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STRANDED NO MORE?
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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State Govt issues fresh guidelines and relaxations

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:**

The State Government issued fresh guidelines today announcing some relaxations from 04 May onwards. This comes after the Centre issued new guidelines on 01 May. The new relaxations include permission to carry out all construction activities, transport of all goods including hardware supplies, stand-alone neighbourhood

shops like car show-rooms, garages, tyre repair shops, barber shops, beauty parlors, spas, allowed to open from 10am-4pm, e-commerce & courier services allowed, and opening of government offices with skeletal staff. Here are some of the important points under the new guidelines. **TRANSPORT** Movement of authorized/identified trucks for essential commodi-

ties will continue as per earlier guidelines. Transport of other commodities, such as construction materials, will be allowed in trucks authorized/identified and with passes issued by the District Magistrates and in compliance with instructions given in previous guidelines. All goods vehicles registered outside the state will be allowed to enter the state provided they leave the state on

the same day and if they cannot the driver and helper will have to stay in the transit camps. Vehicles used by e-commerce operators will be allowed to ply with necessary permissions. **INTRA-STATE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS/VEHICLES** There has been no change in instructions for intra-state movement. It will be allowed for emergency services and essential goods after

getting necessary permissions. Movement of individuals for non-essential activities is strictly prohibited from 5pm-7am. **INTER-STATE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS/VEHICLES** Movement will only be allowed for bringing back Sikkimese stranded outside. **COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS** All licensed neigh-

bourhood shops which are stand-alone shops including vehicle show-rooms, auto garages and tyre repair shops, barber shops, spas, salons [except shops in shopping complexes and multi-brand and single-brand malls] shall remain open with 50% strength of workers. The shops will remain open from 10am-4pm. Courier services, cold storage, warehousing services and other links in the logistics chain will

be allowed. **GOVERNMENT OFFICES** Government offices will function with skeletal staff and deployment of staff may be done on rotational basis. **CONSTRUCTION** All construction activities will be allowed with strict adherence to social distancing norms and ensuring no movement of workers from outside the state.

Pakyong Airport offers its services for emergencies

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:**

Pakyong Green Field Airport has offered its services for emergencies to the state government in view of COVID-19 outbreak for any medical and other essential services.

Operational Director of Pakyong Green Field Airport, Ramtanu Shah said that the airport will lend its support for emergency services and to bring essential commodities within four hours subject to the weather condition and visibility as per the operation guidelines.

He informed that a letter to this effect was given to Principal Secretary, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dr J Jaykumar, last week.

The airport has not been in operation for the past year due to landing problems arising out of poor visibility.

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Govt begins process to bring home more than 6,000 stranded Sikkimese

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:**

The state government has begun the process to bringing back stranded students, patients and other people of Sikkim from different parts of the country.

The online registration system to process requests to return home was launched by Chief Minister PS Tamang [Go-lay] on Friday. Sikkimese people stranded outside the State can register online at www.covid19sikkim.org. Those who do not have smartphones can call helpline numbers to register. Sikkim Helpline numbers for stranded citizens are 03592-201145/202461 and 6295756071, 6 2 9 7 2 9 8 8 0 7, 6295728492 available from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Chief Secretary SC Gupta mentioned that the State Task Force has been

discussing the logistics of bringing people back.

He informed that as things stand, as per reports received from panchayats, legislators and other concerned agencies, around 6,424 people from Sikkim, which includes students and patients, stranded outside the State because of the lockdown are keen to return.

The CS stressed that the Aarogya Setu app was compulsory to complete the registration process.

He added that online registration was "compulsory" for every Sikkimese currently outside the State even if they did not want to return immediately.

Meanwhile, Secretary [Coordination for COVID-19], Home Department, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, has been appointed the Nodal Officer for the movement of stranded persons and a cell has been con-

stituted comprising of Transport Department Secretary, Raju Basnet, PCE-cum-General Manager of SNT, Karma Namgyal Bhutia and Under Secretary [coordination], Sunny Kharel, to facilitate the process.

SNT buses will be used to ferry the people from Siliguri to Sikkim and an open space at Matigara complex will be used for the transshipment.

The Chief Secretary informed that those returning will have to go through medical screening which will include thermal scanning, medical assessment, travel history etc at Rangpo and Melli check posts.

The returnees will have go in for compulsory quarantine and that medical teams will decide whether individuals need to quarantine at hospital, institutional and home.

He added that there was an option of paid quarantine at identified hotels.

Sikkim has prepared 5,000 beds for quarantine facilities and added that ASHA workers, Aanganwadi workers and PHC in-charges will ensure strict medical protocol in cases of home quarantine.

Mr Gupta mentioned that Education Department will take care of around 1,800 returning students and arrange quarantine in school and college hostels.

He informed that in the first batch, Sikkimese presently stranded in Siliguri will be brought home.

The Nodal Officer, in turn, urged all stranded people to register online and to download the Aarogya Setu app. He also advised the people to bring their own thermometers.

Drastic fall in Sikkim's pollution levels due to lockdown

AIR QUALITY IMPROVES FROM 'SATISFACTORY' TO 'GOOD'

GANGTOK, 02 MAY (IPR): The State Pollution Control Board Sikkim has been conducting ambient air quality monitoring under the National Ambient Air Monitoring Programme in eight stations in the state of Sikkim. As per the analysis

conducted, the ambient air quality in the state has been well within the permissible limits as per the provisions of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

The Ministry of Home Affairs' declared pan India lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak on 24/05/2020. However, the SPCB-Sikkim continued to conduct the air quality analysis in all the

8 stations. Air quality is categorized into various indices such as good, satisfactory, moderate, poor, very poor & severe.

As per the comparative analysis of the data generated for the average air quality index of March and April, 2020, the state is well within the permissible limits and improvement has been observed after the implementation

turn to pg02

Coins of different designs in same denomination remain in circulation at the same time as coins have a long life.
Accept them without hesitation



A Mountaineer's Lockdown Tale

**VIKRAM MALIK
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:**

In first week of March 2020, while the news of Coronavirus scare was still more of an urban myth in India than the grim reality it rapidly turned into, a group of 21 mountaineers and adventure enthusiasts were gearing up for the elite Search & Rescue course to be conducted by Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) at Darjeeling and in Sikkim Himalayas.

HMI is one of the select few mountaineering institutes under Ministry of Defense which conducts this advance mountaineering course.

We arrived at HMI Darjeeling on 5th March riding on trains, planes and high spirits without giving Covid 19 a second thought since Search & Rescue is a coveted course and is held only once a year at the close of winter season and once the mountain passes open. Also these courses are booked two years in



advance and no one in the mountaineering fraternity would dream of cancelling.

After the initial two weeks of River and Rock rescue exercise, the team headed for Chowrikhang at the base of Rathong glacier in Sikkim Himalayas. We started from the sleepy town of Yuku-sum at 1750 meters above sea level (which apart from being breathtakingly beautiful has another claim to fame, it's the home town of Bollywood

star Danny Deezongpa).

After 3 gruelling days of climbing with our heavy backpacks we reached the basecamp at Chowrikhang (ht. 4300 meters) fully acclimatized and raring to go.

The base camp was icy cold and bare and miles away from civilization in stark contrast to the pretty and mild weathered Darjeeling where flowers were in bloom. But that dreary campsite was a place any aspiring mountaineer would

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Ankit Rajput
Cricketer and RBI Employee

KL Rahul
Cricketer and RBI Employee

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CM chairs high level meeting to finalise strategy for immediate course of action on COVID-19

GANGTOK, 01 MAY (IPR): Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Go-lay] chaired a high level meeting to finalise the strategy on the immediate course of action on COVID-19 situation on 01 May, 2020.

The meeting had the presence of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, SLA, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Chairpersons and Advisors, Mayor and Deputy Mayor GMC, Chief Secretary, DGP, Zilla Panchayat Adhyakshas and Upadhyakshas, and senior officers of the State Administration.

Chief Secretary, SC Gupta in his opening address, presented a detailed overview of the present scenario with regard to COVID-19 mitigation in the State. He briefed about the medical preparedness in the State, especially in terms of the testing and screening facilities.

The Chief Secretary also apprised about the status of distribution of relief materials to genuine beneficiaries. He informed that the State Government has completed the distribution of relief materials.

He also informed about the initiatives taken by the Government to mitigate any hardships faced by labourers and daily wage workers, in the form of enhancement of daily wages etc.

The Chief Secretary stated that although in the coming days there could be slight relaxation to facilitate certain activities, people should continue to strictly abide by all safety norms.

The Chief Secretary said that as the State moves towards a new normal, there are numerous challenges to be addressed, the immediate being the facilitation of safe return of all the people of Sikkim stranded in other parts of the country. He referred to the latest guidelines from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and informed that a State Nodal Officer has been appointed to facilitate the return of the people of Sikkim.

The Chief Secretary briefed about the categorization of States

into Red, Organge and Green Zones as per the prevalence of COVID-19.

He also informed about the activities of the State Task Force within the State and the frequent correspondence with the Government of India.

The Chief Secretary presented a plan of action prepared by the State Task Force for approval of the Government.

He informed that the return of people of Sikkim will be done through online mode. He apprised that a registration portal is ready and will be made public later in the day.

He further informed about the mechanism of medical screening and testing at the border checkposts, based on which each individual will be sent for quarantine in coordination with the respective District Collectors. He further informed that there will be three categories of quarantine facilities, the recommendation for which will solely depend on the assessment and opinion of the medical team.

He informed that the Health Department has prepared a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the same.

The Chief Secretary further informed that small teams of front-line workers will be formed under the supervision of concerned area MLA and medical team to monitor the people put under quarantine.

He informed that the first priority will be given to return of people who are stranded in Siliguri, the process for which will start from 04 May, 2020. The registration process will however continue through the online process, he informed.

Concluding his address, the Chief Secretary reiterated that the slight relaxation being given to revive economic activity should not be perceived by people as the return of normalcy.

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang in his address thanked the frontline warriors, public repre-

sentatives, and the people of Sikkim for ensuring that the State is COVID-19 free. He said that this has been possible with the collaborative effort of everyone. He extended his warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Labour Day.

The Chief Minister attributed the successful mitigation of the situation in the country to the timely and effective decisions of the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

He said that the Government of Sikkim responded much before all other States and took some bold precautionary measures to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19.

Referring to the latest guidelines from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, the Chief Minister called for unity and coordination among all stakeholders to smoothly facilitate the return of people of Sikkim stranded outside the State.

The Chief Minister shared before the meeting the complete detail of funds received from the Government of India to tackle COVID-19 in the State, and details of the expenditure, thereof.

He informed that the State received a total fund of Rs. 9,64,00000/- (Rupees Nine Crore Sixty Four Lakhs) only for Covid-19 from the Government of India.

The Chief Minister also shared the total fund received under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, and the details of expenditure.

The Chief Minister appealed to the people of Sikkim to continue to strictly adhere to the safety guidelines even after the possible lifting of the lock-down. He said that the State Government will act extremely cautiously to ensure safe return of people. He informed that officers have been designated in Siliguri to facilitate the process of travel in a phased manner. He appealed to the people to invariably download Aarogya Setu Mobile Application for utmost safety. He

shared the total number of people who are actively using the App.

The Chief Minister suggested that a nodal officer could be appointed in each State to ensure proper coordination to help the stranded people.

A team can be formed comprising of one ASHA worker, one Anganwadi Worker, Police, and Ward Panchayat under the supervision of the concerned area MLA to monitor each person under home quarantine, and to coordinate with the medical team.

'Each one Help One' should be our motto to deal with the forthcoming situation, he added.

The Chief Minister made a special mention of the role of Information Technology to deal with the challenging situation during the period of lock-down. He extended his gratitude to the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers for their constant support and encouragement during the crisis.

The Chief Minister said that Covid-19 has taught us an important lesson that we can be self reliant and sufficient.

He assured that the State Government will form an Economic Revival Committee and Education Reform Committee in near future.

The Chief Minister shared that the State will soon have an independent BSNL Administrative Control Centre, which will facilitate internet connection upto the Gram Panchayat Level. He shared that Union Minister for Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad granted immediate approval to this proposal from the Chief Minister in the recent video conference. He said that this was a huge achievement for the State and will help promote e-governance and digital education. He informed that a General Manager will be posted. With this, the Government can carry out video conferencing even up to the gram panchayat level, he informed.

The Chief Minister announced a special financial incentive of

Rs. 5000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only) to Safai Karmacharis throughout the State in recognition of their extraordinary service during COVID-19 situation.

Concluding his address, the Chief Minister invited suggestions and feedback from everyone for a coordinated effort in near future. He acknowledged the efforts of everyone who have gone the extra mile to contain the situation.

Principal Secretary Health, K Shrinivasulu shared some insights into the present situation and the preparedness for any exigencies.

Director General-cum-Secretary Health, Dr Pempa T Bhutia shared in detail the proposed Standard Operating Procedure prepared by the Health Department for screening, testing and subsequent treatment and care during the process of return of people through the two border checkposts.

MLA, Burtuk Constituency, DR Thapa in his brief address thanked the Government and the Chief Minister for inviting MLAs from the opposition parties to this meeting and for seeking their opinion and feedback. He assured all the support and cooperation from the BJP party to deal with the situation in hand. He suggested that the State could consider extension of the lock-down for atleast two more weeks.

Zilla Adyaksha West, Devika Subba suggested that institutional quarantine is a better option for better compliance of all the safety protocol.

MLA, Sonam Venchungpa requested for an exception be made for Denzong Agriculture Cooperative Society to continue its supply of poultry and other meat items to the army in an uninterrupted manner. He also made some suggestions to enhance the IT sector.

MLA, Dzongu Constituency, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha suggested that all frontline workers should be adequately educated and made

aware of all safety norms while carrying out their duties.

MLA, Gangtok Constituency, YT Lepcha suggested that adequate measures be adopted for stocking of all essential commodities transported from outside the State.

Further, he suggested that a legal provision be made to penalise people who deceive the authorities and enter the State and flout the safety guidelines or enter the State through unfair means.

The Chief Minister in response to the suggestion made by the MLA, said that such defaulters will be dealt with under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act.

MLA, Barfung Constituency, TT Bhutia, suggested that all individuals should strictly be placed under institutional quarantine.

Mayor, GMC, Shakti Singh Choudhary, thanked the Chief Minister for granting financial assistance to the GMC to tackle the Covid-19 situation. He also thanked the Chief Minister for the financial grant of Rs. 5000/- to sa-faikarmacaris announced by the Chief Minister today.

The Chief Minister thanked all the MLAs and officers and said that their suggestions have been well taken.

After the interactive session, the online registration portal prepared by the Home Department in coordination with NIC Gangtok was formally launched by the Chief Minister.

A brief presentation on the portal was made by Under Secretary, Home Department (Covid-19 Coordination), Sunny Kharel.

Secretary, IPR Department, Namrata Thapa made a brief presentation about the Online Feedback Portal prepared by the Department, which was launched by the Chief Minister yesterday, the 30 Apr, 2020.

The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Special Secretary, Chief Minister's Office, Tenzing Kizom.

SKM's business cell President undertakes vegetable distribution drive

SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 02 MAY:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Business Cell president, Sajjan Agarwal, started a vegetable distribution drive to families in need at villages here, a press release informs.

Mr Agarwal informs that 85 quintals of vegetables were purchased from Siliguri for this free distribution drive. He has



also decided to bring one more truck of vegetables from Siliguri.

Maruti Transport Service is reported to have

provided trucks free of cost for the entire initiative.

They distribution drive began from Turung under Rateypani

Namthang constituency in South Sikkim today.

Members of Tanis-que and Scorpion Head, Kunal Singh supported the distribution.

Area MLA, Transport Minister, Sanjeet Kharel, also reached the distribution point to encourage the team and thanked Mr Agarwal and his team for the initiative.

Drastic fall in Sikkim's pollution levels due to lockdown

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of the lockdown. The restriction in vehicular movement in addition to closure of all construction activities is likely to have contributed to the current status.

Further, the SPCB-Sikkim in the Matter of O.A. 72/2020 Management of Biomedical Waste (BMW) generated due to COVID-19 is required to implement the directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). Accordingly, the Board has directed all the healthcare facilities that the Guidelines for handling, treatment & disposal of waste generated during treatment/diagnosis/quarantine of COVID-19 patients be strictly implemented to ensure that the outbreak does not spread due to improper disposal of contaminated waste generated from quarantine or isolation centres. The guidelines further specify establishment /

Average Air Quality Index.

Station	March 2020	April 2020
Deorali, Gangtok	60 (Satisfactory)	21 (Good)
Rangpo	62 (Satisfactory)	38 (Good)
Singtam	53 (Satisfactory)	32 (Good)
Namchi	34 (Good)	10 (Good)
Ravangla	26 (Good)	25 (Good)
Mangan	33 (Good)	13 (Good)
Chungthang	23 (Good)	10 (Good)
Pelling	27 (Good)	9 (Good)

Air Quality Index Impacts

0-50 (Good)	Minimal Impact
51 -100 (Satisfactory)	Minor Breathing discomfort to sensitive people
101-200 (Moderate)	Breathing discomfort to people with lung, heart disease, children and older adults
201-300 (Poor)	Breathing discomfort to people on prolonged exposure
301-400 (Very poor)	Respiratory illness to the people on prolonged exposure
>401	Respiratory effects on even healthy people

operation of COVID-19 sample collection & testing laboratories and the same should be informed to the SPCB/PCC of the state. The guidelines also

specify that the Pollution Control Boards are an essential health service for management of COVID-19 BMW and halting its rapid spread from

its use for proper disposal of the same in scientific manner to further prevent its reuse.

Cipla distributes relief materials

SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 02 MAY:

Cipla Foundation distributed relief materials to stranded migrant workers and families in need in the Rangpo and Majhitar area. 150 families living in Rangpo Bazar were provided with 10 kg rice, 1.5 kg pulses, 3 kg potato, 1.5 kg onion, edible oil 1 kg and similar relief packets were also provided to 50 families at Majhitar. Members of Civil Defence, Rangpo Taxi Drivers Association, Police personnel and local youth volunteered to make the initiative possible, a press release informs.

Pakyong Airport offers its services for emergencies

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Airport Authority India has also explored introducing Instrument Landing System (ILS) but it has been found on the basis of technical evaluation that ILS is not feasible and at present an alternate Required Navigation Performance-Authorization Required (RNP-AR) approach is being explored with the help of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Mr Shah said.

SPCC demands police action against BJP-Sikkim treasurer for CRH incident

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee today demanded that the State Government take immediate action on media reports of Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit treasurer, Kailash Agarwal, misbehaving

with a nurse at Central Referral Hospital.

An SPCC press release issued by Karma Tashi Bhutia informs that the incident took place on 21 March and was strongly criticized and condemned by the people on social media but no legal action has been taken by

the administration so far against Mr Agarwal.

The release also questions the silence of the BJP office-bearers on the matter and argues that the SKM government cannot ignore the incident just because it was in alliance with the BJP.

COVID-19: MHA reconstitutes empowered groups

NEW DELHI, MAY 2 (PTI):

The eleven empowered groups of officers created by the central government to implement COVID-19 containment measures in the country have been reconstituted, an official spokesperson said on Saturday.

The reconstitution of the groups, first created on March 29 under the

Disaster Management Act, was necessitated as some members either retired, appointed or were transferred from their earlier posting.

An order for reconstituting the empowered groups was issued by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Friday, the spokesperson said.

"Empowered groups

under Disaster Management Act, 2005, reconstituted for planning and ensuring implementation of COVID-19 activities," the spokesperson added.

Their terms and conditions will remain the same, according to the order.

WB govt asks pvt hospitals to resume normal services

KOLKATA, MAY 1 (PTI):

The West Bengal Health Department on Friday issued directives to private hospitals and healthcare facilities to resume normal services in a planned manner.

Ensuring the safety, protection and comfort of the medical staff engaged in such facilities needs highest priority, it said.

"There are reports

that patients in need of regular critical care related to blood transfusion, dialysis, chemotherapy, owl, obstetric care, institutional deliveries, immunisation are facing hardship due to private hospitals and healthcare facilities either remaining non-functional or turning away patients out of fear of contracting COVID-19.

"Some hospitals are

insisting on COVID-free certificates before allowing the patients in. This situation needs to be redressed immediately," the department said in a notification.

Failure to adhere to the directive shall make the health facilities concerned liable for penal action, it added.

Nepal-India cooperation needs to be expanded to meet future challenges: Ambassador Acharya

NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

India-Nepal cooperation has its roots deep in history and has a greater future with further expansion of ties between the government, citizens and private sector to meet future challenges, says Ambassador of Nepal in India, Nilambar Acharya.

In the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak, the lives and livelihoods have been adversely impacted on an unprecedented scale and given the global nature of the pandemic India and Nepal have also been severely impacted.

Under the aegis of its India-Nepal Centre (INC) and in association with Confeder-

ation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and Nepal SBI Bank Ltd (NSBL), the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized an interactive webinar, "Strategizing Economic Rebounding and Cooperation in India and Nepal," on 30 April with the Ambassador of Nepal in India as the chief guest.

The session witnessed the participation of over 120 delegates from the government, industry and media.

In his message, Mr Acharya said, "Today, every country and every individual is affected. At the same time, there is well-founded optimism and confidence that with the united effort of the whole world, of common people and political leaders, of scientific and med-

ical communities, of all those who are in the forefront of this fight, sooner than later, this extremely painful and disruptive period in human history will come to an end and we will enter the post-COVID-19 period of rebuilding new, normal life.

I pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in this struggle and will not be there to see rebuilding the post-COVID life. Post-COVID life and relations will have the imprint of the present period for a long time to come. Consequences will be felt in various aspects of human endeavor, including in international cooperation. One thing is clear: the world is one, the health of the world is indivisible. No progress can be made in isolation. There is the

herculean task before every country of reviving economic health, of restoring normal life, of organizing normal enhanced cooperation."

He added that leaderships of both the countries have, with the cooperation of their people, succeeded in checking the spread of Coronavirus to a large extent, "as a result, the situation in our countries is not as bad as it is in other countries, particularly the most developed countries in the west."

"Cooperation between our two countries remained exemplary throughout a difficult time. The measures we took were similar and near-simultaneous. Even when we closed our international border for passenger movement, we did our best in ensuring the uninterrupted flow of goods and supplies. Border customs were operational at best. During the lockdown, our people were stranded in a huge number on either side. We had the humanitarian understanding that these people would be taken care of

wherever they are. Each side is doing its best to ensure that the stranded people are provided food and shelter," he added.

Mr Acharya pointed out that the major challenges to meet for us were ensuring food security for the poorest, creating jobs, managing migration returns, ensuring scientific farming and increasing agricultural productivity, reopening tourism industry, developing agro-industry, normalizing disrupted industrial activity, restarting construction works and halted projects, improving infrastructure, preparing human resources, reviving cultural life.

"Post-pandemic Nepal will be seeking more investment from India to generate more growth and more employment. We will come up with more attractive incentives for foreign investment," he said, while outlining that cooperation between the "two countries, two governments, two peoples, two economies, private sectors of both countries need to be expanded to meet future challenges."



Fire fighters douse fire on electricity pole

GANGTOK, 02 MAY (IPR): Fireman, K.B Kalikotey and Lance Naik, Rajesh Chettri of Sikkim Fire and Emergency Service douse an electricity pole that had caught fire at Development Area, Gangtok, today.

The Quick Response Bike with Advanced Firefighting Technology (AFT) of the Sikkim Fire and Emergency Service

is available in case of any fire related emergencies, especially around areas and places that big fire trucks cannot access. Along with the rest of the frontline workers, the fire and emergency service have also been diligently doing their duties so that there is no inconvenience caused to the public during the lockdown.

NGO reaches relief to Martam Landfill rag-pickers

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 MAY:

Voyage NGO, a social enterprise working towards Zero Waste Himalaya, recently distributed ration and protective gear among

rag-pickers working at the Martam Landfill here at 32No. along NH10.

The NGO, it is informed, received distress calls from the area regarding the shutdown of livelihood of rag-pickers

owing to the halt of the scrap recycling industry in West Bengal.

"We decided to provide immediate relief in terms of ration and PPE upon identifying this issue," a press release in-

forms.

Leveraging its past experience of conducting free vaccination camps for rag-pickers, the NGO crowd-funded the initiative and provided ration to 50 rag-pickers on 25

and 28 April.

The beneficiaries were rag-pickers who aren't on the payroll of any government body or private institution and are dependant on scavenging waste from the landfill

and selling it to middlemen as scrap.

The relief packets included rice, pulses, potatoes, onion, oil, salt, chickpeas, soya bean, soap, gloves and masks.

Jeweller turns vegetable vendor to survive lockdown

JAIPUR, MAY 2 (PTI):

A jeweller for 25 years, Hukumchand Soni would not have imagined in his wildest dreams there would come a time when he will have to sell vegetables to earn a living. But then these are no ordinary times.

His shop-counter, which once remained covered with expensive ornaments, is now occupied by green vegetables and the jewellery scale

now weighs potatoes and onions.

The GP Jewellery Shop in Jaipur's Ram Nagar has undergone a radical transformation to adapt to the new set of customers who visit it daily.

It's been four days since I started selling vegetables. This is the only way I can survive (the lockdown), Soni told PTI.

I have no big savings, no big capital, so I started selling vegetables, Soni

added.

He said his jewellery shop was not big but enough to run his family.

After the lockdown began on March 25, all non-essential shops and services were ordered shut and Soni managed for a few weeks but now, he said, he has to find means within the available options to run his household.

We had been sitting at home for so many

days... Who will give us money and food? I used to make and sell small jewellery items like rings and used to repair damaged ornaments. I and other shopkeepers are certainly suffering daily losses, he said.

The only earning member in the family, Soni said it was not an easy decision to become a vegetable vendor.

At least I am earning now. It is better than sit-

ting at home and doing nothing. I have to pay the rent for the shop. I have to take care of my mother and the family of my younger brother who passed away, he said.

He said he goes to the local mandi every-day to get his supplies and transports them to his shop in a hired tempo-rickshaw. I only know that work is worship. That's it.

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A Mountaineer's Lockdown Tale

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taineer would give an arm and a leg to be in (that's a terrible metaphor I know) . Also despite all it's grim desolation it is picturesque and striking in a rugged way.

We were completely unaware of how quickly the things were changing down below , although truth to tell we were too much in the zone to really pay any attention to Covid-19 or any of its brethren virus at that time and would have continued regardless even if we had some inkling.

Meanwhile we were joined by another group of 60 trainees , young , enthusiastic lads from Basic Mountaineering Course. What followed was 15 days of training exercises which would leave us utterly drained and at the same time completely satisfied at the end of each day.

Our scheduled date to descend to Yuksum after our training was the 25th of March, the very day Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced nationwide lockdown, but of course we were blissfully ignorant of the fresh situation as there was no connectivity at the base camp. On the last day, after the exercises were over, we began our two days downward march to Yuksum.

As we approached Yuksum, tired and exhausted from hours of walking, we gradually became aware that we had arrived into a ghost town. The streets were empty and businesses were closed. As we approached our reporting area we were met by our Quarter Master Sub. Maj. Devi Singh, an accomplished mountaineer himself,



grim-faced and tense he greeted us tersely and directed us to a vacant camping ground. A few uniformed personnel from Sikkim police were watching us from a distance. We had been earlier directed by our instructors to cover our faces with bandanas and scarves but we had taken it lightly, more suggestion than command . But now we were told in no uncertain tones to cover our face and maintain a distance of one meter from each other. This was our first encounter with social distancing of which we would get so used to later. It was certainly not a welcome we were expecting.

Meantime, HMI administration had secured all permissions to trans-

port us from Sikkim to our institute in West Bengal, though a mere travel time of 5 hours but , as we realized later , that under the circumstances getting this movement permit it was a herculean task.

After a hurried lunch we were ushered into the waiting jeeps, four persons in one vehicle to ensure social distancing. Masked and somber , we arrived at HMI , Darjeeling at dusk.

The institute wore a new look, so different from how we had left it. The passageways had white circles painted precisely one meter apart, notices in bold black letters 'Isolation Room ' were pasted on our doors and our rooms bore a distinct

smell of chemicals like they had been freshly fumigated. Our beds were neatly made , bottles of hand sanitizers and room spray were prominently kept on table.

What the hell was going on we wondered!

We had heard someone say quarantine in hushed tone earlier and it had started to dawn on us now. This shit was real . It had caused mayhem while we were away and now we were in the middle of it . But if there was any panic , it was all on the inside and everyone remained outwardly calm. There was really no point in being otherwise .

HMI principal Group Captain

Jai Kishan briefed us on what had transpired in last two weeks and the new protocol that was in place. After a quick update on social distancing norms and hygiene practice we were allotted our rooms, four people in each room even though the rooms could accommodate many more, doors of our rooms also had our photographs and details pasted. Once settled, there was an instant flurry in the group, people calling their family and friends for news. Conversations mostly centered around lockdown, longing to be home and eating homecooked food etc.

It was an uneasy night and it was not until late next morning that new order of the civilization sank in.

With meticulousness of an army drill, the fresh set of rules and regulations were set at the institute. The daily timetable which earlier reflected our climbing and rescue schedule gave way to a new order.

Our fresh daily routine consisted of two hours of morning exercise, yoga and meditation followed by breakfast. Self hygiene and room cleaning came next. Daily medical check-up became an unwilling routine. Books were issued to those of us inclined to read to keep us engaged, others devised their own past time. Suddenly there was an eruption of budding photographers, poets and artists.

\HMI administration on the other hand had a daunting task of keeping 80 odd trainees plus staff, occupied, fed, healthy and sound in body and mind .

Rest of the mountaineering institutes, where courses start late, had cancelled all courses so if it was any consolation to us, we were the only batch for 2020 to complete the course successfully.

Meantime at the institute, HMI

principal took further initiative to provide the inhabitants of Darjeeling with stitched face masks. Something that was in acute shortage. Volunteers from amongst us assisted the HMI in-house tailors to cut and sew masks with a aim to stitch and provide 15000-20000 masks to the needy population. We were becoming a productive unit.

He had also launched a 21 days Big Boss style challenge on HMI website for everyone and anyone to upload their creative ideas/ pictures/ videos etc. It became a instant hit.

Meantime we all had cancelled our previously booked return home tickets and had re-booked for 15th April instead , in a bout of misplaced optimism as it turned out , because more news was coming in announcing the extension of lockdown. The S&R team is trained never to give up hope, so this time we were ready and took it with practiced stoicism .

Staying at HMI campus, in a way we all feel lucky, it is a beautiful place , the weather is lovely with free bed and board thrown in. Above all we have a daily routine to keep us occupied and sane.

The lockdown is still in place as I write, extended till 3rd may . We all are in good spirits ,safe and healthy. Luckily Darjeeling has not yet had even a single case of Covid 19.

Although every now and then we do think and feel for those who are stranded like us but in less salubrious circumstances and we realise how privileged we are. We all wish we could do something for them for we are after all a Search & Rescue team, but for now we can only pray for them and for this catastrophe to get over.

[The writer is with Search & Rescue, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute , Darjeeling]

Stranded No More?

Set adrift in uncertain times with no perceptible plan in place

Migrant workers stranded too many hundred kilometers away from home to make any trek or unaided journey home safe, have now been provided a window to return. In its typical blundering style, something refined with the demonetization fiasco, the Centre has unloaded new confusions into an already COVID-con-founded environment. Even as the long pages of bureaucratic said that stranded people will be bussed home, news arrived of a special train returning migrant workers housed in camps in Telangana to their home-state, Jharkhand. Even as this was happening, pilgrims from Punjab stranded in Maharashtra returned home in buses, and now confirmation has arrived that more than 200 of them have tested positive for COVID-19. Some of the bus-drivers have also returned with Novel Coronavirus in them in something that was expected when transporting a busload of people for hours through areas in the “red zone” and making occasional pitstops along the way – people do have to eat and relieve themselves. The impracticality of the whole exercise is confounding. Registering stranded people or those wishing to return home is one thing, safely pulling off such an exercise is whole different ballgame. Thousands of migrant workers are kept in “camps” or live in what can only be called “ghettos” in the cities, so arranging transport for them is not a very complicated process. Screening them, however, is a laborious process. Students stranded outside live dispersed so coordinating their evacuation will be even more complicated. And then there is the fact that not every migrant worker or student is located in the major cities and a sizeable number of them are stuck in smaller towns and villages. Now that hope has been brought to them in the form of this relaxation which allows stranded people to return home, how do the authorities plan to deliver? This is a monumental exercise, and has so many aspects that centralized planning cannot address all facets. Hopefully, the politicians and officials at the district and subdivision level will deliver better and ensure that everyone who wishes to return home can do so.

The logistics of such an exercise are challenging, but what is still very unclear is why this evacuation was even required. The Centre, before it relaxed lockdown rules to allow for people to return home, needs to admit to its many failures. Stranded tourists and pilgrims wanting to return home is understood and expected, but students wishing to return home suggests that no learning is happening despite all the apps and online options being bandied about. It also proves that social support that stranded students should have received as reassurance is missing. Migrant workers returning home is even more distressing because this phenomenon proves decades of mishandling. They live in quarters which are actually inhabitable and this is so not just because they are poor, but because the authorities and agencies which should look out for them have never really cared. They also need to get home because they have neither money nor rations to survive in the city. But wait, did we not hear grand claims that relief materials will be reached to them and that their employers will be told to continue paying their salaries? So, if they have provisions and also their wages, what is the desperation that is driving them to risk dangerous journeys to get home? Clearly, they received nothing, at least not adequate portions of most things required survive; and we are not even talking about dignity here.

Agencies which got very few things right in the month and half that they had to do some things necessary and humane are now expected to safely coordinate an exercise of a scale that has not been attempted before! Hopefully, there is a much better plan than is being broadcast. Who are we kidding? There is no such plan. What we have instead is an order which allows businesses to reopen and MSMEs to begin production even as the scared and disappointed workforce is taken home in what will definitely be unsafe and unkind arrangements. It is another matter that their home states will be stressed and their infrastructure overwhelmed when a much better option would have been to get some things right like keeping the stranded people safe and provided for and reassured. Had this been done, a stronger sense of social responsibility would have been established and the stalled economy could have begun working again the moment it was safe. As things stand, the labour force, on whose sweat everything works will be in no hurry to return after all that they have suffered and after finally having made it home...

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Malaria still kills 1,100 a day. It can't afford to lose resources to coronavirus

FREDROS OKUMU
theconversation.com

Today, another 1,100 people will die from malaria. The number will be repeated tomorrow, and the day after.

As a public health researcher, I embrace the idea that all lives have equal value. That our goal is much more to delay death than to stop death, as the latter is inevitable. Therefore as we mark this year's World Malaria Day, we must emphasise the need for stronger health systems and sustained investments to tackle malaria more aggressively.

This message needs to be conveyed even more urgently than usual amid the coronavirus pandemic. Given the situation in Europe, China and the US, it is clear that COVID-19 significantly disrupts health systems and economic growth. There is genuine fear that if it continues spreading in Africa, the impact may be worse given the continent's weaker health systems. One of the greatest concerns is the likely shift of attention and resources from control programmes of other infections, such as malaria.

Since 2000, Africa has benefited from some of the greatest efforts against malaria. This included a global coalition that has delivered more than 2 billion insecticide-treated nets to countries where malaria is endemic.

Given the extensive health gains, experts increasingly embraced the idea that malaria eradication, though ambitious, is both a feasible and a necessary goal. This remains the aim.

Recently, a strategic advisory panel set up by the World Health Organisation (WHO) five years ago released a report of a three-year study on benefits, future scenarios and feasibility of malaria elimination. Among its key recommendations is improved access to high-quality people-centred

health services, adequate financing and resourcing for malaria programmes as well as stronger engagement with communities.

Unfortunately, in the context of COVID-19, many of these recommendations will be unattainable in the short and medium term. Resources will be shifted to tackle the pandemic and community engagement initiatives will be reduced to a bare minimum to achieve social distancing. Moreover, access to health facilities may be reduced for people with other common diseases such as malaria.

This will mean there will be many more deaths from malaria and other diseases.

This has happened before. Evidence from Africa's fight against Ebola suggests that during outbreaks, many more people are indirectly killed by other diseases such as malaria, HIV and tuberculosis than by the outbreak itself.

African health authorities must therefore earnestly guard against such outcomes, and create a more rational response.

PROTECTING GAINS MADE AGAINST MALARIA

The past 20 years have seen major scientific developments. These have led to malaria deaths being cut from over 1 million to 405,000 a year.

This has been due in part to advances in treatments. Artemisinin-based treatments have replaced previous mono-therapies such as chloroquine. The new drugs have remained effective across Africa, which has largely been unaffected by treatment failures such as those observed in south-east Asia. About 4 million doses of child formulations of these treatments have been delivered, saving another 850,000 lives.

There have also been advances in prevention measures. For example, to mitigate the threat of insecticide resistance in malaria mosquitoes, scientists from private and public institutions have

created new types of insecticidal bed nets and new chemical formulations for spraying houses. And countries such as Tanzania are using innovative distribution approaches involving schools so that they can maintain high coverage and access to essential malaria commodities.

But African countries don't have resilient communities and strong health systems. This means that these past gains need to be protected vigorously.

NOT ALL FEVERS ARE COVID-19

Initial symptoms of malaria – such as a high fever – may be similar to those of influenza and other viral infections such as COVID-19.

This underscores the need for malaria programme managers, community leaders and health workers in affected communities to continue to emphasise prompt diagnosis, effective treatment and improved prevention. But health workers and communities should not be put at any risk. Therefore essential information should be provided about both malaria and COVID-19.

In addition, special efforts will need to be made to avert indirect deaths. For example during the Ebola outbreak, a mass drug rollout was put in place in Sierra Leone to prevent malaria deaths.

Similarly, countries will require innovative approaches to ensure continued distribution of insecticide treated nets. The WHO has already sent an advisory to malaria-endemic countries on how to tailor their control efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Without this, Africa will bear the combined consequences of both diseases.

Since zero malaria starts with each one of us, we must keep up the malaria fight through this cloud of COVID-19.

[the writer is Director of Science, Ifakara Health Institute]

Three ways people are reacting to coronavirus: 'accepting', 'suffering' and 'resisting'

BOBBY DUFFY & DANIEL ALLINGTON
theconversation.com

There remains near-universal backing for the coronavirus lockdown among the UK public. In our study, nine out of ten people support the measures, including seven out of ten who strongly support them. In 25 years of studying public opinion in the UK, I've hardly ever seen seven in ten Brits strongly support anything. The major exception is the nation's longstanding and deep love for the NHS – which points to one key reason behind the level of compliance.

But while support for the extraordinary measures appears incredibly uniform, their impact and our underlying attitudes are not, as a new segmentation analysis from King's College London shows.

Through statistical analysis, we've identified three main clusters within the population, which we've called the "Accepting", the "Suffering" and the "Resisting".

You can get an idea of the incredible variety of experiences of the lockdown among these different groups through their responses to just a few questions. For example, nearly all of the Suffering group say they have been more anxious or depressed since the measures were announced, compared with just 8% of the Accepting. A third of the Suffering say they think about coronavirus all the time, compared with 11% of the Accepting.

The Accepting, on the other hand, are much less likely to have experienced some of the key negative impacts identified in the survey. Only

12% have slept less or less well than before the lockdown, compared with an incredible 64% of the Suffering. The Resisting are particularly likely to have argued with their family or housemates, and both drank more alcohol than they normally would or used non-prescription drugs.



This Resisting group is a smaller proportion of the population than the other two groups, at 9% of UK adults, but this still means they make up around 5 million people. This is important, because they have very different views from the rest of the population on some key aspects of the crisis and very different behaviours.

Most notably, three in five of them think that "too much fuss" is being made about the risk of coronavirus. Reflecting this mindset that reactions have been overblown, a third of them expect life to return to normal within three months, which is three times as high as the rest of the UK public. Only a quarter of Resisters strongly support the current lockdown measures,

compared with three-quarters of the other two groups.

The Resisting group are also much more likely to believe in conspiracy theories and highly unlikely assessments of how far the virus has spread. For example, half of them believe that the virus was probably created in a lab, and 60% believe that most people in the UK have already had the virus without realising it.

These attitudes and beliefs are reflected in much less compliance with official guidance, with four in ten of the Resistor group saying they've met up with friends outside their home, compared with hardly anyone in the other two groups.

Other findings in the survey suggest that this Resisting group are also particularly fearful about the future impact of the lockdown on them personally. An incredible two-thirds of this group think that they're at least fairly likely to lose their job and face financial difficulties as a result of the lockdown. Their more rebellious response may, therefore, be related to a type of wishful thinking: some may be downplaying the risks and measures because they see them as a very direct threat to their own livelihood.

This Resistor group is also heavily concentrated in some sections of the population, with half of them being aged 16-24. At the other end of the spectrum, the Accepting are overwhelmingly in older groups, with 41% aged 55+.

The Suffering, in contrast, are spread across the age range, but are

significantly more likely to be women, while men make up the majority of the other two groups. This pattern is reflected across the survey more generally, with women much more likely to report higher stress levels, difficulty sleeping and concern about the impact of continuing lockdown measures.

There are also differences in political support, with the Accepting significantly more likely to be Conservative supporters, the Resisting more likely to support Labour, while the Suffering are most likely of the three groups to be Remain supporters. Each of these patterns will partly reflect the different age and gender profiles of party and Brexit support.

Public opinion has appeared incredibly unified on the way into these extraordinary measures. But it's vital to look beneath this overall sentiment. Understanding how different groups are reacting is crucial to both maintaining compliance and planning our best route out.

Given the very different experiences within the population already, it seems unlikely that we'll see the same unity on the long road to exiting as we had with the sudden lockdown. Instead, growing poles of opinion seem more likely. The government is not going to please everyone, or be able to point to a blindingly clear "public will" that justifies its response.

[Bobby Duffy is Professor of Public Policy and Director of the Policy Institute, King's College London; Daniel Allington is Senior Lecturer in Social and Cultural Artificial Intelligence, King's College London]

Bihar braces for massive influx of migrants; Nitish asks officials to pull up their socks

PATNA, MAY 2 (PTI): A massive influx of migrant workers is expected in Bihar in the near future and arrangements must be in place for their mandatory 21-day quarantine, medical tests, treatment and economic rehabilitation, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has said.

At a marathon meeting here on Friday which lasted for close to six hours, Kumar asked officials to pull up their socks as the migrants, students and pilgrims, said to be in millions, seem poised to return home in droves on board special trains run by the Centre.

Besides other modes of transport may be arranged upon mutual agreement between the states concerned to facilitate their return, he said.

"We must ensure that the quarantine centres have excellent food, shelter, sanitation and medical facilities.

The isolation centres must be in place at block and panchayat levels.

"If needed, we shall set up more centres as the number of people returning could be huge," Kumar said at the meeting.

The meeting was attended, among others, by his deputy Sushil Kumar Modi, Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar and Director General of Police Guptaeshwar Pandey.

District Magistrates and Superintendents of



Police across the state were also connected through video conference.

"There must be adequate number of vehicles in place for ferrying people from railway stations to quarantine facilities close to their homes. There should be awareness drives in villages, with messages blared on loudspeakers about precautions needed in the current situation," the chief minister said.

The incidence of coronavirus outbreak in the state was low, initially, but there has been a spike of late, partly because of people coming from outside Bihar, carrying the infection, he said.

Bihar has reported 466 COVID-19 cases till Friday.

"Now, we must brace ourselves for the situation that may arise out of a large influx that is expected in the wake of the

Centre's revised guidelines with regard to the lockdown," he said.

The chief minister also said, "We must now have many more testing centres. If required, these should be available at the district level. Accordingly, testing kits too must be arranged and adequate supply of medicines should be ensured."

At present, testing of samples is being conducted at only six places the RMRI, an ICMR centre here, AIIMS, Patna, besides state-run hospitals PMCH and IGIMS, both situated in the capital city, in addition to SK-MCH at Muzaffarpur and DMCH at Darbhanga.

The seventh testing facility at Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College and Hospital in Bhagalpur is scheduled to become functional from Sunday.

Kumar also took note of the economic distress

that awaited the migrant workers who eked out a living in far-off places and are returning home as stalled economic activity following the nationwide lockdown has rendered them jobless.

"Many projects under way in Bihar happen to be labour-intensive. Once the dust settles down, a survey should be conducted to assess the skills these migrant labourers might have and they should be absorbed in the workforce accordingly," he said.

He also expressed distress over the social media being replete with "fake news" and malicious content that tended to stigmatise individuals and communities.

The chief minister ordered officials to keep a close watch and take stern action against those found to be involved in "vitiating the atmosphere".

5 more test COVID-19 positive in Odisha; total cases rise to 154

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 2 (PTI): Five more persons, including two women, tested positive for COVID-19 in Odisha's Jajpur district, taking the total number of such cases in the state to 154, officials said.

The new patients have a travel history to West Bengal's Kolkata, they said.

They have been in a quarantine centre and were asymptomatic, the officials of the Information and Public Relations department said.

With these new patients, the number of COVID-19 cases has gone up to 45 in Jajpur district which emerged as a "new hotspot". "Contact-tracing and follow-up action are being done," they said.

The officials said 55 people have been cured and the number of active cases now stands at 98 in the state.

One person has died of the disease in Odisha.

A total of 36,593 samples were tested till Friday in the state, they said.

Of the total cases, Bhubaneswar in Khurda district tops the list with 47, followed by Jajpur (45), Balasore (20), Bhadrak (19), Sundergarh (10), Kendrapara, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts two each, while Koraput, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Cuttack, Dhenkanal and Puri, detecting one case each.



3,673 people arrested in Assam for violating lockdown, over Rs 1.62cr fine collected

GUWAHATI, MAY 1 (PTI):

The Assam Police said on Friday that it has arrested 3,673 people across the state in the last 38 days for violating the lockdown order imposed to contain the COVID-19 outbreak and collected over Rs 1.62 crore as fine.

In its daily report on the lockdown, the police said 1,690 cases have been registered for 2,532 incidents since the beginning of the restrictions.

"A total of 3,673 people have been arrested for these cases and a collective fine of over Rs

1.62 core was collected from them for violating the lockdown norms," the statement said.

Besides, 22,367 vehicles and 32 boats have been detained from various parts of the state during this period.

The Assam Police is also taking a proactive step against fake news, the statement said.

Action is being taken against those spreading provocative content and rumours about COVID-19 on social media.

The state police has registered 94 cases and

arrested 49 people, it said.

A total of 27 locations of 12 districts were totally sealed and declared as containment zones by the authorities in order to check the spread of coronavirus, police said.

According to the Health and Family Welfare Department, the state has so far tested 10,875 samples for novel coronavirus, of which 42 have been found positive.

One person has died of the disease, while 32 have recovered from the infection.

Odisha prepares SOP to send stranded migrant workers

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 2 (PTI): With the Centre allowing movement of migrant workers, pilgrims, tourists and students stranded due to the lockdown, the Odisha government has issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for sending persons stuck in the state to their home states by road or rail.

In a letter to all district collectors and municipal commissioners, Additional chief secretary-cum special relief commissioner (SRC) P K Jena forwarded the SOP to ensure smooth return of about 60,000 "guest workers" to their respective states.

The Odisha government has described the stranded migrant workers as "guest workers".

The state government has appointed nodal officers for different states to ensure that the people from other states reach their native places safely.

The SOP said that the prior approval of the recipient state is a must before departure of any train/bus from any district/municipal corporation in Odisha. For road journey by means of bus/vans, the transit pass will be provided by the authorities here.

The counterpart collectors/commissioners of municipal corporation/state co-ordinator in the recipient state should be informed with the details of passengers, destination (district and block) and their mobile numbers.

The SOP said that one of the passengers, having

a smartphone, may be designated as the group co-ordinator, whose mobile number may be passed on to the recipient state's collector/municipal commissioner/co-ordinator.

The destination station/border check point of the recipient state for each train/ bus/ van will be decided by the recipient state government.

It said the returnees

should be grouped block-wise/district-wise, while boarding the buses/ vans/ trains, as far as possible, for easier logistics.

As per the MHA guidelines, the passengers have to be screened for health status and only after proper assessment they should be cleared for travel.

No person/group of persons should be al-

lowed to travel without appropriate authorization from the state.

There are about 90,000 migrant workers stranded in Odisha. The state government has described them as "guest workers" and have lodged them in different temporary camps where food, medicines and other essential items are provided to them since the lockdown started.



Ensure UP borders are sealed to stop entry of 'coronavirus carriers': Adityanath to officials

LUCKNOW, MAY 1 (PTI): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday asked officials to ensure that Uttar Pradesh's borders remain sealed so that people who maybe "coronavirus carriers" cannot enter the state.

He gave the directions at a review meeting.

"It should be ensured that the borders of the state remain sealed.

There should be alertness in border areas. No one should enter the state without permission as there is a possibility that they can be coronavirus carriers," an official release issued here quoted Adityanath as saying.

He said the state government is committed to the welfare of labourers and has initiated a number of measures in their interest.

"The government is taking steps to ensure return of labourers stuck in other states in a phased manner," he said.

The chief minister reiterated that four lakh migrant labourers from Delhi and 12,000 from Haryana have returned to the state safely.

He said directives have been issued to ensure that those coming to

the state undergo a health checkup and are sent to home quarantine for 14 days with a ration kit.

Adityanath also gave directions to increase pool testing and procure quality testing kits.

As of Thursday, the number of coronavirus cases in Uttar Pradesh stood at 2,211 and the death toll due to the infection was 40.

C'garh: Health dept focuses on routine health services

RAIPUR, MAY 2 (PTI): The health department in Chhattisgarh has directed district collectors to ensure that routine health services were not disrupted in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, an official here said on Saturday.

In a letter to all collectors, health secretary Niharika Barik Singh said

while the state health machinery had given priority to contain the pandemic, other health services like maternal and neo-natal care, institutional deliveries, immunisation, among others, should not get affected, the official said.

Doctors and medical staff should not be deputised full time at quarantine

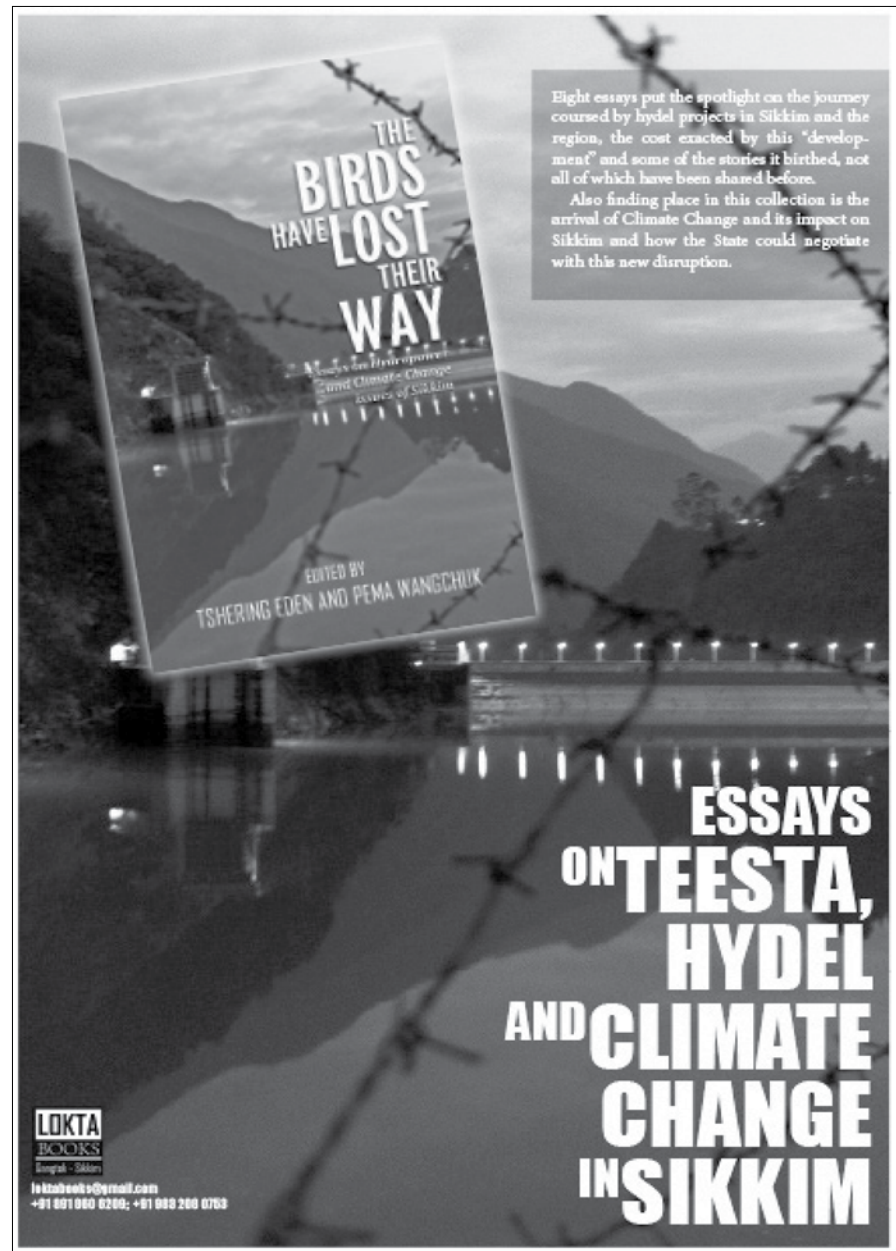
centres, as non-coronavirus activities also need to function smoothly in the state, he said, quoting the communique.

A fixed schedule of doctor visits should be prepared for quarantine centres and they can attend to emergency cases there, he said, adding that doctors must devote the rest of their time in

handling routine health services.

Chhattisgarh has so far recorded 43 COVID-19 cases, of which 36 patients have recovered from the infection.

At least 575 persons were quarantined at 145 centres, while 17,634 were put under home quarantine in the state, the official said.



Judge rules against US women's soccer team in equal pay case

LOS ANGELES, MAY 2 (AFP): A federal judge dismissed the United States women's soccer team's bid for equal pay, rejecting claims the players had been underpaid in a crushing defeat for the reigning world champions.

In a 32-page ruling, Judge Gary Klausner of the US District Court for Central California in Los Angeles tossed the women's claim of pay discrimination, ruling in favour of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).

Klausner did allow the women's case for unfair treatment in areas such as travel, housing and medical support to proceed to trial, set for June 16 in Los Angeles.

But the judge said the equal pay claims -- the central plank of the case -- had been dismissed because there was evidence the women had previously turned down an offer in the Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations to be paid along the lines of the US men's team.

"The history of negotiations between the parties demonstrates that the WNT rejected an offer to be paid under the same pay-to-play structure as the MNT, and the WNT was willing to forgo higher bonuses for benefits, such as greater base compensation and the guarantee of a higher number of contracted players," Klausner wrote.

"Accordingly, plaintiffs cannot now retroactively deem their CBA (collective bargaining agreement) worse than the MNT CBA by reference to what they would



have made had they been paid under the MNT's pay-to-play terms structure when they themselves rejected such a structure," he said.

- 'SHOCKED AND DISAPPOINTED' -

The US women were left stunned by their defeat on the pay issue. The women had been seeking back pay of 66 million under the Equal Pay Act.

Prominent US women's team star Megan Rapinoe said after learning of the court's decision that the battle is not over.

"We will never stop fighting for EQUALITY," she wrote on Twitter.

A spokeswoman for the players reacted with dismay following Friday's ruling.

"We are shocked and disappointed with today's decision, but we will not give up our hard work for equal pay," spokeswoman Molly Levinson said.

"We are confident in our case and steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that girls and women who play this sport will not be valued as lesser just because of their gender.

"We have learned that there are tremendous obstacles to change; we know that it takes bravery and courage and perseverance to stand up to them." USSF said Friday night it would continue to work with the women's program to grow the game in the United States.

"We look forward to working with the Women's National Team to chart a positive path forward and to grow the game both here at home and around the world," it said.

"We are committed to continuing that work to ensure our Women's National Team remains the best in the world." The increasingly acrimonious lawsuit had taken a dramatic turn in March, when a filing by lawyers for the federation argued that US men's team players required a "higher level of skill based on speed and strength" than the women.

The filing triggered outrage amongst the women's players while influential sponsors such

as Coca-Cola voiced disgust at the remarks.

USSF President Carlos Cordeiro later resigned following the uproar, with Rapinoe accusing the USSF of "blatant sexism" in its legal filings.

The US women, who clinched back-to-back World Cup wins with victory at last year's finals in France, had based their claim for back pay in the disparities between prize money distributed by FIFA at the men's and women's World Cups.

Germany's men won 35 million for their victory in the 2014 World Cup while France earned 38 million after triumphing in Russia in 2018.

The United States women, victors in the

2015 and 2019 World Cups, earned total prize money of 6 million over the two tournaments.

The USSF argued in court that between the years 2015-2019, the women actually were paid more money than the men on both a cumulative and an average per game basis.

During that period the women's national team received 24 million and an average of 220,747 per game while the men's team received payments of 18 million and 212,639 per game.

Under the current CBA, which was signed in 2017, more than half the women's team players receive an annual base salary of 167,000.

Ultimate goal is to beat India in their backyard: Langer after Australia reclaim top rank

MELBOURNE, MAY 1 (PTI): Reclaiming the top spot in Test cricket has brought smiles back on their faces but Australia coach Justin Langer says beating India in their own den remains the ultimate test and their numero uno status will be put to test when they clash with the Virat Kohli-led team.

After a tumultuous transition phase post the ball-tampering scandal, Australia on Friday displaced India as number one side in Test format but Langer is aware that it does not take long for situation to change.

"We recognise how fluid these rankings are, but at this time it was certainly nice to put a smile on our faces," Langer told Cricket Australia website.

"We've got lots of work to do to get to be the team that we want to be, but hopefully over the last couple of years not only have we performed well on the field, but also off the field," Langer added.

The former left-handed opener underlined what he felt will be the ultimate test of character.

"Certainly a goal for us has been the World Test Championship ... but ultimately, we have to beat India in India and we've got to beat them when they come back (to Australia).

"You can only judge yourself as being the



best if you beat the best and we've got some really tough opposition to come," Langer put his priorities in place.

The team he insists needs to get better as now others will come gunning for them.

"Getting to No.1 is a great thing, but when you're No.1, you're always the hunted," Langer said.

"We've been the hunters for a while, now we're the hunted and we need to get better and better."

Langer also hoped that white ball team under Aaron Finch will win the World Cup.

"I know how hard it is to win World Cups ... everything has to go right. One day, I'd love to see Aaron Finch with all his mates lift that T20 World Cup above his head.

Coronavirus US sport shutdown will cost \$12 billion: report

NEW YORK, MAY 2 (AFP): The 100 billion US sports landscape will lose 12 billion in revenue due to the coronavirus shutdown, ESPN reported, with deeper cuts if NFL and college gridiron games are wiped out.

Analysis of the magnitude of business losses includes superstar salaries to pay for stadium workers but it might be a conservative estimate because it does not include outdoor recreational sport, gambling or such individual sports as golf, tennis and NASCAR, the most popular form of US auto racing.

Patrick Rishe, sports business program director at Washington University in St. Louis, estimated the impact of the shutdown on major US pro and college sports leagues as well as youth sport for ESPN, which also had labor market analysis firm Emsi make sport-related job estimates.

Rishe estimated US pro sports would lose 5.5 billion from the shutdown while college sports would lose 3.9 billion and youth sport tourism would fall by 2.4 billion.

And those figures assume Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer can finish half of their scheduled seasons with spectators while the NBA and the National Hockey League cancel the unfinished part of their regular seasons and stage playoff games with-

out spectators with youth sports resuming in July.

None of that is assured given the stay-at-home orders remaining in place over most of the nation as a result of the deadly virus that has killed more than 63,000 people in the United States and infected more than one million.

"As an economist, you stand back, you look at the carnage that's taking place -- dumbfounded, awestruck, mind-numbing. All of those phrases, they're all relevant because we just have never seen anything on this scale," Rishe told ESPN.

Figures include 3.25 billion that would have been spent by spectators on pro sports plus 371 million of income for stadium and arena workers and 2.2 billion in US television rights fees.

An NFL wipe out would cost more than 11.5 billion in television revenue while 65 major collegiate American football programs receive about 4 billion in TV money, about half the income that finances all athletic department budgets.

There are three million jobs nationwide that depend upon sports, from ushers and guards to scouts and trainers, according to the report.

Rishe said that should MLB play without spectators for half a season for its 162-games-a-team schedule, over 2 billion more in game-day fan spending would be lost.

Thierry Henry notes positive changes in his return to MLS

WASHINGTON, MAY 2 (AP): There's been a shift in Major League Soccer in the relatively short time since Thierry Henry was a player.

The former Arsenal star, now the new coach of the Montreal Impact, played for the New York Red Bulls from 2010 to 2014.

Back then, Henry said, MLS was still targeting players from Europe at the end of their careers. Like him.

But now the league is drawing promising young talent from Mexico and South America signalling a progression from the old 'retirement league' reputation MLS once had. The average age of players is skewing younger than a decade ago.

That's a sign that the league is evolving, Henry said.

Henry noted that MLS is retaining young talent, like LAFC's Carlos Vela, who in the past may have gone to Europe.

I don't know how far the league can go. It's up to us obviously, now I'm back in, to make sure that we can elevate the league as much as we can," he said.

This league has no limits for me, but you need time to reach that



level.

MLS was celebrating its 25th season, and Henry was embarking on his first as coach of the Impact, when play was suspended on March 12 because of the coronavirus outbreak.

On Friday, however, the league took its first step toward restarting the season by announcing it was allowing voluntary individual workouts for players at team outdoor practice fields starting next Wednesday.

Montreal had started well, with a win in Henry's debut as coach over the New England Revolution,

and a draw on the road against FC Dallas, before the league was shuttered.

Henry, who signed a two-year contract with the Impact last November, is now navigating the uncertainties of coaching amid a pandemic.

Well, what's difficult is not being on the field, as I mentioned before. You cannot beat that. You need to be on the field in order to have a feeling, to have intensity," he said.

"And when you succeed at what you wanted to do or planned to do for a game or a training session, the players are

buying it a bit more because they can feel it a bit better."

It is Henry's second stint as a head coach: He had a difficult three-month tenure coaching Monaco, the club he played for as a youth. Before that, he coached the forwards for Belgium, which reached the 2018 World Cup semifinals.

As a player, Henry is France's all-time top scorer and a winner of the 1998 World Cup and 2000 European Championship. He retired from international play in 2010 with 51 goals in 123 appearances.

With Arsenal, Henry held the record for most goals for a foreign player in the English Premier League (175) until Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero passed him in January.

Henry remains Arsenal's all-time leading scorer with 228 goals across all competitions during his time there from 1999-2007.

Henry also played for Barcelona before signing with the Red Bulls, where he scored 51 goals before retiring in 2014 and becoming a TV soccer commentator.

Henry is hopeful he'll

get to restart the latest chapter of his career soon.

I always mention Jurgen Klopp. It took him three and a half years to do what he's doing with Liverpool. It doesn't happen just like that, Henry said.

So we were kind of getting somewhere. It was early stages let's not get carried away. Guys were starting to understand what we wanted and how we wanted to play and the intensity and the togetherness and the fight that we wanted to put into games.

US announces relaxations for H-1B visa holders and Green Card applicants

WASHINGTON, MAY 2 (PTI): The US government has given a grace period of 60 days to H-1B visa holders and Green Card applicants, who have been served notices for submission of various documents, in view of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on Friday said the 60-day grace period for responding to its requests will include requests for evidence; continuations to request evidence (N-14); notices of intent to deny; notices of intent to revoke; notices of intent to rescind and notices of intent to terminate regional investment centers; and filing date requirements for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion.

"USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking action," it said.

According to the statement, the USCIS will consider a Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision before it takes any action.

"USCIS is adopting several measures to protect our workforce and community and to minimise the immigration consequences for those seeking immigration benefits during this time," it said.

The relaxations come in view of the coronavirus outbreak, which first surfaced in China's Wuhan city in December last. So far, the virus has claimed over 65,000 lives in the US and over 235,000 lives globally.

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A decade after debt crisis, Greece on verge of virus recession

ATHENS, 02 MAY [AP]: Ten years after sinking into its worst economic crisis in living memory, Greece once again faces the spectre of a grave recession in the midst of a global coronavirus lockdown.

Though the country has so far been spared the death toll of other European nations at fewer than 150 fatalities from COVID-19, it will not escape the resulting economic downturn, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis warned this week.

"The consequences of this coronavirus attack will undoubtedly be dramatic," he told parliament on Thursday.

"We know with certainty that (the recession) will be deep... we don't know how long the health crisis will last, we don't yet know if we'll have tourism."

Tourism is one of Greece's most important sources of revenue, along with shipping.

The Greek state alone could lose 8-10 billion euros (\$8.8-11 billion) in income this year, the prime minister said.

- WHERE'S THE MONEY? - Greece has already adopted measures worth 17.5 billion euros, or 10 percent of national output, to support businesses and employees, Mitsotakis said.

Including EU funds, the



package will reach 24 billion euros, he said.

But the opposition has questioned whether the money has actually reached the intended recipients.

"Where is this money? It's good for announcements but actual businesses and (employees) have not received a single euro," former leftist prime minister Alexis Tsipras said Thursday, predicting that layoffs will soon be "out of control".

Greece this year had been counting on a growth spurt

of 2.4 percent. After exiting the final debt crisis bailout in 2018, its borrowing rates were at historic lows -- in October Athens even sold treasury bills at a negative rate -- and it has cash reserves of more than 36 billion euros at hand.

But with most of its economy in virus quarantine since March and global lockdowns expected to wreak havoc on tourism, Greece is expected to sink into a 10 percent recession this year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

- 'IRREPARABLE' DAMAGE - Panagiotis Petrakis, professor of finance at the University of Athens, argued that the economic blow will be less severe.

"The most likely scenario is a six percent contraction, provided there is no deterioration in the pandemic," he told AFP.

Petrakis also believes that the economic impact of this crisis will be less protracted. The IMF itself estimates a 5.5 percent Greek recovery in 2021.

The Greek finance ministry

says the downturn could be limited to 4.7 percent through support measures, followed by a 5.1 percent rebound. The jobless rate will approach 20 percent, it said Friday.

The government will begin easing lockdown restrictions this month, with most shops opening by May 11 and restaurants and year-round hotels following on June 1.

But few expect any foreign visitors before July.

Many Greek businesses fear the damage will be irreparable, especially with minimum two-metre (6.5-feet) social distancing requirements squeezing out customers.

"Last summer I had 10 tables outside and 10 inside. Now, I will just have three tables outside and I'm supposed to make do," says Costas Gogos, owner of a tavern in the port of Rafina near Athens.

"Many will not even reopen, they won't manage with so few tables," added a neighbouring restaurant owner.

- MEMORIES OF 2010 -

It was on May 2, 2010, when the socialist government of George Papandreou signed the first of three eventual bailouts with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF that would

total 350 billion euros.

A week earlier, Papandreou had stunned the nation by announcing the call for international assistance. His televised address from the tiny island of Kastellorizo is indelibly etched in the nation's collective memory.

In the years that followed, a quarter of Greek national output would be wiped out in wave upon wave of wage and pension cuts and tax hikes demanded by the so-called troika of creditors.

Unemployment soared to a high of 27 percent before eventually falling to 16 percent in March, still the highest in the eurozone.

Dozens of general strikes and hundreds of street protests would follow, many of them violent. In one of the worst incidents on May 5, 2010, three people died in a bank set on fire during an anti-austerity protest, one of them a pregnant woman. The culprits were never caught.

The crisis was sparked by reckless state spending and misreporting of fiscal data to the EU. When revealed by Papandreou's government, it caused Greece's borrowing rates to spike beyond reach.

Hong Kong police use pepper spray to clear May Day protest

HONG KONG, MAY 2 (AP): Hong Kong police used pepper spray Friday night to disperse more than 100 protesters singing and chanting pro-democracy slogans in a shopping mall.

The demonstrators sang the protest anthem "Glory to Hong Kong" and chanted "Glory to Hong Kong, revolution of our times" in the New Town Plaza mall in Hong Kong's New Territories.

As the protesters gathered, police stopped and searched some and later told them to leave, saying they were violating coronavirus social-distancing rules.

The police then used pepper spray while dispersing the crowd before cordoning off the atrium

of the mall.

The protest was one of several small ones that went ahead on the May 1 Labour Day holiday despite rules that forbid public gatherings of more than four people.

Protesters also gathered near Kowloon's Mong Kok and Kwun Tong subway stations.

Organisers initially planned citywide protests but many were cancelled, with the organisers urging people to eat at pro-democracy restaurants instead to support them as business slumps because of coronavirus-related restrictions. Friday's protests were the latest in a string of demonstrations at shopping malls over the past week. They follow the



arrest of 15 pro-democracy activists and former lawmakers last Saturday.

The demonstrations are a continuation of a movement that began last June to protest an ex-

tradition bill that would have allowed detainees in Hong Kong to be trans-

ferred to mainland China. Although the bill was later withdrawn, the

demonstrations continued for months before a lull starting in January as

the coronavirus pandemic broke out.

North Korea's Kim reappears after weeks of speculation

SEOUL, 02 MAY [AP]: North Korea's Kim Jong Un has made his first public appearance in nearly three weeks, state media reported Saturday, following intense speculation that the leader of the nuclear-armed nation was seriously ill or possibly dead.

State television showed Kim walking, smiling broadly and smoking a cigarette at what the North said was the opening of a fertiliser factory on Friday in Suncheon, north of Pyongyang.

Rumours about Kim's health have been swirling since his conspicuous no-show at April 15 celebrations for the birthday of his grandfather, the North's founder -- the most important day in the country's political calendar.

His absence triggered a series of fevered rumours and unconfirmed reports over his condition, while the United States and South Korea insisted they had no information to believe any of the conjecture was true.

Seoul's unification ministry reacted to Saturday's report by saying "groundless" speculation about Kim had caused "unnecessary confusion", calling for more careful consideration in future.

Kim's sudden death would have left Pyongyang facing an unplanned succession for the first time in its history and raised unanswered questions over who would succeed him and take over the North's nuclear arsenal.

China, the North's key diplomatic ally and main

provider of trade and aid, is keen to maintain stability in its neighbour and avoid the possibility of an influx of refugees.

North Korea is "at the epicentre of an extremely tense security crisis", involving "a nuclear stand-off where tens of millions of lives are at stake," Henri Feron, Senior Fellow at the US Center for International Policy, told AFP.

"This raises legitimate concerns about the domestic and international instability that his death could cause."

Footage showed Kim in his trademark black suit, waving to hundreds of workers who cheered his appearance and released balloons.

He was flanked by senior officials -- including his sister and close adviser Kim Yo Jong --

and showed no outward signs of ill health.

At one point Kim sat in front of a sign that described the event as a factory opening ceremony for May 1, 2020, but his appearance could not be independently verified.

As with previous public appearances during the global coronavirus pandemic, Kim and his entourage were not wearing masks, unlike the crowd of workers at the ceremony.

Analysts said Kim could not appear in public wearing a mask as it would make him appear vulnerable to the North Korean people.

The North has insisted that it has not seen a single case of coronavirus, although experts say that is unlikely.

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ON THE GO! The makeup mogul, Jeffree Star fills up his pink Lamborghini at a gas station wearing a blue Adidas tracksuit with neon green Yeezy Boost 350 sneakers.

Bill Maher Says Mike Pence Didn't Wear Mask at Mayo Clinic Because He Wanted to Tell 'Barefaced Lies'

In the monologue to the latest at-home edition of "Real Time," Bill Maher talked about the latest disturbing or just weird current events amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. And one thing he took particular issue with the way Mike Pence handled a trip to the Mayo Clinic this week.

On Tuesday, Pence toured the Mayo Clinic to get a look at how it is dealing with coronavirus patients, but the vice president inexplicably didn't wear a face mask despite being surrounded by sick people. Face masks are of course mandatory at the clinic, but Pence claims no one told him of this fact. There are some problems with that account, however.

First, the Mayo Clinic has since said that Pence was definitely told about the policy in advance. And second, at least one journalist who accompanied Pence has said they were all told about the policy and instructed to comply with it, and Pence was apparently so unhappy with that disclosure that they banned the reporter from Air Force Two for two weeks in retaliation, according to the Washington post.

"You know who else is not popular this week? Mike Pence. Not popular," Maher said about that. "Went to the Mayo Clinic. Everyone was wearing a mask, of course, it was the Mayo Clinic, or everywhere. And he did not have a mask. Mike Pence said, 'No it's okay. I've been tested. And besides, they're called barefaced lies.'" Zing!

Maher also brought up how Trump has responded to the possibility that the supply of meat in the U.S. might be affected by coronavirus outbreaks at meat processing facilities. Trump issued an executive order requiring those facilities to



Maher complained. "And his voters started calling poison control centers to see if that was okay. Deplorable? They're the unbleachables."

After briefly touching on Hillary Clinton's endorsement of Joe Biden, Maher concluded by poking fun at the order to begin reopening Georgia, which began this week and will continue next week. "States are starting to open up for business again. Georgia leading the way. They have opened up the tattoo parlors and the beauty salons. In the south what they call the 'high-tech sector,'" Maher joked.

"And it's good to see that in Georgia things are becoming normal again. When I say 'becoming normal,' I mean being able to get a tattoo of Jesus wrestling a snake," he continued. "Oh and bowling alleys in Georgia. If you're in Georgia, bowling alleys are open, barbershops and tattoo parlors. Because what could be safer businesses than ones involving razors, needles and sticking your fingers and other people's balls."

remain open (even though the order doesn't require worker safety to be taken into account).

"Yeah, don't don't f— with lunch," Maher said. "The war powers act, which is at his disposal — he could use it for you know masks, ventilators. He used it this week to make sure that the meat packing plants were kept open. Because meat, now it's personal. You step on Donald Trump's meat hose and s— just got real."

Maher also talked about

the thing everyone has been talking about for a week now — how Donald Trump literally suggested it might be possible for people to fight coronavirus by injecting disinfectant into the body. (As always, absolutely do not do this.)

"Yes. This incomparably stupid man actually suggested — and he's the president of the United States, I don't know if you know that — actually suggested this week that people ingest cleaning disinfectants,"

COVID-19: 100 singers unite for anthem dedicated to frontline warriors

In one of the biggest collaborations by artists for a noble cause, a group of 100 singers, including the legendary Asha Bhosle, Kumar Sanu and Sonu Nigam have come together to record an anthem for the frontline warriors fighting the coronavirus pandemic and in the aid of PM Cares fund.

The anthem 'One Nation One Voice', recorded in 14 different languages, will be dedicated to the nation by Lata Mangeshkar on behalf of Indian Singers Rights Association (ISRA) on May 3.

It will be released across over 100 digital platforms such as TV, Radio and on social media.

Commenting on the initiative, Bhosle said that singers are the artists who have always expressed the feelings of the public.

"On this occasion when all of us are fighting against the coronavirus pandemic as One Nation' ably led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we 100 singers of the country under ISRA decided to express our love for the nation and dedicate this song as One Voice', she said.

The artists, who are a part of the an-

them include Asha Bhosle, Anup Jalota, Alka Yagnik, Hariharan, Kailash Kher, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Kumar Sanu, Mahalakshmi Iyer, Mano, Pankaj Udhas, S P Balasubramanian, Shaan, Sonu Nigam, Talat Aziz, Udit Narayan, Shankar Mahadevan, Jasbir Jassi among others.

Sanjay Tandon, CEO of ISRA said, One Nation One Voice in aid of PM Cares is a dedication from ISRA where 100 artists pay tribute to all the people in the forefront of the battle against the coronavirus and all the people at home who have supported the lockdown."

"One Nation One voice is not just an anthem but it is a national movement - we have over 100 broadcast, social, amplification and tech platforms supporting the launch," said Sukrit Singh of XP&D BeLive digital platform.

The anthem is the brainchild of Nigam, singer Srinivas and Tandon.

Nigam said, "It is our collective tribute to the mammoth struggle and effort our government and the entire medical and health workers are putting together

in these times of global crisis. Hundred singers are coming together from different corners of India, is an unprecedented show of solidarity and love."

Srinivas said as artists they wanted to contribute to the fight in their own way.

"ISRA being the treasure house of singers in this country, we embark on a song with 100 voices and nothing else, to stir the nation's heart and reaffirm our solidarity. A hundred voices sing in unison for the nation," he said. Every artist has recorded the song from home.

Manish Baradia, Creative Director of Moving Pixels said: Working with home recording of audio and video is a beautiful challenge. There is a certain sincerity and effort that comes through that no packaging can match. The end result is inspiring. The anthem is composed for the digital age and can be enjoyed on TV, Radio, Devices and Caller Ring Tones."

The song is available in 14 languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bhojpuri, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Rajasthani and Odia.



ARIES:

You may have settled for less in the past, but that's not your style anymore. You are honing your skills, realising your magical abilities, and coming into your power. Knowing what you deserve will prove to be a turning point for you, Aries. You are ready to attract opportunities that are in alignment with who you are right now. Rule #1: learn to stay open. If you've had any guilt around self-care or choosing yourself, you're learning to let go of that too. How about starting (or ending) your day with a ritualistic bath followed by a cup of sereni-tea?

Tip: You know your worth.

TAURUS:

You may feel like everything is falling apart. Is it really, though? Look beyond the illusion. Understand your vantage point here. This is the secret to overcoming the given obstacle. Yes, it's true that there are people who may be trying to get in the way of your success or poison others against you. Don't feel threatened by the juvenile games. Focus on what you came here to do.

Tip: Understand your vantage point in any given situation.

GEMINI:

No love story is devoid of drama. But you're learning to take everything with a pinch of salt and focus on the essence of your relationship—the love that brought you together. Date night promises to start early in the Gemini headquarters. Single or away from your partner? You're likely to spend quality time with your siblings or somebody you consider as one. Share stories, both old and new. Know that it is vulnerability that is bringing you together.

Tip: Love like nobody's watching.

CANCER:

There were times in the past when you resisted self-care and considered turning inwards a colossal waste of time. But you're letting go of this limiting belief. You're learning the importance of giving yourself the love you deserve. It's all about coming up with small, simple rituals that make you feel celebrated. Movement meditation is also going to be a big theme for you today.

Tip: Give movement meditation a shot.

LEO:

As a fire sign, you revel in living on the edge. The idea of slowing down has always sounded more appealing on paper than it does in practice. But what you're experiencing now is a deep inner alchemy. Yes, there are days you resist the process. But the days you embrace mindfulness outnumber them. Remember, awareness is about the small, simple things, like connecting with the ground when you walk or sipping on your tea like it's source of ecstasy.

Tip: Slow down.

VIRGO:

While the new moon is synonymous with beginnings, la luna in her fading glory encourages us to face our shadows; to release and to let go. Inner work is the need of the hour, Virgo. You already have a sense of what you need to part ways with. It's now time to set a strong intention and take the required action. Want to take the witchy route to liberation?

Tip: La luna, in her fading glory, is encouraging you to release.

LIBRA:

Your relationship with confrontation has always been a complicated one. What's keeping you from speaking your truth? Do your needs not deserve to be met, Libra? Remember, the wounded child is now an empowered adult. Befriend courage, stand up for yourself, and speak your mind. This is the only way the world will meet you halfway. If you're feeling especially sensitive today, be mindful of your boundaries. Be mindful of what you may be consuming consciously or unconsciously. Most importantly, take time to ground your energy.

Tip: The wounded child is now an empowered adult.

SCORPIO:

A powerful affirmation by Danielle LaPorte to start your day with: "I call all of my power back to me now. I am whole and complete." This is a time of reclaiming your reins, Scorpio. The limitations that once held you back are now intimidated by your very presence. It's true that there are certain things in our life that are predetermined, but don't forget the role of free will. Steer your chariot in a direction that you feel called towards, and know the Universe will realign itself for you.

Tip: Call your power back to you.

SAGITTARIUS:

You're craving solo time like never before, especially if you've been sharing space with other people. It's okay to check out once in a while as long as you're not harming anybody in the process. Let your loved ones know your need for space as you bury yourself underneath a pile of books. You may or may not have a way around the chores though. By tapping into the gift of awareness, you will find a way to make the most mundane tasks meditative.

Tip: Your need for space is real.

CAPRICORN:

We all have an army of angels, guides, and masters assigned to us at birth. We may not be able to see them through our naked eyes, but we can perceive them via our third eye or the 'ajna chakra'. Tune in, Capricorn. Feel their presence. Become aware of the many miracles they are manifesting on your behalf. As you do, be sure to express your gratitude for each one of them.

Tip: Your spirit team is trying to get through to you!

AQUARIUS:

You may have been at loggerheads in the past, but you're slowly finding your balance. You're learning to appreciate their contribution to your life, and acknowledging the love that brought you together. Domestic bliss is on the cards, Aquarius. As such, interpersonal relationships are taking centre stage. Be mindful of the wounds that are calling for your attention.

Tip: Love conquers all.

PISCES:

Your time away from the matrix has provided you with the opportunity to not just inculcate new habits, but also to put them into practice. It's not just about who you are becoming in this time period, it's about what you are taking into the world with you. Make it count, Pisces. There are positive changes on the health and wellness front too. You couldn't fathom the idea of not having access to your gym or your trainer, but look at you now! The cheat code to staying motivated: workouts that allow you to be your most playful self as you sweat it out.

Tip: Make this period of self-isolation count.