



IDRIS ELBA TESTS POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS: 'I DIDN'T HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS'
pg 08

LAUGHTER IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC: WHY SOUTH AFRICANS ARE JOKING ABOUT CORONAVIRUS
04

DISNEY WORLD CLOSES AFTER WALT DISNEY'S GRANDDAUGHTER RIPS FIREWORKS CROWDS AT PARK
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 71 | Gangtok | Wednesday | 18 March 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

State Univ students to continue protest

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 17 MAR:
Students of Sikkim State University who have been sitting in protest outside the SSU building in Gangtok since Sunday have resolved to continue pressing for their demands.

They have refused to acknowledge the letter from the Education department to the Assistant Registrar addressing their demands on the grounds that the same has not been shared with them officially.

No one from the department has made contact with them and a supposed notification shared on Whatsapp



groups cannot be accepted as authentic, they point out.

A letter of the Director [Higher Education]

Education Department, Kapil Meena to the Assistant Registrar of SSU giving clarifications on different demands placed

by students of the university is being shared on social media.

Speaking to media persons, students of

Sikkim State University have expressed that they have not received a copy of such letter and came to know about

it through WhatsApp. However, they expressed their dissatisfaction over the clarification and stated that it was just an eye-wash.

They said that they will continue their protest until the Education Minister, Additional Chief Secretary of Education Department and Vice-Chancellor of SSU meets them and addresses their grievances.

It has to be mentioned here that students have been sitting on dharna to press their demands in front of the SSU building in Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College complex in Tadong since Monday.

Unauthorized sale of liquor alleged on Rangpo-Ranipool stretch; Deptt wants more specific complaints

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 17 MAR:

Complaints have been coming in from people claiming to be residents along the Ranipool to Rangpo bazaar stretch on NH-10 that "rampant illegal" sale of liquor, including country liquor, in this area was growing into a nuisance.

Reiterating that they were residents of Rangpo, Mining and Majhitar, they added that they have brought this to the notice of the Excise Department as well, but have seen no action being initiated by the department in combating the illegal sale of liquor.

A licensed vendor, on the condition of anonymity, further contended that there has been an increase in unauthorised

sale of liquor in the recent years and that the Excise and Police departments have preferred to ignore it despite clear violation of laid down rules and laws.

He adds that even some bars were operating without valid excise licenses and that such units have also been selling alcohol on dry days.

Speaking over the phone, the Excise Department Secretary, T Namgyal, stated that the department has not received any such complaints from anyone thus far.

He added that the stretch from Ranipool to Rangpo was almost 30 KMs long and that the complaint should be more particular and not blanket like this for proper follow-up to be initiated.

In times of coronavirus, tuning in to tune out anxiety

NEW DELHI, MAR 17 (PTI):
In another time, another place, Bertolt Brecht had memorably said, "In the dark times. Will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing. About the dark times."

The context of Brecht's verse, written in exile in the late 1930s, was Nazi fascism, but the lines strike more than a chord in these days of the coronavirus pandemic with many people using poetry and music to keep their anxieties at bay and their spirits high.

From Florence to

Mumbai, people are tuning in to tune out their stresses, standing in balconies to sing out loud to each other in symphony, pressing a button to let the music flow or sometimes simply sharing their playlists on social media platforms.

In Italy, the home of operatic singing, videos of musicians and others standing in their balconies with their clarinets and cellos, drums and in some cases utensils, making music and singing have been shared over

turn to pg 02

Bhaichung reaches three former USFC players to East Bengal trials

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 17 MAR:

Three former footballers of United Sikkim Football Club [USFC] are presently undergoing a 20-day coaching camp with East Bengal Football Club in Kolkata. Earlier, founder of the now-disbanded USFC, Bhaichung Bhutia, had taken Sonam Zangpo Bhutia and Karan Rai for the trials while another former USFC player, Kunal Tamang, joined them directly in Kolkata



from Mumbai. Sonam Zangpo Bhutia and Kunal Tamang are experienced stoppers while

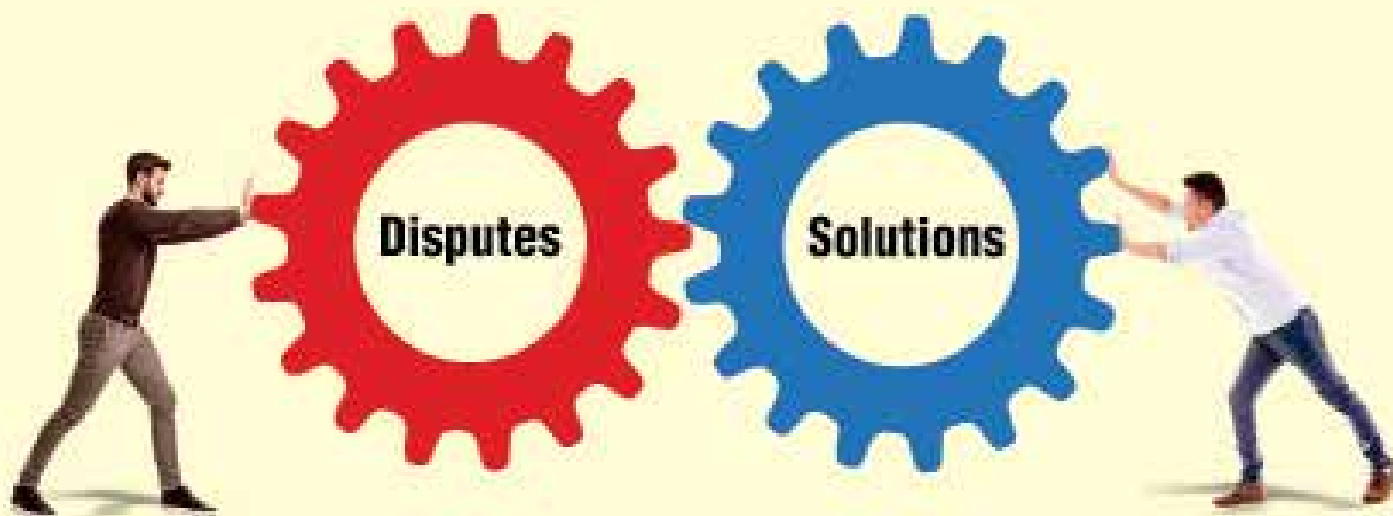
Karan Rai is a popular striker.

SC says yes to permanent commission for women in Navy

NEW DELHI, MAR 17 (PTI): Maintaining that women and men officers should be treated equally, the Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared permanent commission for women in the Navy. A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud said denying permanent commission to women officers who have served the nation would result in serious miscarriage of justice.

It said there cannot be gender discrimination in granting permanent commission to women officers in the Navy after the statutory bar was lifted by the Centre to allow entry of women. "Once statutory bar was lifted to allow entry of women officers then male and female officers are to be treated equally in granting permanent commission," the court said.

Resolving Disputes by Instilling Trust



VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME 2020

Settle your Income Tax disputes by 31st March, 2020 to avail higher benefits

ELIGIBILITY

- Appeals/writs filed on or before 31.01.2020 and pending
- Orders for which time for filing appeal has not expired on 31.01.2020
- Cases pending before Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) on 31.01.2020
- Cases where DRP issued direction on or before 31.01.2020 but no order has been passed
- Cases where assessee filed revision (Section 254) on or before 31.01.2020
- Search case if the disputed tax is less than Rs. 5 Crore in a year

- The appeals/writs filed by taxpayers or the department
- Disputes where the payment has already been made shall also be eligible
- Cases in arbitration in India or Abroad

DISPUTES COVERED

- All disputes, subject to some exclusion, in relation to the-
 - (i) Disputed tax
 - (ii) Disputed penalty
 - (iii) Disputed interest
 - (iv) Disputed fee
 - (v) Disputed tax deducted at source (TDS) or tax collected at source (TCS)

SALIENT FEATURES... PAYMENT TERMS

Payment made on or before	Appeal relates to disputed tax or interest or fee	Appeal relates only to disputed penalty
31st March, 2020	100% of the disputed tax (125% in search cases)	25% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee
End date (30th June 2020)	110% of the disputed tax (135% in search cases) such that it does not increase total demand	30% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee

If an issue in taxpayer's pending appeal already decided in his favour by appellate forum or if Department has filed appeal on an issue, amount payable is 50% of aforesaid amount.

Visit : www.incometaxindia.gov.in
www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in



Income Tax Department
Central Board of Direct Taxes



@incometaxindiaofficial



@IncomeTaxIndia

Yamunanagar woman dies of swine flu

YAMUNANAGAR, MAR 17 (PTI): A 65-year-old woman from the Subash Nagar locality here died of swine flu, a senior health official said on Tuesday.

Yamunanagar Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Vijay Dahiya said she was tested positive for swine flu on March 9 at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh.

However, her family preferred to admit her to a Mohali hospital in Punjab, where she died on Monday, he said.

District Surveillance Officer Dr Vagish Guten said that a health team is in constant touch with family members of the woman.

Her family members have been asked to be vigilant, he said, adding that their samples have also been sent for investigation.

The woman was cremated here on Tuesday.

Trinamool Cong MPs stage walkout in Rajya Sabha

New Delhi, Mar 17 (PTI): Trinamool Congress members in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday staged a walkout in protest against some remarks made by Minister of State of Railways Suresh Angadi.

Soon after Railways Minister Piyush Goyal responded to a discussion on working of the Ministry of Railways, Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien lodged his protest against the remarks made by the junior minister.

Earlier speaking during the discussion, Angadi said, "I have been to West Bengal, it is very unfortunate that there are encroachments on both sides of the (railway) tracks by unauthorised persons whether national...or from other states, other countries, we don't know."

"There is no response from the state government to (request to) clear the tracks," he said.

Angadi added the railways network has been impacted the most in the state due to protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

O'Brien opposed the minister describing the people of his state in a particular way.

Deputy Chairman Harivansh, who was in the Chair, said the issue would be examined, and added that "nothing will go on record".

Amid protests by Opposition members, the Trinamool Congress MPs staged a walkout.

Awareness on addiction and Coronavirus by Mamring School

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 MAR: SAATHI and Red Ribbon Club of Mamring Senior Secondary School, East Sikkim conducted an awareness program on Monday at Bering Secondary School, East on HIV AIDS, Substance Abuse, Addiction, Adolescence, Voluntary Blood Donation, Value Education, Precautions against Coronavirus COVID-19 Infections, etc.

As per a press release, Principal, Prahlad Sharma, Nodal teacher, Bikash Bhattarai, peer educator, Pragya Sharma (XII) spoke on various



topics. Students were told about various safety measures against spread of COVID-19 such as doing Namaskar instead of shaking hands while greeting,

seven steps hand washing, maintaining cleanliness, avoiding gathering and touching, etc, were.

The program was attended by HM, staff and

students of Bering SS. SAATHI Mamring SSS has adopted Bering SS for community awareness.

Team of 10 peer educator students along with

two teacher educators were selected from Bering Secondary School to give further awareness, identify problems and issues with addiction, etc.

BJP wants Education Deptt to handle issues with sensitivity

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 MAR: Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit has advised the Education Department to address pertinent issues of the education sector on priority basis.

The party has asserted that the State Government and Education

Minister should take up the issues more seriously and ensure an early resolution.

A BJP press release informs that there have been reports of protests by teachers and students on a daily basis in the State.

The release adds that students of Gyalshing College have been

protesting delay in infrastructure development at the college and adds that it was very unfortunate that the department has not responded with sensitivity to this issue and the party has demanded that the department take initiative for early fulfillment of these demands in the interest of students.

South District prepared to fight COVID-19



NAMCHI, 17 MAR (IPR): Along with the rest of the world South District has equipped itself to combat the Coronavirus crisis. All the officials and grassroots level workers of the Health Department along with all concerned line departments are working in a coordinated manner to fight coronavirus in the district as well as in the state.

Ample measures have been undertaken by the Health department in order to make people aware. A Rapid Response Team under Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) has been formed at the District Hospital. This team consists of specialists who will be responsible for investigating and managing outbreaks within the district, wherever it will be required.

Screening activity has already started at Melli Check post, since 29 January conducted by Health department for which staff from various Health Sub-Centres is posted to Melli Check post. Daily report of Screening is continuously being updated to State IDSP Cell and to the District Collector (South).

SDRF and IRB personnel have been posted at Melli Check post from 10 March onwards to assist in screening pro-

cess of the public at the Check-post. Additionally, a screening centre has also been established at Tourism building at the said check post and most importantly the officials are tracking the movement of tourists who has already arrived from affected areas of various states to Sikkim.

Likewise a District level Inter-departmental Coordination meeting was held under chairmanship of South District Collector and all Heads of department were briefly sensitized regarding this disease.

Apart from departmental meeting a detailed co-ordination convention was held with all the Medical Officer Incharge of 6 Primary Health Centre & 1 Community Health Centre wherein they were guided with regards to the treatment protocols. The health officials are regularly holding massive awareness activities at all levels including during the occasion of special Gram Sabha.

In a bid to swiftly respond to this disease the South Health Department has put up ambulance for transport of suspected cases which is placed at Namchi and Melli Check post. Single bed Isolation facility is also available at Namchi Hospital.

Mandatory filling up of Self Declaration form by Tourist who had entered Sikkim before 17 March is being followed at Melli Check Post in co-ordination with Tourism department. It may be mentioned here that the State Government has notified on a complete ban of tourist entering Sikkim from 17 March to 15 April but filling up of the self declaration form will continue for locals who have returned from affected countries or areas.

Compulsory home based quarantine of persons returning from COVID-19 affected countries as per guidelines issued by Government of India is being tracked along with daily monitoring by the health staffs of the concerned area.

It may be mentioned here that total awareness programmes on COVID-19 under South from 29th January till date are that 153 number of Village Health and Nutrition Day (VHND), 89 Schools, 96 Community and 10 Gram sabha has been covered.

The South District health authorities has made earnest efforts and responded in a robust manner towards this disease by adequately training doctors and health staffs.

Yes Bank resolution framework underway, depositors can withdraw money from Mar 18: Das

MUMBAI, MAR 16 (PTI): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said the resolution framework for Yes Bank is underway as planned and depositors can withdraw their money from the evening of March 18.

The RBI governor, Shaktikanta Das, also assured to intervene with additional liquidity if there is a need.

Defending the steps taken on Yes Bank and expressing confidence in getting the intended outcomes, Das said the identity of the bank will be retained as a private sector lender.

Das also said that despite the crisis at Yes Bank and the rapidly

evolving coronavirus pandemic on the economy and the banking system, the health of the banking system is good.

In a tweet, Yes Bank also said customers will be able to access full banking services from Wednesday evening, as the moratorium will be lifted earlier.

"We will resume full banking services from Wed, Mar 18, 2020, 18:00 hrs. Visit any of our 1,132 branches from Mar 19, 2020, post commencement of banking hrs to experience our suite of services," the tweet said.

"You will also be able to access all our digital services & platforms @RBI @FinMinIndia," it said.

MP Congress moves SC, seeks access to its rebel MLAs



NEW DELHI, MAR 17 (PTI): Madhya Pradesh Congress party moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday seeking direction to the Centre and the BJP-led Karnataka government to grant it the access to communicate with its rebel MLAs.

Earlier in the day, the apex court asked the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh to respond by Wednesday to a plea by senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan seeking immediate floor test in the state Assembly.

The state Congress party, in its plea, urged the apex court to declare as illegal the action of

the Centre, the Karnataka government and the BJP's state unit of illegally confining its MLAs in Bangaluru.

It also sought a direction for allowing its rebel MLAs to participate in ongoing budget session.

The trust vote should be held only in the presence of all the duly elected MLAs of the state Assembly, said the plea filed by MLA Govind Singh, the chief whip of Congress legislature party in the assembly.

It said the communications of Governor Lalji Tandon asking the government to hold trust vote be declared as "illegal and unconstitutional".

Three candidates for lone Rajya Sabha seat In Manipur

Imphal, Mar 17 (PTI): After scrutiny on Tuesday, three candidates remain in the field for the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Manipur for which election is scheduled on March 26.

The qualified nominees include BJP's Leishemba Sanajaoba, the titular king of Manipur, Indian National Congress (INC) candidate Tongbram Mangibabu and Naga People's Front

(NPF) contestant Honreikhu Kashang.

The scrutiny work was held during the day at the premises of Manipur Legislative Assembly secretariat by the Returning Officer (RO) for the election.

The last date for withdrawal of candidature is March 18, said the RO.

It may be noted that NPF is the partner of ruling BJP-led government in Manipur.

In times...

and over on social media platforms, their joie de vivre spreading in ripples across the globe.

The country is one of the most affected in the world with more than 27,900 cases of the coronavirus and over 2,100 deaths.

The famous Italian resistance poem "Bella Ciao" (goodbye beautiful), "Forza Italia" (stay strong Italy) and "Nessun Dorma" (none shall sleep) were some of the songs that saw people come to their balconies for a sing along with their neighbours.

In one instance, famous Italian opera singer Maurizio Marchini serenaded his Florence neighbourhood with "Nessun Dorma" from his balcony.

"All these videos of Italians playing their instruments during the lockdown are incredible," Hollywood star Chris Evans tweeted recently, sharing his favourites.

In India, composer Ankur Tewari, who was the music supervisor on "Gully Boy", held an online jam on Sunday for his followers confined to their homes.

The singer-songwriter said the trigger to livestream a music gig was a mix of his concerts getting cancelled and the general anxiety about India entering a crucial week with the number of coronavirus cases on the rise.

"It is essential for people to stay indoors and as much as possible, try and avoid being in social gatherings. I wanted to encourage that. I thought I'll do a gig so they don't feel that there's fun happening in the outside world and there's nothing for them," Tewari told PTI.

The musician, part of the popular independent band Ankur & The Ghalat Family, said music is a healer in times of so much uncertainty.

"Everything is so uncertain, we don't know how long it's going to go on, what's happening. But music is always a good healer so I thought it'd be good to sing songs to people."

Taking to music in times of distress is natural, he said.

"Indians, just like Italians, are quite musical. For every occasion we have songs. Music somehow connects with nature. It always brings you back to your natural state," he added.

Popular 1990s rapper Baba Sehgal released a new music video titled "Namaste", named after the no-contact Indian way of greeting gaining currency across the globe.

"I saw Prince Charles coming out of the car and trying to shake hands with one of his colleagues and realised he isn't supposed to shake hands and does 'namaste'. Then I saw Trump also doing that with some minister.

"I thought 'namaste' should be the theme. Not that it's a cure for coronavirus, but it's a preventive step. I wrote the soundtrack in an hour's time, made music by 2 am and dubbed the song the next day," Sehgal told PTI.

The 2.14 minute song is also a warning on climate change.

On Monday, popular British rock band Coldplay's Chris Martin also jammed live on Instagram, informing his followers that American singer John Legend will be the next artiste to perform in the series.

Actor-singer Rita Wilson, who tested positive for the infection along with actor husband Tom Hanks, made a playlist for all those in self-isolation or being quarantined.

"I want to make a @Spotify playlist for people self quarantining. Something that might relate to isolation, perhaps? Can you send some song ideas that I can add? Also, what should we call it? Quarantine Choruses? This is what one does in quarantine. U think of stuff like this," she wrote last week.

The playlist features 32 songs and runs for just more than two hours, with classics like Eric Carmen's "All By Myself" and The Beatles' "I'm So Tired," to more modern hits like Miley Cyrus' "The Climb," Destiny Child's "Survivor" and MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This".

Broadway actor Laura Benanti gave a shout-out to theatre students whose high school musicals have been called off amid the COVID-19 scare by asking them to send in their videos.

"Dark times for all. Trying to find some bright spots. If you were meant to perform in your High School musical and it was cancelled please post yourself singing and tag me. I want to be your audience! Sending all my love and black market toilet paper," Benanti wrote on Twitter recently.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

to book advertisements in SummitTimes call 03592-208698 9734152541 9647102692 advertise@summittimes.com

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK:

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

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp.

Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri – 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

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

IPR Dept holds meeting on COVID-19 with mediapersons

GANGTOK, 17 MAR (IPR): Department of Information & Public Relations, Government of Sikkim, organized a meeting with media persons today to discuss ways to intensify the campaign against Corona Virus.

The meeting was chaired by Secretary, IPR Department, Namrata Thapa, and was attended by media representatives from local daily newspapers, All India Radio, Doordarshan, Samvaad Television, Red FM and Radio Misty, and Digital/ Social Media houses, and representative from Sikkim Film Cooperative Society (SFCS). The programme also had the presence of State IEC Officer, IEC Bureau, Health Department, Sonam G. Bhutia, who was specifically invited to sensitize the media fraternity on COVID-19.

Secretary, IPR Department, Namrata Thapa, in her opening remarks drew the attention of the media persons on the



latest decisions made by the State Government as preventive measures. She called for intensifying the awareness on COVID-19, and appealed for proactive support from the media fraternity to reach out to the people of Sikkim.

She informed that the IPR Department is working in close coordination with the State Health Department to prepare print and audio-visual awareness material on various aspects of Corona

Virus. She said that these materials would be shared with the media houses for extensive coverage. The Secretary also shared the communication strategies prepared by the IPR Department in consultation with the State Health Department.

Representatives of the media houses, in turn, shared about the initiatives being taken from their end to spread correct information on Corona Virus and the

prevailing situation. They also cleared a few myths and misconceptions about the Virus from the resource person from Health Department.

Some of the media persons also expressed their willingness to lend assistance to the health staff and officials as volunteers, and requested for necessary training. Likewise, representative from SFCS also shared the organization's commitment to volunteer for the cause.

State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia made a power point presentation and shared some basic information about COVID-19. He also demonstrated the correct method of hand-washing and use of hand sanitizers and face masks. Mr Bhutia also highlighted on the prevailing myths and misconceptions regarding the virus and the common practices.

Secretary, Namrata Thapa, summed up the meeting by thanking all the media persons for their presence and participation in the discussions and for their continued support. She categorically stated that any misreporting should be avoided, and in case of any doubt, facts should be checked with the concerned departments before they are made public.

The meeting also had the presence of Director, IPR Department, Benu Gurung, and officers and staff of the Department.

Quizzing for Census 2021



GANGTOK, 17 MAR (IPR): A District Level Census 2021 Quiz Competition was held at the Conference Hall of District Administrative Centre (DAC) here at Sichey today.

The quiz was organised by the Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim in collaboration with the Education Department, Government of Sikkim to encourage the students to widen the knowledge regarding the Population Census.

Rongli SS, Enchey SSS, Modern SSS, Tika Ram Nirula SSS and Dikling SSS participated in the District Level Census 2021 Quiz Competition.

Director, Yashoda Bhandari, Census Operations, Sikkim along with Joint Director (East), AD Chettri, Education Department, SDM, Tshering Bhutia, Gangtok and Co-Ordinator, Dorcus Targain, Education De-

partment chaired the quiz competition as the esteemed judges.

Krilesh Pradhan and Arpit Gupta from Rongli Secondary School won the competition. Phur Diki Sherpa and Dimple Lhamu Bhutia from Enchey SSS and Nirmal Chauhan and Tshering Yangden Lachenpa from Modern SSS were adjudged as the runners up and first runners up respectively.

Yashoda Bhandari in her brief address mentioned the importance of the Census process and added that the Indian Census is the most comprehensive and credible source of information on Demography (Population characteristics) and a basis for reviewing Economic Activity, Literacy and Education, Housing, Household Amenities, Urbanisation, Fertility and Mortality, Scheduled Castes and Sched-

uled Tribes, Language, Religion, Migration, Disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data etc.

She also informed that Census 2021 will be a Digital Census with Mobile Apps used to collect data. She further mentioned that Census 2021 will be conducted in two phases. First phase will include House listing operations along with updation of National Population Register from 07 Apr, to 22 May 2020 while the 2nd phase of actual population enumeration would commence from 09 to 28 Feb, 2021 followed by revision round from 01 to 05 Mar, 2021.

Esteemed judges gave away the certificates and trophies to the participants and the winners of the competition. Quiz Master, Ashish Thapa successfully conducted the competition.

Cong attacks govt for nominating ex-CJI Gogoi to RS

NEW DELHI, MAR 17 (PTI): The Congress on Tuesday criticised the government for nominating former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to the Rajya Sabha and used the remarks of former law minister Arun Jaitley on cooling off period for judges to attack it.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi considered the advice of his late law minister before nominating Gogoi.

"Did PM Modi consider the advice of his former colleague and Law Minister and Finance Minister, Late Sh. Arun Jaitley before recommending Ex-CJI, Ranjan Gogoi to Rajya Sabha," he asked on Twitter.

"Justice Lokur rightly summarises it -: 'Has the last bastion fallen?'" Surjewala said in another tweet.

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi also said that Modi could have adhered to the advice of Jaitley in this regard.

He also highlighted and shared the 2012 remarks of Jaitley on having a cooling off period for judges to head Tribunals.

"Modiji amitshahji hamari nahi to arun Jaitley ki to sun lijiye! Did he not speak and write against post retirement largesse to judges? Do u remember," he said citing Jaitley's comments.

"...Courts function on faith trust perception and faith. Each has taken a bad beating today," he said.

Three candidates for lone Rajya Sabha seat In Manipur



IMPHAL, MAR 17 (PTI): After scrutiny on Tuesday, three candidates remain in the field for the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Manipur for which election is scheduled on March 26.

The qualified nominees include BJP's Leishemba Sanajaoba, the titular king of Manipur, Indian National Congress (INC) candidate Tongbram Mangibabu and Naga People's Front

(NPF) contestant Hon-reikhu Kashang.

The scrutiny work was held during the day at the premises of Manipur Legislative Assembly secretariat by the Returning Officer (RO) for the election.

The last date for withdrawal of candidature is March 18, said the RO.

It may be noted that NPF is the partner of ruling BJP-led government in Manipur.

3-member panel to probe clash in Manipur village: CM

IMPHAL, MAR 17 (PTI): Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh set up a three-member panel to probe the clashes between two communities at Chassad village in the state's Kamjong district, warning strict action will be taken against those found to be involved in violence and arson.

The three-member panel, comprising of the Additional Chief Secretary, the Deputy Inspector General (Intelligence) and the Joint Secretary, has been asked to establish the course of the events that led to the clashes in the village, Singh told reporters late on Monday.

It will also identify those behind the incidents of violence that left several houses damaged, he added. The chief

minister said that his government will repair the houses which were torched, as well as provide financial assistance to the affected people.

Normalcy is returning to the area as adequate security forces, including the Assam Rifles and the Army, have been deployed, Singh said.

Clashes broke out between the two communities on Monday, which police suspect was due to a land dispute, prompting the district administration to clamp prohibitory orders under section 144 Crpc at Chassad-Kamjong and along the main road of the Sampui area in the hill district.

Mobile internet services have been suspended for three days across the state, following the violence.

Sikkim Chemists Association welcomes Govt decisions

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 MAR:

Sikkim Chemists Association has welcomed the safety decisions taken by the Government of Sikkim on 16 Mar, 2020.

The association has requested citizens to not panic and avoid hoarding items like hand sanitizers, masks, etc.

"The association is making arrangement to procure these items for the public use and make it available at MRP in case of Sanitizers and at purchase prices in case of three ply masks," a press release from the Association informs.

The association is constantly in touch with the District Collectorate, Health Officials and has requested all its members to adopt the following advisory:

1. Be a careful citizen. If you see any person with flu, fever and cough, immediately motivate him to take medical care, Inform authorities immediately.
2. Motivate not to touch M E N (mouth, eyes and nose).
3. Make available Masks and Sanitizers at all levels for the sake of public benefit.
4. N 95 Masks must be sold on Doctors prescription only, as these are required either by infected person, health workers, doctors or caretaker of the patient only.
5. The normal three ply masks should be sold at the procured prices on humanity ground and should not be more than Rs. 20.00 in any case.
6. Alcohol based sanitizers are most effective and tested. Don't rely on untested herbal sanitizers which will give you false satisfaction.
7. Wherever possible, keep water taps and soap in front of your shops and motivate people that washing hand frequently is better than all precautions.
8. Make aware and motivate your customers not to panic and rather stay home and hygienic.

Bhim Bahadur Chettri's felicitation postponed

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 MAR:

The felicitation program planned for Bhim Bahadur Chettri, the Indian army dancing sensation from Jitlang near Rangpo, has been postponed in the wake of the Novel Coronavirus scare due to which all public gatherings have been put on hold for the time being.

Mr Chettri, it may be recalled, had made it to the top-6 in the Star Plus reality show, Dance-Plus season-5 and a special felicitation was planned by the Talent Search and Promotion Committee, Rangpo Chapter, at Rangpo Bazaar Playground on 22 March.

The same now stands postponed.

Only urgent matters to be listed in Courts till 31 March

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 MAR:

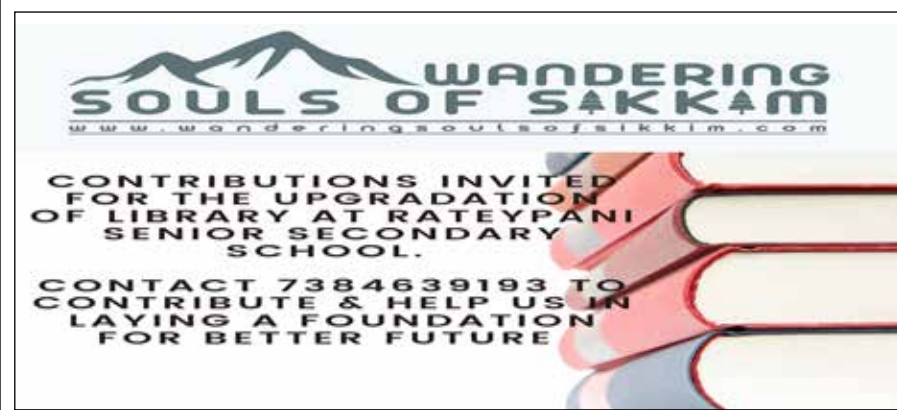
Bar Association of Sikkim [BAS] adopted a resolution today that only urgent matters will be listed before the courts and no regular hearings may be listed till 31 March 2020. BAS also decided that members of the Bar will abstain from participating in court proceedings unless required to


appear for urgent matters till 31 March.

BAS general secretary, Tashi Rapden Barfungpa, informed that Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami advised that members of the Bar take preventive measures, file advance adjournments and other required services in dispensation of justice through online services till 31 March or

file adjournments through their counsels and that all trial courts will consider their application without any adverse remarks.



BAS passed the resolutions after deliberations with members as per the advisory of the Government of India and decision taken by WHO to declare Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, a pandemic.





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	Precautions to Prevent nCoV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition. ● No vaccinations available as of now. ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected. 	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>If you seek help, you may call : - Toll free no. 104 District surveillance Officer EAST : 7029372100 WEST : 9593297809 NORTH : 9641957468 SOUTH : 7407691463 New STNM AMS : 9434711402</p>

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

CONTACT

**SUMMIT TIMES
REPORTERS**

**SINGTAM
8170070813
MANGAN/ DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213**

**GANGTOK
8116388176
9832424750
8016270440**



BL land for sale. Road site 100ft by 50ft at Lower Syari. Enroute Ranipool to Deorali via Syari. 10 Minutes Drive from Ranipool. Serious Buyer may contact : **83720-77482/ 94341-36989/ 98320-82664**

Pride to Camouflage Male Chauvinism

The deck was always loaded against women's equality. The game has now become tougher

There is a reason why the Trump victory in America was deplorable. Given the American dominance of mass media, even if one does not understand the American electoral college process, the elections there are closely followed. What is worse, they also set the trend. So, while the past eight years were about the inspirational pursuit of change and inclusiveness, now it is about regression and paranoia. Picking up just one strand here - when a person with the obnoxious sexism of The Donald manages to win, apart from imperiling the rights of all the women in USA, he also delivers the packaging within which disgusting worldviews and offensive sexism can not only be packaged and peddled, but also consumed without guilt. Invoke nationalism, paint a threat to old laws/ ways and traditions and anything, no matter how false or patently disagreeable, can be circulated. Of course, once such language becomes commonplace, there are enough of us with regressive streaks to lend our shoulders to it and lower the bar for the new normal. But then again, it would be wrong to credit the US elections for this new trend. In fact, it would be incorrect to even call this a new trend, but what the American experience has done is that it has helped explain and expose the shallowness of the entire enterprise.

It goes without saying that women's rights, even the basic ones which will secure them equality, have been compromised and sabotaged so effectively over the centuries that we have internalized the denigration to such an extent that every step forward has to be battled, argued and defended. It was already an uphill battle until regression received its new packaging in traditions and identity politics. Of course, these dodges were always deployed and in fact form the very basis of arguments on which the denials imposed on women constructed, the worry is that they have become acceptable, almost fashionable now. Take the case of Nagaland for instance. The sanctity of the Article of the Constitution of India which allows for customary practices to continue there is being invoked to marshal the mobs to oppose women's reservation in urban local bodies. However, this argument stands on weak knees since, well, urban settings are neither customary nor traditional to tribal societies and hence did not have tribal traditions/ practices governing them so there could be none that would get diluted when women were accorded reservations. One might have understood the big brother fears being screamed by the opponents if women in Nagaland were already empowered and were being voted into elected posts. But that is not the case. The only inference left then is that the chest beating nationalism is being trumped up to oppose women's empowerment. And they have won. At least for now.

The deck is clearly loaded against any attempts at allowing women to become equal. And we are not even speaking societal attitudes here, but are dwelling on how the laws and rules have been laid out. In Sikkim's case, the identity of "local" women continues to be tied to the males to whom she "belongs" - first her father, and then her husband. Is it demeaning? Of course it is. But has any group militated against it? They won't. Because tied into this second-class citizenship is the concept of identity and belonging. And while this should get at least some people even more riled because even belonging is not allowed to women independent of a male-appendage, it remains not even meekly voiced in fear of the masochistic boats that might get rocked or the purity of old practices that could get called into question. And before anyone suggests that our country is any better, take a look at the PAN card application form (Form No. 49A). When the particulars are filled out, they allow for a space where the mother's name may be filled. This is optional, and while PAN card holders can have their mother's name displayed on their cards, the registration of father's name is mandatory because, clearly, identity can be established only through the father irrespective of what the person might feel or believe!

What we are staring at are practices, convictions and laws which are so skewed that it will take a paradigm shift in how we respond to gender issues to get addressed adequately. Unfortunately, even the piecemeal scratches being attempted are now being stomped down by aggressive invocations of parochial pride which is nothing by a thin camouflage draping the male chauvinism which sits at the root of all discriminations. And it appears to be becoming okay to do so.



Laughter in the time of a pandemic: why South Africans are joking about coronavirus

HERMAN WASSERMAN
theconversation.com

Almost immediately after the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in South Africa, the jokes started. From memes featuring prominent politicians to bad puns, from TikTok video clips to pictures of people posing with silly home-made protective gear, South Africans took to Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook to make fun of the virus.

It is not unusual for South Africans to make jokes about their many problems, from former President Jacob Zuma's legacy of alleged grand corruption, known as state capture, to the regular power blackouts caused by ongoing crises at the national power utility Eskom. Cartoonists never seem to have a shortage of material.

Online jokes, memes and video clips are of course not peculiar to South Africa. The increased accessibility of a growing range of social media platforms and editing tools have made it possible for media users around the world to create and interact with news topics in ever more creative ways. Yet it is remarkable how, in a country like South Africa with its multitude of serious challenges, media users often take to jokes rather than despair when presented with a new problem.

Why is humour so often the first port of call when South African media users find themselves in stormy seas? There may be various socio-cultural, political and psychological reasons for this.

SOCIO-CULTURAL REASONS

There is an established body of academic literature about the important role of gossip, jokes, rumour and satire in African politics and societies.

In his landmark article, the historian and human rights activist Stephen Ellis described the phenomenon of "pavement radio", or radio trottoir, that can be found across Africa. This phenomenon is underpinned by the widespread oral tradition characteristic of these societies.

Ellis defines this form of communication as "the popular and unofficial discussion of current affairs."

Unlike the press, television or radio, this "is not controlled by any identifiable individual, institution or group of people."

Pavement radio is not to be mistaken for ordinary, unverified rumours or gossip, but performs a social and political function. Its subject matter are issues of public interest about which there has not been an official announcement, or where official

information cannot be trusted.

Humour also helps build community. For example, popular South African tabloids have established a fiercely loyal readership with their stories of the supernatural, the silly or the absurd alongside a strong commitment to the community interest. Tabloid readers integrate their newspaper reading practices with storytelling, sharing and communal interpretation of newspaper content.

These practices illustrate how the conviviality of African societies also influence their media use. Similarly, joking about the coronavirus may be a way for people to say 'it is all very absurd, but we're in this together'.

POLITICAL REASONS

Pavement radio thrives when the mainstream media are tightly controlled by the authorities, or where there is widespread distrust in official narratives.

South Africans enjoy a much higher degree of media freedom than they used to. But during apartheid, alternative media and underground information networks often provided more trusted channels of communication than the compliant mainstream media, or propaganda issued on the state broadcaster.

Widespread corruption in post-apartheid South Africa has not done much to improve citizens' respect for official narratives. They know what it feels like to be lied to.

Research has shown that young South Africans in particular are distrustful of politicians and political institutions. And political disillusionment with the current government and feelings of frustration have also proven to be fertile ground for rumours and conspiracy theories that provide more plausible explanations of people's current circumstances than political, economic or scientific authorities.

The "sceptical laughter" evoked by popular culture is a way of poking fun at authority, undermining the power of politicians or big corporates.

In some of the jokes about the coronavirus it's clear that South Africans are laughing - perhaps nervously - at the government's promises that it has everything under control. The news that the first confirmed patient returned to South Africa from a ski holiday unleashed jokes about the racial profile of the disease. Joking about rich jetsetters becoming infected or making fun of African remedies and responses, may be a way to take the sting out of racial inequality and economic hierarchies.

PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS

Laughter and humour could be used as a coping

mechanism. Media coverage of COVID-19 can stoke fear and panic through their choice of words ("killer virus") or images (scary microscopic virus pictures, empty shelves in supermarkets). The sheer stream of reporting and daily tally of the infected and the dead can also be overwhelming and confusing.

Given the various other risks that South Africans have to contend with on a daily basis, making jokes about this added thing to worry about may help to take the sting out of the new, unknown threat.

Several jokes on Twitter named these other threats, as a reminder that while COVID-19 is serious, the other concerns should not be lost from sight. For instance, a jibe about the coronavirus having to show its proof of residence at the port of entry hinted at the high levels of violent xenophobia in South Africa.

Humour in this context is a way of showing resilience and agency. Although some Twitter users remarked that the humorous tone might still change when the seriousness of the disease hits home, the jokes largely had an optimistic tone. As one person posted on Twitter:

"We did it with Ebola, we did it with Listeriosis, we did it with Boko Haram, we definitely will did (sic) it with #CoronavirusinSA can I get an Amen!"

Another was more fatalistic: "The Ronas is here to wipe us out but at least we will die laughing."

THE DOWNSIDE

Unfortunately, the prevalence of jokes and satire can also spread misinformation, as audiences don't always know what information to trust and what to just laugh about. Research in Africa shows very high levels of exposure to misinformation.

This is a cause for concern in the current COVID-19 epidemic.

And this is why it's important to take popular culture seriously. If we understand how people use media in their everyday life, or how they use humour to allay their fears, it is easier to find appropriate responses to those concerns. The fight against the "infodemic" of misinformation cannot be won by only insisting on fact-checking and rational debate.

In Africa, the role of humour and jokes in everyday popular culture is deadly serious.

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

Social Distancing: What it is and why it's the best tool we have to fight the coronavirus

THOMAS PERLS
theconversation.com

As the coronavirus spreads into more and more communities, public health officials are placing responsibility on individuals to help slow the pandemic. Social distancing is the way to do it. Geriatrician Thomas Perls explains how this crucial tool works.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Social distancing is a tool public health officials recommend to slow the spread of a disease that is being passed from person to person. Simply put, it means that people stay far enough away from each other so that the coronavirus - or any pathogen - cannot spread from one person to another.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes social distancing as staying away from mass gatherings and keeping a distance of 6 feet or 2 meters - about one body length - away from other people. In New York City, for example, theaters have closed temporarily, many conventions around the world are being canceled and schools are closing all across the U.S. I've stopped taking the train during rush hour. Now I either work from home or drive in with my wife, or I take the train during off-hours so I can maintain the 6-foot distance.

Social distancing also means not

touching other people, and that includes handshakes. Physical touch is the most likely way a person will catch the coronavirus and the easiest way to spread it. Remember, keep that 6-foot distance and don't touch.

Social distancing can never prevent 100% of transmissions, but by following these simple rules, individuals can play a critical role in slowing the spread of the coronavirus. If the number of cases isn't kept below what the health care system can handle at any one time - called flattening the curve - hospitals could become overwhelmed, leading to unnecessary deaths and suffering.

There are a few other terms besides social distancing that you are likely to hear. One is "self-quarantine." This means staying put, isolating yourself from others because there is a reasonable possibility you have been exposed to someone with the virus.

Another is "mandatory quarantine." A mandatory quarantine occurs when government authorities indicate that a person must stay in one place, for instance their home or a facility, for 14 days. Mandatory quarantines can be ordered for people who test negative for the virus, but have likely been exposed. Officials have imposed mandatory quarantines in the U.S. for

people on cruise ships and those traveling from Hubei province, China.

WHY DOES SOCIAL DISTANCING WORK?

If done correctly and on a large scale, social distancing breaks or slows the chain of transmission from person to person. People can spread the coronavirus for at least five days before they show symptoms. Social distancing limits the number of people an infected person comes into contact with - and potentially spreads the virus to - before they even realize they have the coronavirus.

It's very important to take a possibility of exposure seriously and quarantine yourself. According to recently published research, self-quarantine should last 14 days to cover the period of time during which a person could reasonably present with symptoms of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. If after two weeks they still don't have symptoms, then it's reasonable to end the quarantine. Shorter quarantine periods could happen for asymptomatic people as tests to rule out the virus become widely available.

WHY IS SOCIAL DISTANCING SO CRUCIAL?

At the moment, it's the only tool available to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

Experts estimate that a vaccine is 12 to 18 months away. For now, there are no drugs available that can slow down a coronavirus infection.

Without a way to make people better once they fall sick or make them less contagious, the only effective tactic is making sure hospital-level care is available to those who need it. The way to do that is to slow or stop the spread of the virus and decrease the number of cases at any one time.

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

Everyone must practice social distancing in order to prevent a tidal wave of cases. I am a geriatrician who cares for the most vulnerable people: frail older adults. Certainly, such individuals should be doing all they can to protect themselves, diligently practicing social distancing and significantly changing their public ways until this pandemic blows over. People who are not frail need to do all they can to protect those who are, by helping to minimize their exposure to COVID-19.

If the public as a whole takes social distancing seriously, overwhelming the medical system could be avoided. Much of how the coronavirus pandemic unfolds in the U.S. will come down to individuals' choices.

[the writer is Professor of Medicine, Boston University]

Arunachal Pradesh: CIHCS land issue stalemate ends

ITANAGAR, MAR 17 (PTI):

A land issue involving the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS) and locals, which has been pending since long, has been resolved after it was agreed that a compensation of Rs 5.97 crore would be granted to an umbrella body of land owners by the Centre.

The stalemate was resolved following the intervention of Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, a CMO report said.

Chairing a meeting with the CIHCS authorities and the land owners under the umbrella of Singchung Village Council Land Management Committee (SVCLMC) here on Monday, Khandu had advised both parties to resolve the matter at the earliest, keeping in mind the importance of having the CIHCS at Dahung in West Kameng district.

With both parties mandating Khandu for a solution, it was resolved in the meeting that the compensation, amount-



ing to Rs 5.97 crore, as assessed and submitted by the district administration and as decided by the Union Ministry of Culture, would be granted to the SVCLMC as per the Jhum Land Regulation, 1947. No other terms and conditions would henceforth be legally binding on the CIHCS, the report said.

Khandu advised CIHCS director Gurmet Dorje to immediately take up construction of boundary walls on the two plots of land under its occupation.

Responding to a pro-

posal of Naresh Glow, former minister and SVCLMC chairman, the chief minister requested the committee to put forward a separate proposal for establishment of new schools in the area which, he assured, would be favourably considered by the state government provided the land is made available free of cost.

Glow had earlier suggested that, if possible, the existing land from where the CIHCS is currently functioning should be returned to the SVCLMC along with all infrastructure so that

it could be utilised to run either a Ramakrishna Mission School or Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya (VKV) for the benefit of Bugun community students.

SVCLMC advisor Sang Norbu Sarai emphasized that the CIHCS should carry out the terms and conditions that was initially agreed between the Buddhist Culture Preservation Society (BCPS), Bomdila and SVCLMC, Singchung while setting up the CIHCS at Dahung before its taking over by the union ministry. He said, the SVCLMC had

never asked the CIHCS to shift to some other place nor had it urged for compensation.

The compensation was an offer from the CIHCS at a later stage which "even now is not being insisted upon by the SVCLMC", he added.

Meanwhile, the CIHCS director apprised everybody of the letter of the ministry in which it had communicated to the state chief secretary regarding its decision to provide Rs 5.97 crore as land compensation.

The director shared his vision of developing the CIHCS into a Deemed-to-be-University in future, with provisions for enrolling around 4,000 students and creating around 400 jobs of various categories.

However, he noted that such a vision would materialize only if the land issue is resolved once and for all, claiming that the only way of resolving the issue was acceptance of land compensation as decided by the ministry, the report added.

Brus in Mizoram seek equal package



AIZAWL, MAR 17 (PTI):

A body representing over 1,900 repatriated Bru families met governor PS Sreedharan Pillai, demanding a rehabilitation package equal to that offered to those members of the community who stayed back in Tripura.

The Equal Package Demand Committee (EPDC), the body representing the repatriated Bru families, sought the governor's intervention on the matter, urging him to take up the matter with the Union Home Ministry, its chairman Elvis Chorkhy said.

More than 1,900 Bru families returned to Mizoram from Tripura during the formal repatriation exercises conducted by the Centre and the Mizoram government between 2010 and 2018, he said.

"The Bru families returned following assurances that the Centre will take care of their all-round development," Chorkhy said, claiming that Rs 80,000 in cash

and free ration for a year were given to these families. However, with the quadripartite agreement among the Centre, Mizoram and Tripura governments and the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBD-PF), the quantum of the rehabilitation package for those settling in Tripura was increased to Rs 6.7 lakh, apart from free ration for two years, he said.

"This created a huge gap between the repatriated families and those who will permanently live in Tripura," Chorkhy said.

He said the committee has made several appeals to the Centre for an equal package but to no avail.

The governor has assured them to take up the matter with the Union Home Ministry, according to Chorkhy.

Thousands of Brus fled Mizoram and migrated to Tripura, following ethnic tensions triggered by the murder of a Mizo forest guard in 1997. The Centre and the Mizoram and Tripura governments

made at least nine attempts to repatriate them between 2009 and 2019, yielding minimum results.

On December 16, 2019, a four-party agreement was signed to end the more than a two-decade-old imbroglio on Bru repatriation.

According to the agreement, over 35,000 Bru families, who failed to return before November 30, will settle permanently in Tripura.

The agreement also said that the Centre would provide rehabilitation to the tune of Rs 4 lakh each to the Bru families and land for constructing house. The families will also be provided housing assistance of Rs 1 lakh each, apart from Rs 5,000 and free ration every month for two years.

The Tripura government will conduct identification of the Bru refugees and all the relief camps will be closed down after the completion of resettlement, the agreement said.

Arunachal stops issuing ILPs amid Covid-19 scare

ITANAGAR, MAR 17 (PTI): The Arunachal Pradesh government on Tuesday stopped issuing temporary and provisional Inner Line Permit (ILP) as part of its measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Commissioner (home, political and border affairs), Kaling Tayeng, in a directive, asked officials to temporarily suspend the issuance of ILPs till further orders.

He, however, clarified that the process for renewal of existing ILPs will continue.

ILP is a mandatory official document issued by the government allowing inward travel of domestic visitors.

Last week, the government had stopped issuing Protected Area

Permit to check entry of foreign tourists.

On Monday, it announced the closure of all educational institutes, cinema halls and weekly markets till April 5.

Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, however, clarified that board exams would be held as per schedule.

Kumar also directed shopping malls to disinfect their stores and food courts from time to time.

He asked people to avoid mass gatherings, sporting events and public meetings, while directing all deputy commissioners and superintendents of police to ensure strict compliance of the order.

Arunachal Pradesh has not registered any novel coronavirus case so far.

Left, Cong walk out of assembly after demand for Mamata statement on coronavirus denied



KOLKATA, MAR 17 (PTI): The opposition Left Front and Congress on Tuesday staged a walk-out from the West Bengal Assembly, after the speaker turned down their demand for a statement from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the steps taken by her government to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

Disgruntled lawmakers of the Congress and

the Left Front walked out of the assembly shortly after the Question Hour, as Speaker Biman Banerjee did not heed to their call for a statement from the CM. "Whenever we demand a statement from the state government regarding any problem, it is turned down...", Left Front Legislative Party leader Sujan Chakraborty said.

"We have been denied our democratic

rights inside the House," Leader of Opposition Abdul Mannan said.

The state's Parliamentary Affairs Minister Partha Chatterjee said opposition parties should stop politicising each and every matter.

"Coronavirus has been declared as pandemic. We should now keep aside political differences and fight unitedly," Chatterjee said.

Kolkata Metro sees dip in footfall amid Covid-19 scare

KOLKATA, MAR 17 (PTI): Metro Railway is witnessing a fall in passenger count, amid the restrictions imposed in the state in the wake of Covid-19 scare, its spokesperson said on Tuesday.

On Monday, passenger footfall stood at 5.32 lakh against an average of 6.2 to 6.5 lakh on any weekday, she said.

With schools, colleges and universities shut, and cinema halls and tourist places closed, passenger count of Kolkata Metro, the city's

transport lifeline, has dwindled.

As a precautionary measure, intensive cleaning and sanitisation of rakes are being carried out regularly, Metro spokesperson Indrani Banerjee said.

Medical officers of Metro Railway are also generating awareness on the disease, Banerjee said.

"A fever clinic and an isolation ward have been opened at Tapan Sinha Memorial Hospital to tackle any coronavirus-related emergency," she said.

Passenger count in buses, too, has gone down over the last few days, West Bengal Transport Secretary N S Nigam said.

"Monday being the first working day of the week, there is usually a huge rush.... Number of commuters, however, was found to have dipped yesterday," he said.

Taxis and cab aggregators have also reported a decline in demand in the city, with fewer vehicles plying on the streets as several office-goers worked from home.

How a Resilient Public Health System Will Save Us from the Next Pandemic

DR RAJIV KUMAR, URVASHI PRASAD

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is now officially a pandemic according to the World Health Organisation. India currently has around 110 confirmed cases, 17 of whom are foreign nationals. The government has been quick to adopt a multipronged strategy, including issuance of clear guidelines to ministries for coordinated action, imposition of travel restrictions, suspension of visas, large-scale screening and contact tracing as well as regular dissemination of information to the public. Mounting a swift response involving all stakeholders in a country of India's scale and diversity is undoubtedly commendable. With these measures in place we can be confident that India will be able to successfully limit the spread of the disease. Moreover, in recognition of the fact that controlling a pandemic necessitates regional and global cooperation, the Prime Minister's leadership in bringing together SAARC countries for chalking out a strong common strategy against COVID-19 is laudable.

Having said that, COVID-19 is not the first pandemic we have seen and will most certainly not be the last either. In fact, in an increasingly globalised and rapidly urbanising world, the risk of such outbreaks spreading quickly to all parts of the world is only becoming higher. The need of the hour is to build a resilient public health system that can prevent diseases, promote good health and respond quickly to min-



imise loss of life when faced with an outbreak of this magnitude.

During the last few years, the Indian government has taken several steps to strengthen the public health system through the implementation of programmes like Mission Indradhanush and the National AYUSH Mission. Flagship schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan and Swachh Bharat Mission also impact human health as they help to prevent diseases and boost immunity.

So, what else is needed to build a strong and adaptive public health system across India?

Firstly, we need to increase spending on public health. The Central Government is committed to enhancing funding for health to at least 2.5 per cent of GDP as stated in the National Health Policy

(NHP), 2017. States too have a critical role to play in meeting the NHP target of increasing health expenditure to more than 8% of their budget by 2020. After all, as highlighted by National Health Accounts data for 2015-16, of total government health expenditure in India, the share of the Union government is 35.6% while that of state governments is 64.4%. Moreover, in addition to increasing overall public spending on health, we need to ensure that a large share of the funds goes towards preventative care.

Second, as outlined in NITI Aayog's 'Strategy for New India @ 75' a focal point for public health is required at the central level with state counterparts. Such an agency would be responsible for performing the functions of disease surveillance and response, monitoring health status,

informing and educating the public as well as providing evidence for public health action. In order to be effective, the agency would also need to be legally empowered for enforcing compliance from other public authorities and citizens. This is crucial because several factors require inter-sectoral action to achieve a measurable impact on population health. The legislation, possibly in the form of a Public Health Act, would clearly confer specific powers on the agency for taking action to promote public health, especially in situations of "public health nuisances". For instance, medical facilities that dispose potentially harmful waste inappropriately need to be held accountable as do residential colonies that allow water to stagnate, thus providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The impact of such actions, after all, is not just on one or two individuals, but in fact puts the health and lives of several individuals at risk.

Third, it is essential to institute a public health cadre in states, with officials trained in disciplines such as epidemiology, biostatistics, demography and social and behavioural sciences. To a great extent, such a cadre can be created by training existing personnel in the necessary skill sets, thus requiring only minimal additional staff. NITI Aayog has consulted a wide range of stakeholders for developing a model public health cadre that draws upon various best practices. The good news is that the 13th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW) has resolved to establish a public health

and management cadre in states by 2022. CCHFW is an apex advisory body which recommends broad lines of policy action in health-related areas.

Fourth, we need to train front-line workers like Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and Multi-Purpose Workers (MPWs) for promoting healthy behaviours among people and identifying early signs of a disease outbreak in communities. Given the inherent information asymmetry in health and the fact that we live in world where misinformation can spread rapidly, appropriate channels are necessary for ensuring that people are aware of diseases, their symptoms as well as mechanisms for prevention and treatment. The National Medical Commission Act, 2019 includes enabling provisions for creating a cadre of mid-level service providers who can also play a vital role in screening people for early signs of illness in rural areas.

Lastly, efforts must be made to reinforce disease surveillance and response. This requires the list of notifiable diseases to be expanded along with steps for integrating health facilities in the private sector in disease reporting as part of regular surveillance systems. Infrastructure for surveillance, including adequate numbers of suitably equipped laboratories for testing samples, also needs to be strengthened.

Dr Rajiv Kumar is Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. Urvashi Prasad is Public Policy Specialist, NITI Aayog. View expressed are personal.

Tom Brady to leave New England Patriots after 20 years and six NFL titles

TOM LUTZ
NEW YORK, 17 MAR [THEGUARDIAN]: One of the most successful partnerships in the history of US sports has come to an end with the news that Tom Brady is leaving the New England Patriots.

In a series of statements on social media on Tuesday, Brady confirmed he is leaving the team after 20 seasons and a record six Super Bowl titles. “Although my football journey will take place elsewhere, I appreciate everything that we have achieved and am grateful for our incredible TEAM accomplishments,” he wrote.

He also paid tribute to “all of the incredible fans and Patriots supporters.” He added that it has “truly been the happiest two decades I could have envisioned in my life, and I have nothing but love and gratitude for my time in New England.”

Brady will turn 43 this summer but has said in the past he intends to continue playing into his mid-40s and possibly beyond. He officially becomes a free agent on Wednesday but



can reach an agreement with a team on Tuesday. There will be no shortage of teams willing to recruit him, even if he is no longer at the peak of his considerable powers. Brady did not reveal his next destination but possibilities include the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the Las Vegas Raiders or a return

to his native California with the Los Angeles Chargers. Brady was barely on teams’ radars when he came out of college in 2000. Every team in the league passed on him several times in that year’s draft before the Patriots selected him with the 199th pick. He began his career in New England as their fourth-choice

quarterback – and may have stayed as a back-up for some time – if not for an injury to the team’s starter, Drew Bledsoe, in 2001. He subsequently led them to the Super Bowl that season and never looked back. His poise, accuracy and infamous worth ethic, along with his partnership with head coach

Bill Belichick, would lead to another five titles, a record the Patriots share with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

His last title came in February 2019 when he was 41, an age when most players are long retired. However, his final season with the Patriots was disappointing by Brady’s high standards. New England were shocked in the playoffs by the unfancied Tennessee Titans, and Brady threw 24 touchdowns, his lowest total in a full season since 2006. While some wondered if he was starting to decline, others pointed out that he was not helped by a weakened supporting cast.

The Patriots did not record a losing season while Brady was their starting quarterback. He was named the league’s most valuable player three times, to the Pro Bowl 14 times and is a certainty for the hall of fame when he retires. His 74,571 passing yards are second all-time among NFL quarterbacks and his 541 passing touchdowns are also second on the all-time list.

Bruno Fernandes uses Premier League award as spur to keep improving

LONDON, 17 MAR [AFP]: Bruno Fernandes has been named the Premier League player of the month for February following an exceptional start to life at Manchester United.

Summer interest turned into a prolonged January pursuit for the 25-year-old Portugal midfielder, with United getting their man towards the end of the window in a deal worth an initial €55m (£46.6m).

Fernandes who has hit the ground running since moving from Sporting Lisbon, also winning the PFA’s fan award for top-flight players and the club’s individual honour for February.

“Since I was a kid it was a dream to play for Man Utd, and to be there at Old Trafford is the biggest dream of my career,” Fernandes said. “When you come to a new club you always want to score and the first goal is spe-

cial. It doesn’t matter how the goal is scored, but important is the goal’s worth. I’m happy with my start but from now I need to give more, to be better.”

It is understood Fernandes and his teammates are to return to training on Tuesday. Precautions are in place at United’s training complex because of the coronavirus pandemic but the training ground remains open.

United won 5-0 against LASK on Thursday in a Europa League last-16 first leg played behind closed doors because of Covid-19 restrictions put in place by the Austrian government.

The club are waiting on Uefa’s meeting on Tuesday to find out the implications of the disease’s outbreak on the schedule, while Premier League fixtures have been suspended until early April.

Euro 2020 postponed for a year by Uefa because of coronavirus crisis

DAVID CONN
PARIS, 17 MAR [THEGUARDIAN]: This summer’s European Championship has been postponed until the summer of 2021, Uefa has decided, as it contemplates the unprecedented disruption caused by the coronavirus.

European football’s governing body held its scheduled conference call with Europe’s 55 national football associations at 12pm UK time, and 17 minutes later the Norwegian FA was the first to tweet the news that the tournament has been postponed until next year.

“Uefa has decided that the European Championship is postponed to 2021,” it reported. “It will be played from 11 June to 11 July next year. More information coming.”

The Swedish FA’s president, Karl-Erik Nilsson, confirmed the same in a message to Reuters.

The tournament was due to have been held this year from 12 June to 12 July in host cities of 12 countries right across Europe, including London, Glasgow and Dublin. Wembley was due to host seven matches at Euro 2020, including the semi-finals and the final.

The postponement was widely expected after national leagues and Uefa’s own Champions League and Europa League club competitions were suspended last week and Europe became locked down by severe travel and social restrictions.

It emerged on Tuesday that Uefa last week cancelled its hotel bookings in Copenhagen, one of the host cities. The CPH Hotel told Reuters that Uefa had booked 80 of its 102 rooms but cancelled them a little over a week ago. The Marienlyst Strandhotel told Reuters that Uefa had cancelled rooms booked on behalf of the Denmark team, who are usually based there.

The postponement of the Euros frees a month this summer to try to finish club competitions, which the Premier League, EFL and all European leagues hope to do, but this remains highly uncertain as it is impossible to know when normal life, including football and other sports, can resume.

The European Club Association, European Leagues and the international players’ union were involved in separate video-conference calls with Uefa after the first one with the 55 FAs, to discuss the possibilities for domestic competitions, and the Champions and Europa Leagues.

Assuming that the Euros can go ahead on the new pencilled-in dates next year, Uefa will have logistical practicalities to work out in relation to the women’s European Championship, which scheduled for 7 July to 1 August in England next year. The Nations League final and Under-21 Euros in Hungary and Slovenia are also scheduled for next summer.

Bundesliga attempts to cover all bases in ever-changing crisis landscape

ANDY BRASSELL
BERLIN, 17 MAR [THEGUARDIAN]: Firstly, many eyes across European football were rolled as the Italian football authorities struggled to make coherent decisions in a post-coronavirus world. Now, everybody is getting into the same boat. The Bundesliga, so in tune with the value of factoring in fans and of outside engagement to the product, is discovering what a scramble it is to find clarity and a united front in the eye of the storm.

“Now there is a point,” wrote Eintracht Frankfurt’s sporting director Fredi Bobic in a guest column in Kicker, “where we have to assume responsibility in management positions without precise facts and make decisions that concern the health of all of our employees, and indeed everyone involved in football. The worst part is a decision made out of clear conviction in the morning is already useless by the afternoon.”

Bobic himself went through that last week, with his club’s pledge on Wednesday that the following day’s Europa League tie with Basel would be played to an expected full house, before making a U-turn later the same day.

Like most European leagues, the Bundesliga has been reacting on the fly to the coronavirus crisis, for there is simply no other option. In the middle of last week there was no nationally unified approach across German football. On Tuesday, last Saturday’s scheduled Revierderby between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke had already been arranged to be played behind closed doors (no small decision given the dimensions of the occasion and a potential €5m loss of matchday revenue). Union Berlin released a statement that said after consultation with Berlin’s municipal authorities, their game against Bayern Munich would go ahead with fans present.

By Wednesday that advice had evolved, forcing Union to change tack and announce the game would be behind closed doors. Later in the same day was a historical first for the Bundesliga, with its first-ever game behind closed doors (Geisterspielen, ghost games, as they’re referred to) - a Rhine derby between Borussia



Mönchengladbach and Köln.

As Gladbach squeezed to a 2-1 win there were all the appropriate pantomimes. Breel Embolo celebrated his opening goal by mock-cupping his ears. At full-time, having been stymied in their chase for an equaliser, Mark Uth dropped to his haunches and Jorge Meré pulled his shirt over his face in frustration. None of it felt right. Rather than explain contested decisions, referee Deniz Aytekin lamented an evening that was anything but an occasion to the Sky cameras. “It’s hard to put into words,” he said. “Something is missing, and it’s [a] massive [loss]. The passion isn’t there. It’s tough to concentrate.”

It was at that point that alarm bells started ringing for the authorities, too. With a group of Gladbach ultras estimated in excess of 2,000 turning up outside Borussia-Park, despite the stadium being out of town, and demanding to celebrate with their players at full-time, it was starting to become clear that limiting public gatherings would require games to be postponed, rather than to be just played without fans, in scenes reflective of those in the Champions League at Valencia and Paris.

Further upstairs, it seemed to be taking a little longer for the message to get through. As late as Friday afternoon, the Deutsche Fußball Liga’s official plan was to play all of Matchday 26 – up to and including Monday night’s match between Werder Bremen and Bayer Leverkusen – behind

closed doors before starting a hiatus afterwards. This was despite the unease of many of the main protagonists, including Bayern’s Thiago Alcântara, who had made clear his exasperation in a mid-morning tweet. “This is crazy,” wrote the midfielder. “Please stop fooling around and land on reality.”

As in other territories, the big decisions were essentially taken out of the hands of the authorities. Paderborn coach Steffen Baumgart started showing symptoms of possible infection ahead of his team’s Friday night game at Fortuna Düsseldorf, while local authorities in Bremen had become deeply concerned about the possibility of fans gathering outside the Weserstadion – à la Gladbach, but possibly in even greater numbers – for Werder’s game with Leverkusen.

Certainly Karl-Heinz Rummenigge’s declarations in the Bayern press conference to preview the Union game, alongside Hansi Flick, didn’t age well either. “At the end of the day, it’s about finances and the big outstanding TV payments to the clubs,” he had said. “I think it’s right that, under the current conditions, this weekend’s games take place.” Equally Dortmund’s Hans-Joachim Watzke upset some by admitting on Sunday’s Sportschau that he would have been in favour of the games going ahead to limit losses.

Yet when Uli Hoeness, who described football’s scheduling dilemmas as “the smallest problem, when doctors in

Italy have to make decisions about life and death because they cannot assign a ventilator to every patient,” is the voice of calm and compassion, you know these are unusual times. Bobic wrote in his Kicker column about a series of complex, “sometimes very contradictory discussions” in the lead-up to the plug eventually being pulled, with the usual diverse points of view and priorities coming up against a series of unprecedented immovables.

As various ways forward were floated, including the possibility of a 22-team top-flight with four promoted teams and no relegation, the constant was finding a way of softening the forthcoming financial blows. It may be considered beyond vulgar given the global situation, but the administrators of the game have to deal with financial reality, and making sure there is a game (and clubs) to come back to. The last instalment of the season’s TV rights money – some €304 million - is due to the clubs of the country’s top divisions in May. Delay or withholding the payment of the €34 million due to Bayern, for example, would undoubtedly sting. The failure of clubs at the other end of the spectrum, like Sandhausen or Aue, to bank their dues of just over €2 million could have even more serious effects.

In the forthcoming days and weeks sides, attitudes and preconceptions must flex. Hoffenheim owner Dietmar Hopp, the target of continued disdain and defiance from fan groups

in recent weeks, has been nationally praised after his company CureVac stonewalled Donald Trump’s attempts to pay for exclusive rights to any eventual coronavirus vaccine. The anger of those supporters towards Hopp has always been entirely separate from the other facets of his business life – nobody has denied his extensive philanthropy and work for cancer patients – but this latest development does underline his status as one of the most complex characters in the German game.

As for the ultras, many groups have called for unity and, in some cases, put their campaigning skills to great use by fundraising for Italian emergency workers (see tweet below). Yet they too already have their view on the possible way forward. The cross-club fan alliance Unsere Kurve released a statement on Monday in opposition to further Geisterspielen. “It must not be that public life is shut down, but professional football continues to try to maintain a pseudo-reality by all means necessary,” it said.

German football has always been a breeding ground for healthy debate and while unity is important, so will be the right to continuing expressing a point of view. “Sport can again play an important role in society,” wrote Bobic.

“To provide variety across the country, to provide subjects that have nothing to do with the coronavirus.”

That is something not insignificant to hang on to.

Now you can whatsapp
Summit TIMES @
9832556698
9832080753

Tokyo 1940: The Games that became the 'Missing Olympics'

Fears are growing that this year's Olympics may be postponed or axed because of the coronavirus pandemic but Japan has been here before -- the cancelled summer Games of 1940 were also due to be hosted in Tokyo.

Japan's military aggression in Asia forced the annulment of what became known as the "Missing Olympics" after the Games were switched to Helsinki before finally being scrapped because of World War II.

Tokyo officials originally touted a bid for the 1940 Games as a way to show the city had recovered from the devastating 1923 earthquake, according to author David Goldblatt in his history of the Olympics entitled "The Games".

In much the same way, Japan has framed the 2020 Olympics as the "Recovery Games" -- a chance to show the country is back on its feet after the catastrophic 2011 triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown.

Tokyo's 1940 bid was spearheaded by Jigoro Kano, the founder of modern judo and first Japanese member of the International Olympic Committee, who stressed the importance of bringing the Games to Asia for the first time.

"I carry a grave resolve. The Olympics should naturally come to Japan. If they don't, the reason for this must be something unjust," said Kano in his plea to the IOC.

The Japanese had a special reason for wanting to celebrate 1940, as it coincided with the 2,600th year since the enthronement of the nation's legendary first emperor, Jimmu. Tokyo launched an official bid in 1932 and found themselves up against Rome and Helsinki.

Japan engaged in a fierce lobbying campaign that included pleading with Italy's fascist dictator Benito Mussolini to step aside in their favour.

"In the you-scratch-my-back kind of deal that has become the norm in international sports politics, Mussolini announced with unusual candour, 'We will waive our claim for 1940 in favour of Japan if Japan will support Italy's effort to get the XIIIth Olympiad for Rome in 1944,'" wrote Goldblatt. With just Tokyo and Helsinki left standing, the IOC plumped for the Japanese capital by 37 votes to 26.

- 'Cultural diplomacy' -

Before the bid had been tabled, Japan in 1931 invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria and two years later withdrew from the League of Nations -- the precursor to the United Nations -- after the body refused to sanction the occupation.

The Olympic bid was therefore also an attempt to shore up international diplomacy, according to Asato Ikeda, assistant professor at Fordham University, New York, who has written about the 1940 Games.

Asian markets swing after virus sparks Wall St collapse

Asian markets fluctuated Tuesday after Wall Street suffered its worst day in more than three decades with coronavirus panic sweeping the planet, though European equities enjoyed an early bounce.

While governments and central banks attempt to soothe markets with massive stimulus pledges and interest rate cuts, more countries are going into lockdown to prevent the outbreak's spread -- bringing the world economy juddering to a halt.

There is a broad consensus that the disease, which has wiped trillions off market valuations, will cause a global recession, with the airline industry among the first in the firing line, leading company heads to plead for billions of dollars in state help to prevent them going under.

"Drastic measures by the Federal Reserve and other central banks have failed to appease markets, with investors still running towards the exit door of risk assets as governments step up their radical measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak," said National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril.

The Philippines became the first country to shut down its stock market as the country goes into lockdown, and the bourse will be closed until further notice.

Sydney rose 5.8 percent, a day after crashing 9.7 percent in its worst day on record.

But after an early advance, the rest of Asia swung in and out of positive territory through the day.



Tokyo ended up 0.1 percent after a roller-coaster session, Hong Kong added 0.9 percent and Mumbai rose 0.7 percent, while Bangkok was slightly higher.

But Shanghai slipped 0.3 percent, while Jakarta sank more than four percent. Seoul, Taipei and Singapore were all down.

Wellington dipped despite New Zealand becoming the latest country to announce monetary support, unveiling a US\$7.3 billion package of measures.

That was followed later Tuesday by a 45 billion euro (\$50 billion) aid pledge by France for its businesses.

In early trade, London rose 2.9 percent and Frankfurt surged 4.5 percent, while in Paris, where the

market regulator banned short-selling on 92 stocks, the CAC 40 rallied four percent.

- 'Crying out' for help -

Wall Street indices collapsed Monday in their worst day since 1987, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq dropping about 12 percent and the Dow sinking nearly 13 percent. US futures rallied Tuesday.

"The message from markets is that as much as monetary stimulus is a welcome move, lowering the price of borrowing and increasing liquidity are not enough," added Catril.

"The required COVID-19 measures are hampering the global economy and with activity grinding to a halt, governments need to step in and provide support. Markets are

crying out for more fiscal backing."

Heads of the Group of Seven leading economies pledged to "do whatever it takes" to protect the economy, while US President Donald Trump acknowledged the world's largest economy "may be" headed into recession.

However, he added that the crisis should wash through the economy by August, after which there would be a "tremendous surge in the stock market". Oil prices edged up after Monday's collapse that saw Brent falling more than 12 percent to a four-year low, and WTI sliding below \$30 a barrel.

Adding to the weakness in crude markets is the price war between major producers Saudi Arabia and

Russia.

"Presumably, the market is getting supported by physical bargain hunters, but those storage facilities are rapidly filling," said AxiCorp global chief market strategist Stephen Innes.

But "if storage does fill, quashing that demand, oil prices are sure to collapse further," he said in a note.

"The global markets will then have to hope that the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Russia is resolved before we reach that point of no return."

IHS Markit said rising production and slumping demand could result in the "most extreme global oil supply surplus ever recorded".

- Key figures around 0820 GMT - Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 0.1 percent at 17,011.53 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng: UP 0.9 percent at 23,263.73 (close)

Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.3 percent at 2,779.64 (close)

London - FTSE 100: UP 2.9 percent at 5,300.74

Dollar/yen: UP at 107.00 yen from 105.92 yen at 2130 GMT

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.1144 from \$1.1117

Pound/dollar: DOWN at \$1.2225 from \$1.2240

Euro/pound: UP at 91.22 pence from 91.10 pence

Brent North Sea crude: UP 3.3 percent at \$31.01 per barrel

West Texas Intermediate: UP 5.2 percent at \$30.20 per barrel

New York - Dow: DOWN 12.9 percent at 20,188.52 (close)

France lockdown as global virus panic spreads



France goes into a near-total shutdown Tuesday over the coronavirus, the latest country to impose draconian restrictions affecting the lives of tens of millions of people.

European leaders also plan to ban all non-essential travel into the continent on Tuesday in a bid to stem a pandemic that has upended society, battered markets and killed thousands around the world.

With French President Emmanuel Macron describing the battle against COVID-19 as a "war", governments around the world are scrambling to keep the public safe with measures rarely seen in peacetime, slamming borders shut and forcing citizens to stay home.

The crisis is infecting every sector of the economy, and global stocks have been on a rollercoaster ride, with Wall Street on Monday sinking more than 12 percent in the worst session since the crash of 1987.

Investors are still in panic mode, despite emergency interventions by central banks and governments to shore up confidence.

After the initial outbreak in a Chinese city in December, Europe has emerged as the epicentre of the virus with more deaths now recorded outside China than inside.

COVID-19 has now killed more than 7,000 people worldwide, including over 2,100 in Italy, the worst-hit country outside China.

More than 180,000 cases have been recorded in 145 countries.

The head of the World Health Organization called Monday for every suspected coronavirus case to be tested, something which would send the known tally of the sick sky-rocketing.

"You cannot fight a fire while blindfolded," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told journalists. "Test, test, test. Test every suspected case."

In a sombre address to the nation, Macron ordered the French to stay at home for 15 days from midday Tuesday, banning all non-essential trips or social contacts.

Most shops, restaurants and tourist sites in the world's most visited country are already shuttered.

About 100,000 police and gendarmes will be out on the streets to enforce the measures, after Macron warned violations would be punished.

"We are at war, a public health war certainly. We are fighting not against an army or another nation. But the enemy is there, invisible and elusive and on the move," he said.

With European nations already closing their borders, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she would ask the leaders of the bloc's Schengen visa-free border zone to stop all non-essential travel into the area.

"Concretely, all trips between non-European countries and EU countries will be suspended for 30 days," Macron said.

This follows a ban on inbound travel to the United States, whose President Donald Trump steered the nation for a fight against the virus that he warned could last months.

US health officials said the first human trial to evaluate a possible vaccine had begun, although it may be another year to 18 months before it becomes available.

French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi and American drugmaker Regeneron also said they had started clinical trials for a new drug, Kevzara,

an immuno-suppressor.

In another small glimmer of hope, China reported just one new domestic case on Tuesday -- but found 20 imported from abroad.

- 'Apocalyptic vibe' -

Trump said he was asking Americans to restrict gatherings to groups of fewer than 10 people -- as the streets of New York and the capital Washington stood largely deserted.

One customer at a French restaurant in Brooklyn said she felt the moves were unprecedented.

"I want strong leadership, but it's scary. I've never experienced anything like this before and I don't think my parents have, I don't think anyone has," Kelly McGee told AFP.

"There's something about being in this apocalyptic vibe and being with other people and experiencing it together that I think I still crave."

Trump acknowledged the United States "may be" heading into a recession due to the virus, as G7 leaders vowed to coordinate their response to the virus and "do whatever it takes, using all policy tools" -- after a meeting held via videoconference.

Every sector from tourism to food to aviation is affected, as the global economy effectively goes into shutdown. German giant VW on Tuesday joined other European car makers in closing down plants and major world airlines have axed almost all flights temporarily, triggering pleas to help carriers survive.

Italy announced plans to renationalise national carrier Alitalia, while France said it was also ready to nationalise large companies if necessary.

There are growing doubts too over the European football championships set to take place in 12 countries this summer and the Olympics in Japan, as the virus shreds the sporting calendar.

Very few countries have been left untouched by the virus as it continues its relentless march across the globe, and a cascading number are taking increasingly drastic responses.

Britain called for an end to all "non-essential" contact and travel, while Switzerland declared a state of emergency.

Germany banned gatherings in churches, mosques and synagogues and said playgrounds and non-essential shops would close.

Tens of millions of people in Southeast Asia were ordered into effective home quarantines, with Malaysia and the Philippines announcing unprecedented lockdowns.

In India, the world's second-most populous country, where most schools and entertainment facilities have already shut down, the Taj Mahal was closed to visitors.

'Elderly hour' in Aussie stores as panic-buying continues

Australia's elderly were let in early to supermarkets on Tuesday but there were still scenes of coronavirus panic buying in some areas, with reports of empty shelves and large queues.

After rushes on groceries, the country's biggest supermarket chain opened exclusively for elderly and disabled shoppers for an hour in an attempt to let them purchase essentials like toilet paper -- which has repeatedly sold out and sparked several violent incidents.

But the move prompted long queues outside several stores in Sydney and Melbourne, with reports of shoppers leaving empty-handed.

"It's day one of our dedicated shopping hour and we know it wasn't perfect across all of our stores," Woolworths Supermarkets Managing Director Claire Peters said in a statement.

Supermarkets would learn from today and continue the early hour shopping through the week, Peters said.

Despite security guards blocking younger



shoppers from entering stores, unprecedented demand still led to many items disappearing. At Woolworth's Neutral Bay store in Sydney's north shopper sentiment about the move was mixed.

"It is important but I don't think it is the best way. The best way, I think must be delivery at home because you look at a 93-year-old coming shopping, it's better to do delivery," 71-year-old Irie Voico told AFP as he waited for the store to open.

Another customer, who didn't want to be identified, said he was worried about bringing all the elderly together in a group where coronavirus could easily spread.

But several welcomed the move, say-

ing the mood was good among those older shoppers turning out early to avoid chaotic scenes. "This morning was well managed, full marks to Woolworths. Everyone was well mannered in there," 75-year-old Max Hill said.

Robyn Swan, 73, said the mood at the store yesterday had been frantic when shelves were bare but today they had been restocked.

"I've got what I wanted. I'm trying not to do the frantic shopping but I can see it's easy to do but I live on my own so I don't need to panic like my children with their grandchildren," Swan said.

Australia has nearly 400 confirmed cases of coronavirus so far, with five fatalities.

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

Sikkim SCAN | CapitalTIMES | Neighbourhood WATCH | Sports & Specials | ElseWhere | EtcETERA

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

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK: For circulation details Contact: +91-9749997495, +91-9647102492 & for Advertisement booking at +91-9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI: Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads. B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, Ist. 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irshad_sil23@gmail.com

Phone: 03592-208698 +91-9832556698 +91-9832080753

www.summittimes.com

news@summittimes.com summittimes14@gmail.com advertise@summittimes.com

Address: Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road Near Diesel Power House (DPH) Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101



STUNNER SHADES! The actress, Vanessa Hudgens looks cool and casual spending time outside in Studio City, Calif.

Big Brother Germany contestants know nothing about coronavirus — and will find out on live TV

One might think that you'd have to be living under a rock to not know about the escalating coronavirus pandemic. But it turns out you just have to live in the Big Brother house.

The 14-person cast of Germany's newest season of Big Brother are unaware of the growing crisis and will be informed on live television on Tuesday night, according to several news organizations, including Radio Times and The Guardian. The cast has been living in isolation in a house in Cologne since Feb.

6, at which point the novel coronavirus was restricted to Wuhan and a few isolated cases around the world. Since beginning the show, they've had no updates from the outside world, apart from the addition of four housemates on March 6. Germany now has over 7,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19; 17 people have died there.

"Of course, the residents will be informed if there is reason to do so," the show's producers for German station Sat.1 initially told German paper Süddeutsche Zeitung. "Which information is given to the residents from outside is also decided in exchange with the

relatives." They also claimed "special hygiene measures" were being taken to protect the contestants. However, an uproar led producers to announce that the contestants will be told the news in a live special episode, now set to air Tuesday night before the show's regular

time slot at 7 p.m. Reportedly, the housemates will be able to ask questions about the state of the nation and receive video messages from relatives.

This is not the first time Big Brother producers have had to temporarily halt their social experiment to inform participants of an emergency. In 2001, the producers of the American version interrupted the show's second season to tell the final three contestants about 9/11.

Strangely, this turn of events was semi-predicted in Black Mirror creator Charlie Brooker's 2008 series Dead Set, which follows a group of Big Brother U.K. housemates in the wake of a zombie apocalypse, stranding the cast and crew inside the house and leaving them the last to know about the crisis. It was shot inside the actual U.K. Big Brother house and featured host Davina McCall.



Idris Elba Tests Positive For Coronavirus: 'I Didn't Have Any Symptoms'

Elba was showing no symptoms before testing positive. Luther actor Idris Elba said in a tweet Monday that he has tested positive for COVID-19 after being exposed to someone who tested positive for the virus last week.

"I have no symptoms so far but have been isolated since I found out about my possible exposure to the virus," Elba said in a video tweet today. "Stay home people and be pragmatic. I will keep you updated on how I'm doing."

The actor said he wasn't showing symptoms but was exposed to someone who had tested positive on Friday so he self-quarantined until he could get his results. Elba follows other celebs like Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson, and former Bond girl Olga Kurylenko, who have also tested positive. Elba lives in London, England.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Monday that Brits need to stop non-essential social contact and avoid clubs, pubs, theaters, and all unnecessary travel as the coronavirus outbreak accelerates, even telling its citizens over 70 or who have underlying health conditions to self-quarantine for four months. "It looks as though we are now approaching the fast growth part of the upward curve, and without drastic action cases could double every five or six days," Johnson said.

"Look, this is serious," Elba said, appearing next to his wife, Sabrina, in a video posted to social media (she has not

been tested but is "feeling ok"). "Now is the time to really think about social distancing, washing your hands. We live in a divided world right now – we can all feel it," he added. "It's been bullshit. But

mass spreading of the virus and people who are actually severely ill are being denied tests is horrifying. The fact that Idris Elba got one immediately with no symptoms is completely infuriating.



now is the time for solidarity, now is the time for thinking about each other."

Prime Minister Johnson also said anyone with symptoms of the coronavirus should isolate themselves along with their entire household for 14 days and should work from home if they are able. "We need people to start working from home where they possibly can," Johnson said.

As of today, almost 180,000 people globally have tested positive for the virus and 7074 have died as a result. As our country comes to terms with the delays in testing that will likely cause

"Beyond that, there are people out there showing no symptoms," Elba said. "Yeah, and it sucks."

Information about COVID-19 is rapidly changing, and Scary Mommy is committed to providing the most recent data in our coverage. With news being updated so frequently, some of the information in this story may have changed after publication. For this reason, we are encouraging readers to use online resources from local public health departments, the Centers for Disease Control, and the World Health Organization to remain as informed as possible.

Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively Donate \$1 Million For Coronavirus Relief, Give Out Hugh Jackman's Phone Number

Just a day after Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively announced their Mint cell phone company is giving free service to new and existing customers alike amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the celebrity power couple announced they are donating \$1 million to non-profit efforts in Canada to help those impacted by the illness. Reynolds announced the news through a post on his Instagram Monday afternoon, all while jokingly giving out Hugh Jackman's number.

"Covid-19 has brutally impacted older adults and low income families," Reynolds writes. "Blake & I are donating \$1 million to be split between FEEDING AMERICA and FOOD BANKS CANADA. If you can give, these orgs need our help."

The Deadpool star adds, "Take care of your bodies and hearts. Leave room for joy. call someone who's isolated and might need connection," before adding Jackman's fake number with a tear emoji.

Sunday evening Mint announced "all current and new customers" would receive free unlimited high-speed data add-ons.

"These last few days have thrown the world into an unprecedented moment of uncertainty where reliable communication is of the utmost importance," the statement reads. "As your communication provider, we feel it's necessary

to do something that could possibly help all of us navigate this tough time a little bit better. Starting 3-15-20 through 4-14-20, Mint Mobile will be providing all current and new customers with FREE unlimited high-speed data add-ons."

Monday afternoon, President Donald Trump and his coronavirus response team suggested any gatherings with 10 or more people should be postponed or limited. According to the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 tracker, 181,546 cases of the lethal respiratory infection have been diagnosed worldwide. Upwards of 7,126 deaths have resulted from the infection, including at least 50 within the United States.

Starting tomorrow, major metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles are shuttering most public gathering places such as movie theaters, concert halls, and the like. New York is limiting all restaurants and cafes to take-out and delivery orders only.

Did you know ComicBook.com has a podcast? That's right folks, ComicBook Nation is available every Wednesday and Friday bringing you the best breakdowns of the week's biggest news from Kofi Outlaw, Matt Aguilar, Janell Wheeler & the rest of the staff at the site. Catch the newest episode right here or subscribe on iTunes today!

Disney World Closes After Walt Disney's Granddaughter Rips Fireworks Crowds At Park



There's no better remedy for the coronavirus blues than standing shoulder-to-shoulder hundreds of people, right? Walt Disney's granddaughter took exception to a pair of photos posted Sunday on Twitter that showed crowds watching fireworks displays at the parks Granddad founded.

"Are you f*cking kidding me?" Abigail Disney tweeted in response:

Disney World in Orlando is closed as of Monday, but it and the company's other Orlando parks remained open over the weekend, despite its Anaheim sites shutting down a few days earlier.

Social media reacted to Abigail Disney Twitter-slam, generally ripping the company. But the photos were posted on the WDW New Today account, which notes that it is "not affiliated with the Walt Disney Co." Its tweet also doesn't note when either photo was taken. As of Monday

night, the company had not commented on the matter.

Abigail Disney has a history of disagreeing loudly and publicly with her grandpa's company. Last year, she labeled Bob Iger's compensation "insane" while addressing pay disparities for its employees.

She also has been an activist on that issue. Back in 2017, Disney wrote an op-ed for USA Today after Congress passed a sweeping tax overhaul, calling it a "huge handout." In a video posted on NowThis News, she said: "This bill will give me this tax cut while also killing health insurance for over 13 million people. It will let me pass over \$20 million to my children, tax-free. And all my friends with private jets? They get a tax cut too."

Disney said she was motivated to speak out against the bill because of the desire to advocate for the public good, above self-interest.

ARIES: Your mental agility is a gift, Aries. Use it to your advantage. What you are doing now is sabotaging the game by imagining unhealthy scenarios that may or may not play out. What you want to do instead is think of ways in which you can get ahead of the competition. Your operative words are 'swift action'. So don't waste your time weighing things over and over until you're utterly exhausted.

Tip: Think on your feet and take swift action.

TAURUS: Want to expand your business but can't figure out the best way forward? That's probably because your brain is working on overdrive. 'Less is more' is a philosophy that will support you at this time. So, declutter your schedule. Step away from what you are creating.

Tip: Honour the yin or non-doing aspects of creation.

GEMINI: It's ironic how they refer to the 'intuition' as the sixth sense and disregard the messages that come from a space deep within. What if this your primary sense, Gemini? A medium through which the mys-

terious forces above communicate with us on a daily basis?

Tip: Be aware of what Spirit is revealing to you in this moment.

CANCER: If you have a roof over your head, food on your plate, and a handful of people who love you for who you are, you are blessed, Cancer. Often, we take the small things for granted, but they're the ones that make our lives worth living. Give thanks for everything in your life, no matter how big or small. This will align you with the energy of abundance and open the door for blessings to pour in.

Tip: Gratitude is the secret to aligning yourself with abundance.

LEO: While we all desire happiness, the subject brings a certain amount of insecurity with it. Could your upbringing be the reason for the storm brewing within? Have you been raised to believe that life is synonymous with suffering and that we experience joy in fleeting moments? It's time to let go of the negating belief and embrace joy, playfulness, and happiness as your natural state of being.

Tip: Being happy is a sign that you're on the

right track.

VIRGO: You may love them to Venus and back, but you will never agree on everything, and that's just how the Universe works. So don't feel the need to play by others' rules or hide your truth for the fear of being rejected. This situation requires you to be exactly who you are. So bring your most authentic self to the table and hold space for the conversation you have been resisting.

Tip: A deep dive into your subconscious will help you understand why you are making the choices you are.

LIBRA: It's amazing how we often disregard what our intuition is telling us while trying to assess situations through the lens of logic. Not everything can be explained rationally, Libra. Be aware of what Spirit is communicating to you by way of dreams, symbols, and visions. The conversations you overhear at the grocery store or the book you chance upon while reorganising your shelf, all have a message.

Tip: Be aware of the messages coming through from the unseen world.

SCORPIO: Aren't you tired of giving into

the constant pressure? Exhausted by the very idea of doing things by the book? Throw that rule book out the window, along with the 'grand plan' you've been so rigid about. This is a time to focus on your subconscious, identify the patterns that have been motivating you, and hit the reset button. You are rising from the ashes, Scorpio. Honour the process of rebirthing.

Tip: Let go of the old aspects of you and allow yourself to be reborn.

SAGITTARIUS: Not all who wander are lost, Sagittarius. Maybe they're in the mood to discover newer aspects of themselves. Maybe they're taking a detour. Don't give yourself too much grief about not following 'the plan'. You are exactly where you need to be and you are progressing at the right pace. Breathe into your fears.

Tip: The divine plan will reveal itself.

CAPRICORN: There is enough evidence out there to prove that worrying has a detrimental effect on our immune systems, thereby making us more vulnerable to even the most common of diseases. In other words,

fear weakens us, both emotionally and physically. Could you be succumbing to the collective energy of panic around the state of affairs right now? Capricorn, this is not a time to let your vibration drop. Take precautionary measures but also draw energetic boundaries around you. Staying protected will get you through these trying times.

Tip: Don't give into the fear.

AQUARIUS: The trouble is, we are always in a rush to fast forward the film. To get to a certain destination that we believe will make us crack the code to happiness. But what if the present is where the magic is at? Breathe and centre yourself, Aquarius. Allow things to progress at their own pace.

PISCES: Often, we get caught up in the illusion of the material world and lose touch with ourselves. Could this be you, Pisces? Spirit is urging you to detach from the drama and focus on inner work. Honour what your inner being is asking you to heal within you right now and in this moment. Simple self-care rituals will go a long way in assisting the process of renewal. Tip: Focus on the inner work.