from West Bengal, 3,428 from Gujarat, 3,284 from Punjab and 2,242 from Madhya Pradesh.

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

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



With 41 new cases and 71 discharges, Sikkim's active COVID cases stand at 667

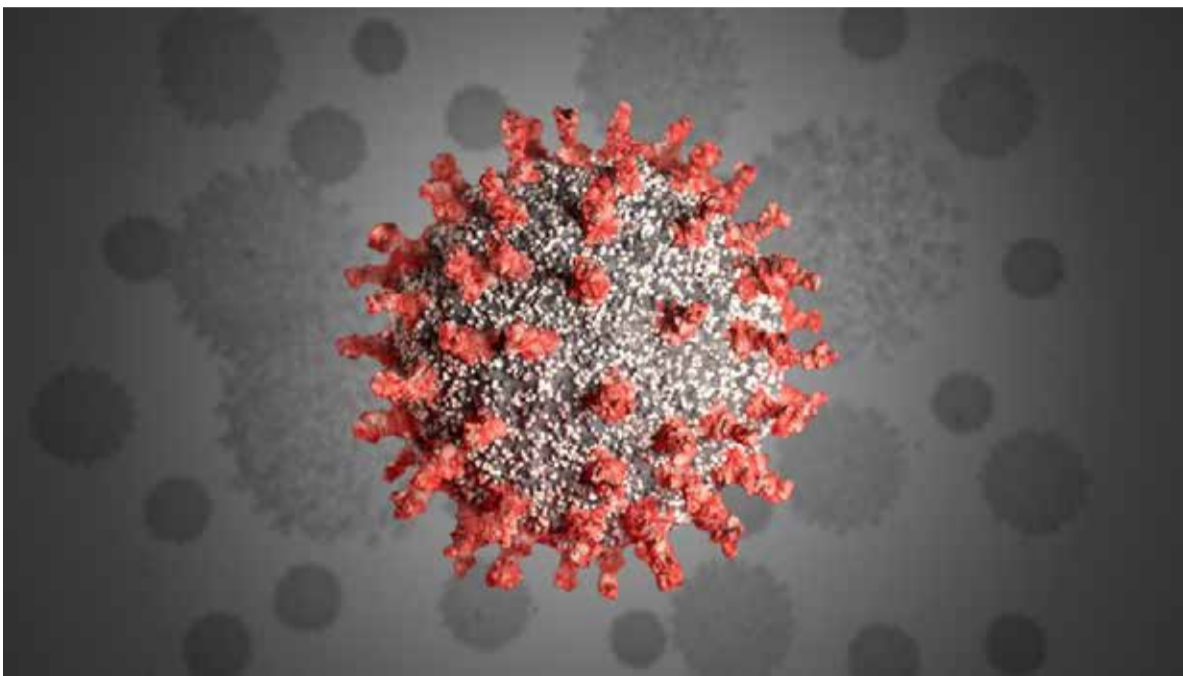
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

Sikkim's tally of confirmed COVID-19 cases bulged to 2,856 with 41 fresh cases of novel coronavirus detected in the 24 hours ending 8 AM Tuesday.

Meanwhile, 71 more COVID patients were discharged from isolation facilities on Monday taking the number of discharged patients to 2,154. With these discharges and the new cases, there are now 667 actives COVID-19 cases in the State.

Of the new cases, 20 were detected from RT-PCR testing of 249 samples at the VRD Lab while TrueNat testing of 37 samples found seven COVID-19 cases. 14 more cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 77 samples.

While providing the details of the new cases found in RT-PCR testing,



Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, informed that one person from Penlong, one from the containment zone in Daragaon, Tadong, one from above Sikkim Motor Training Institute in Sichey, one from MG Marg, one form the containment zone

in Arithang, one from near Patanjali Store in Arithang, one from Assam Lingzey and one from Namli tested positive for COVID-19.

He added that another person from near Entel Motors at 6th Mile Tadong, one from near Modern SSS in

Tathangchen, one from Tibet Road, one from a paid quarantine facility, one from Ranipool, one from near Enchey Gumpa in Chandmari, one patient already admitted at STNM hospital, one from near Kajla Petrol Pump, one from Rangpo and one

from Sang Khola were also found COVID-19 positive in RT-PCR testing.

Meanwhile, two persons from Sisa Golai, Gangtok, one from below AIR quarters in Arithang, one from near Ringhim Helipad in Mangan, one from

near Himalayan Hotel at Tadong, one from Pani House area and one from Namchi were found positive for COVID-19 in TrueNat testing.

Likewise, one person from the containment zone in Daragaon, Tadong, one from near Entel Motors 6th Mile Tadong, one from Samdur, one from Nurses Hostel E-block of CRH Tadong, one from Pachey Samsing in Pakyong, one from DPH Area Gangtok, one from Metro Point Tadong, one from near Lumsey School in Tadong, one from 6th Mile Tadong, one from 8th Mile SSB camp, one from below Saraswati Mandir at 5th Mile Tadong, one from near the slaughter house area in Upper Arithang, one from Pendam and one from Legship in West Sikkim were found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing.

India rejects China's assertion over following its 1959 stand on perception of LAC

NEW DELHI, SEP 29 (PTI): India on Tuesday rejected China's position that it abides by its 1959 stand on the perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and asked the neighbouring country to refrain from advancing an "untenable unilateral" interpretation of the de-facto border.

The stand by China spelt out by its foreign ministry insisting that it takes the 1959 line on perception of the LAC amid a nearly five-month-long border standoff in eastern Ladakh triggered a strong reaction from India.

"India has never accepted the so-called unilaterally defined 1959 Line of Actual Control (LAC). This position has been consistent and well known, including to the Chinese side," MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said in response to a question by the media on the issue.

The spokesperson's comments came after a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson told Hindustan Times that China abides by the LAC as proposed by then Premier Zhou Enlai to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in a letter dated November 7, 1959.

Srivastava referred to various bilateral agreements including the 1993 agreement on maintenance of peace and tranquility along the LAC, 1996 pact on confidence

building measures (CBMs) and the 2005 agreement on political parameters and guiding principles for settlement of the boundary issue, to emphasise that both sides showed commitment to reach a common understanding of the alignment of the LAC.

"Therefore, the insistence now of the Chinese side that there is only one LAC is contrary to the solemn commitments made by China in these agreements," he said, adding the Indian side has always respected and abided by the LAC.

Referring to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent address to Parliament, Srivastava said it is the Chinese side which by its attempts to transgress the LAC in various parts of the Western Sector has tried to unilaterally alter the status quo.

The MEA spokesperson also talked about repeated affirmation of the Chinese side in the last few months that the current situation in the border areas should be resolved in accordance with the agreements signed between the two countries.

"In the agreement reached between External Affairs Minister and his Chinese counterpart on 10th September also, the Chinese side has reiterated its commitment to abide by all the existing agreements," Srivastava said.

Farmers decide to intensify 'rail roko' agitation

AMRITSAR/FEROZEPUR, SEP 29 (PTI): Farmers agitating over the three agricultural laws enacted by Parliament recently continued their 'rail roko' stir on Tuesday for the sixth day and decided to extend it for an indefinite period.

The farmers under the banner of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee have been squatting on rail tracks at various places in the state since September 24.

They said they have decided to intensify their protest against the Centre and will continue to block rail tracks at Tanda, Mukerian, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Ferozepur.

The protesters are demanding the rollback of the three anti-farmer legislations.

The train service,

meanwhile, continued to remain suspended in Punjab amid the farmers' stir.

Under the banner of Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, the farmers on Tuesday also unanimously resolved to boycott some private companies, alleging that the Centre's farm bills were intended to benefit some private players.

State general secretary of the committee, Sarwan Singh Pandher, dubbed the farm laws as anti-farmers and said the private firms will exploit farmers.

Another farmer leader Sawinder Singh Chautala said the rail roko protest would be further intensified next month and urged people from all sections of the society to come forward and

support the farmers' cause.

In Ferozepur district too, the protesting farmers vowed to boycott some private companies. They continued to block the railway track near Basti Tankan Wali for the sixth consecutive day.

While addressing farmers, union leaders Satnam Singh Pannu, state president of the Sangharsh Committee, said the farmers have pledged to boycott each of the products that come from some of the corporate houses.

Pannu claimed that the central government wants to promote the interests of some corporate houses in the country.

He said the farmers are already reeling under financial crunch and these new

agricultural bills would further aggravate their misery.

Pannu said Punjab has always played a pivotal role as the food bowl of the nation. The farmers of the state will be the worst hit by these central laws, he claimed.

He announced that the farmers would oppose the laws tooth and nail.

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday assented to the three contentious bills -- the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Lokayukta declares Goa minister 'unfit' to hold office

PANAJI, SEP 29 (PTI): The Goa Lokayukta has held Solid Waste Management Minister Michael Lobo to be "unfit to hold his post" while passing an order on a complaint against him, and said it should be conveyed to the chief minister.

Though making such recommendations is 'futile', it is the duty of the anti-corruption institution to do it, said Lokayukta Justice P K Misra (ret'd) in his order of September 17, made public last week.

The order also indicted Sarpanch and Secretary of Arpora panchayat and Member Secretary of the North Goa Planning and Development



Authority (NGPDA) for maladministration and vengeful action against the complainant.

Rose de Souza, the complainant, had applied to the NGPDA -- Lobo was then its chairman -- for a construction license.

But the authority delayed the sanction of license out of vengefulness, she alleged.

The Lokayukta held that the "obvious

maladministration and vengeful action" on the part of Sarpanch, Secretary and Lobo resulted in causing loss to the complainant.

"If any declaration is made (under section 16-A of the Lokayukta Act) that he should not continue as a minister, and such declaration is accepted or deemed to be accepted, the matter is left to the discretion of the concerned minister

to resign or not to resign," the order said.

"Therefore, in the present political scenario possibly no useful purpose would be served by giving a declaration that Lobo is unfit to continue as a Minister.

"In spite of such stark reality of futility of making such a declaration, the institution considers that it is a solemn duty to give a declaration that Lobo should not continue to hold the office of Minister," the order said.

Since chief minister is the competent authority in respect of a minister, the order should be forwarded to the CM along with relevant materials on record, it said.

Yangthang Rinpoche's 4th Parinirvana Memorial Puja

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

DomangYangthang Rinpoche's 4th Parinirvana Memorial Puja ceremony will be held at Yuksam on 30 September, a press release informs.

"Due to the Covid-19 protocol, the gathering of people will have to be kept limited this year. Therefore, the devotees, followers and Dhammapractitioners are requested to send/offer their prayers from respective places," the release states.



Bhawani Gurung gets Dattopant Thegri National Self-reliance award

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

Bhawani S Gurung from Ravangla, South Sikkim was conferred the "Dattopant Thegri National Self-reliance award" by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch for manufacturing of LED lights brand "Batti", a press release informs.

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch is a political and cultural organisation founded in 1991. It is an affiliate of the Hindu Nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that deals with economic issues.

It is an affiliate of the RSS, which pitches for swadeshi or indigenous production, has launched a pan-Indian Swadeshi Swavlamban Abhiyan (self-reliance campaign) Aatmanirbhar to promote local production, the release mentions.



AYUSH Society observes Poshan Maah Abhiyan

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT

(IPR): Sikkim State

AYUSH Society observed Poshan Maah Abhiyan at various co-located AYUSH PHCs, CHCs and District hospitals and AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres across the State from 21 to 26 Sept, 2020.

During the programme, various activities were carried out in different locations in the State. The programme was



attended by pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent

girls and the children. Various activities under Poshan Maah Abhiyan

and its importance were also briefed on the programme, which were as follows:

1. IEC talks on nutrition, malnutrition, importance of balance diet during pregnancy, post pregnancy, lactational period and during adolescent age.
2. A variety of nutritional colorful food were displayed and its importance were also briefed.
3. Importance

of exclusive breast feeding, types of weaning food, importance of deworming, timely immunisation and iron supplementary for the children.

4. Importance of yoga in daily life, home remedies for common activities by Ayurvedic Doctor.

The doctors and staff also distributed immuno boosters, masks, protein rich dietary supplements in the programme.

Rotary Club Siliguri inducts cricketer Richa Ghosh

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

Rotary Club Siliguri Metropolitan celebrated the birthday of Indian Women's Cricket team player from Siliguri, Richa Ghosh, a press release informs. During the celebration she was also inducted in to the club as an Honorary Member.

The Club congratulated and thanked Ghosh for

representing Siliguri in the national level cricket. At the age of 16, Ghosh was named in India's squad for the 2020 ICC Women's T20 World Cup in January 2020. Later the same month, she was also named in India's squads for the 2020 Australia women's Tri-Nation Series.

Club President, Shiv Shankar Sarkar, Secretary, Rakesh Garg, Legal Advisor,



Sougata Banarjee, Vice President, Jyoti Dev Sarkar along with Rotary district 3240, Sandeep Ghoshal joined the celebration.

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National camp for women wrestlers to begin on October 10

AMANPREET SINGH

NEW DELHI, SEP 29

(PTI): The women's national wrestling camp will finally begin at the SAI Centre in Lucknow from October 10, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) said on Tuesday, with a warning that the grapplers who miss it will not be considered for national team selection.

The national camp was to begin from September 1 but postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

To make matters worse, the country's two of the four Olympic-bound wrestlers -- Vinesh Phogat and Deepak Punia -- returned positive for the virus, creating more fear in the minds of many wrestlers.

After assessing the situation and on the advice of the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the WFI has finally made up its mind to start the

camp in six Olympic weight categories -- 50kg, 53kg, 57kg, 62kg, 68kg and 76kg -- till December 31.

Wrestling was among nine disciplines that the SAI picked for resumption of activities from October 5, under its 'Khelo India Phir Se' initiative.

"We are starting the camp from October 10 in Lucknow. The strength of the camp will remain same, three wrestlers in each of the six Olympic weight categories," WFI Assistant secretary Vinod Tomar told PTI.

The wrestlers will have to undergo a 14-day quarantine period and return negative test before they are allowed to begin mat training.

Asked if all the top wrestlers have agreed to join the camp, Tomar said, "All will have to come. Those who will miss the camp

will be replaced and will not be considered for selection."

Asked specifically if Vinesh has agreed to join the camp, Tomar said the WFI is arranging what she needs.

"She wanted to train abroad but in current situation, we are giving her good partners to train with at the camp."

Before the camp was postponed, 2018 World Championship medallist Pooja Dhanda had said that "we have to learn to live with Coronavirus", indicating that she will have no issues in joining the camp whenever it starts.

Meanwhile, the coach of an up and coming wrestler said his ward will join the camp but only because a place in the national team is at stake.

"After speaking with the parents of the wrestler, we have decided to send

address of A.K. Singh, CMD included efforts to augment growth in solar and wind power. Company has envisaged floating solar projects of 500 MW each in Odisha and Telangana and 50 MW in Kerala under Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs) Scheme of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India. Company has received in-principle approval from MNRE for enhancement of Solar Park capacity (from 100 MW to 140 MW) in Odisha, which envisages development of two projects of 40 MW and 100 MW. Possibilities are also being explored for development of other utility scale solar projects in different States/UTs such as Telangana (293 MW), Tamil Nadu (2 X 25 MW) and Leh (50 MW).

NHPC has issued Letter of Award (LOA) to solar power developers for Inter State Transmission System (ISTS) grid connected photovoltaic projects aggregating to 2,000 MW. NHPC is also undertaking various other projects with installed capacity of 2,258 MW through subsidiaries and joint ventures. He said that by the end of the current decade NHPC will have installed capacity of 20,000 MW including JVs and Subsidiaries.

Various queries of members regarding performance of the Company were also addressed at the AGM.



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

NHPC Limited, hosted its 44th Annual General Meeting (AGM) through video conferencing from its Corporate Office, Faridabad on 29th September 2020. The management of the company recommended a dividend of Rs.1.50 per equity share for the year 2019-20, which is inclusive of interim dividend of Rs.1.18 per equity share paid in March, 2020.

A.K. Singh, CMD, NHPC addressed the shareholders at the AGM wherein members of NHPC Board and Company Secretary, NHPC were also present. CMD highlighted key achievements made by NHPC despite the challenges posed due to CoVID-19 pandemic. Shri Singh informed that the Company had earned a total revenue of Rs. 9,771.59 crore, revenue from operations (net) of Rs. 8,735.41 crore and Net Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs. 3,007.17 crore during the FY 2019-20.

He also said that NHPC had achieved its highest ever annual generation of 26,121 Million Units (MUs) surpassing the previous highest generation of 24,193 MUs during financial year 2018-19. A.K. Singh further informed about the successful acquisition of Lanco Teesta Hydro Power Limited

as a wholly owned subsidiary company for the implementation of Teesta VI HE Project (500 MW) in Sikkim through Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

Similarly, the company has been declared as successful resolution applicant by the Committee of Creditors of Jal Power Corporation Limited, a company implementing Rangit Stage-IV HE Project (120 MW) in Sikkim. The shareholders were also informed about the receipt of stage-II forest clearance for Dibang Multipurpose Project (2800 MW).

Mr Singh also informed about MoUs signed with Green Energy Development Corporation of Odisha Limited (GEDCOL) to form a Joint Venture Company (JVC) to plan & develop techno-commercially feasible floating solar power projects of 500 MW in the state of Odisha and with Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company Limited (HIDCL), a company owned by Govt. of Nepal for joint cooperation to develop hydropower projects in Nepal. He went on to add that the company is having 2,800 MW installed capacity under construction and hydroelectric projects having 5,945 MW installed capacity are under clearance or approval stage.

Other important points during the

Chamling condole demise of NMC Chairman

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

Sikkim Democratic Front president, Pawan Chamling, has condoled the demise of Chairman, Namchi Municipal Council, Uday Chandra Rai who passed away in the morning of

29 Sept at STNM Hospital.

In his message, Mr Chamling, has said that Sikkim has lost a proud son and SDF has lost one of its faithful and dedicated leaders.

"Today, even as we mourn the passing away of an able and

dedicated leader, we derive our consolation from the fact that we had the privilege of having him lead the NMC as a remarkably successful chairman," he mentions.

He has further extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Serum Institute to boost production of COVID-19 vaccine doses to 200 million

BENGALURU, 29 SEPT [REUTERS]:

Serum Institute of India will make up to 200 million COVID-19 vaccine doses for poorer countries, including India, next year, as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI vaccines alliance have doubled their funding, the company said on Tuesday.

The extra funds will help Serum boost

manufacturing of the vaccine candidates from AstraZeneca Plc and Novavax Inc, for delivery under the COVAX scheme as early as the first half of 2021.

The collaboration takes forward an initial agreement signed in August by Serum, GAVI and the Gates Foundation for 100 million doses to be priced at a maximum of \$3 each.

The total funding provided is now \$300 million, and the expanded collaboration also has an option for the provision of additional doses as needed.

The so-called COVAX plan, co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and GAVI, aims to deliver 2 billion vaccine doses around the world by the end of 2021. More than 150 nations have

joined the plan, though China and the United States have not signed up.

The global death toll from COVID-19 passed 1 million on Tuesday, according to a Reuters tally.

India, which leads the world in the daily average number of new infections reported, saw its coronavirus case tally rise to 6.15 million as of Tuesday.

Odisha officer arrested for torturing wife: Police

JHARSUGUDA, SEP 29

(PTI): The deputy

collector of Odisha's Boudh district was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly torturing and assaulting his wife, a senior police officer said.

Sarat Bag, an Odisha Administrative Service (OAS), was arrested on the basis of a complaint lodged by his wife on

September 26, said Suchismita Mohanty, the inspector in-charge of BTM police station in Jharsuguda.

Bags wife has accused him of torturing and physically assaulting her. Based on her complaint, police registered a case and launched a hunt for Bag, she said.

The deputy



collector's comment was not available immediately.

Bag, who was hiding at a relative's place at Jogiadihi in the Kolabira area, was picked up by a police team and brought to Jharsuguda, the police officer said.

Stating that similar charges had been levelled against him in the past, Mohanty said further investigation in the case is underway.



CRH docs perform complex neurological surgery

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 SEPT:

A complex neurological surgery was performed on a middle aged lady at Central Referral Hospital (CRH) Tadong under Sikkim Manipal University recently, a press release informs.

The patient was suffering from advanced spondylosis involving the cervical spine (neck). She is a hardworking vegetable vendor in Lall Bazaar in Gangtok and because of her illness she was unable to go to work to earn her living.

Severe neck pain radiating all the way to her limbs with electric shock like sensations made it impossible for her to carry out her daily chores at home. She even lost sleep and her symptoms of clinical depression, which she



Dr Pranav Rai
Consultant Neurosurgeon, CRH



was already suffering from, were beginning to worsen.

She visited the Neurosurgery outpatient clinic in CRH few months ago, anxious and scared.

After a detailed history taking and thorough neurological examination it was established that she had cervical

radiculopathy and early myelopathy. MRI scan of the neck showed advanced degenerative cervical spine disease with multiple levels intervertebral disc prolapses causing compression of the spinal cord and nerve roots. This explained all her symptoms.

It is known that the majority of cases improve with conservative treatment and so, keeping this in mind she too was advised a trial of rest and medications. However, unfortunately her pain wasn't resolved and she called in a week later. Overcoming her fear of surgery she agreed to go for it and came for admission. A detailed preoperative workup, planning and preparation made it possible to post her case under general anaesthesia.

She underwent a C5-C6 and C6-C7 intervertebral discectomy (removal of the intervertebral disc between the "numbered" vertebral bones) and fusion using an interbody cage stuffed

with bone chips and an anterior plate which was secured with screws. These implants are made of Titanium and are much stronger than steel and resistant to corrosion and so can be kept permanently. It requires extensive planning and intraoperative X-ray guidance to achieve a stable construct.

A small incision in front of the neck was used to reach the intervertebral disc space in target. The procedure was performed by Consultant Neurosurgeon, Dr Pranav Rai and his team, taking all precautions and safeguards for COVID-19 infection.

After the procedure the patient had significant reduction in her symptoms. The pain was relieved and she recovered without any complications.

She still has to undergo long term physiotherapy to strengthen her muscles at home which has been tailored to her case by the experts here in CRH.

There are various other procedures which are done routinely in CRH. Procedures like Lateral mass stabilization, transpedicle stabilization, Laminotomy, decompressive Laminectomy, Laminoplasty etc. These can be done not only in degenerative spine disease but in other conditions as well like trauma, benign and malignant conditions of the spine, spinal tuberculosis, congenital anomalies etc.

The Neurosurgeons in CRH have also been operating cases involving the brain such as brain trauma, brain tumours, infections, stroke and haemorrhage, hydrocephalus, and congenital conditions.

Rights group Amnesty halts India operations, says facing witch-hunt

NEW DELHI, 29 SEPT (REUTERS): Human rights group Amnesty International stopped its work in India on Tuesday saying the government had frozen its bank accounts in the latest action against it for speaking out about rights violations.

The group said it had laid off staff after facing a crackdown over the past two years over allegations of financial wrongdoing that it said were baseless.

"This is latest in the incessant witch-hunt of human rights organizations by the government of India over unfounded and motivated allegations," Amnesty said in a statement.

Its bank accounts were frozen on Sept. 10, it said.

Amnesty had highlighted rights violations in recent months in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region as well as what it said was a lack of police accountability during riots in Delhi in February, and the government had sought to punish it, it said.

There was no immediate response from government spokesmen to requests for comment.

Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's government has faced accusations that it is clamping down on dissent, including in Muslim-majority Kashmir, where insurgents have battled government forces for more than 30 years.

Critics also say the government is pushing a Hindu-first agenda, undermining the secular foundations of India's democracy and raising fears among its 170 million Muslim minority.

The government denies any bias against any community.

Opposition politician Shashi Tharoor said Amnesty's exit was a blow.

"India's stature as a liberal democracy with free institutions, including media & civil society organisations, accounted for much of its soft power in the world. Actions like this both undermine our reputation as a democracy & vitiate our soft power," he said on Twitter.

Critics of the organization, however, cheered its departure, posting comments on Twitter such as "good riddance" and accusing the group of turning a blind eye to hate crimes against Hindus elsewhere in the region.

Odisha mountaineer, who climbed Mt Everest, beaten up

BHAWANIPATNA, SEP 29 (PTI): Noted mountaineer Jogabyasa Bhoi, who has scaled many peaks including the Mt Everest, was allegedly beaten up by a group of people at a village in Odisha's Kalahandi district, police said on Tuesday.

Three persons, including a boy, were held for attacking and injuring Bhoi with sticks and sharp objects when he had gone to Dahanramal village in the district on Sunday

night, a police official said. Bhoi, who sustained injuries in the attack, was rescued by his friends and relatives when they came to know about the incident, police said.

The mountaineer filed a police complaint and based on it three persons were arrested on Monday evening, said Deepanjali Pradhan, the inspector of Kesinga police station.

The incident is suspected to have been triggered by an old feud and misunderstanding,

she said, adding that further investigation is in progress and efforts are on to nab the others.

Bhoi said he had organised a mountaineering programme and took some local youths, including the main accused's son to Himachal Pradesh in 2017. After a trekking expedition, the team was returning to the base camp when the son fell sick and died during treatment, he said.



**SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

Walk -In- Interview.

No. 117/SJ&WD/CPS/2020

Date: 07/09/2020

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from eligible local candidates for filling up the following posts on contractual basis for a period of three years under Child Protection Scheme in the Social Justice & Welfare Department sponsored by the Ministry of Women & Child Development. The details of posts and eligibility criteria are as under:

Sl. No	Name of the post	No. of post District-wise	Educational Qualification / Eligibility Conditions	Sitting Allowance
1	Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee (03 posts)	East - 01 West - 01 South - 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have a minimum of 07 (seven) years of experience of working with children in the field of education, health, or welfare activities. OR Should be a practicing professional with a degree in Child psychology or Psychiatry or Social Work or Sociology or Human Development or in the field of Law OR A retired judicial officer. 	Rs.1500/- per sitting.
2	Member, Child Welfare Committee (11 posts)	West - 04 North - 03 South - 04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have a minimum of 07 (seven) years of experience of working with children in the field of education, health, or welfare activities. OR Should be a practicing professional with a degree in Child psychology or Psychiatry or Social Work or Sociology or Human Development or in the field of Law OR A retired judicial officer. 	Rs.1500/- per sitting.
3	Member, Juvenile Justice Board (07 posts)	East - 01 West - 02 North - 02 South - 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have atleast 07 (seven) years of experience of working with children in the field of education, health, or welfare activities OR Should be a practicing professional with a degree in Child psychology or Psychiatry or Sociology or in the field of Law 	Rs.1500/- per sitting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- All the placements stated above under the Child Protection Scheme are purely on contractual basis for a period of 03 years.
- The appointment shall not confer any right for regularization in future.
- The Members shall be selected through walk-in-interview of the eligible applicants.
- Candidates fulfilling the above eligibility criteria as prescribed against each post shall apply.
- Candidates must be in good health and physically fit to discharge his/her duties.
- Applicants for the post of Chairperson and member of CWC should be above the age of 30 (thirty) years at the time of submission of application or on the last date of submission of application.
- Applicants for the post of member of JJB should not be less than 30 (thirty) years of age at the time of submission of application or on the last date of submission of application.
- The Chairperson of the District CWC will be nominated by the State Government amongst the selected candidates of CWC.
- Selected candidates are liable to be posted in any districts.
- Application for Chairperson and Member, CWC can be submitted in one application. However, separate application must be submitted for the post of Member of JJB.

Interested candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria must submit the application along with resume addressed to the Additional Secretary-cum-Director, CPS, SJ&WD, with the following valid documents, email id and contact numbers, to the office of the Under Secretary, CPS, Social Justice & Welfare Department, 5th Mile, Lumsey East Sikkim on or before 9th October 2020 latest by 4 p.m. Only those applications with prescribed and properly attested documents received within the stipulated date and time shall be entertained.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

- Attested copy of requisite qualification from a recognized Board/University.
- Attested copy of Sikkim Subject Certificate/Certificate of Identification from the Concerned Authority.
- Attested copy of valid Local Employment Card.
- No Objection Certificate from the Secretary, Head of Department in the case of any temporary employee serving in Government Departments.
- Experience Certificate duly certified by the relevant Issuing Authority.

Social Justice & Welfare Department reserves the right to reject any application not found fulfilling the above terms and conditions. No TA/DA shall be admissible for attending the interview.

Date of interview will be intimated later on.

This employment notice is also available in the departmental website
www.sikkimsocialwelfare.gov.in

Sd/
Tshewang Gyachho, SCS
Secretary
Social Justice & Welfare Department,

R.O No. 90/IPR/PUB/Classi20-21, Dated - 29.9.20

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

Treatment

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



If you seek help, you may call :
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District surveillance Officer
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WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

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

Needed - Rural Pragmatism, Not Urban Vainglory *Empower, for real, panchayats to shoot down superficial projects*

By now, the panchayats should be rather comfortably ensconced in their posts, busy with the tasks of Panchayati Raj, and still, rather frequently, one reads of Panchayats being told what to do. They are still taken through the processes on which amendments to which Acts made their election possible, given the drill on the usual stuff about working for the people in collaboration with line departments etc etc. These are the basics that one expected the elected Panchayats to already know when they filed their nomination papers, but wait, too many of them were elected unopposed and had no need to understand either the Act or their tasks so long as they kowtowed right for the “ticket”. But that we leave for another time. And that said, one still hopes that such sessions, beyond making Panchayats “aware” about how and why they are more empowered today and whether earnest plans are afoot to divest even more powers to them, also get reassured that they can call the shots and need not “obey” babus or other politicians when it comes to the affairs of the villages they represent. And come the next panchayat elections and the rural representatives will also have shed their political colours and could then be expected to work more for the people and less for the party.

The next progression should see them flex their muscles and shoot down scatter-brained projects and proposals that only somnolent bureaucrats can dream up. For instance, if a “file” was moved to invest 55% of an Innovation Fund to purchase plastic chairs and a PA system, they should be able to laugh it out of the Panchayat Bhawan. For those scoffing and claiming that such “projects” are not mooted, a quick read of the Annual Technical Inspection Report on PRLs and ULBs for the year ended 31 March 2014 by the office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Sikkim, is recommended. Apparently, in 2013-14, the East Zilla Panchayat blew up Rs 55 lakh (out of Rs 1 crore) towards purchase of plastic chairs and sound systems on the argument that these assets would help in “dissemination of information about welfare schemes” and would also “generate revenue” for the Gram Panchayats through rentals. The Panchayats might need plastic chairs and even sound systems, but such purchases cannot be called “innovative”. Apparently, the Thirteenth Finance Commission had recommended formulation of District Innovation Fund “with a view to support and promote innovation for better alternatives, reducing costs, increasing the efficiency of capital assets, improving service delivery and governance”. This Fund was expected to fill “vital gaps in public infrastructure already available in the district, which is not being fully utilised for want of a relatively small investment”. So, how did they propose this one – they already had the floor space and needed chairs to fill it up for “full utilization” or that they had speeches ready, but needed a sound system to broadcast them? The guidelines suggested drawing up of an Annual Plan for utilisation of funds after carrying out Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis to “trigger innovative measures” with a view to make Government accountable and accessible to all section of the society. And they came up with this? The dodge must have been originally drafted and processed by babus not panchayats and the latter must have just fallen in line. Real empowerment will see them advise and demand better and be able to reject and amend.

There is another glaring evidence of civil works and expense-driven problem-solving superficiality. Apparently, the Rural Management & Development Department (RMDD) (through ZP, South) developed a water harvesting structure at Tamley lake in 1998-99 to provide potable water to the three villages of Mungram, Guptigaon, Sirubari and Rajarukgaon. It should come as no surprise that this project did not age too well, and in 2008, the villagers complained that water supply was poor. By Feb 2008, RMDD-Jorethang had a DPR for Rs 79.51 lakh ready to repair the water harvesting experiment. The funds were expended and work completed two years later. So, did the people go without potable water for two years? Thankfully, no. They repaired the existing pipes carrying water from a distant source. It cost them Rs 2.08 lakh to do this! Meanwhile, the Rs 79.51 lakh spent by the RMDD delivered repairs to a water harvesting structure that does not serve as a source of water to the nearby villages! The obvious need for more rural pragmatism to direct the development and investment priorities cannot be stressed more tellingly than this example.

One needs to understand that the reason the nation has empowered the rural voters is because all other attempts at fixing accountability have failed. When Panchayats decide, and if they decide from their own wits and not departmental chits, more projects will achieve fruition. When decisions are taken through informed and involved gram sabhas, then the whole village knows; when the whole village knows, the whole village watches and because it is about them and about facilities they and their children will use, they are also expected to monitor. When projects fail, the blame ends at the village boundaries and the buck can actually stop at the right door. When such accountability becomes real, the bastis will begin noticing real improvements. Urban naïveté and vainglory need to be played out of the villages and rural pragmatism allowed back in and supported to express itself more forcefully.

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Coronavirus: Is Manaus, Brazil, the first city to reach herd immunity?

GORDON DOUGAN
THECONVERSATION.COM

Two years ago, I visited the Brazilian city of Manaus at the start of a trip through the Amazon. Since my childhood, I had been fascinated by this dot on the map that sits at the centre of the Amazon basin at the confluence of the Amazon and Rio Negro rivers.

The city is ultra tropical, with life very much lived on the street in an intense atmosphere. I felt it had a slightly oppressive feel, giving the impression that either the river or the encroaching forest could claim it back for nature at any moment. Against this background, it was interesting to hear that Manaus is now regarded as one of the most coronavirus-infected cities in the world, with 44%-66% of the population infected, and is at the centre of a debate about herd immunity.

To an infectious disease and vaccine expert, herd immunity is a common term, but it is now becoming part of lay language and debate. Interestingly, although it is a critical component of how the spread of infections is limited, very few people really understand it and even fewer can actually measure it. Many infectious diseases naturally move through populations as incidence waves where rates of infection increase or decrease cyclically.

Before public health interventions, the incidences of diseases such as whooping cough and measles oscillated over a period of several years. This was put down, at least in part, to herd immunity. As a wave moves through a city or region, people become immune and the disease dies down.

Over time, immunity can wane. Also, babies are born and vulnerable people move into a city and herd immunity declines, precipitating the next wave. Herd immunity is much about breaking transmission. Protected individuals protect others from disease by not infecting them, breaking the transmission chain.



They reduce the now-famous R number.

Even this is not so easily understood as some diseases such as flu escape immunity by varying their structure, and others, such as typhoid, manipulate natural immunity so that protection does not easily build up. Even with herd immunity present, the disease agent does not disappear but is suppressed. It can stay on in the soil or water, as with cholera, or even in human carriers, as with typhoid.

ARTIFICIALLY INDUCING PROTECTION

Natural infection is one way of inducing herd immunity. The other is by vaccination. Vaccines can artificially induce protection in people who have never been infected and break the natural transmission cycle. Indeed, routine vaccination has reduced incidence rates for many diseases and has eradicated one – smallpox.

It is important to understand that vaccines usually induce

protection differently to natural infection. So even for diseases where natural infection is not completely protective, a vaccine can be. This is one area often misunderstood in the media.

Also, although vaccines protect they don't always eliminate the disease from a population. A classic example is whooping cough, which can persist as an almost asymptomatic disease in adults who can then reinfect unprotected children.

HARD TO MEASURE

How do we measure herd immunity? Actually, this is really difficult. Many people think that you can just measure antibodies in the blood. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many infections – antibodies don't always correlate with protection. This is in part the problem with the claim that Manaus is acquiring herd immunity. Antibodies also tend to wane over time,

and herd immunity can quickly disappear.

Measuring herd immunity accurately needs a carefully constructed field study, set up to distinguish between those directly protected by a vaccine and those indirectly protected by vaccinated individuals. It is a statistical challenge that relatively few investigations have achieved.

Proving herd immunity in Manaus will be a challenge without a true correlate of protection or a carefully designed study. However, it will be interesting to watch how the COVID-19 infection rate trends in the next year. Indeed, early evidence suggests that rates are on the rise once again in the city.

Undoubtedly, the debate about herd immunity will continue, but the science is much more murky and difficult to both grasp and measure.

[The writer is Professor, Microbial Pathogenesis, University of Cambridge]

Fox News uses the word ‘hate’ much more than MSNBC or CNN

CURD KNÜPFER & ROBERT MATHEW ENTMAN
THECONVERSATION.COM

Fox News is up to five times more likely to use the word “hate” in its programming than its main competitors, according to our new study of how cable news channels use language.

Fox particularly uses the term when explaining opposition to Donald Trump. His opponents are said to “hate” Trump, his values and his followers.

Our research, which ran from Jan. 1 to May 8, 2020, initially explored news of Trump's impeachment. Then came the coronavirus. As we sifted through hundreds of cable news transcripts over five months, we noticed consistent differences between the vocabulary used on Fox News and that of MSNBC.

While their news agendas were largely similar, the words they used to describe these newsworthy events diverged greatly.

FOX AND HATE

For our study, we analyzed 1,088 program transcripts from the two ideologically branded channels – right-wing Fox and left-wing MSNBC – between 6 p.m. and 10:59 p.m.

Because polarized media diets contribute to partisan conflict, our quantitative analysis identified terms indicating antipathy or resentment, such as “dislike,” “despise,” “can't stand” and “hate.”

We expected to find

that both of the strongly ideological networks made use of such words, perhaps in different ways. Instead, we found that Fox used antipathy words five times more often than MSNBC. “Hate” really stood out: It appeared 647 times on Fox, compared to 118 on MSNBC.

Fox usually pairs certain words alongside “hate.” The most notable was “they” – as in, “they hate.” Fox used this phrase 101 times between January and May. MSNBC used it just five times.

To put these findings in historic context, we then used the GDELT Television database to search for occurrences of the phrase “they hate” on both networks going back to 2009. We included CNN for an additional comparison.

We found Fox's usage of “they hate” has increased over time, with a clear spike around the polarizing 2016 Trump-Clinton election. But Fox's use of “hate” really took off when Trump's presidency began. Beginning in January 2017, the mean usage of “they hate” on the network doubled.

‘US’ VERSUS ‘THEM’

So who is doing all this hating – and why – according to Fox News?

Mainly, it's Democrats, liberals, political elites and the media. Though these groups do not actually have the same interests, ideology or job description, our analysis finds Fox lumps them together as the “they” in “they hate.”

As for the object of all



this hatred, Sean Hannity, Tucker Carlson and other Fox hosts most often name Trump. Anchors also identify their audience – “you,” “Christians” and “us” – as the target of animosity. Only 13 instances of “they hate” also cited a reason. Examples included “they can't accept the fact that he won” or “because we voted for [Trump].”

Citing liberal hate as a fact that needs no explanation serves to dismiss criticism of specific policies or events. It paints criticism or moral outrage directed at Trump as inherently irrational.

For loyal Fox viewers, these language patterns construct a coherent but potentially dangerous narrative about the world.

Our data show intensely partisan hosts like Hannity and Carlson are more likely than other Fox anchors to use “they hate” in this way. Nevertheless, the phrase permeates Fox's evening programming, uttered by hosts, interviewees and Republican sources, all painting Trump critics not as legitimate opponents but hateful enemies working in bad faith.

By repeatedly telling

its viewers they are bound together as objects of the contempt of a powerful and hateful left-leaning “elite,” Fox has constructed two imagined communities. On the one side: Trump along with good folks under siege. On the other: nefarious Democrats, liberals, the left and mainstream media.

Research confirms that repeated exposure to polarized media messages can lead news consumers to form firm opinions and can foster what's called an “in-group” identity. The us-versus-them mentality, in turn, deepens feelings of antipathy toward the perceived “out-group.”

The Pew Research Center reports an increasing tendency, especially among Republicans, to view members of the other party as immoral and unpatriotic. Pew also finds Republicans trust Fox News more than any other media outlet.

Americans' divergent media sources – and specifically Fox's “hate”-filled rhetoric – aren't solely to blame here. Cable news is part of a larger picture of heightened polarization, intense partisanship and paralysis in Congress.

GOOD BUSINESS

Leaning into intense partisanship has been good for Fox News, though. In summer 2020 it was the country's most watched network. But using hate to explain the news is a dangerous business plan when shared crises demand Americans' empathy, negotiation and compromise.

Fox's talk of hate undermines democratic values like tolerance and reduces Americans' trust of their fellow citizens.

This fraying of social ties helps explain America's failures in managing the pandemic – and bodes badly for its handling of what seems likely to be a chaotic, divisive presidential election. In pitting its viewers against the rest of the country, Fox News works against potential solutions to the the very crises it covers.

[Curd Knüpfer is Assistant Professor of Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin; Robert Mathew Entman is J.B. and M.C. Shapiro Professor Emeritus of Media and Public Affairs, George Washington University]

30 automatic rifles, nearly 8,000 cartridges seized; 3 arrested in Mizoram

AIZAWL, SEPT 29 (PTI): The Border Security Force (BSF) has seized a cache of arms and ammunition and arrested three persons near the India-Bangladesh border in Mizoram’s Mamit district, an officer of the paramilitary force said on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, BSF personnel seized 28 AK-47 rifles, and one AK-74 and US-made carbine each along with 7,894 ammunition rounds from two vehicles near South Phuldungsei village in West Phaileng tehsil on

Monday night, he said. An amount of Rs 39,020 in cash and other articles were also seized, he said.

Three persons, residents of Aizawl, have been arrested while transporting the arms and ammunition, the officer said.

The accused persons have been handed over to the state police and their interrogation is underway, he said.

The arrested persons have been identified as Lahuapzauva (56),

Vanlalruata (25) and Liansanga (46), the officer said, adding they lived in various localities in Aizawl.

“Preliminary questioning during a joint interrogation by BSF and the state police suggested the trio lived in rented houses in Aizawl and one of them is from Myanmar,” Mizoram Deputy Inspector General of Police (Headquarters) John Neihlaia told PTI.

However, it is yet to be ascertained whether they belong to any armed outfit, he added.

2 more months required to kill damaged Baghjan gas well in Assam: Oil India chief

GUWAHATI, SEPT 29 (PTI): PSU major Oil India Ltd (OIL) on Tuesday said it will likely take overseas experts two more months to kill its damaged well at Baghjan in Assam, where gas has been gushing out uncontrollably for the last 126 days.

Addressing a press conference after the company’s annual general meeting, OIL Chairman and MD Sushil Chandra Mishra said it has started taking action against employees responsible for the mishap, which has killed three persons.

“The fire at the well-head has been doused after we successfully

diverted the gas on September 13. We are in the process of completely controlling the well and for that, a snubbing unit from Canada is likely to arrive within next three-four weeks,” he said.

After the arrival of experts of the Alert Disaster Control with their equipment, it will take another 3-4 weeks to control and kill the well, Mishra said, adding, “a total of about eight weeks will be required to kill the well from now”.

The company has spent around Rs 70 crore so far towards foreign experts in their efforts to douse the flame and control the

well, the top OIL official said.

On August 17, OIL had achieved the first successful step towards dousing the blaze when it could place the Blow Out Preventer, a very heavy metal cover weighing several tonnes, in its third attempt at the mouth of the damaged gas well.

Assam Commerce and Industry Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary had said in the assembly on September 2 that a team of experts from Canada were on their way to Baghjan and it will take them two more months to douse the flame.

Farm laws will help hoarders: Mamata

SILIGURI, SEP 29 (PTI): Hitting out at the Centre over the contentious farm laws, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that this legislation will devastate the farmers of the country and help the hoarders.

Addressing an administrative meeting at branch secretariat ‘Uttar Kanya’ here, Banerjee said she will speak to state officials and take steps to protect

the interest of the farmers.

“The farm laws will devastate the farmers of the country. It will only help the hoarders. The laws will not serve the interest of the farmers. We will soon convene a meeting of officials to see what can be done to protect the interest of the farmers,” she said.

The opposition parties, including Banerjee’s Trinamool

Congress, have been protesting three farm sector laws enacted by the Narendra Modi government, alleging these are “anti- farmer measures” and will “destroy” the agriculture sector.

The government has, however, asserted that the new laws will free farmers from the clutches of middleman and allow them to sell their produce anywhere they want at a remunerative price.

Calcutta HC stays notice to Visva-Bharati professor

KOLKATA, SEP 29 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court has stayed a notice to a professor of the Visva-Bharati by the internal complaints committee of the varsity.

The professor had been accused of making derogatory remarks against the varsity and some of its officials and an enquiry was conducted.

One of the members of the enquiry committee, before which the petitioner professor appeared, complained in writing to the vice-chancellor

that he used the term “khos golpo” during the appearance, claiming that it was “extremely inappropriate”, considering the time and place of its usage”.

Following the complaint, the internal complaints committee issued a notice to the professor on August 14, challenging which he moved the high court.

Hearing the petition, Justice Rajasekhhar Mantha noted that what transpires from the complaint of the committee member is that the petitioner did

not answer any question in the enquiry and stated in Bengali that he is satisfied having a pleasant conversation (“khos golpo”) with the complainant.

The court said that the dictionary meaning of the Bengali phrase “khos golpo” is “a pleasant chat, an amusing tale or story”.

Justice Mantha noted that the complaint does not even indicate that the said “amusing chat of pleasant story” was made with any inappropriate gesture or expression or otherwise.

“It, therefore, is ex facie clear to the Court that the word by any stretch of imagination, cannot amount to any sexual harassment,” the court observed.

Holding that courts normally do not interfere with enquiries particularly that of sexual harassment at the inception, it said that “the facts of the instant case are, however, too blatant and proceedings absolutely ridiculous, warranting interference, to prevent abuse of process of law”.

Justice Mantha

on Friday stayed the notice dated August 14 and directed that any proceedings for sexual harassment arising out of the aforesaid complaint shall remain stayed for a period of eight weeks.

The respondents were directed to file affidavit-in- opposition within a period of two weeks, while the petitioner professor will file a reply thereto, if any, by one week thereafter.

The court directed that the matter be mentioned before it for hearing after completion of pleadings.

Former Assam CM Anwara Taimur dead

GUWAHATI, SEPT 29 (PTI): Assams only woman Chief Minister Syeda Anwara Taimur died on Monday due to a cardiac arrest in Australia, her family sources said. She was 83.

Taimur was also the lone Muslim chief minister of the state.

The former chief minister was staying in Australia with her son for the past few years, the sources said.

Taimur had helmed a Congress government in Assam from December 6, 1980 to June 30, 1981 when her term ended with the state being put under Presidents rule for six months.

She was later the

PWD and agriculture minister of the state from 1983 to 1985.

Elected four times to the state Assembly in 1972, 1978, 1983 and 1991, Taimur was a Rajya Sabha member in 1988.

She quit the Congress and joined the AIDUF IN 2011.

Before her foray into politics, the Aligarh Muslim University alumni was lecturer in Economics in Debicharan Barua Girls College at Jorhat in 1956.

Her name did not figure in the contentious National Register of Citizens (NRC) final list in 2018 as she was away in Australia and could not apply for it, her family members said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has condoled her death.

In a tweet he said “...Her contributions towards Assams development will be remembered. May her soul rest in peace”.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has mourned the death of his predecessor. Anwara Taimur the lone woman Chief Minister of the state was the peoples chief minister who served the people of Assam with compassion, he said in a statement.

“During her long political career she served the people of Assam as Chief Minister, minister with different

portfolios as well as MLA and MP. Her contributions for the state as well as for the welfare of the people will be acknowledged and remembered by the posterity. Her death is a loss to the state,” he added.

Assams minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said A big loss for us all as former CM Syeda Anwara Taimur breathed her last.

An able administrator and affable peoples person, Syeda Mam was the only woman CM of Assam. A 4-term MLA, she had an illustrious political career spanning over 4 decades. My prayers and condolences.

Ruling Assam BJP president Ranjeet Kumar Dass in a message to Taimur’s family said, May my condolences bring you comfort and may my prayers ease the pain of this loss. I offer you my thoughts, prayers and well-wishes during this dark time in your life.

Assam PCC president and Rajya Sabha member Ripun Bora said Saddened by the news of the demise of former Chief Minister of Assam Syeda Anwara Taimur. My heartfelt condolences to her family members in this hour of grief. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

The AIUDF also mourned the demise of their member.

Manipur woman innovator to make mask from lotus stem

IMPHAL, SEP 29 (PTI): A 27-year-old woman innovator from Manipur’s Bishenpur district who has made thread and cloth from lotus stem is now working to make mask from the stalk of the same plant.

Tongbram Bijiyshanti, a resident of Thanga Tongbram locality in the vicinity of the state’s famous Loktak lake, told PTI that she along with 15

women are involved in the project and is training 20 more women.

Lotus plants grow in large numbers in Loktak lake.

Bijiyshanti said she made thread and cloth from lotus stem for her start-up programme in 2018-19. Her product was sent to a Gujarat laboratory which gave the green signal for it.

A Botany graduate, she said: “I researched

on the production methodology mostly from the internet and got into the field back in 2017-18, when a teacher of mine told me to come up with an idea to serve as a source of living”.

Eldest of three siblings, Bijiyshanti said her team is currently involved in producing traditional men’s shawl and necktie.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

appreciated the innovative efforts of Bijiyisanti in his Mann ki Baat radio programme.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has also appreciated the innovative efforts of Bijiyshanti to make thread and clothes from lotus stem.

“In #MannKiBaat, Hon’ble PM @narendramodiji appreciated the ennovative efforts of Ms Bijay Shanti

from Manipur who’ve launched a start-up to develop thread from Lotus stem, & that her efforts & innovations have opened new avenues in the fields of lotus farming & textile,” the chief minister tweeted.

The chief minister said Bijiyshanti’s start-up to develop thread from lotus-stem have opened new avenues in the field of lotus farming and textile.

351 Jagannath Temple servitors test positive for COVID-19



PURI, SEP 29 (PTI): At least 351 servitors and 53 employees of Shree Jagannath Temple here have tested positive for COVID-19, an official said.

A total of 404 persons engaged in the 12th century shrine have tested positive for the virus since August, said Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) administrator Ajay Jena said on Tuesday.

He said the Lord Jagannath’s rituals, however, are continuing as usual despite the absence of so many servitors.

The Jagannath temple is closed for devotees since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The official said as most of the servitors are in home isolation

after testing positive for the infection and there is a shortage of knowledgeable people to perform rituals.

At least a group of 13 priests each are required to perform rituals for the sibling deities - Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath. Therefore, the presence of 39 priests apart from other servitors are essential to perform daily rituals of the oldest Lord Vishnu Temple here, who is being worshipped since ages in the form of Lord Jagannath.

The uniqueness of the Puri temple is that rituals are interconnected with each other; they start from early hours till late in the night. If one ritual is not performed, next one could not

be performed as per the temple tradition, said Bhaskar Mishra, a researcher in Jagannath culture.

If more number of servitors test positive for the virus in the coming days, there might be a problem. The administration is considering a proposal to engage junior servitors, he said.

So far, a total of 9,704 COVID-19 cases have been detected in Puri district of which 1,255 cases are reported from Puri Municipality area alone. Of the 52 deaths reported in the district, nine hail from the Puri Municipality area. At least three of the nine fatalities in Puri town are servitors engaged in the temple rituals, the district health officials

said.

The administration had conducted COVID-19 test of all the servitors engaged in the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath. Then only two servitors had tested positive for COVID-19. However, the infection struck Puri about a month after the festival, an official said, adding that the SJTA used to provide homoeopathy preventive medicines to servitors’ families to keep them safe.

Meanwhile, the state government in an affidavit informed the Orissa High Court that it is not possible to reopen the temple including Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri for devotees under the prevailing COVID pandemic. The temple remains closed for devotees since March.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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Schumacher and Ilott handed F1 practice slots

BERLIN, 29 SEPT (REUTERS): Mick Schumacher will take part in first Friday practice with Alfa Romeo at the Nuerburgring next week as Ferrari seek to give their three leading junior drivers Formula One race weekend experience.

Britain's Callum Ilott will take part in the same session with the Ferrari-powered Haas team while Russian Robert Shwartzman will get his chance on the final Friday of the season in Abu Dhabi with Haas or Alfa.

Schumacher, son of Ferrari great and seven-times world champion Michael, is leading the Formula Two standings ahead of the Eifel Grand Prix weekend at the German circuit.

"The fact that my first participation in a Formula One weekend will take place in front of my home audience at the Nuerburgring makes this moment even more special," said Schumacher, 21.

Ferrari-powered Alfa Romeo and Haas both have potential vacancies for 2021.

All three Ferrari Academy drivers will also test a 2018 Ferrari SF71H at the Italian team's Fiorano track on Wednesday in preparation for their F1 practice debuts, having already had seat fittings.

Mick Schumacher has won two races in F2 this season and leads Ilott by 22 points. Shwartzman, a rookie in the series, is fifth in the standings but has won three races.

Schumacher and Ilott have driven F1 cars before in test sessions.

Schumacher also drove Michael's 2004 Ferrari around the Mugello circuit this month at a Tuscan Grand Prix celebrating the Italian team's 1,000th Formula One championship race.

"We wanted to organise this test session so that our three best youngsters would be as well prepared as possible to tackle an event that will always be a special moment for them," said Ferrari sporting director Laurent Mekies in a statement.

"We believe strongly in our Academy, which has already proved its value with Charles Leclerc a driver on which the Scuderia can build its long term future."

KKR's batting firepower faces stern test against marauding Rajasthan Royals

DUBAI, SEP 29 (PTI): Kolkata Knight Riders will have to bat out of their skin to stop a marauding Rajasthan Royals when the two teams clash in an IPL match at the Dubai International Stadium here on Wednesday.

Having started off as underdogs, the Royals have taken the IPL by storm, chasing down the highest tournament total 224 against Kings XI Punjab in their last match.

In two wins from two matches, the Royals have got past the 200-mark with ease. In their success, they have found two stars in Sanju Samson and Rahul Tewatia, who have outshone marquee players.

In his second coming at the Royals, little known Haryana all-rounder Tewatia has got instant stardom for his 31-ball 53 against KXIP, which helped the side chase down a record 224 with three balls to spare against KXIP.

Struggling to get off the blocks quickly, Tewatia, who was on 17 from 23 deliveries with the team needing 51



from the last three overs, suddenly woke up from the slumber, smacking left-arm quick Sheldon Cottrell for five sixes in an over to turn the tables for RR.

But the season so far belongs to Samson -- the wicketkeeper from Kerala.

Boasting of the season's highest strike-rate of 214.86, Samson has two successive half-centuries that has once again put him in contention for a longer rope in the Indian team as a keeper-batsman.

Skipper Steve Smith has been ever reliable, striking two half-centuries, while opener Jos Buttler will be waiting to explode.

To match or even surpass the Royals, KKR have the biggest stars in Andre Russell to go along with reigning World Cup winning English skipper Eoin Morgan, one of the best in limited-overs cricket.

But both Morgan and Russell have got limited opportunities so far, having dropped down to No 5 and 6 respectively.

The fixture might just finally see them bat higher up, especially the star Jamaican, who was their highest run-getter last season with 510 runs at a astonishing strike rate of 204.81.

Having started off

be playing here for the first time this season.

For the record, the teams batting first have won all the five matches here so far.

Teams (from)

Kolkata Knight Riders: Dinesh Karthik (C and WK), Andre Russell, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Nitish Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Rinku Singh, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Mavi, Shubman Gill, Siddhesh Lad, Sunil Narine, Pat Cummins, Eoin Morgan, Varun Chakravarthi, Tom Banton, Rahul Tripathi, Chris Green, M Siddharth, Nikhil Naik, Ali Khan.

Rajasthan Royals: Steve Smith (captain), Jos Buttler, Robin Uthappa, Sanju Samson, Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Manan Vohra, Kartik Tyagi, Akash Singh, Oshane Thomas, Andrew Tye, David Miller, Tom Curran, Aniruddha Joshi, Shreyas Gopal, Riyan Parag, Varun Aaron, Shashank Singh, Anuj Rawat, Mahipal Lomror, Mayank Markande.

Match Starts at 7:30pm IST.

Outstanding Super Over from Saini: Kohli



DUBAI, SEP 29 (PTI): Reining in the batsmen like Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya in a Super Over is no mean task and Royals Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli was quick to acknowledge a job well-done by his pacer Navdeep Saini.

Saini conceded only seven runs in the Super Over to decisively tilt the match against Mumbai Indians on Monday after both the teams finished with the score of 201 in regular contest.

"Outstanding Super Over from him (Saini), bowling against Hardik (Pandya) and Kieron Pollard. I think the longer boundary helped him gain some confidence with his yorker, because he has got the pace and then he was using the wide yorker well too," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"The guys showed real good composure to get these two points in the bag and very crucial points at early stages of the tournament," Kohli added.

The India skipper also praised young wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan and Kieron Pollard to bring Mumbai back into the game.

"It was such a roller-coaster of a game. We batted well in the first innings to get us past 200 and then the start of bowling was outstanding. They played well in the middle overs, waited for the dew to

kick in. Pollard and Ishan to bat the way they did was outstanding to keep them in the game," he said.

According to Kohli, fielding is something that his team needs to work on.

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma conceded that RCB controlled nerves better than his team.

"Nothing to take away from RCB. They stuck to their plans, although we put them under pressure, they held their nerve more than us. It was a great game of cricket, we were not in the game at all when we started with the bat.

"But great innings by Ishan (Kishan) there to get us back in the game and then Polly (Kieron Pollard) was brilliant as usual," Rohit said.

Rohit said that Kishan was drained and hence he was not to bat in the Super Over.

"He was drained out and was not comfortable. We thought we could send him in but he was not feeling fresh and Hardik is somebody we trust for hitting the long-balls but it did not come off."

Rohit was confident that the match was on till Pollard was around.

"We lost a few wickets there and could not get back. With Polly (Pollard) being there, anything can happen and with Ishan hitting the ball really well, we had that belief that we could get it," he said.

Coronavirus infection rate rising in India but scope for more, survey shows

BENGALURU, 29 Sept

[Reuters]: Coronavirus infection rates among adults in India have risen sharply, a survey showed on Tuesday, although a large percentage of the population has not yet been exposed, suggesting there is scope for cases to rise much further.

In the serological survey conducted in August and September, blood samples were tested for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. If a person tests positive for the antibodies, it means they were infected with the virus at some point.

Blood samples collected from more than 29,000 adults between Aug. 17 and Sept. 22 showed that the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies increased to 7.1% compared to 0.73% in a previous survey between May 11 and June 4, the director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research, Balram Bhargava, told a press

briefing.

"However, a large percentage of the population is still unexposed, and the susceptibility of a considerable section of people getting infected exists," he added.

The second survey was conducted in the same 700 villages and wards from 70 districts in 21 states as the first survey. Results from the second survey also showed urban slum and non-slum areas had a higher infection prevalence than rural areas.

"The new (survey) shows lockdown and containment measures as well as behaviour change at population level checked spread of SARS-CoV-2," Bhargava said.

India on Tuesday reported 70,589 new infections in the last 24 hours, taking its total to 6.15 million cases. The country leads the world in the daily average number of new infections reported.

De Villiers keeping wickets lends balance to RCB: Washington Sundar

DUBAI, SEP 29 (PTI): Royal Challengers Bangalore spinner Washington Sundar is in awe of his superstar teammate AB de Villiers and feels that the South African swashbuckler's legendary ability to perform multiple tasks, including wicket-keeping, lend balance to the IPL side.

De Villiers kept wickets in RCB's win over defending champions Mumbai Indians here on Monday, taking the keeping gloves from an off-colour Josh Philippe. He also smashed a 24-ball half century to grab the man of the match honours.

After the game, Sundar wondered if there is any job in the world that de Villiers cannot do.

"Tell me one thing that he cannot do, whatever the team needs him to do he will do, he will be more than happy



to do and he has been doing that for so many years for RCB," Sundar said of the 36-year-old star, who has retired from international cricket.

"It adds a lot of balance and he behind the wickets also gives bowlers a lot of thought process and he adds a lot of value to the team," he added.

Speaking about Monday's match, Sundar said pacer Navdeep Saini conceding just seven

runs in the Super Over was a reflection of his tough character.

After the match was tied courtesy blistering half centuries by Ishan Kishan and Kieron Pollard, Saini managed to bowl an economical Super Over, conceding seven runs, chased effortlessly by RCB to script a memorable win.

"He (Saini) has been amazing not just this year but the last couple

of years also. He has been very good and he is going from strength to strength and growing as well," Sundar said.

"He did the same thing with the Indian team also, to be able to bowl such a 19th over with two set batsmen, and when Hardik (Pandya) and Pollard are at the crease in the Super Over, to be able to give just seven runs is amazing.

"It shows so much

With 3rd straight win, Liverpool making ominous start to EPL

LONDON, SEP 29 (AP): Three wins from three games, two big rivals dispatched, and an expensive new signing already on the scoresheet.

Liverpool is making an ominous start to its title defense in the English Premier League. The champion's high-risk, high-reward strategy paid off in its come-from-behind 3-1 win over Arsenal on Monday in an open game featuring a late clinching goal by Diogo Jota in his first league start for Liverpool.

This was absolutely exceptional, Liverpool manager Jrgen Klopp said, 100% dominant against a team in form.

Liverpool gave up some glaring chances inside an empty Anfield by deploying an aggressive press and a high line Alexandre Lacazette,

who put Arsenal ahead, squandered two one-on-one opportunities at 2-1 but the brave tactic forced many openings of its own.

Of course there's some risk, Klopp said.

But we want to win the ball as high as possible. Not frustrated, not disappointed at all.

He'll be pleased the way the nascent standings look, too.

Liverpool is one of three teams to have opened with three straight wins, including over Chelsea and now Arsenal. With two of its other main rivals Manchester City and Manchester United having already lost a game each, the start to the season could hardly have gone better for Liverpool.

Arsenal dropped points for the first time but was threatening

to beat Liverpool for a third straight month after wins in the league in July and the Community Shield in August when Lacazette took advantage of a rare mistake by Andrew Robertson to give the visitors a 25th-minute lead.

Sadio Mane equalized inside three minutes before Robertson made amends by scoring himself after controlling a cross from Liverpool's other flying full back, Trent Alexander-Arnold.

That wild nine-minute period, featuring three goals, characterized a high-risk game plan from Liverpool that causes chaos for its opponents because of the way they are squeezed high up.

Break the press and Liverpool is in trouble, though, and Lacazette was played through

clean on goal in the second half for chances to equalize. Both of his efforts were tame and comfortably saved by Alisson, and Lacazette was spotted hiding his head in his jersey in the dugout after being substituted.

Jota sealed victory in the 88th by driving in a shot that glanced the post as it went in, after David Luiz's headed clearance only reached the edge of the area.

"It's an amazing feeling, of course," said Jota, who recently joined from Wolverhampton for 41 million pounds (\$ 52 million). I just wish it was in front of a full stadium.

LEAKY FULHAM

Nothing appears to have changed at Fulham.

The last time the southwest London club was in the Premier League in the 2018-19

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Dark days ahead for Lebanon as crisis bites

BEIRUT (AP): The past year has been nothing short of an earthquake for Lebanon, hit by an economic meltdown, mass protests, financial collapse, a virus outbreak and a cataclysmic explosion that virtually wiped out the country's main port.

Yet Lebanese fear even darker days are ahead.

The country's foreign reserves are drying up, the local currency is expected to spiral further out of control, and incidents of armed clashes between rival groups are escalating. Bickering politicians have been unable to form a government, putting an international bailout out of reach.

Last week, a French initiative to form a rescue government of specialists fell apart when the political factions split along familiar fault lines, deepened by the U.S.-Iran rivalry.

The country risks slipping into chaos.

"Absent a major change in either side's political calculations, the coming weeks will see continued stalemate, a caretaker government that lacks the capability to implement any serious reforms, and an acceleration of the economic collapse," said Mike Azar, a former Johns Hopkins SAIS professor of finance.

French President Emmanuel Macron's plan

was widely seen as a last opportunity to charter a way out of Lebanon's gravest crisis since the 1975-90 civil war. It included a six-month timeline for a small government made up of non-partisan experts to deliver reforms. Mistrustful of Lebanon's famously corrupt leaders, the West has made billions of dollars in aid contingent on those reforms.

Lebanon's politicians initially committed to the plan and named a new prime minister-designate, Moustapha Adib, who promised to deliver a Cabinet within two weeks. To avert the usual horse-trading among factions over ministries, Adib tried to pick his own names to form the government.

But the two main Shiite parties, Hezbollah and Amal, accused him of acting on behalf of their local political rivals. They insisted on naming Shiite members of the Cabinet and on keeping the Finance Ministry for their sect. Adib refused and stepped down Saturday.

For all the pressure on the factions to put aside their usual self-serving interest and jockeying, another force is in part making them dig in: escalating U.S.-Iran tensions.

The Trump administration has stepped up its maximum pressure campaign

on Iran and its proxy militias, including Hezbollah, ahead of the Nov. 3 U.S. elections.

It slapped sanctions on two senior pro-Hezbollah politicians, including the former finance minister, in the middle of efforts to form the Cabinet. That fueled suspicions Washington was seeking to isolate Hezbollah and diminish its role in any new government.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo openly berated Macron for meeting with Hezbollah officials during his visit to Lebanon and promised a wider array of sanctions targeting the group and its local allies.

Hazem al-Amin, an anti-Hezbollah Lebanese journalist and columnist, wrote that the militant group has effectively put the Lebanese public in the middle of an "open confrontation" with the United States.

Writing in the pan-Arab news site Daraj, he said the U.S. is looking to squeeze Hezbollah before the elections, while Hezbollah is trying to wait out the Trump administration, betting on a new president.

But can Lebanon wait?

Last week, Lebanese President Michel Aoun, an ally of Hezbollah, could not have been blunter when he was asked by a reporter where Lebanon was headed if a new government is not

formed.

"To hell, of course," he replied.

Macron, in a press conference on Sunday, said he was "ashamed" of Lebanon's political leaders and warned of "a new civil war" if they can't set aside personal and sectarian interests to unlock international aid.

That aid is more sorely needed than ever, with worse still to come for Lebanese in the country's slide to the bottom.

In the next few weeks, the Central Bank is expected to end subsidies on basic goods. Since the local currency's collapse, the bank has been using its depleting reserves to support imports of fuel, wheat and medicine.

Already, after the blow of the financial crisis, half the population is below the poverty line. Lifting subsidies will further fuel inflation and could be a trigger for food riots. Civil unrest would put the population in confrontation with demoralized security forces who — like other Lebanese — have seen their salaries decrease by up to 80% in U.S. dollar terms.

"The threat is very real. There have been a couple of security incidents over the past month that show weapons are around in abundance, and so are idle young men to wield them," said

Heiko Wimmen, project director for Lebanon, Iraq and Syria with the International Crisis Group.

He said turf wars among local armed groups may become a daily occurrence in areas that are not controlled by any political actor and could scale up once groups driven by sectarian and political motivations become involved.

Meanwhile, everyday life becomes harder.

A Beirut landfill is nearing maximum capacity, threatening a new trash crisis. Hospitals struggle to cope with the financial crisis amid a surge in coronavirus cases, triggering warnings of an Italy-like scenario. Medicines are harder to find. Poverty and crime are rising, along with sectarian tensions fanned by politicians seeking to hang on to their seats.

The Aug. 4 explosion at Beirut's port — blamed on the political leadership's corruption and incompetence — didn't just cause pain, death and damage. It struck yet another blow to the economy. Economic activity losses attributed to the blast damage range between \$2.9 billion and 3.5 billion, the World Bank estimated. Public sector reconstruction and recovery requires

some \$1.8 billion to \$2.2 billion — funds that are nowhere seen on the horizon.

Even if a government is formed, Lebanon will not be out of the woods. IMF negotiations failed in July because Lebanese actors could not agree among themselves.

Wimmen said the core of the problem are political elites who have captured the state to wreck and plunder it.

"The bottom line is that fixing the financial sector and the budget — the two key issues that the IMF is supposed to address — will have to mean that the interest of some people who have political clout suffer, so there is a lot of potential for conflict," he said.

Azar gave a similarly bleak outlook. "Given that Lebanon's economic collapse is a self-inflicted wound due to a dysfunctional political system, it is unlikely that any economic recovery will be sustainable without a fundamental rethinking of the political system," he said.

The longer it takes, the more opportunities are lost, the bigger the brain drain and the more irreversible the trend becomes.

"When businesses shutter and human capital emigrates, it becomes much more difficult for an economy to recover as the drivers of such recovery would no longer exist," he said.

Dying winds give crews hope in Northern California fires

SAN FRANCISCO (AP): Firefighters say they hoped dying winds would enable them to bear down on a wildfire that exploded in the Northern California wine country, prompting tens of thousands of evacuations while a second blaze killed at least three people.

The Glass Fire raged through Napa and Sonoma counties on Monday, tripling in size to around 56.6 square miles (146.59 square kilometers) without any containment.

Some two dozen homes had burned, the San Jose Mercury News reported.

The fire north of San Francisco was driving through brush that hadn't burned for a century, even though surrounding areas were incinerated in a series of blazes in recent years.

But dry winds that gave the flames a ferocious push appeared to have eased by Monday evening and firefighters were feeling "much more confident," said Ben Nicholls, a division chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire.

"We don't have those critical burning conditions that we were experiencing those last two nights," he said.

The Glass Fire is one of nearly 30 wildfires burning around California and the National Weather Service warned that hot, dry conditions with strong Santa Ana winds could remain a fire danger in Southern California into Tuesday.

In a forested far northern part of the state, more than 1,200 people were evacuated in Shasta County for the Zogg Fire.

Three people have died in the fire, Shasta County Sheriff Eric Magrini said Monday. He gave no details but urged people who receive evacuation orders: "Do not wait."

Residences are widely scattered in the area, which was torched just two years ago by the deadly Carr Fire — infamously remembered for producing a huge tornado-like fire whirl.

Pacific Gas & Electric had cut power to more than 100,000 customers in advance of gusty winds and in areas with active fire zones. The utility's equipment has caused previous disasters, including the 2018 Camp Fire that killed 85 people and devastated the town of Paradise in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

By Monday night, the utility said it had restored electricity to essentially all of those customers. However, PG&E said about 24,000 people remained without power in areas affected by two fires in Napa, Sonoma, Shasta and Tehama counties.

So far in this year's historic fire season, more than 8,100 California wildfires have killed 29 people, scorched 5,780 square miles (14,970 square kilometers), and destroyed more than 7,000 buildings.

The Glass Fire began Sunday as three fires that merged and drove vineyards and mountain areas into eastern Santa Rosa.

Some 70,000 people are under evacuation orders, including the entire 5,000-plus population of Calistoga in Napa County. Some people were injured and Sonoma County sheriff's deputies had to rescue people who ignored evacuation orders, officials said.

Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin, who lives in the Oakmont area of Santa Rosa, heeded the order to flee late Monday night. It took her nearly two hours of crawling along a jammed road to reach safety.

Gorin's home was damaged in another fire three years ago and she was rebuilding it. She saw three neighboring houses in flames as she fled.

Death toll from coronavirus tops 1 million

NEW DELHI (AP): Joginder Chaudhary was his parents' greatest pride, raised with the little they earned farming a half-acre plot in central India to become the first doctor from their village.

For the coronavirus, though, he was just one more in a million.

After the virus killed the 27-year-old Chaudhary in late July, his mother wept inconsolably. With her son gone, Premalata Chaudhary said, how could she go on living? Three weeks later, on Aug. 18, the virus took her life, too — yet another number in an unrelenting march toward a woeful milestone.

Now, 8 1/2 months after an infection doctors had never seen before claimed its first victims in China, the pandemic's confirmed death toll has eclipsed 1 million, according to a count by Johns Hopkins University.

That is partly due to the virus's quickening spread through India, where reported deaths have topped 96,000 and cases are increasing at the fastest rate in the world.

The United States, where the virus has killed about 205,000 people, accounts for 1 out of 5 deaths worldwide, far more than any other country despite its wealth and medical resources.

"It's not just a number. It's human beings. It's people we love," said Dr. Howard Markel, a professor of medical history at the University of Michigan who has advised government officials on containing pandemics. On a Thursday morning

in February, Markel's mother, 84 and infirm, was stricken by an illness later diagnosed as COVID-19. She died before midnight.

"It's our brothers, our sisters. It's people we know," Markel said. "And if you don't have that human factor right in your face, it's very easy to make it abstract."

Even at 1 million — greater than the population of Jerusalem or Austin, Texas, more than four times the number killed in the 2004 earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean — the toll is almost certainly a vast undercount.

Many deaths were probably missed because of insufficient testing and inconsistent reporting, and some suspect concealment by countries like Russia and Brazil.

And the number continues to mount. Nearly 5,000 deaths are reported each day on average. Parts of Europe are getting hit by new outbreaks and experts fear a second wave may await the U.S.

"I can understand why ... numbers are losing their power to shock, but I still think it's really important that we understand how big these numbers really are," said Mark Honigsbaum, the London-based author of "The Pandemic Century: One Hundred Years of Panic, Hysteria and Hubris."

Few people can testify to those numbers like the Rev. Mario Carminati, a priest in the northern Italian province of Bergamo, which was hit by one of Europe's first major outbreaks last spring. When the virus overwhelmed local cemeteries, Carminati

opened his church to the dead, lining up 80 coffins in the center aisle. After an army convoy carted them to a crematory, another 80 arrived. Then 80 more.

"It was something completely unpredictable that arrived like a bolt of lightning in a clear sky ... and struck our reality," he said.

Eventually the crisis receded and the world's attention moved on. But the pandemic's grasp endures. In August, Carminati buried his nephew, 34-year-old Christian Persico.

"This thing should make us all reflect. The problem is that we think we're all immortal," Carminati said.

The virus first appeared late last year in patients hospitalized in the Chinese city of Wuhan. The first death was reported there on Jan. 11. By the time authorities locked down the city nearly two weeks later, millions of travelers had come and gone. China's government has come in for criticism that it did not do enough to alert other countries to the threat.

Government leaders in countries such as Germany, South Korea and New Zealand worked effectively to contain it. Others, like U.S. President Donald Trump and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, dismissed the severity of the threat and the guidance of scientists, even as hospitals filled with gravely ill patients.

Brazil has recorded the second most deaths after the U.S., with about 142,000. India is third and Mexico fourth, with more than 76,000.

Oscar Ortiz, an oil platform worker for

Mexico's state-owned Petroleos Mexicanos, said he felt helpless while ill and quarantined this spring, as 14 of his coworkers died from the virus, three in a single week.

"It's very painful to see this and not be able to do anything," said Ortiz, whose company has reported more than 300 deaths in its ranks.

The virus has forced trade-offs between safety and economic well-being. The choices made have left millions of people vulnerable, especially the poor, minorities and the elderly.

India, whose government relaxed tight restrictions in recent months to jump-start an economy where many subsist on earnings from day labor, is the latest example.

"When the pandemic actually started to get under control to some extent, the lockdown was eased and then completely lifted," said K. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India. "The virus had a free passage and could spread much more easily."

With so many of the deaths beyond view in hospital wards and clustered on society's margins, the milestone recalls the grim pronouncement often attributed to Soviet dictator Josef Stalin: One death is a tragedy, millions of deaths are a statistic.

The pandemic's toll of 1 million dead in such a limited time rivals some of the gravest threats to public health, past and present. It exceeds annual deaths from AIDS, which last year killed about 690,000 people worldwide. The virus's

toll is approaching the 1.5 million global deaths each year from tuberculosis, which regularly kills more people than any other infectious disease.

But "COVID's grip on humanity is incomparably greater than the grip of other causes of death," said Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University. He noted the unemployment, poverty and despair caused by the pandemic, and

deaths from myriad other illnesses that have gone untreated.

To put the death toll, alone, in perspective, look to Brazil.

Nearly a decade ago, more than 900 Brazilians were killed in flooding that was widely described as the country's worst-ever single day of natural disaster. From late May to late August, the coronavirus killed more Brazilians than that, on average, day after day.

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SummitTIMES

France to ban use of wild animals in circuses, marine parks

PARIS (AP): France's environment minister has announced a gradual ban on using wild animals in traveling circuses, on keeping dolphins and killer whales in captivity in marine parks and on raising mink on fur farms.

Barbara Pompili, France's minister of ecological transition, said in a news conference Tuesday that bears, tigers, lions, elephants and other wild animals won't be allowed any more in travelling circuses "in the coming years."

In addition, starting immediately, France's three marine parks won't be able to bring in nor breed dolphins and killer whales any more, she said.

"It is time to open a new era in our relationship with these (wild) animals," she said, arguing that animal welfare is a priority.

Pompili said the measures will also bring an end to mink farming, where animals are raised for their fur, within the next five years.

The ban does not apply to wild



animals in other permanent shows and in zoos.

Pompili did not set any precise date for the ban in travelling circuses, saying the process should start "as soon as possible." She promised solutions will be found for each animal "on a case-by-case basis."

The French government will implement an 8 million-euro (\$9.2 million) package to help people working in circuses and marine parks find other jobs.

"That transition will be spread over several years, because it will change the lives of many people," she said.

Parminder Nagra to guest star in 'Black-ish'

LOS ANGELES, SEP 29 (PTI): "Bend It Like Beckham" star Parminder Nagra will feature in a guest role on the popular sitcom "Black-ish".

The Indian-origin British actor, along with "Scrubs" star Judy Reyes, will portray the colleagues of Tracee Ellis Ross' Dr Rainbow Johnson on the ABC series.

Nagra, who previously played Dr Neela Rasgotra on NBC's "ER", will essay the role of Dr Wen, while Reyes will star as Dr Laurie, reported Entertainment Weekly.

"It was great and weird because we have our shields and you have to remove your PPE right before (shooting of the scene begins)," Ross said.

"So there wasn't a lot of bonding time. There weren't a lot of moments for us to connect as actors and do what we should do in this job... They were fantastic, and I hope that they come back again. I hope that we do more together," she added.

"Black-ish" follows an upper middle class African-American family led by Andre 'Dre' Johnson (Anthony



Anderson) and Rainbow (Ross).

It also features Yara Shahidi, Marcus Scribner, Miles Brown, Marsai Martin, Jeff Meacham, Jenifer Lewis, Peter Mackenzie and Deon Cole.

Amanda Seyfried, Thomas Sadoski welcome second child

LOS ANGELES, SEP 29 (PTI): Actor couple Amanda Seyfried and Thomas Sadoski have become parents for the second time.

The "Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again" star, who managed to keep her second pregnancy secret, announced the birth of their son through the charities they work with, INARA and War Child USA. Seyfried, 34, and Sadoski, 44, also share three-year-old daughter Nina.

"Since the birth of our daughter three years ago our commitment to the innocent children that are so brutally affected by conflict and war has been a driving force in our lives. With the birth of our son, the work of INARA and War Child has become our North Star," the couple said in a statement on Monday on Instagram.

INARA (International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance) and War Child USA also shared the news of the baby's birth on their respective pages.

The post on INARA's page reads: "We are so happy to join with @warchildusa to be the first to announce that our



board members @mingey @thomas_sadoski welcomed their second child into this world... #AmandaSeyfried #ThomasSadoski #Babyborn #Secondchild #Newborn #INARA #WarChild (sic)"

The official social media pages of War Child USA added, "We are so happy to join with INARA to be the first to

announce that ambassadors Amanda Seyfried and Thomas Sadoski welcomed their second child into this world."

Seyfried married the "John Wick" actor in 2017 after dating for a year.

Last month, Katy Perry and Orlando Bloom announced the birth of their daughter, Daisy, through UNICEF, of which they are Goodwill Ambassadors.

Apple to release Billie Eilish documentary in February

LOS ANGELES, SEP 29 (PTI): Apple is set to release its highly anticipated documentary about multiple Grammy winning-singer and songwriter Billie Eilish in February.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, "Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry" will premiere both in theatres and on Apple TV Plus. RJ Cutler, best known for singer John Belushi's eponymous docu and "The September Issue" which followed Vogue fashion magazine editor Anna Wintour, has directed the Apple Original Films doc.

"The World's a Little Blurry" is produced by Interscope Films, Darkroom, This Machine and Lighthouse Management & Media. Eilish, 18, ruled the most recent Grammy Awards with her debut album, 'When We Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?', winning five trophies, including best new artist and album of the year.

She has also sung the theme song for "No Time to Die", the upcoming James Bond film.



CRYSTAL CLEAR! Singer Gwen Stefani was photographed for her new line of eyeglasses for her Lamb collection in Beverly Hills.

Rapper Lil Yachty arrested for driving 150 mph in Ferrari

ATLANTA (AP): Georgia State Patrol arrested rapper Lil Yachty this month after he was allegedly caught driving more than 150 mph (241 kph) on an Atlanta highway.

Troopers pulled over a white Ferrari with the 23-year-old rapper, whose name is Miles McCollum, behind the wheel on Sept. 21, State Patrol said.

An officer had followed

the car after spotting it speeding and weaving in and out of traffic on the interstate near downtown, according to a State Patrol incident report obtained by news outlets.

McCollum was taken to the Atlanta City Jail and charged with reckless driving and speeding, according to the agency. He has since been released.

The recording artist

totaled his red Ferrari in the same area in June after spinning out of control. Witnesses told investigators that the roads were wet and McCollum was traveling at a high rate of speed at the time, news outlets reported.

The rapper addressed the recent speeding in a video on the app Tik Tok, saying in part: "Yeah. It happened. ... Slow down kids."

Mickey Rourke, Taye Diggs board horror thriller 'Mammon'

LOS ANGELES, SEP 29 (PTI): Mickey Rourke, Taye Diggs and Jessica Uberuaga have joined the horror thriller "Mammon".

Isaac Walsh, who has films "Rook" and "Relative Duplicity" as his writing credits, will make his feature directorial debut with the project.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Walsh and Tyler Clair Smith have co-written the script.

"Mammon" follows a struggling young couple who are chasing the American dream, and soon realise that their worst nightmare is



the demonic spirit in their new home.

Mike Hatton is producing under his banner, Ton of Hats.

The film is slated to start shooting next month in Southern California.

ARIES:

YPeople could give you some wonderful feedback today, but will you be able to set your ego aside long enough to listen to it without getting defensive? What they're going to tell you comes from a genuinely compassionate place. They're not just trying to find flaws to pick on. They have faith in you, which is why they think you can do better. You are capable of amazing things and they know it! The worst mistake you can make today is to limit yourself.

TAURUS:

You provide a valuable balance in your social circle right now. Someone is being incredibly inflexible, acting like they're the only person on earth and overlooking everyone else's needs. People are starting to lose their temper, and it looks like trouble is brewing. Since you're usually so warm and open to change, it could fall to you to help this stick-in-the-mud loosen up a bit. Appeal to their urge to be popular. Let them know that their behavior isn't winning them any friends.

GEMINI:

You can always count on yourself for good advice, and on days like today you should only count on yourself. It's not that getting other people's input won't be helpful; it's just that it could overload you with too much irrelevant information. Plus, some of the people have their own hidden agendas, which probably won't be the same as yours. You know who you can trust. You see them every time you look in the mirror.

CANCER:

There are a lot of things up in the air in your life right now, but that doesn't mean you need to feel nervous. Try to see this uncertainty as an opportunity. You can make things go the way you want if you try hard enough. If you want to make a change, you can make it. Instead of projecting what you fear onto the situation, project what you want out of the situation. You'll be surprised by how a little bit of positive thinking can turn the tide and make things fall into place.

LEO:

The work you've been putting in at the gym is starting to pay off, but not everyone has been following your progress as closely as you think -- don't get upset if no one has noticed you lost a pound or gained some muscles. And whatever you do, don't brag about how healthy you are becoming -- especially right in front of a friend of yours who's about to lunge into an ice cream sundae! You have to be sensitive to the fact that not everyone will make the same kinds of choices that you have.

VIRGO:

You won't be able to schedule in fun time right now -- there will be way too many factors to pull together, and way too many people who just won't be able to commit. So if you're looking to have an adventure, today, don't consult your calendar. Just get out there! The key to exploring something new is to have an open mind and not be afraid of talking to new and different people. Dive right in to the messiness of life and

let the surprises come -- they will!

LIBRA:

Do you feel like there are too many limits being put on you right now? Take a moment today to ask yourself if those limits are self-imposed! Are you making excuses not to move forward? This is a tough question to ask yourself, but you owe it to yourself to be honest about the answer. Add a little more ambition to your attitude! Push yourself harder, and you will push other people harder. Then, those walls of limitation will come tumbling down. You'll see.

SCORPIO:

You might think that having no unpredictability in your life means there is less stress in your life, which is true -- but it also means that you have less excitement! Today, you should release some self-control. Let yourself be motivated by your whims instead of your plans. Be more spontaneous and you might discover a fabulous new hobby, person or hot spot. One little addition to your life could put you at a new crossroads. Exciting things are bound to result.

SAGITTARIUS:

Music and art hold great appeal for you, right now, so try to squeeze some extra entertainment into your free time, today. Check out a new exhibit at the art museum, visit your local record store and stock up on new CDs, or just surf the net looking for the next hot band to become obsessed by. New artistic expressions will feed your intellect and up your energy level. It's amazing how a

new voice or a new image can make you see things in a whole new way.

CAPRICORN:

The thing that will give you the greatest sense of accomplishment today won't involve you winning a competition or attaining a goal -- it will involve you adhering to a new set of restrictions you've given yourself. By building your self discipline, you are building your confidence. Every time you say 'no' to a bad habit or say 'yes' to something that is healthy but not a lot of fun, you are doing yourself a great favor.

AQUARIUS:

You've been working your fanny off to try to meet a goal, and it might feel like no one has noticed your struggles at all. But before you hop on the 'self pity express,' stop and think about it -- the reason that no one is reaching out to give you a helping hand is probably because they have faith that you can handle it on your own! Don't assume that people are abandoning you or overlooking your efforts. Keep your head down and don't worry about who is or isn't paying attention.

PISCES:

Despite the political game playing that has been going on in the office lately, it's always important for you to treat coworkers with the same amount of respect that you would like them to give you -- they can be a huge help to you down the line, and you don't want to go burning any bridges! Think of your future, and assume that anyone who's on your level now might very well rise higher, some day.