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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Supplies airdropped to cut-off villages of Sakyong and Pentong



MANGAN, 25 JUL (IPR): An MI-17 Helicopter of the IAF today conducted three sorties to transport ration and essential supplies to the villages of Sakyong and Pentong in North Sikkim. The two villages were cut-off from the rest of Dzongu since 10 July owing to multiple slides and washing off of many bridges connecting these villages with the rest of the District and the continuous rainfall that followed.

100 bags of rice weighing 50 quintals, 550 litres of cooking oil, 1.5 quintals of salt, 100 packets of candles and matches and medicines were dropped.

The helicopter could not land at Pentong due to the landing zone not being conducive. Hence the consignments were dropped at Sakyong school ground. The share of ration for Pentong village would be transhipped via a manual rope-way connecting Sakyong and Pentong villages.

Nangzey Dorji becomes second Sikkimese to become President of Mahabodhi Society of India

SAGAR CHHETRI

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Nangzey Dorji, a retired Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, was recently appointed President of the Mahabodhi Society of India.

This makes Mr Dorji only the second Sikkimese after Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal to hold this post.

After his retirement, Mr Dorji had taken charge as the Secretary of the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee in 2006 and his fourth term at the post had ended in July and was reappointed for a fifth term.

Mr Dorji retired as Secretary, Ecclesiastical Affairs Department, and was honoured with the Sikkim Sewa Samman by the State government in the year 2014 for his contributions to the State.

It is learnt that he was the first person to represent the entire Himalayan region in Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee of Mahabodhi Temple and lifetime member of



Mahabodhi Society of India. He initiated documentation of religious institutions and introduction of monastic schools and Sanskrit Patshalas in Sikkim. He also credited with having played a key role in the affiliation of Sikkim Institute of Nyingma Higher Studies to Sampurananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi as a post graduate institute for Buddhist Studies in 1986.

Sikkim's COVID-19 load grows to 499; Active cases number 357

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Sikkim's active caseload of COVID-19 reached 357 with 21 new cases reported on Saturday. Sikkim's cumulative COVID count is now 499. Five patients also made full recoveries and were discharged from hospital today.

These 21 new cases also included a doctor posted at the Emergency Ward of STNM hospital.

In his 111th health bulletin

on Saturday, Health Department DG-cum-Secretary, Dr Pempa T Bhutia, detailed that out of 25 samples tested by TrueNat on Friday, one contact from Sun Pharma was detected positive. Meanwhile, 18 tested positive during screening of 323 samples by RT-PCR.

Out of these 18, five are from the Flu Clinic at STNM hospital, including the doctor from Emergency Ward, a 22-year-old man from Dhobi Dhara Arithang

and a 35-year-old man from Vishal Gaon in Upper Arithang and other two whose samples will be retested following some doubts.

The Secretary added that three SSB personnel from Rhenock and five ITBP personnel from Rey also been tested positive along with three other contacts in Rongli, one from Epica Garden and one from Namchi.

Dr Bhutia informed that rapid antigen testing of eight samples at Singtam returned

negative, while in the testing of 34 samples at Rangpo, all eleven returnees tested negative but two cases were detected from 23 contacts at Chanatar.

He added that 18 contacts of Sun Pharma patient have tested negative while one more contact at Timburbong tested positive.

The South district team sent 157 samples from Mamring and 17 samples from Jorethang for RT-PCR testing and results were expected tonight.

Deptts depute 47 employees to help at STNM Hospital

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Government departments have released 47 employees to help out with non-COVID tasks at STNM Hospital here as safai karamcharis and office attendants.

The Department of Personnel, it may be

recalled, had requested to nominate at least two employees to help out at STNM Hospital which was running short on manpower.

The departments have now forwarded the names to DoP and these employees have been directed to report to STNM Hospital from Monday onwards. They will be placed

on non-COVID, non-medical duty, but make no mistake, they are part of Sikkim's frontline against COVID-19.

It will, afterall, be their support which will free the medical and hospital support staff to focus on COVID patients whose numbers have been swelling.

After doc tests positive, Emergency ward at STNM Hospital shut for a week

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

A lady doctor posted at the Emergency Ward of STNM Hospital here at Socheygang tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday. Following the same, the emergency ward of the hospital has been contained and will remain closed for a week.

Health Department DG-cum-Secretary Dr Pempa T Bhutia, while confirming the development, explained that following stated protocol, the emergency ward has been contained for a week.

He said that it is suspected that the doctor was exposed when a patient sent from the Flu Clinic to the Emergency Ward later tested positive for COVID.

Dr Bhutia added that in-patients who were already in the emergency ward cannot be discharged unless screened for the virus and will be kept at the emergency ward until then.

He further informed that three doctors have been shifted to the quarantine facility in the annexe building of the hospital and nurses and other staff to the Yatri Niwas of the hospital and will be attending to the in-

patients at the emergency ward.

He added that testing of these health workers will be conducted on 29 or 30 July.

The Secretary informed that the department has already requested the Medical Superintendent of the Central Referral Hospital, Tadong, to attend to emergency cases at least for a week that the emergency ward at STNM Hospital is closed.

He urged CMOs and doctors in the districts not to forward cases to Gangtok if possible and further urged the people of Gangtok to go to the emergency ward at CRH if required.

The flu clinic at STNM Hospital, however, will remain open for flu-related cases. He urged the people to cooperate and support the department in this difficult situation.

The Secretary highlighted that a doctor getting infected was a serious matter as it could spread to other health workers and that would affect Sikkim's defence against COVID. He added that the department has been allocating duties to health workers on rotation to avoid such a situation and to reduce exposure.

Does your homemade mask work?

SIMON KOLSTOE

THECONVERSATION.COM

If a surgeon arrived at the operating theatre wearing a mask they had made that morning from a tea towel, they would probably be sacked. This is because the equipment used for important tasks, such as surgery, must be tested and certified to ensure compliance with specific standards.

But anyone can design and make a face covering to meet new public health requirements for using public transport or going to the shops.

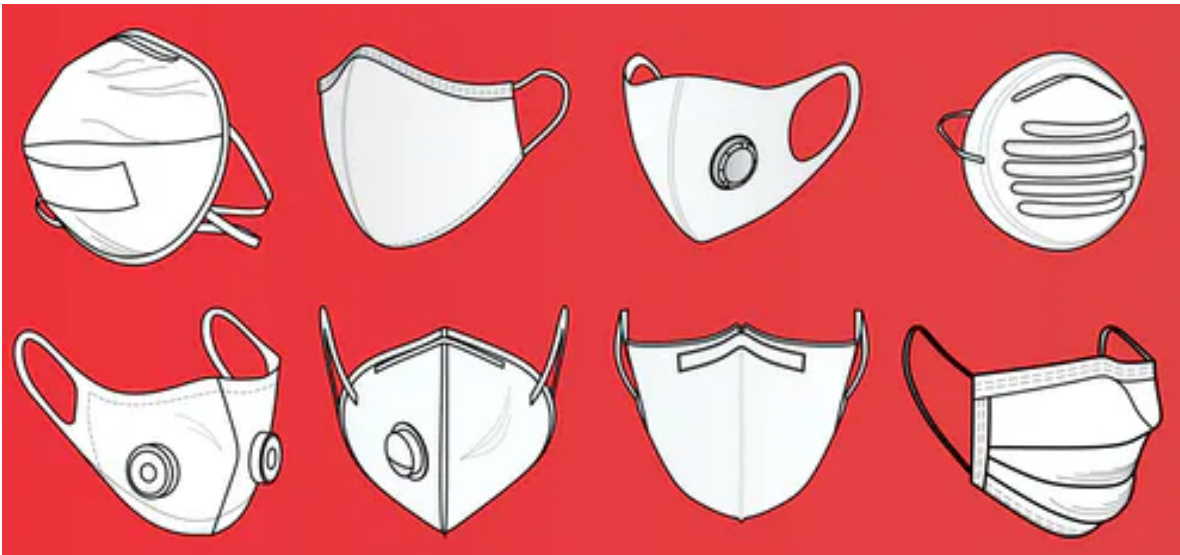
Indeed, arguments about the quality and standard of face coverings underlie recent controversies and explain why many people think they are not effective for protecting against COVID-19. Even the language distinguishes between face masks (which are normally considered as being built to a certain standard) and face coverings that can be almost anything else.

Perhaps the main problem is that, while we know that well-designed face masks have been used effectively for many years as personal protective equipment (PPE), during the COVID-19 outbreak shortages of PPE have made it impractical for the entire population to wear regulated masks and be trained to use them effectively.

As a result, the argument has moved away from wearing face masks for personal protection and towards wearing "face coverings" for public protection. The idea is that despite unregulated face coverings being highly variable, they do, on average, reduce the spread of virus perhaps in a similar way as covering your mouth when you cough.

But given the wide variety of unregulated face coverings that people are now wearing, how do we know which is most effective?

The first thing is to understand what we mean by effective. Given that coronavirus particles are about 0.08 micrometres and the weaves within a typical cloth face covering have gaps about 1,000 times bigger



(between 1 and 0.1 millimetres), "effectiveness" does not mean reliably trapping the virus. Instead, much like covering our mouths when we cough, the aim of wearing cloth coverings is to reduce the distance that your breath spreads away from your body.

The idea is that if you do have COVID-19, depositing any virus you may breathe out on either yourself or nearby (within one metre) is much better than blowing it all over other people or surfaces.

So an effective face covering is not meant to stop the wearer from catching the virus. Although from a personal perspective we might want to protect ourselves, to do so we should be wearing specially designed PPE such as FFP2 (also known as N95) masks. But, as mentioned, by doing so we risk creating mask shortages and potentially putting healthcare workers at risk.

Instead, if you want to avoid catching the virus yourself, the most effective things to do are avoid

crowded places by ideally staying at home, don't touch your face, and wash your hands often.

TWO SIMPLE TESTS

If effectiveness for face coverings means preventing our breath travelling too far away from our bodies, how would we go about comparing different designs or materials?

Perhaps the easiest way, as demonstrated by several increasingly shared pictures or videos on social media, is to find someone who "vapes" and film them breathing out the vapour while wearing a face covering. One glance at such a picture dispels any suggestion that these face coverings stop your breath escaping.

Instead, these pictures show that your breath is directed over the top of your head, down onto your chest, and behind you. The breath is also turbulent, meaning that although it does spread out, it doesn't go far.

In comparison, if you look at a picture of someone not

wearing a face covering, you will see that the exhalation goes mostly forward and down, but a significantly further distance than with the face covering.

Such a test is probably ideal for examining different designs and fits. Do coverings that loop around the ears work better than scarves? How far under your chin does a covering need to go? What is the best nose fitting? How do face shields compare to face masks? These are all questions that could be answered using this method.

But, in conducting this experiment, we should appreciate that "vaping" particles are about 0.1 to 3 micrometres – significantly bigger than the virus. While it is probably fair to assume that the smaller virus particles will travel in roughly the same directions as the vaping particles, there is also the chance that they may still go straight forward through the face covering.

To get an idea of how much this might happen, a simple test involving trying to blow out a candle directly in front of the wearer could be tried. Initially, the distance coupled with the strength of exhalation could be investigated, but then face coverings made from different materials and critically with different numbers of layers could be tried. The design of face covering that made it hardest to divert the candle flame will probably provide the best barrier for projecting the virus forward and through the face covering.

Without any more sophisticated equipment, it would be difficult to conduct any further simple experiments at home. However, combining the above two tests would provide wearers with a good idea about which of their face coverings would work the best if the aim was to avoid breathing potential infection over other people.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Evidence Based Healthcare and University Ethics Advisor, University of Portsmouth]

Cong wants lockdown extended, pharma units shut for now

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee [SPCC] has advised the State Government to extend the lockdown for another week from 27 July in the interest of the people of Sikkim. The party stated that the government needs to

be very sensitive to the situation and recognize its mistakes and lapses.

An SPCC press release further asserts that the government immediately shut all pharma companies in the State for some time given the present situation.

The release highlights that the Congress has

repeatedly suggested that pharma companies be closed during the COVID-19 pandemic but the government has not paid heed till date.

Mentioning the case of a doctor from the emergency ward of STNM Hospital testing positive for COVID-19, the party has questioned

the government's preparation for the situation.

The party has further demanded that the government bear the expenses of patients who seek treatment at CRH since the people have already suffered too much because of the pandemic.

CM's message on Kargil Vijay Diwas

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

On the occasion of 'Kargil Vijay Diwas', Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang on behalf of his government and the people of Sikkim has extended his gratitude to heroes of the Kargil war.

This day is observed on 26 July each year to pay homage to the brave hearts who laid down their lives and marked the victory of Indian Armed Forces in the 1991 Kargil war.

"As we mark 21st year of achieving

victory at Kargil, India remembers the heroes and their greatest sacrifice for our motherland. The martyrs will always be engraved in our hearts and memory with utmost respect. Our nation's protection and

safety is dependent on our soldiers.

I salute our heroes and pay homage to the supreme sacrifice being made by our men and women guarding our borders to keep our country secure. Jai Hind!," the CM has said.

Varavara Rao's family approaches NHRC; seeks updates on his health

HYDERABAD, JULY 25 (PTI):

Family members of poet Varavara Rao, accused in the Elgar Parishad case, have moved the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking a direction to a Mumbai hospital, where he is being treated for COVID-19, and prison authorities to provide "transparent" updates on his health status.

The petition filed on Friday stated that the family was compelled

to approach the rights body as they were denied any information about his condition or his treatment at the Nanavati Hospital in Mumbai.

"Today, we are compelled to write this letter to you, as we are denied any information about his condition or his treatment at the Nanavati Hospital.

From the time he was shifted out of Taloja Jail to St Georges hospital to Nanavati hospital,

the only official information provided to the family was that he had tested positive for the COVID-19, they said.

Denial of any information on Rao's health is a direct violation of NHRC's July 13 order, whereby it had specifically directed the prison authorities to provide all the necessary medical care and assistance to the poet with intimation to his family members, they added.

Seeking NHRC's intervention, the family sought official updates on his health and line of treatment every six hours.

Rao, 80, was undergoing treatment in Mumbai hospitals since July 16 after being tested for coronavirus positive.

He is behind bars for about 22 months and had approached the special NIA court, seeking bail on medical grounds and the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Varavara Rao's family approaches NHRC; seeks updates on his health

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Ex-BCCI umpire translates Laws of Cricket into Hindi

INDORE, JUL 25 (PTI):

Former BCCI umpire Rajiv Risodkar has translated the Laws of Cricket into Hindi, which have been uploaded on the website of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).

The MCC is the custodian of cricket laws. "It is a matter of pride for the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA) that the Hindi translation of the Laws of Cricket (The 2017 code 2nd Edition 2019) framed by MCC is now available on the



STAGE-V POWER STATION DISINFECTS SURROUNDING AREAS

NHPC's Teesta-V Power Station at Balutar, East Sikkim, carried out sanitization works on 25 July at Makha, Singbel, Ralep, Dungdung and other nearby areas through its Fire Tenders. The fire tenders sprayed disinfectants as part of COVID-19 preventive measures, an official press release informs.

Banks need to raise and conserve capital in COVID time: former RBI deputy governor

KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTI):

Commercial banks of the country are required to raise capital at this juncture even if it is not needed as the COVID-19 pandemic has made the future uncertain, former deputy governor of RBI N S Vishwanathan said.

He said that raising resources at the moment is essential as it might not be available or become exorbitant when actually

needed.

"Banks are required to raise capital at the moment.

They need to raise and conserve capital. This is because when it is needed, capital may not be available or become highly expensive," Vishwanathan said while speaking at a webinar organised by Enque Collaboration.

According to him, both the government and RBI have announced a

slew of measures to limit the debilitating effect of COVID-19.

"However, the future is uncertain and the contraction of the economy is sure to happen," he said.

NPA levels of banks are sure to go up and the entire risk management mechanism will undergo a paradigm shift, Vishwanathan said.

He said that banks are required to be

adequately capitalised and the cost-to-income ratio has to be lowered.

MD&CEO of Punjab National Bank, S S Mallikarjuna Rao, said that it is needed to maintain the quality of assets and raising capital.

A sectoral assessment has to be done and there is also a need to assess the damage caused by COVID-19 pandemic, Rao said.

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FOR RENT:

Two and half storeyed (1st to 3rd floor) complex is available for rent in the heart of Ranipool Bazaar (Opposite UCO Bank). The building area is 35'x60' appx. In each floor ad is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks tec. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

Riverside land [General] along Ra-nipool-Rumtek Highway near Adampool, stretching from the roadside down till the river bank. Total area measuring 0.2348 Hectares [approximately 25,274 sq ft]. Ideal for developing a Resort. Parties interested in purchasing the entire plot can contact 9083826462 and 9832556698. Brokers will not be entertained.

FLAT FOR SALE

4BHK flat, total area 2376 sqft
Ninety Bazaar, Near Paljor
Stadium, Gangtok
Contact: 9563083895

LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sqft and 50X30 sqft JunkeriDara, SamlikMarchak
Price negotiable Contact: 6296366498, 9641878315, 9593262407

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

Coconut Theatre connects the World Theatre through "Chai-Wai and Rangmanch - 2020" – The Show must go on!

RASHMIN MAJITHIA

During the lockdown, Chai-Wai & Rangmanch organised a series of live sessions by theatre practitioners.

Coconut Theatre embarked on this ambitious and challenging project during the current World-wide lockdown. It has developed an Intellectual Property titled - "Chai-Wai & Rangmanch - 2020" in association with Ticketninja.in, which comprises of one daily Online Session with a reputed Theatre Expert from India and various countries all over the world including the USA, UK, Australia, South Africa and UK. The sessions are live on the official Coconut Theatre Facebook Page at 6.00pm Indian Standard Time. Veteran Actors, Award Winning Playwrights & Directors, Make-up Specialists, Music Composers, Designers, Choreographers and Technicians shared their memorable experiences, as also their life changing inspirational moments. This collectors' item is an invaluable tool for any aspiring Theatre Student, Amateur Theatre Artist[s], Writers, Directors, Music Composers, Choreographers, Make-up Artists, Designers, Technicians and Theatre Groups and everyone connected with the theatre fraternity.

Managing Director of Coconut Media Box LLP, Rashmin Majithia shared that Chai-Wai & Rangmanch is the biggest activity for theatre practitioners, speakers from various cultures, age groups and despite not being conversant with the online process, willingly consented. A Few senior Theatre Experts who are 80+ years old too, enthusiastically joined the fray.

A few Respected names such as, Padma Shri & Sangeet Natak Akademi Award Winner, Rita Ganguly, MS Sathya, Bansi Kaul, Balwant Thakur, Manoj Joshi, Neelam Mansingh, Satish Alekar, Dadi Pudumjee and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award Winner, Dolly Ahluwalia, Prof Ashok Bhagat, Shri Prasanna, Suresh Sharma (Director – National School of Drama), Amod Bhatt, Anjana Puri, Neena Tiwana, Sanjay Upadhyay, Rohini Hattangady, Nadira Babbar, Himani Shivpuri have done their sessions.

Stalwart participants include Chandradasan, Rajat Kapoor, Sharman Joshi, Rajpal Yadav, Makarand Deshpande, Atul Satya Koushik, Arvind Gaur, Mahesh Dattani, KK Raina, Lillete Dubey, Rakesh Bedi, Sonali Kulkarni, Raghubir Yadav, Lubna Salim, Darshan Jariwala, Siddharth Randeria, C Basavalingiah, Ila Arun, Aanjan Srivastava, Alok Chatterjee, Salim Arif, Saif Hyder Hasan, Asif Ali Beg, Ranjit Kapoor, Tiku Talsania, Sachin Khedekar, Sandip Soparrkar, Vijay Kenkre, Nina Kulkarni, Jayati Bhatia, Suchitra Pillai, Vipul Mehta, Jimit Trivedi, Rajoo Barot, Ramesh Talwar, Kuldeep Singh, Chandrkant Kulkarni, Kewal Dhaliwal, Pallavi MD, Sumeet Raghavan, Ananth

Mahadevan, TS Nagabharana, Aparna Mehta many other senior Theatre experts have done their sessions.

Global Theatre Experts have been added to Coconut Theatre's repertoire, seeing Artistic Director Bruce Guthrie from UK (Head of Theatre & Film at National Centre for the Performing Arts – Mumbai), Artistic Director Jonathan Hollander from NYC, USA, Actor & Director Mark Wakeling from UK, Theatre Director Amr Kabeel Egypt, Choreographer Ingri Fiksdal from Norway, Writer-Director David Woods from Australia, International Production Designer Neil Patel from USA (Production Designer of Mughal-E-Azam The Musical), Megan Furniss – Playwright from South Africa, Actor-Director Glenn Hayden from Australia, Writer, Actor, Director Jessica Litwak from Californina, USA, Writer-Director Ana Cândida Carneiro from the USA, Three Times Tony Award Winner Scott Pask from USA, Actor & Director Motshabi Tyelele from South Africa and World Renowned Writer-Director Jeff Baron from the USA have done their sessions.

Upcoming sessions are with, Subhash Ghai (31 July), Padma Shri & Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Waman Kendre (Ex-Director – National School of Drama) (25 July), Popular Actress Sushma Seth (27 July), Dolly Thakore (29 July), Supriya Pathak (01 August), Famous Theatre Actors Shreyash Talpade (28 July), and Adil Hussain (26 July) and many more.

Rashmin Majithia is a Renowned Industrialist and also A Producer of Coconut Theatre, is going to do the last session (108th) of the first season of "Chai-Wai & Rangmanch - 2020". He will share his views as a Theatre Producer considering the current situation and his thoughts for starting the online theatre activity which shows his passion about performing arts. He will also take this opportunity to thank all the Indian and International Guest Speakers who have given their precious time for this initiative.

Unfortunately the Indian Theatre Industry has minimal support from the audience, corporates and other bodies compared to Bollywood, Sports, Music and other Digital Entertainment Platforms but this rising IP has made a promising start by showcasing the best names during this pandemic. The response too is very encouraging, Both Indian and International Theatre Fraternity appreciated the initiative of these sessions.

"The objective is to connect entire Theatre Fraternity LOCALLY & GLOBALLY be on one platform to emphasize avenue of learning also to build a career. Our vision is to achieve

108+ sessions by 03 Aug, 2020. This archive will be available shortly on Coconut Theatre YouTube Channel with no cost."



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fresh lot of rapid information

SGSS members sanitize Shantinagar

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Members of Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti volunteered to sanitize different areas of Shantinagar and premises of Karma Thujee Monastery today, a press release informs.

President, SGSS, Krishna Chettri, had requested MEO, Singtam Nagar Panchayat, Prakash Kharel, for sanitization of Shantinagar and its surroundings, the release mentions. MEO, Singtam



Nagar Panchayat, took sanitizing materials morning. Members of the Samiti who prompt action and sent to Shantinagar this

came forward for the noble cause are Arpan Pradhan, Nikhil Sundas, Suman Sunar and Dhiraj Pradhan. The team of four boys was led by Krishna Chettri.

Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti's president had directed the shops under its area to maintain social distance and informed the shopkeepers not to allow anyone without masks to visit the shop. A4 size posters on maintaining safe shopping were also distributed to the shopkeepers, reads the press release.

Only symptomatic cases to be treated at STNM Hospital

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

According to East District administration, asymptomatic patients are being shifted to COVID-19 care centres located in different

Subdivisions and only symptomatic cases are being shifted to STNM Hospital from these COVID-19 care centres. This is being done due to the increasing number of COVID cases in the state. As food with more

nutrients is necessary in these COVID care centres to ensure quick recovery of patients, East District administration has taken a decision to add half litre milk, fruits and one mineral water

bottle in the daily diet in addition to previous diet of breakfast, lunch, dinner and tea.

The administration has said that people can lodge a complaint with the in-charge of COVID care centre or concerned

SDM, if they are not given these items.

Further, it is informed that this arrangement is for COVID care centres and not for quarantine centres where previous diet system shall continue.

No buyers, huge losses: COVID turns Eid underwhelming for goat sellers

GAURAV SAINI

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): Shakeel Khan came from Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, around two weeks ago to sell his employer's goats at Delhi's famous caprine market near Jama Masjid. A week away from Eid al-Adha or Bakri Eid, he has not been able to find any buyers.

With a little money left on him, the 22-year-old spends his nights outside closed shops on Urdu Bazar Road near the famous mosque.

"Had I been able to sell some of my goats and earn something, I would have found a shelter nearby," he says.

The novel coronavirus pandemic has hit businesses and people who could afford four goats till last year do not have enough money to buy even one this Eid, says a buyer who approached Khan but could not seal the deal.

Khan's employer had fixed the price of a pair of goats, each weighing around 40 kg, at Rs 30,000. "The price is reasonable," he says.

"Last year, I sold eight goats for Rs 1.6 lakh -- Rs 20,000 a goat. This year, no buyer has offered more than Rs 10,000 a goat so far," says Khan, who has been a regular to the caprine market for five years.

Safeena, 53, and her daughter-in-law have come from Filmistan area in Old Delhi to buy a goat for the festival on July 31.

"We buy a goat every year. This year, our shop remained shut for most of the period," she says. "These are tough times. We had saved some money for the festival but we cannot afford to splurge."

Fariya, the daughter-in-law, says they bought

a goat for Rs 15,000 last year.

"This year, we have got only Rs 10,000. It has been hard to find a nice goat in this price range," she says, resting for a while on a bench outside a cloth shop in the market.

Zaid Malik, the cloth shop owner, says the administration did not give permission for selling of goats this year for fear of coronavirus.

"Compared to previous years, there is nothing in the market this time. It would bustle with activity and you won't find any empty space. Now, you can count the number of people on your fingers," he says.

In normal times, Mohammad Izhaar would have sold around 15-20 goats on the festival of sacrifice. This year, he has sold only a pair, that too at a loss.

"We have scaled down our prices. Our asking price was Rs 18,000, we got Rs 15,500," he says.

In a world without coronavirus, the pair would have fetched Rs 30,000-35,000, according to Izhaar.

"It takes around 18 months to prepare a goat. A lot goes into its upkeep. We spend around Rs 10,000 on food, which includes gram, wheat, maize, barley, per goat a year," Izhaar, a resident of Azadpur, says.

The goats are kept in a 1,300-square-foot plot his father has rented for Rs 7,000 a month.

Aslam Khan, 13, comes to the market around 10 am and leaves at 8 pm. But in over a week, he has not been able to find a buyer for any of his four goats.

"My brother drops me here every morning

and he himself goes to the Jafrabad market to sell goats. I don't have a place to sit, so I keep standing the whole time," he says.

"Only a few buyers have approached us so far. They, too, offered a very low price. If we are not able to sell them this year, we will keep them for next time," Khan says.

Mohammad Zahid, from Uttar Pradesh's Amroha, says he had brought five goats and have sold three of them at a loss of around Rs 18,000.

"I had no option but to sell them at a loss. The transport cost is so high given the circumstances. Tempo drivers have been asking for Rs 500-700 per goat. Also, police have to be taken care of," he says.

Business is lean and fuel prices have increased. Everyone is fighting for survival. The virus has already killed us all, Pawan Kumar, a tempo owner, says.

"This is the worst I have seen. People from Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and other states come here to sell goats. They would rent a place and stay in the city for a month at least. Only a few people have come from outside this year, due to strict restrictions in place," he says.

Shahbuddin Khan, a hardware shop owner, says an arrangement could have been made to avoid losses, but the government is unwilling.

"The municipal corporation could have used the grounds nearby to set up stalls for goat sellers, adhering to social distancing norms," he says. "Based on a token system, there could have been different slots for sellers to avoid overcrowding.

Department said.

Three out of the 10 new fatalities were from Ganjam, the worst-hit district by the pandemic, two each from Balasore and Sundargarh and one each from Gajapati, Jharsuguda and Rayagada, an official said. There are 8,650 active cases of the coronavirus

disease (COVID-19). With 1,320 new cases, the total number of infections rose to 24,013, the health official said.

As many as 887 of the new infections have been detected in different quarantine centres, while 433 were found through contact-tracing exercises, he said.

More parts of Arithang declared containment zones

GANGTOK, 25 JUL [IPR]: Following the detection of six new COVID positive cases from the Arithang area here, the east district administration has declared the Dorjee Building near the slaughter house, Vishal Gaon Upper Arithang and Gai Goth near Dhobi Dhara as containment zones.

Earthquake triggers landslides in Mizoram, 23rd to hit state in 5 weeks

AIZAWL, JULY 24 [PTI]: An earthquake of 3.8 magnitude shook east Mizoram's Champhai district on the Myanmar border on Friday, according to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS).

This is the 23rd quake to jolt the northeastern state in the last five weeks.

The quake on Friday occurred at 11.16 am and

the epicentre was 29 km southeast of Champhai, the NCS said.

The earthquake and heavy rains caused landslides at several places in the district, Champhai Deputy Commissioner Maria CT Zuali told PTI.

She said two buildings have been vacated and the water supply pipeline to Dungtlang village was damaged due to landslides.

Students make technology innovations to battle COVID-19

KOCHI, JULY 25 (PTI): From a mask-vending machine to a software that detects COVID-19, youngsters demonstrated an array of innovations on Saturday at an event to promote technological inventions vis--vis the pandemic.

The 'Innovations Unlocked Kerala Student Innovators Meet' by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) proved the quality of talent in countering the pandemic since the start of the nation-wide lockdown four months ago.

Also, the virtual event selected innovators to groom them as entrepreneurs.

More than 150 models were displayed at the interactive forum which featured 300 participants in the virtual expo held by KSUM in association with Wadhwani Foundation.

The foundation creates jobs for new-age enterprisers and TCS DISQ, an initiative of Tata Consultancy Service Foundation, to groom change-makers, a press release from KSUM said.

Among others, the students displayed cutting-edge equipment for emergency medical care, crowd control, artificial intelligence-based devices that function by maintaining social distancing, technology to sanitise

large spaces against the coronavirus, novel check-up methodology and improvised PPE kits, the release said.

Of the 150-plus items demonstrated, 21 were selected by the KSUM following an appraisal.

They include products by student-groups of various engineering colleges in the state, besides by higher secondary schools in Madappally and Meenangadi of north Malabar.

The selected groups become eligible for a three-month pre-incubation programme with support from leading technological and industrial establishments, the release said.

Earlier, State Higher Education Principal Secretary Dr Usha Titus, in her inaugural address, highlighted the need for a revamp of technological education so as to notice up- and coming talents and groom them.

New crises give rise to inventions, she said, adding that the government, with KSUMs cooperation, was ready to help civil engineering students planning to launch startups that are into landscaping.

KSUM is the state governments nodal agency for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities.

South police patrol 20 Mile



NAMCHI, 25 JUL [IPR]: The South District Police Department headed by SDPO [Ravangla] Sonam Thakarpa patrolled the footbridge at 20 Mile, Bardang, connecting South and East districts today. Keeping in view the guidelines of the State Government, strict patrolling will be done in coming days as well.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Treatment

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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



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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Disgustingly Compromised, Inadequately Incensed

We should not stop talking about sexual abuse of children

There was an incident not very long ago, could not have been more than five or six years back when a septuagenarian was beaten up by his nephew. When news of the incident first arrived, most people clucked at the degeneration of our times and of how age no longer commanded respect. As more details unraveled, while the sense of degeneration was reinforced, the sympathies had shifted. Apparently, the septuagenarian was a pedophile, and among the victims he had preyed upon was his nephew's child. The incident had come to light when parents of other victims had come to know of the pedophile among them and had lodged a police complaint. But that was still not when he was roughed up. Apparently, the matter was settled out of court when the extended family negotiated a "settlement" and a "punishment". The pervert was to be socially ostracized by the village and the family. The nephew eventually "lost it" when the predator was allowed back into the village within a few months on the justification that he was of advanced age and "repentant"!

It is worrying that most people still not see the depravity of what had been engineered in this case until the High Court took notice. While the cops were all fine with the "compromise" arranged in the child molestation case, they did their job and picked up the nephew on assault charges. When the High Court was hearing an appeal on the assault case, it learned of the obnoxious negotiations which had gone sour and resulted in the assault. The Court then ordered the cops to investigate the original case. One does not know what happened of that investigation, but this one episode which got "outed", should have opened the can of worms that the society at large does very well to keep packed in Sikkim. After all, this cannot be the only POCSO Act case that has been compromised.

The horrors that visit victims of child abuse are too inadequately handled by the society and its systems. Imagine the anger, frustration and hate that a victim will grow up into when s/he realizes that the perpetrator, even after being exposed and caught, was allowed to walk free without being held to account. It should worry Sikkim that the kind of subversion carried out in the case mentioned above although shocking and disturbing for some, are not necessarily rare. Criminal acts, especially offences against women and children, are more pervasive than accepted and unfortunately less prosecuted than is necessary for women and children to be made safe in this off-balance society. The criminally-inclined will continue to commit excesses because that is a tendency they have been allowed to nurture and get away with, and every time they are 'saved' from punishment, and victims refused the justice that the society owes them, the perpetrators are emboldened and the victims further smothered.

Institutions in our country are geared to instinctively circle the wagons around their own even when though it should be the victims who command all the sympathy. This attitude makes for a dangerous mix with the patriarchal instincts in which genuine sensitivity towards women and children becomes a stillborn pursuit. The incident shared here fleshes out all that is wrong with the tokenisms being paid to women and child welfare and amplify the societal failures and failure of organizations and committees specifically tasked with looking out for them. And let's accept it, even the commissions tasked with looking after the welfare and interests of women and children were not born out of the society's realization to have specialist organizations for the job. These organizations are there because a central rule mandates them and because there are funds to sustain them. While this is not to suggest that such organizations are useless, but it also needs to be accepted that they not very motivated either. Otherwise, "compromise" of any offence against women or children should attract immediate condemnation from such organizations. But why blame the organizations when the society itself conspires against its young so often?

Given the nexus of connections which most institutions and organizations and even the society at large have become, priorities are always misplaced and reprehensive responses unleashed often. These problems cannot be corrected with more rules and more laws – what is required is wider sensitivity and a clear checklist of due processes. Since individuals are routinely failing in what is expected of them, the institution should be made such that there is a prescribed code and a transparent process which needs to be followed whenever a complaint is lodged or an incident comes to light. Personal prejudices, and we are a nation which is deeply prejudiced on all issues, need to be snuffed out, and this will happen only when guidelines are detailed and digressions severely penalized. Until that happens tokenism will rule.

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How Earth's plastic pollution problem could look by 2040

COSTAS VELIS & ED COOK
THECONVERSATION.COM

During a visit to a bookstore a few weeks ago, we couldn't help but stare at a display unit featuring no fewer than ten books telling you how to rid plastics from your daily life. We're bombarded by information on the topic of marine litter and plastic pollution, but how much do we really know about the problem?

Think about other planetary challenges, like climate change or ozone layer depletion. Mature areas of research have developed around them, allowing scientists to identify where the gases that cause these problems come from, and how much reaches the atmosphere each year.

But when it comes to plastic pollution, we know close to nothing about how and where plastic waste is generated, managed, treated and disposed of, especially in low and middle income countries. As a result, we're struggling to limit the amount of litter accumulating in the environment.

Our research published in Science involved a herculean effort to spot, track and model the current and future flows of plastics into the world's land and waterbodies. We found that plastic entering the marine environment is set to double by 2040 and, unless the world acts, more than 1.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste will be dumped on land and in waterbodies.

By identifying the ways in which this litter is produced and distributed, we've also discovered how best to reduce the plastic deluge. In the process, we found the unsung heroes on the frontline

fighting the pollution crisis who could be the world's best hope of stemming the tide.

THE WORLD'S PLASTIC PROBLEM IN NUMBERS

We developed a model called Plastic-to-Ocean (P₂O) which combines years of accumulated knowledge on global flows of plastic. It compares our current production, use and management of waste with what is projected in the future.

Do you burn your waste in the garden or in the street? Do you drop it into the river? If you answered no to both of these questions then you are possibly one of the 5.5 billion people whose waste gets collected. If you were among the remaining two billion, what would you do with your uncollected waste? Would you make use of a nearby stream, cliff edge, or perhaps squirrel the odd bag in the woods after dusk?

More often than not, uncollected plastic waste is simply set on fire as a cost-free and effective method of disposal. Our model suggests that cumulatively, more than 2.2 billion tonnes of plastic will be open burned by 2040, far more than the 850 million tonnes that's anticipated to be dumped on land and the 480 million tonnes in rivers and seas.

Having tracked the sources of plastic items through the supply chain and their fate in the environment, we explored what might help reduce aquatic pollution. We found that the single most effective intervention is to provide a service for the two billion people who currently don't have their waste collected.

But, of the nine interventions we tested, none solved the problem

on their own. Only an integrated approach that in addition to increasing collection coverage includes interventions such as reducing demand for single-use and unrecyclable plastic and improving the business case for mechanical recycling, could be successful. For the countries suffering most from plastic pollution, this knowledge could offer a way forward.

But even in our best-case scenario, in which the world takes the kind of concerted and immediate action proposed in our study, approximately 710 million tonnes of plastic waste will be released into the environment by 2040. That may sound a lot, but it would mean an 80% reduction in the levels of plastic pollution compared to what will happen with no action over the next two decades.

COULD WASTE PICKERS SAVE THE DAY?

Our work also cast light on the contributions of 11 million waste pickers in low and middle-income countries. These informal workers collect waste items, including plastics, for recycling, to secure a livelihood for day-to-day survival. The model estimates that they may be responsible for 58% of all plastic waste collected for recycling worldwide – more than the combined formal collection services achieve throughout all the high-income countries put together.

Without this informal waste collection sector, the mass of plastic entering rivers and the ocean would be considerably greater. Their efforts should be integrated into municipal waste management plans, not only

to recognise their tremendous contribution but to improve the appalling safety standards that they currently endure.

Establishing a comprehensive baseline estimate of sources, stocks and flows of plastic pollution, and then projecting into the future, has been an immense task. When it comes to solid waste, the availability, accuracy and international compatibility of data is notoriously insufficient.

Plastic items occur throughout the world in tens of thousands of shapes, sizes, polymer types and additive combinations. There are also considerable differences in cultural attitudes towards the way waste is managed, how plastic products are consumed, and the types of infrastructure and equipment used to manage it when it becomes waste.

Our modelling effort was a delicate and tedious exercise of simplifying and generalising this complexity. To understand how reliable, accurate, and precise our findings are likely to be, think of the first models that estimated how sensitive the climate is to human influence back in the 1970s.

Hopefully, the strong evidence base we have presented today will inform a global strategy and strong local preventive action. The plastic pollution challenge can be substantially controlled within a generation's time. So, is anyone ready to act?

[Costas Velis is Lecturer in Resource Efficiency Systems, University of Leeds; Ed Cook is Research Fellow in Circular Economy Systems, University of Leeds]

The office is dead! Long live the office in a post-pandemic world

BETH HUMBERD, DEBORAH SALON & SCOTT F. LATHAM

THECONVERSATION.COM

The future of the office has become an open question after the coronavirus lockdown forced tens of millions of Americans to work from home. Will office workers flock back to their cubicles and water coolers when the pandemic ends? Or will employees want to hold on to their newfound freedom and flexibility, while employers eye the lower costs of the lack of a physical footprint?

At least a few companies have already answered this question: Twitter, for example, says most of its employees can continue working from home forever, making the office merely a place to meet clients. We asked three scholars to weigh in on the future of the office.

RELATIONSHIPS NEED PROXIMITY

BETH HUMBERD and SCOTT LATHAM, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Although we've seen numerous office epitaphs in recent weeks, we believe the pre-pandemic workspace isn't going away anytime soon. Why?

Organizational life is founded on relationships. Sure, the current remote work experiment has demonstrated that more jobs can be done virtually than many managers previously assumed. But jobs are comprised of tasks; organizations are comprised of relationships. And relationships require ongoing – and often unintended – interactions.

Decades of research provide important insight into how effective work relationships are built. We know that they require mutual trust and cooperation, and that physical proximity is critical to fostering trusting and cooperative relationships.

This is especially true in the knowledge and creative economies, as shared space promotes information sharing and collaboration. A 2009 study found that Google employees sharing physical space exchanged information more effectively than those located even on separate floors in the same building. A similar study from 2013 showed that when scientists had to walk further from the lab to places like the restroom or the printer, they developed more research collaborations. And a more recent study found that "water cooler" socialization was critical to new idea generation at business incubators, which support the growth of startup companies.

And as robots take over more human jobs thanks to automation and artificial intelligence, these relationships will matter more than ever. Our own research has found jobs that are inherently relational are more likely to endure.



So we believe that it's not the office itself that will remain but the necessity of physical proximity to keeping the modern organization – and our work relationships – running smoothly.

WORKER FLEXIBILITY IS HERE TO STAY

DEBORAH SALON, Arizona State University
Office employees want more flexibility in where they work. That's the main finding from a survey I'm conducting with other researchers at Arizona State University and the University of Illinois.

Our survey aims to understand how the nationwide lockdown that forced much of the professional workforce to telecommute changed employee views on going to the office, among other topics. The survey is ongoing and, if you are at least 18 and live in the U.S., you can take it online. The results reported below reflect nearly 2,100 responses collected from mid-April to mid-July and have been weighted to the U.S. population in terms of age, gender and education level.

Our data indicates that nearly two-thirds of those who still had jobs during the pandemic were almost exclusively working from home. That compares with just 13% of workers who said they did so even a few times a week pre-COVID-19.

Among those who had previously not regularly worked from home, 62% said they were enjoying the change, and 75% expect their employers to continue to provide flexibility in where they work after the pandemic has passed.

Of course, there may be a gap between employee expectations and the reality of what employers are willing to provide. One of the arguments companies have traditionally used in opposing offering workers more flexibility is the belief that they are less productive or efficient

working from home.

But even at a time when workers face many distractions, particularly those with young children, nearly two-thirds of our working respondents reported normal or above-normal productivity. This is consistent with prior psychological research on remote work that found that those who telecommute often perform about the same or somewhat better than their in-the-office colleagues. Workers in our survey credited not having to commute to the office and fewer distractions such as meetings for their increased productivity.

That's why I believe the future of office work is likely to be much more flexible than ever before. Overall, including those who previously worked from home, a full 26% said they plan to work remotely at least a few times each week when the pandemic is over – double the 13% that said they did so prior to it.

Only 9% of the workers we surveyed, however, said they want to completely abandon the traditional office. They seem to just want more balance. Given the option, many office workers would like to commute to a traditional office on some days and work from home on others.

With luck and a bit of good planning, I believe the U.S. workforce could become not only more productive post-pandemic, but also enjoy their lives just a little bit more.

[Beth Humbert is Associate Professor of Management, University of Massachusetts Lowell; Deborah Salon is Associate Professor of Transportation Planning, Arizona State University; Scott F. Latham is Associate Professor of Strategic Management, University of Massachusetts Lowell]

C'garh: Villagers attack four SECL officials

KORBA, JUL 25 (PTI) Four officials of the South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) were allegedly held hostage and assaulted by villagers in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred on July 23 night when the officials were visiting Malgaon village for carrying out pre-mining activities in the area acquired by the company for expansion of its Dipka coalfield, a police official said.

A case was registered against over two dozen villagers on Friday on a complaint lodged by SK Dewangan, General Manager (mining), Dipka project, he said.

Dewangan and other officials had gone to Malgaon for levelling work of a pond in the acquired land area when one Dilraj Singh, his brother and mother, and some locals reached the spot and tried to obstruct the work, the police official said quoting the complaint.

Villagers allegedly

held them hostage for about two hours and thrashed Dewangan, Mine Manager Manoj Kumar, Mine Security Officer DK Meshram and security incharge Ugrasen with sticks before releasing them, he added.

Singh and others have been booked under sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 506B (criminal intimidation), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 342 (wrongful confinement) of the Indian Penal Code, the official said.

No arrest is made so far.

Villagers had alleged that proper rehabilitation was not granted to the project-affected persons.

However, Dewangan said land was acquired in Malgaon, Reki, Haldibazar and Suwamudi villages in 1986 and full compensation was provided to villagers by the SECL.

3 daughters in a family test COVID-positive in Nagaland

DIMAPUR, JULY 23 [NAGALAND PAGE]: Three daughters in a family of five have tested COVID-19 positive after returning to Dimapur from their native village in Assam.

As reported earlier in Nagaland Page exclusively on July 21, the youngest daughter in the family, a 5-year old girl, had tested positive for COVID-19 in Dimapur on July 19, after staying for 9 days in a paid quarantine with family members. The minor girl was transferred to COVID Care Centre for further treatment with her mother, who volunteered to look after her daughter in the COVID CC.

On Friday, the other two daughters also tested positive while undergoing home quarantine at a reputed hotel in Dimapur. So far tests on parents of the three daughters have returned negative.

A source close to the

family said the family came from Hojai district of Assam on July 10 and were undergoing facility quarantine at a paid hotel.

"On the 11th day amongst the five family members the youngest daughter was tested positive and immediately she and her mother, though tested negative, were shifted to COVID Care Centre Dimapur," family source said.

The source close to the family told Nagaland Page today that the two eldest daughters – one aged 26 years and the other 18 – tested positive and are being shifted to 7th Mile COVID Care Centre.

"Their tests were taken four days back and today the results showed both the daughters as COVID-19 positive," the source said.

Sources said their parents tested negative in today's report and their samples were sent for retest.

Kolkata Police constable dies due to COVID-19



KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTI): A Kolkata Police constable succumbed to COVID-19 at a private hospital here, an officer said on Saturday.

Constable Krishna Kanta Barman posted at Hastings Police Station died on Friday, a senior officer of Kolkata Police said.

"He was suffering from COVID-19 for more than a week and succumbed to it last evening. His family will get Rs 10 lakh as part of the health insurance of the state government for COVID-19 warriors," he said.

So far, three Kolkata

Police personnel have died of COVID-19.

Officer-in-charge of Taltala Women's Police Station has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital, police sources said.

Currently, over 270 police personnel of the force are undergoing treatment for COVID-19 at different hospitals, they said.

So far, over 900 policemen including Kolkata Police personnel have been infected by the disease in West Bengal, the officer added.

Arunachal's COVID-19 tally crosses 1,000-mark with 65 fresh cases

ITANAGAR, JULY 25 [PTI]: Arunachal Pradesh's coronavirus tally crossed the 1,000-mark on Saturday as 65 more people, including 33 security personnel, tested positive for the disease, a Health Department official said. With the fresh infections, the total number of cases rose to 1,056, State Surveillance Officer Dr L Jampa said.

Of the new cases, 30 were reported from Papum Pare district, five from Tirap, three from Lohit, two from Lower Dibang Valley and one each from Namsai and West Kameng and 23 from the Capital Complex region, he said.

"All the 30 infected people in Papum Pare are Indo Tibetan Border Police personnel and they have been in a



quarantine centre, while the 23 cases in the Capital Complex have been detected from various areas of the region," he said.

Of the five fresh patients in Tirap, two are state police personnel, he said, adding that a healthcare worker, an employee of the Water Resources Department

and a returnee from Assam also tested positive for the disease in the district.

The three infected people in Lohit district are staffers of the Border Road Task Force, (BRTF). They had recently come from Uttar Pradesh and were in a quarantine centre, Jampa said.

The state surveillance

officer said the two patients from Roing in Lower Dibang Valley district are returnees from Assam, while the person from West Kameng is a staffer of the Army, who recently came from Andhra Pradesh.

The Namsai patient had also returned from Assam, he said.

"All, barring six, are asymptomatic and have been shifted to COVID Care Centres," Jampa said.

Arunachal Pradesh witnessed a spurt in coronavirus cases after residents of the state started returning from other parts of the country.

There has been a steep rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the state since July 1 as 865 people have so far tested positive for the disease during the current month, Jampa said.

The first COVID-19 case in the state was reported on April 2 and the person recovered on April 16. The state reported its second case after a gap of almost six weeks on May 24.

The Capital Complex,

comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, recorded the highest of 374 COVID-19 cases, followed by Papum Pare (57) Namsai (42), East Siang (39) and Changlang (20) districts.

Fifty-eight patients — 45 from the Capital Complex region, 10 from Changlang district, two from Lower Subansiri and one from Namsai — were discharged from hospitals on Friday, the official said.

The state now has 661 active cases, while 392 people have recovered from the disease and three died of the infection.

"The recovery rate in the state stands at 35 per cent," Jampa said, adding that 53,335 samples have been tested in the state so far.

Bengal wears deserted look on 2nd day of bi-weekly lockdown

KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTI): Normal life came to a grinding halt in West Bengal on Saturday as a complete lockdown was enforced across the state to break the chain of surging novel coronavirus cases.

All shops were shut and all modes of transport went off the roads as part of the state government's plan to clamp restrictions two days a week. A similar lockdown will take place next Wednesday.

Only medicine shops and health establishments were allowed to remain open during the lockdown

across the state.

Flight operations at the Kolkata airport were also suspended during the lockdown as the government had requested the Civil Aviation Ministry that no flights should operate during the lockdown.

Police patrolled all major traffic intersections in the metropolis to keep a check on people coming out on the streets without any valid reason. Barricades were also put up in various parts of the state to stop people from coming out of their homes, officials said.

Public and private offices were closed and public transport



was off the roads as the government has imposed restrictions on their plying. Commercial establishments and

markets were also closed. Several trains at Howrah and Sealdah stations have been also cancelled.

More than 3,800 people were arrested for flouting lockdown guidelines on Thursday when the first bi-weekly

lockdown was enforced.

West Bengal has so far registered 53,973 COVID-19 cases and 1,290 deaths till Friday.

India to handover 10 broad-gauge locos to B'desh

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): India will handover 10 broad-gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh on Monday, providing the neighbouring country mobility solutions for both intra-country and inter-country movement, the Railways said.

Senior dignitaries from both the countries are expected to flag off the handover, which will be conducted via video conferencing, according to the statement.

The dignitaries include foreign ministers, railways ministers and high commissioners of both the countries, Railway Board chairman and others officials at the local stations on both sides of the border, it said.

The physical location of the handover will be the Gede station of the Eastern Railway in West Bengal's Nadia district and the receiving station of Darshana on the Bangladesh side.

Bangladesh had sent a proposal to India in April last year for procurement of these locos, with 72 per cent of its present ones already crossing their economic life.

The 3300 HP

WDM3D locos being given to Bangladesh have a residual life of 28 years or more and are designed for a speed of 120 kmph. They are suitable for hauling freight as well as passenger trains and have a microprocessor-based control system.

"It will help in movement within Bangladesh as well as inter country movement," the statement said.

"The Railways has modified the locos to suit the maximum height restrictions in BR (Bangladesh Railway)," it said. "We are keen to partner with BR for supply and maintenance of all types of rolling stock"

These locos would provide improved train operations within the BR and also for interchange with the Indian Railways, and strengthen the partnership between both the transporters, according to the statement.

According to reports from Bangladesh, the BR had till May last year 178 metre-gauge (MG) locomotives, out of which 139 have crossed their 20-year economic life. Of its 90 BG locomotives, 55 have completed their economic life.



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The Premier League’s overachievers, underachievers and those on par

PAUL WILSON
LONDON, 25 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: League tables may never lie, though everyone knows they can be economical with the truth. By Sunday evening we will have our final Premier League table, after an extraordinarily difficult season is played out to a compromised but fair conclusion. Yet what the record books and finishing positions never quite reveal is what was expected of teams beforehand.

Some teams in the top half of the table will be disappointed with their place in the order of things, whereas some teams in the bottom half will be relieved. What follows is an attempt to break up the table into three groups: those who have done better than anticipated, those who have done worse and those who have simply completed the course with an acceptable but unspectacular score.

OVERACHIEVERS

1) **LIVERPOOL** Cynics might argue they have underachieved for the past 30 years, though when they finally got it right they blew everyone else away. Consistency is what marks out Jürgen Klopp's side: they would have won any other Premier League title with the 97 points they gained last year. This time they were confirmed champions with a ridiculous seven matches still to play, an outstanding achievement that deserved better than being witnessed only by empty stadiums.

2) **SHEFFIELD UNITED** Simply never looked like a newly promoted team. If the key to Premier League success is adapting quickly and looking like a side that truly belongs in the top flight, Marcelo Bielsa at Leeds could do a lot worse than asking

Chris Wilder for a few tips.

3) **WOLVES** Cannot reach the Champions League now, but they gave it a good go. Play the sort of football Arsenal and Everton fans would die for, and should take credit for finishing comfortably above those two clubs. Still in Europe and may even spring a surprise at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

4) **LEICESTER** Will be disappointed if they cannot seal Champions League football, though being in a position to try to claim it is an improvement on the drift of the post-title years. Even under Claudio Ranieri Leicester were never seen as a long-term top-four team; at present they are very close to achieving that goal.

5) **CHELSEA** Perhaps not the greatest season, though factor in a new young manager, a transfer ban and the excellence of Liverpool and Manchester City, and steady progress has been made with some statement signings already in the bag for next season. Frank Lampard says Champions League qualification is not the be-all and end-all, though it may not feel that way against Wolves.

6) **NEWCASTLE** Controversial this, because Toon fans want to do better than lower mid-table, but considering everyone had Newcastle down as relegation candidates at the start of the season, Steve Bruce has done a fair job. Not great, but better than expected.

PAR FOR THE COURSE

1) **MANCHESTER CITY** Should not be too downhearted about finishing second to Liverpool, especially as they are still in with a shout in this season's Champions League. Not quite as imperious as



in the recent past but still terrific on their day. Success in Europe, given their record, would nudge them into the overachievers class, though inevitably people would point to their spending and say about time.

2) **MANCHESTER UNITED** A satisfactory season for Ole Gunnar Solskjær in the end, even if an awful lot still rests on Sunday's result. At the beginning of the season, with doubts over the manager's future and questions over the club's transfer policy, most United fans would have gladly accepted third place on the final day. Well done Bruno Fernandes.

3) **BURNLEY** This is meant as a compliment, honestly, Mr Dyche. It is too easy to say Burnley punch above their weight – they have been doing it for years. A solid, mid-table Premier League outfit, they don't need patronising any more. Finishing around 10th is what is expected.

4) **SOUTHAMPTON** Thank goodness for Danny Ings. Turned round a disastrous start to the season but cannot be regarded as overachievers for

that fact alone. While Ralph Hasenhüttl seems well suited to the job, Southampton seem keen to recommence their (highly successful) sideline in selling players.

5) **NORWICH** Did not spend a great deal of money, which is fair enough, and did not adapt their game in any way to Premier League demands, which is harder to understand. Seemed happy enough to accept the quick return to the Championship that beckoned for most of the season.

6) **CRYSTAL PALACE** Too good to go down, not consistent enough for a top-half finish. Beating relegation while retaining a degree of dignity now seems their station in life, in addition to getting a decent price for Wilfried Zaha.

7) **BRIGHTON** Same as Palace, though their relegation worries lasted a little longer. Decent first season for Graham Potter, even promising at times, but Brighton need to strengthen if this is not to be the story of every season.

8) **ASTON VILLA** Easy to say they have underachieved considering the money spent last summer, but

when you come up via the play-offs a chance of last-day survival is about as much as can be reasonably asked. Deserve credit for sticking with their manager when others might have pressed the panic button.

UNDERACHIEVERS

1) **TOTTENHAM** Last season's Champions League runners-up will not even qualify for next term's competition, and José Mourinho cannot conceal his disdain for the Europa League. Or some of his own players, for that matter. Fair to say the club have failed to build on the promising foundations laid by Mauricio Pochettino.

2) **ARSENAL** Going into the last game five points behind Tottenham, who are themselves five points off the top four, is simply not acceptable, FA Cup final or not. There is an enormous amount of youthful potential in the squad, but it has not been properly exploited this season.

3) **EVERTON** Some would say the appointment of Carlo Ancelotti represented staggering overachievement, and

they might even be right, but in terms of results and the overall look of the side this has been one of the most disappointing of Goodison seasons.

4) **WEST HAM** Such consistent underachievers, a fight against relegation going into the last couple of weeks of the season might even be considered par for the course, but when the fans eventually come back it will be clear their dissatisfaction with their ground, their owners and their manager has not gone away.

5) **BOURNEMOUTH** Still in with a fighting chance of survival – anyone would be at Everton – but this has been a much harder season than previous ones in the top flight. Even Eddie Howe is finally beginning to look old.

6) **WATFORD** Where to begin? Seemed to have rescued themselves by bringing in Nigel Pearson, only to shunt him out with two games to go. Will need to improve on their body language from the last game to get a result at Arsenal. Possibly the club worst affected by the coronavirus shutdown.

Camps set to open after NFL, players’ union reach agreement

WASHINGTON, JUL 25 (AP): NFL training camps are set to open after the league and the players’ union reached agreement on several issues, including future salary cap mechanisms and how players can opt out of the upcoming season because of the coronavirus.

The NFL Players Association’s executive committee and 32 player representatives approved the offers Friday.

Players who decide they want to opt out have until Aug. 3 to do so, and they will receive a stipend from the owners. The amount of the stipend will be 350,000 for medical opt outs and 150,000 for voluntary opt outs, two people with knowledge of the decisions told The Associated Press.

The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the stipend amount was not made public.

That agreement eliminated one major obstacle to a full opening of training camps next week. Already, the sides had agreed to cancel all preseason games, as well as to a reduction in the number of roster spots in training camp from 90 to 80 though teams will have until Aug. 16 to get down to 80.

The NFLPA said in a statement on Twitter that its board of representatives adopted the proposed amendments to the CBA by a vote of 29-3.

The league also offered an extended acclimation period of 18 days for players, given that the coronavirus caused the cancellation of all offseason on-field activities at team facilities. Training camps are to open Tuesday, though the Texans and Chiefs, who meet in the season opener Sept. 10, have veterans scheduled to arrive this weekend

for COVID-19 testing.

We have worked collaboratively to develop a comprehensive set of protocols designed to minimize risk for fans, players, and club and league personnel, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement.

These plans have been guided by the medical directors of the NFL and the NFLPA and have been reviewed and endorsed by independent medical and public health experts, including the CDC, and many state and local public health officials.

Many economic issues were settled, including how to handle revenue losses that would result from games played without fans or even canceled games because of COVID-19. The league has proposed a minimum salary cap of 175 million for 2021; this season's cap is 198.2 million.

Should the 2021 salary cap decrease a very likely outcome caps through 2024 would be adjusted to cover some of that drop-off. That way, the cap wouldn't plummet too far.

The cap has increased exponentially since 2014, going up by 10 million or so annually.

Players will also get a prorated salary for games played if any games are canceled this season.

Practice squads will be increased to 16 players. Four such players could be protected weekly from being exposed to other teams.

Actual practices in camps won't begin for about three weeks.

The season will undoubtedly present new and additional challenges, Goodell said, but we are committed to playing a safe and complete 2020 season, culminating with the Super Bowl.

Anand crashes to fourth straight defeat in Legends of Chess tourney

CHENNAI, JUL 25 (PTI): Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand suffered his fourth straight defeat in the USD 150,000 Legends of Chess online tournament, going down 2-3 to Anish Giri of the Netherlands.

The former world champion Indian and Giri played out four draws before the Dutch player pulled off a win in the Armageddon game (a tie-break) late on Friday.

Anand, however, picked up his first point of the event. He remains at the bottom of the table. He had earlier lost to Peter Svidler, Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik.

The Chennai-

based Anand, who is making his maiden appearance at the Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour, settled for a 82-move draw in the opening game of the best-of-four contest.

The second game was a 49-move affair while the third and fourth games were drawn, setting the stage for the Armageddon.

Giri grabbed the decider with black pieces to secure victory and two points.

Anand meets Hungary's Peter Leko in the fifth round later on Saturday.

Russia's Peter



Svidler, who was in joint lead with Magnus Carlsen, lost to Ding Liren of China 1.5-2.5 to hand the sole lead to the Norwegian world No.1. Carlsen has 12 match points and is followed by Ian Nepomniachtchi

(11). It was Liren's first win in the tournament.

Carlsen had no troubles, thrashing veteran Israeli Boris Gelfand 3-0.

All the round-robin games are best-of-four

game contests.

Legends of Chess is a unique event where Carlsen, Liren, Nepomniachtchi and Giri, semifinalists at the Chessable Masters (part of the Magnus Carlsen Tour), received an

automatic invite and are up against six legends aged 40-52, who have been at the top of world chess at various points in their career.

The tournament is part of the Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour. The winner of this event will qualify for the USD 300,000 Grand Final scheduled from August 9 to 20.

Results: Round 4: Anish Giri beat Viswanathan Anand 3-2; Magnus Carlsen beat Boris Gelfand 3-0; Vladimir Kramnik beat Peter Leko 2.5-1.5; Ding Liren beat Peter Svidler 2.5-1.5; Ian Nepomniachtchi beat Vasyl Ivanchuk 2.5-1.5.

England releases five players from bio-secure bubble

MANCHESTER, JUL 25 (PTI): England have released five players from the bio-secure bubble here after they missed out on selection of the ongoing third Test against the West Indies.

Out of the five, batsman Joe Denly will join the white-ball training group ahead of the upcoming Ireland series.

The other four -- Dan Lawrence, Craig Overton, Ollie Robinson and Olly Stone -- have returned to their counties, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said.

The 34-year-old Denly played the first Test of the series before being dropped following the return of Joe Root from paternity leave.



“While Denly will join up with the England camp at the Ageas Bowl

on Monday ahead of the Royal London ODI Series, the other four players

will be available for their counties in the build-up to the start of English domestic season, which starts with the Bob Willis Trophy on 1 August,” the ECB said.

England had named an enlarged squad for the three-match Test series against the West Indies, with a number of players kept as reserves for any

possible requirement of COVID-19 substitutions.

Six back-up players remain at Emirates Old Trafford after England named their playing XI for the third Test which began on Friday.

England are scheduled to play three ODIs against Ireland at the Ageas Bowl at Southampton, starting on July 30.

India will be in top-10 in Los Angeles Olympics: Rijiju

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said India will be competing for a top-10 finish by the time the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics comes calling, riding the government's ambitious ‘Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme’.

“We will leave no stone unturned,” Rijiju said.

He said the “Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme” is scouting talent as young as 10-year-old and 12-year-old with an aim to prepare them for the Los Angeles Games.

He was speaking about the objectives and goals India wants to achieve in the coming years during the India Today Mindrocks event.

“We look forward and realise the dreams of every Indian to make India a great sporting powerhouse,” he said.

Rijiju said the talented youngsters will be guided by a world-class coaching facility during their journey to become world champions.

“Objectives are very clear, we have created the ‘Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme’ that

means those who are 10-13 years of age will be ready to become world champions by 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

“By starting the scheme we are identifying the young talents, it's a process of talent scouting at a young age and taking full responsibility of their training by bringing in world-class coaches.”

Rijiju added that steps like enhancing the skill sets of Indian coaches, removal of Rs 2-lakh salary cap for coaches and extension of coaching tenures will bring positive changes in the system.

“I have recently decided to extend the tenure of coaches, Indian coaches are being enhanced and the 2-lakh salary cap of coaches has also been removed.

“By 2028, the target of getting India in the top-10 of Olympics medal ranking will be realised. I am very clear. We started planning and executing those plans,” Rijiju said.

He also reiterated that there is a need to create a sports culture to help India becoming a sporting powerhouse.

A Texas hospital overwhelmed by the coronavirus may send some patients home to die

(CNN): Doctors at a Texas hospital along the US-Mexico border may decide to send coronavirus patients “home to die by their loved ones” due to limited resources, officials say.

Government and health officials in Starr County announced this week they are creating committees to review patients’ cases at the Starr County Memorial Hospital in Rio Grande City.

At least 50% of the patients admitted in the hospital’s emergency room have tested positive for Covid-19, Dr. Jose Vasquez, the county’s health authority, said in a news conference earlier this week.

“The situation is desperate,” he said.

This rural South Texas county began seeing an increase in positive cases about a month ago, Vasquez said, and the hospital admitted its first Covid-19 patient at that time.

The hospital quickly filled the eight beds in its Covid-19 unit, so it expanded to 17 and then 29 beds, Vasquez



said. About 33 medical workers, including medical practitioners and lab technicians, were deployed by the state to assist the hospital.

“Unfortunately, Starr County Memorial Hospital has limited resources and our doctors are going to have to decide who receives treatment, and who is sent home to die by their loved ones,” Starr County Judge Eloy Vera wrote in a Facebook post on Thursday. “This is what we did not want our community to experience.”

Vasquez said it was a difficult decision to start reviewing the cases but with limited resources,

officials have to consider who has a “the best chance” of survival.

“Those patients who most certainly don’t have any hope of improving, we believe they are better taken care of within their own family in the love of their own home rather than thousands of miles away, dying in a hospital room alone,” Vasquez said.

At least 40 new coronavirus cases were reported on Thursday in Starr County, bringing the county’s total to 1,701. There have been 17 deaths linked to the virus and 32 others are pending state confirmation, local

health officials said.

“When we talk about people who have died in our community, we are talking about uncles, cousins, siblings, a coworker, a relative,” Vasquez said. “We are talking about people who had a close relationship with any of us one way or another.”

An estimated 64,000 people live in Starr County, according to data by the US Census Bureau.

The pandemic surge has been particularly hard along the Texas-Mexico border. Starr County’s neighbor, Hidalgo County, has turned into one of the state’s main coronavirus hotspots.

Trump talks up his rule-cutting, but courts saying otherwise

WASHINGTON, JUL 25 (AP): President Donald Trump is positioning himself as a champion regulation-cutter in the leadup to the Nov. 3 election, but in between his showy red-tape-cutting events, his deregulatory agenda is taking a beating in the courts.

One day, he’s hailing a massive rollback to one of the nation’s most important environmental laws, which he hopes will speed up gas pipelines and all kinds of other big projects.

Another, he’s holding forth between two pickup trucks being used as props on the South Lawn of the White House a blue one piled with weights identified as government regulations and a red one, of course, that has been unburdened.

No other administration has done anywhere near, Trump declared.

But there’s a sharp disconnect between the president’s muscular rhetoric and the many courtroom battles he’s lost.

Trump’s deregulatory victories have been shrinking in number as courts uphold many of the lawsuits filed by states, environmental groups and others in response to his administration’s sometimes hastily engineered rollbacks.

Just hours before Trump’s South Lawn event, for example, a federal judge reinstated an Obama-era rule that required oil and gas companies operating on public lands to take reasonable measures to stop climate-damaging methane emissions.

The judge described the Trump administration’s legal groundwork to justify the rollback as wholly inadequate and backwards. An agency cannot flip-flop regulations on the whims of each new administration, she wrote.

The defeat was the

administration’s third major loss in federal courts in just one week.

Those were three really huge major decisions all across the span ... where the Trump administration was rebuked across the board,” said Vickie Patton, general counsel of the Environmental Defense Fund, who had a role in all three cases.

Bethany Davis Noll, director of New York University’s Institute for Policy Integrity, estimates the administration has emerged victorious in 15 percent of the regulatory lawsuits. Previous administrations generally won about 70 percent, she said.

To be sure, the president has had a few wins, and many important cases are not yet resolved.

Among the administration’s victories: It scrapped an Obama-era regulation that imposed tougher restrictions on hydraulic fracturing operations. Trump also signed 15 resolutions of disapproval that passed a Republican-led Congress, overturning an array of rules issued by federal agencies in the final months of Barack Obama’s presidency.

But where Trump has really made his mark is throttling back new regulations, said Cary Coglianese, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School and director of the Penn Program on Regulation.

There’s just been much less new regulation of great consequence during the last three and a half years, Coglianese said.

With respect to peeling back existing regulations, Coglianese finds Trump efforts to be limited and mostly aimed at undoing the work of his predecessor.

That includes throwing out Obama’s legacy efforts to moderate climate change by mandating far more fuel-efficient vehicles and

setting the first limits on carbon pollution from U.S. power plants.

Other administration efforts would greatly weaken the scope of two laws that have served as the foundation for a half-century of public health and environmental regulation, removing federal protections for millions of miles of waterways and wetlands and reining in environmental reviews and public input for major projects.

Among modern-day presidents, Coglianese said, Democrat Jimmy Carter was probably the most impactful, deregulating the airline, trucking and railroad industries. Democrat Bill Clinton systematically got rid of outdated regulations through a reinventing government initiative.

With Trump, there’s a lot more smoke-and-mirrors to the deregulatory picture than the administration paints, Coglianese said. It’s certainly not at all the driver of economic growth during the pre-COVID period of the administration and it’s certainly not enough to take us out of the economic troubles we find ourselves in. The president early in his administration directed agencies to scrap two regulations for every new one they create. The White House said last week that it has taken seven deregulatory actions for every significant new rule.

But even the White House’s own records reflect that many of those rule-cutting measures were minor. The ratio falls to 2 to 1 over the past two years when only significant rules are considered.

The president’s pose between the two pickups was designed as a reminder to supporters not as an overture to win over new ones that if you distrust regulations, Trump is still your guy, said Daniel Bosch, who tracks regulatory policy at the conservative American Action Forum.

Australia declares ‘there is no legal basis’ to Beijing’s claims in South China Sea

Australia says China’s claims to disputed islands are ‘invalid’ and are not consistent with UN convention on law of the sea

Australia has declared “there is no legal basis” to China’s territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea, marking an escalation of recent tensions with Beijing and bringing Canberra further in line with Washington.

The declaration, made in a submission to the United Nations on Thursday, comes after the United States hardened its position earlier this month, accusing Beijing of a “completely unlawful ... campaign of bullying” to control the sea.

Australia’s shift in position comes as Australia’s foreign affairs minister, Marise Payne, and the defence minister, Linda Reynolds, prepare to travel to Washington next week to meet with the US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, and the secretary of defence, Mark Esper, for the 2020 Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (Ausmin).

The declaration to the UN said: “Australia rejects China’s claim to ‘historic rights’ or ‘maritime rights and interests’ as established in the ‘long course of historical practice’ in the South China Sea.”

Australia’s declaration mentioned the objections and complaints held by the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia in regards to Beijing’s actions in the South China Sea, and “rejects” the validity of “land building activities” used to create artificial islands.

The declaration said Australia does not accept China’s claim of sovereignty over the Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands, after



Australian warships encountered China’s navy near the Spratly Islands earlier this month when taking part in drills with Japan and the United States in the Philippines Sea.

It notes “the Tribunal in the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award found these claims to be inconsistent with UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and, to the extent of that inconsistency, invalid”.

“There is no legal basis for China to draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of maritime features or ‘island groups’ in the South China Sea, including around the ‘Four Sha’ or ‘continental’ or ‘outlying’ archipelagos,” it said.

“Australia rejects any claims to internal waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf based on such straight baselines.

“Australia also rejects China’s claims to maritime zones generated by submerged features, or low-tide elevations in a manner inconsistent with UNCLOS. Land building activities or other forms of artificial transformation cannot change the classification

of a feature under UNCLOS ... the Australian government does not accept that artificially transformed features can ever acquire the status of an island.”

Earlier on Saturday, Payne and Reynolds said “discussions at Ausmin 2020 will centre on our shared efforts towards a stable, resilient, open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific, particularly in the context of the impact of Covid-19”.

“Our relationship is built on our shared values, and a shared understanding of the importance of maintaining presence and leadership in our region.

“In the face of an increasingly complex and contested regional environment, it is vital we continue working together across the breadth of our relationship.”

The joint statement also reiterated that “the United States remains by far Australia’s largest source of foreign investment”.

The ministers also wrote an opinion piece in Saturday’s the Australian newspaper noting “coercive actions in the South China Sea, such as the escalation of disputes and militarisation of disputed features,

continue to create tensions that destabilises the region”.

The opposition leader, Anthony Albanese, said Australia needed to defend the “national interest” when asked about the change in position on Saturday morning.

“We also need to stand up for international law,” he said. “And the international law of the sea provides for freedom of navigation which is absolutely critical to international trade.”

Tensions between Australia and China escalated earlier this year as Canberra pushed for an inquiry into Beijing’s initial handling of the Covid-19 outbreak, with Australia’s trade minister, Simon Birmingham, complaining his Chinese counterpart would not answer his calls in May.

Since then, China has issued a warning to its citizens, and lucrative international student market, not to travel to Australia out of fears of racism. In June, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian accused Australia of mass espionage and of “stoking confrontation”.

Rising tensions have prompted Australian business leaders, who are worried further hostilities could damage

exports to China, to call for a “separation of powers” between Australia’s foreign relations and trade ties.

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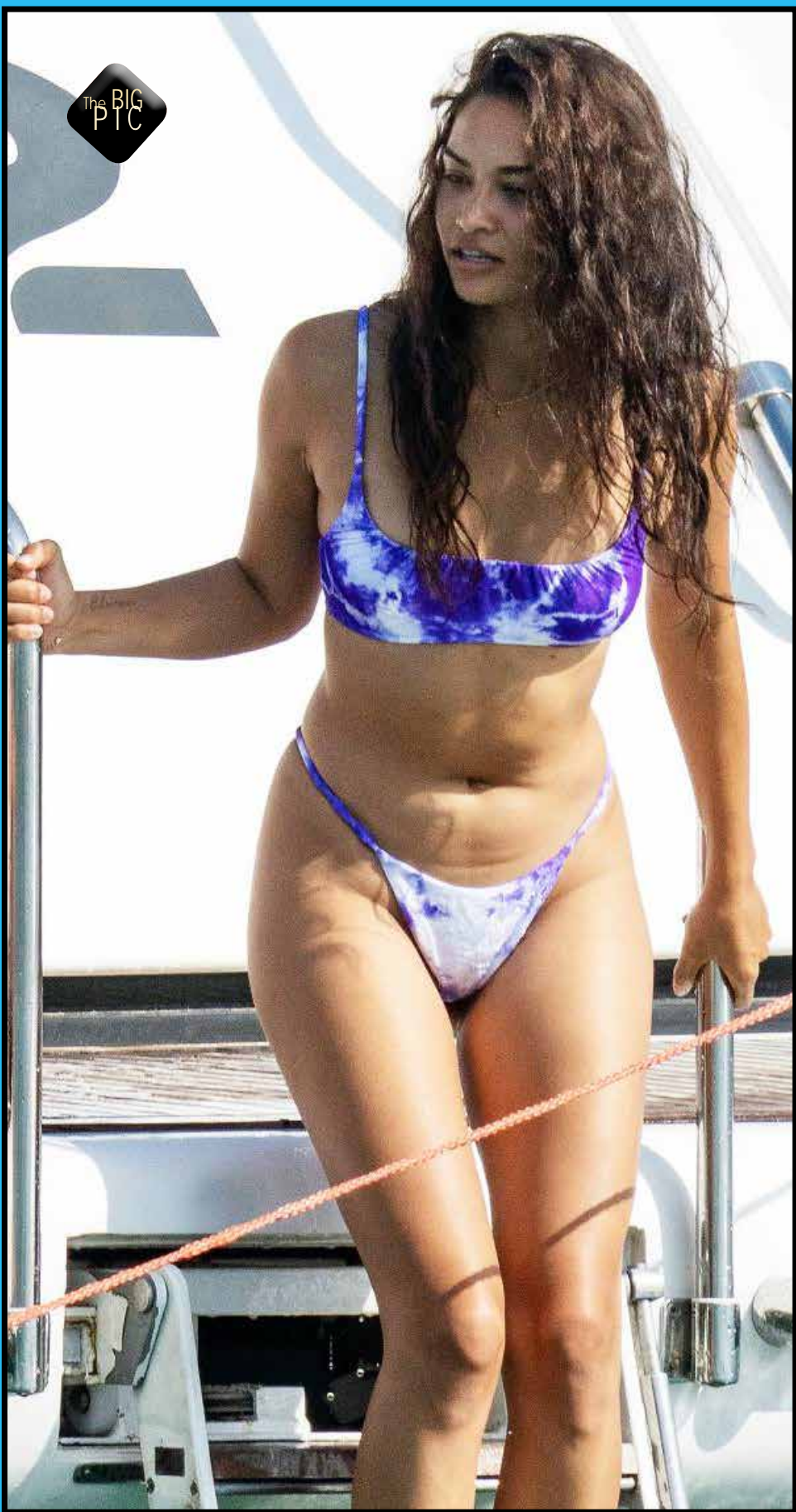
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SummitTIMES



Bikini Beauty! Model Shanina Shaik wore a purple and white tie-dyed bikini at Club 55 in St Tropez.

Nina Dobrev to headline series adaptation of ‘Woman 99’

LOS ANGELES, JUL 25 (PTI): Actor Nina Dobrev will be playing the lead role in a series based on Greer Macallister’s bestseller novel “Woman 99”.

According to Deadline, the project is being developed by Bruna Papandrea’s Made Up Stories in partnership with Endeavor Content.

Macallister’s book, which was published in March 2019, follows a young woman whose quest is to free her sister from an infamous insane asylum, risking her sanity, safety, and life.

“Greer’s gripping novel has so many elements that I love including a courageous heroine, the mighty bond of sisters and the power of perseverance, all set against a heartbreaking backdrop exploring the historical treatment of women cast off from society,” Papandrea said in a statement.

Dobrev, best known for starring in movies such as “The Perks of Being a Wallflower”, “Flatliners” and “XXX: Return of Xander Cage”,



will also serve as executive producer. “It’s so important to tell women’s stories written by women with women for women. Unfortunately, history continues to repeat itself, and Woman 99 explores themes of mental illness, societal inequality, and injustice that make this cautionary tale feel hauntingly relevant even centuries after the story takes place,” the actor said. Made Up Stories’ Steve Hutensky and Casey Haver also will serve as executive producers, and Janice Park will produce.

ARIES: Who’s to say what destiny had in mind when she dealt you a certain set of cards? But there is a cosmic intelligence out there that knows things that you and I don’t. Instead of going down the rabbit hole of negative emotions, open your mind to what your circumstances are pointing you towards. There’s a lesson in here for you, Aries, one that will help you clear karmic baggage and ascend to the next level.

TAURUS: They say ‘hurt people, hurt people’ for a reason, Taurus, a phrase that is beginning to hold true for when you are in your karmic journey. The cards are urging you to become aware of the wounds from your past that are bleeding into your present, wounds that are becoming the reason for your cold and calculated behaviour. Put yourself in the shoes of another person before you act unconsciously or leave scars behind.

GEMINI: We all love our stories, don’t we? Stories that portray us as the victims of our circumstances. But, every thought we put out there is charged with intention. In other words, we literally ‘think’ our world into being. Instead of going the self-destructive route, use the power of your imagination to create a bank of positive thoughts.

CANCER: If you feel like inspiration has been playing the role of the elusive lover, it’s time to change the approach a little. Instead of running around in circles, engage in something that’s unrelated to the given project. Working with your hands is a wonderful way to get out your head. So, bring out your tool kit, painting supplies, or simply do the dishes.

LEO: The Universe is in the mood to deliver one truth bomb after another. So who are you if not who you were taught to be? Learn to differentiate between the voice of wisdom and the voice of conditioning, Leo. Stripping away the layers may cause pain in the beginning, but it is what will liberate you ultimately. Some of you may feel inspired to speak your truth and share your awakening story.

VIRGO: It’s funny how we fear joy, and worry about its transient nature, when it is in fact our natural state of being—an indicator that we are in alignment with the divine plan written in the stars for us. Breathe out the worries and accept the joy and abundance that are being offered to you right now. There’s a lot more where that came from! Your interpersonal relationships are also taking centre stage at this moment.

LIBRA: We’ve grown up to believe that vulnerability is for the faint-hearted, that fear and shame are meant to be bottled up and never spoken about in public. But what Dr Brené Brown, known for her extensive research on the subject, says is that vulnerability is also the birthplace of joy, belonging, creativity, authenticity, and love.

SCORPIO: Remember when you thought you were *too smart*, *too outgoing*, *too bossy*, *too big* or *too sassy* for your own good? Truth is, you’re all of those things and more. Your personality tends to outshine all others in the room. But you no longer feel the need to apologise for who you are or dim your light to fit in.

SAGITTARIUS: So you took on more than you were prepared for. But, there’s no need to crumble under the weight of this responsibility. Have an open and honest conversation with those around you. Ask for help where you need to (without giving yourself grief about this). Trust that the support you require will come to you unexpectedly when you open yourself. Cleansing and purging could be a theme for those dealing with emotional baggage.

CAPRICORN: If you have a roof over your head, food on your plate,

and a handful of people who love you unconditionally, you are blessed, Capricorn. It’s true that things are not going according to the plan, especially on the work and money front, but the good stuff is what you’re being asked to focus on. Often, we take the small things for granted, but they’re the ones that make our lives worth living. So, give thanks for everything, and know that in doing so you are aligning yourself with the energy of abundance.

AQUARIUS: Sometimes we get so caught up in fulfilling our dreams that we forget to notice all the ways in which they are coming to fruition. Aquarius, take a moment to observe and appreciate the life you have created. Your hard work is paying off—in this moment. Let the harvest inspire you to keep putting in the work and create the abundance you desire. The challenges you’re being presented with will require you to think on your feet.

PISCES: Robert Evans once said, “There are three sides to every story: my side, your side, and the truth.” This is just the wisdom you want to apply to your current circumstances. Don’t let judgements and biases colour your lens. Think clearly and objectively. As the mediator, you will find that the responsibility of restoring peace and harmony rests on your shoulders. Try to look at challenges in your own life objectively as well.

4 Things Mark Cuban Says You Should Do With Your MoneyThe ‘Shark Tank’ investor and Dallas Mavericks owner offers some surprisingly down-to-earth personal finance advice.

If you’re going to take personal finance advice from anyone, you can’t do much better than Mark Cuban. The Shark Tank shark and Dallas Mavericks owner sold his first startup to CompuServe in 1990 for \$6 million. Then he sold his second business to Yahoo for \$5.9 million in 1999. Since then he’s started or acquired several other businesses and invested in many more. His current net worth is estimated at about \$4.2 billion.

For someone who’s gotten extremely rich taking risks on a lot of investments, Cuban has some surprisingly down-to-earth advice to share. The personal finance site GOBankingRates has carefully reviewed Cuban’s book, blog, and interviews, distilling out 20 pieces of financial advice he’s offered over the past few years. You can find the full list here. These are some of his best tips.

1. Start by paying off all debt. “The best investment you can make is paying off your credit cards, paying off whatever debt you have,” Cuban said in an interview with MarketWatch. “If you have a student loan with a 7 percent interest rate, if you pay off that loan, you’re making 7 percent, that’s your immediate return, which is a lot safer than picking a stock, or trying to pick real estate, or whatever it may be.”
2. Save six months of income. Credit cards, of course, have a much higher interest rate so there’s an even bigger benefit in getting them paid off. “Using a credit card is OK if you pay it off at the end of the month,” Cuban told an interviewer from Money. “Just recognize that the 18 or 20 or 30 percent you’re paying in credit card debt is going to cost you a lot more than you ever could earn anywhere else.” For debt that can’t be quickly paid off (a mortgage or student loan, for example) he suggested taking



advantage of low interest rates during economic down times to refinance.

You should try to save up six months of income and keep it available, Cuban told Vanity Fair. “If you don’t like your job at some point or you get fired or you have to move or something goes wrong, you’re going to need at least six months income,” he explained.

3. It’s OK to make risky investments, but they should only be 10 percent of the total.

Self-made millionaires and billionaires got there by taking calculated risks, Cuban acknowledges. So investing in something completely risky is just fine -- so long as you limit it to only 10 percent of your overall investments. “If you’re a true adventurer and you really want to throw the Hail Mary, you might take 10 percent and put it in bitcoin or Ethereum, but if you do that, you’ve got to pretend you’ve already lost your money,” Cuban said in that same Vanity Fair video. “It’s like collecting art, it’s like collecting baseball

cards, it’s like collecting shoes.” In other words, “It’s a flyer, but I’d limit it to 10 percent.”

What should you do with the other 90 percent? Put it into the cheapest index fund tied to the S&P 500 that you can find, he says.

4. Shop for discounts.Is this really personal finance advice? Yes, Cuban says. It’s tough to make a high rate of return in today’s investment climate, so you could be better off, say, buying two years worth of toothpaste if you find it at 50 percent off.

“Saving 15 percent on \$1,000 worth of items you know you will absolutely spend money on is a better return on your money than making 15 percent in a year on a \$1,000 investment because you don’t pay taxes on it,” he explained in a blog post.

You don’t really think of bringing home bulk items from Costco in the same way that you do putting money into a mutual fund. But look at it the way Cuban does, and suddenly it makes perfect sense.

Melanie Laurent to lead Netflix feature ‘02’

LOS ANGELES, JUL 25 (PTI): “6 Underground” actor Melanie Laurent is set to star in Netflix’s upcoming survival thriller “02”.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, filmmaker Alexander Aja, best known for “Crawl” and “Piranha 3D”, will direct the movie based on Christie LeBlanc’s original script which

was on The Black List.

The project marks Aja’s return to French-language films after a gap of 15 years.

Laurent will topline a cast which also includes actors Mathieu Amalric and Malik Zidi.

The film’s story centres on a young woman who wakes up in a medical cryo

unit. She doesn’t remember who she is or how she ended up sequestered in a box no larger than a coffin.

As she’s running out of oxygen, she must rebuild her memory to find a way out of her nightmare.

The film will be produced by Vincent Maraval, Brahim Chioua and Noemie Devide for Getaway Films.

Anurag Kashyap apologises after Ayesha Shroff tells him to keep Tiger Shroff out of ‘nepotism’ controversy

After filmmaker Anurag Kashyap shared a news article about Tiger Shroff to talk about nepotism in the industry, the Baaghi actor’s mother Ayesha Shroff responded and said, “Don’t involve my kid in this.”

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, who has helmed films like Gangs of Wasseypur, Bombay Talkies, and Bombay Velvet among others, has been quite vocal about the existence of nepotism and favouritism in Bollywood. After Sushant Singh Rajput’s shocking and sudden demise, the entire film industry came under criticism for various reasons. And currently, the industry is divided into two. While some are blaming nepotism for Sushant’s demise, others are talking about mental health and how it has nothing to do with nepotism.

Recently, Anurag Kashyap tweeted an article about Tiger Shroff and Taimur Ali Khan and he questioned paps for giving them coverage. He also blamed the audience for supporting nepotism by giving attention and fame to star kids.

In a tweet, Anurag wrote, “This is nepotism by media ..? Why?? Because this is what you the audience wants to see... So isn’t it nepotism by you the audience too??” (sic).

After Jackie Shroff’s wife and Tiger’s mom Ayesha Shroff saw the tweet, she defended her son and asked the director to



not involve him in the nepotism controversy.

Ayesha’s reply read, “Yo! Don’t involve my kid in this!! he’s here on his own hard work entirely.” (sic).

In a few hours, Anurag replied to Ayesha and apologised to her on his tweet. He wrote, “I am sorry Ayesha .. I meant it for how media chases “Taimur”. Sorry to have hurt you . Just read this”

Anurag is constantly tweeting from his profile to talk about nepotism. He also gave an interview recently to express his views on mental health, Kangana Ranaut’s recent tiffs with Taapsee Pannu and Swara Bhasker and much more. He stated that nepotism does exist in the industry, however, talent excels privileges.

Anurag last helmed web film Choked.