



**KILLING OFF WOLVERINE
IN 'LOGAN' WAS LOGICAL,
SAYS JAMES MANGOLD**

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**CORONAVIRUS HAS TURNED RETAIL
THERAPY INTO RETAIL ANXIETY
– KEEPING CUSTOMERS CALM
WILL BE KEY TO CARRYING ON**

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SOMETHING GREAT: NEVE CAMPBELL
ON 'SCREAM' REBOOT**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Swarms of locusts enter Jaipur residential areas

JAIPUR, MAY 25 (PTI): Swarms of locusts entered some residential areas of the city on Monday, presenting the local people with an unusual sight.

Locusts normally affect districts in western Rajasthan but this time the swarms have travelled as far as Jaipur city. The swarms later headed towards Dausa district.

The swarms are travelling farther and damaging trees as there are no standing crops for them to feed on, an official said.

In Jaipur's Murlipura and Vidhyadhar Nagar areas, people beat 'thalis' at the locusts that had settled on walls and trees, hoping to make them move on.

The menace of locust has spread to 18 districts of Rajasthan and they are rapidly travelling in search of food, Om Prakash, the commissioner of state agriculture department, told PTI.

He said the swarms were in Nagaur and reached Jaipur and nearby areas on Sunday. They were seen in residential areas of the city on Monday and then they moved towards Dausa, Prakash said.

There is no standing crop on ground so they are staying on large trees and moving fast. Locust control teams conducted operations by sprinkling pesticide in Jaipur last night and today remaining swarms have moved towards Dausa, he said.

Centre's Locust Warning Organisation in Jodhpur and the state agriculture department are working in coordination to handle the locust attack issue.

The latest such attack occurred on April 11 when the swarms entered from Pakistan and damaged cotton crops in Ganganagar to some extent.

The swarms later travelled to various other districts and have now crossed Jaipur.

Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria conducted field visit and met the farmers.

The director of agriculture department informed that 200 teams are working in the field to monitor the movement of locusts and nearly 800 tractor-mounted sprayers are being used.

He said, fire department is also involved in the operations against the locusts.

Prakash said the swarms have covered almost 54,000 hectare area in the state this time and containment operations were conducted in 40,000 hectare area.

Passang Sherpa proposes fact-finding team to study COVID's impact on Sikkim

"OPPOSITION RECEIVED MORE VOTES THAN SKM IN 2019, HENCE HAS A BIGGER RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE PEOPLE"

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 25 MAY:**

Passang Sherpa, who had contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections as an independent candidate and has been a regular political commentator, today blamed the State Government's self-aggrandizing instinct for having compromised the State's efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic or even recognize its impact on the state's economy.

He announced plans to constitute a fact-finding committee with representatives from different political parties and social organisations to understand the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the State.

Addressing a press conference

here today, Mr Sherpa accused the state government of negligence in evacuating stranded Sikkimese, a casual approach which made the process traumatic for the returning Sikkimese.

Mentioning how the returning Sikkimese were heckled en route and targeted with racial slurs, he rued that there was still word on whether the State Government has spoken to government's where these incidents occurred and ensured better security for returning Sikkimese.

He went on to allege that the government arrangement for paid and facility quarantine options revealed class snobbery in which the more privileged can isolate themselves in a single room of a star hotel while the poor have to stay quarantined in dormitories.

Not only was this offensive, it was also unsafe since it increased the chances of transmission, he added.

"We have been accommodating upto 2 lakh guests in our hotels during tourism season so the government



could easily have provided free quarantine facility in these hotels, and yet it opted to go for a class differential," he said.

The lack of an informed plan was also obvious in how returning Sikkimese are being herded together in quarantine centres irrespective of where they have returned from.

Keeping people who have

returned from red, orange and green zones in the same centre increases the chances of transmission and this should have been avoided, he stressed.

He also criticized the state government not having established testing facilities at Rangpo and Melli check-posts which would have ensured better screening of arrivals.

already deciding longterm plans even though the ERC is yet to submit its report.

"We urged the government to allow us to constitute a fact-finding team to find out the issues and problems of the people of Sikkim during the lockdown to bring it to the notice of the government but the administration did not allow us," Mr Sherpa said.

He added that with the relaxations in the lockdown it was important to take the views and suggestions of the people.

"We are calling a meeting of representatives of different opposition political parties and organisations. Sikkim Krantikari Morcha formed the government with 46% of vote share while opposition received 54% of the votes so the opposition has a big responsibility towards the people and needs to move beyond social media and into the society now," he said.

He added the fact-finding committee will prepare a report by going to different sections of the people and taking their feedback.

Viral Lab passes validation test, another test to go

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 MAY:**

In his daily bulletin, Health Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia today informed that the Viral Research and Diagnostic Lab has passed the validation test conducted today and now the confirmatory gene test will be held on Tuesday.

In the validation test, samples were sent to the Viral Lab at STNM Hospital from North Bengal Medical College for testing. The samples were tested and results matched with the results already available with the NBMC. The Viral Lab here passed this validation test conducted today.

However, the lab has to also undergo the "con-

firmatory gene test", he informed.

"After passing the gene test, ICMR will give us access to its website and after we get the RNA extraction kits we will be able to conduct tests here. Hopefully we will be able to complete the process by Tuesday night," said Dr Bhutia.

Dr PT Bhutia today informed that seven persons are admitted at the COVID19 Unit in STNM Hospital, Socheygang, which includes the first COVID19 patient. There are three persons who had returned from Delhi recently who have all tested negative in the Trunat testing and one of them is suspected to

be suffering from Tuberculosis. Another person who had come into contact with the COVID19 patient has also been admitted although he tested negative in the Trunat testing. While two persons were admitted late in the evening and will undergo tests on Tuesday.

It may be mentioned that the top 3 floors of STNM hospital have been converted into COVID unit. Level 7 houses the ICU, level 8 the isolation ward and level 9 is for suspected cases of COVID19.

Meanwhile, 37 contacts of the COVID positive patient have tested negative.

Indra Hang writes to I&B Minister against Pataal Lok

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 MAY:**

Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba, has written to the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Prakash Javadekar, objecting to what he sees as a sexist slur targeting the Nepali community in a web-series currently streaming on Amazon Prime.

The MP shot off the letter on Sunday and has called on the Union Minister to look into the matter and take necessary action against the makers of Pataal Lok, the web-series in question.

"Peaceful character

and the humility of the Nepali speaking population has been provoked by this sexist remark. This is totally objectionable and highly condemnable," the MP adds in a press release issued today.

Highlighting that Nepali is one of the 22 languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India with 10.5 million people speaking the language as their mother tongue, the release stresses that the derogatory and offensive label tagged in the scene in question has not only hurt the senti-

ments of the community but has also revealed the racist stereotyping that members of the Nepali community and others from the northeast region have been suffering by way of racial assaults owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The release adds that despite the high number of Nepali-speaking Gorkha jawans committed to protect the nation, the identity and image of Nepali-speaking Gorkhas have been compromised with such references [in the web series].

"Being an MP in the 17th Lok Sabha from Sik-

kim parliamentary constituency where Nepali is mother tongue to majority of the population, I condemn the act of sexist slur hurled against us," the release adds.

With this, three MPs from the region have written against the web series demanding the dialogue be beeped out along with the subtitles and the makers be made to apologise to the community. Other MPs who have officially complained against Pataal Lok are Darjeeling MP Raju Bista and MP from Kaliabor in Assam, Gaurav Gogoi.

Record 6,977 new COVID-19 cases in India in last 24 hours; death toll climbs to 4,021

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 (PTI): India registered biggest single day spike of COVID-19 cases for the fourth consecutive day on Monday with 6,977 new infections, reported in the last 24 hours, taking the country's tally to 1,38,845, while the death toll rose to 4,021, according to the Union Health Ministry.

A total 154 deaths were reported in the last 24 hours till Monday 8 am.

The number of active COVID-19 cases climbed to 77,103 while 57,720 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, the ministry said.

"Thus, around 41.57 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said. The total confirmed cases includes foreigners.

Of the 154 deaths reported since Sunday morning, 58 were from Maharashtra, 30 from Delhi, 29 from Gujarat, nine in Madhya Pradesh, eight from Tamil Nadu, six from Uttar Pradesh, four from Telangana, three each from Rajast-



han and West Bengal, two from Bihar and one each from Punjab and Uttarakhand.

Of the total 4,021 fatalities, Maharashtra tops tally with 1,635 deaths followed by Gujarat at 858 deaths, Madhya Pradesh at 290, West Bengal at 272, Delhi at 261, Rajasthan at 163, Uttar Pradesh at 161, Tamil Nadu at 111 and Andhra Pradesh at 56.

The death toll reached 53 in Telangana, 42 in Karnataka and 40 in Punjab.

Jammu and Kashmir has re-

ported 21 fatalities due to the disease, Haryana has 16 deaths while Bihar has registered 13 and Odisha has seven deaths.

Kerala, Jharkhand and Assam have reported four deaths each so far.

Chandigarh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh each have recorded three COVID-19 fatalities each while Meghalaya has reported one fatality so far, according to the ministry data.

According to the ministry's website, more than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to co-morbidities.

Two feared dead in landslide at Bey

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 24 MAY:**

A landslide in the evening of 24 May at around 5pm at Myong Kyong, 12th Mile, Bey, Upper Dzongu washed away three kutcha houses belonging to one Sam-ten Lepcha of Bey.

A couple, Chandra Bdr Tamang, aged 67 years and his wife, who were living in one of the houses, is feared killed in this landslide. They were both Nepal nationals and working in the under construction SPWD bridge.

The couple is believed to have been swept away by the slide along with the house according to neighbours who managed to escape in time.

The RO Dzongu and his team from Subdivisional Administration, Dzongu along with the MLA Dzongu, Pintso



Namgyal Lepcha visited the site on 25 May morning.

The two deceased have been recorded as missing since their bodies have not been traced. The search operation could not take place to-

day on account of the inclement weather. The SDRF has been requisitioned by the District Police for the search operation today.

Eleven other houses have suffered damages and residents of these

houses have been evacuated and shifted to their relatives' houses nearby. The JHS in Lingzya has been identified as the relief camp. The panchayats who were part of the inspection team have been told to ascertain by

Tuesday whether this relief camp needs to be activated as some of the victims were more comfortable putting up with their relatives.

However, distribution of ration and other essential items will be

arranged by the administration on Tuesday.

The existing suspension foot bridge connecting Bey to Sakyong and Pentong villages has been washed away thereby cutting off these two villages completely.

DE Roads and Bridges Department, who was part of the inspection team, has been directed to submit a short term plan by Tuesday for restoration of connectivity at the earliest. A long term plan for permanent restoration of connectivity has also been sought.

Apart from the above, reports of loss of life of farm animals have also come in. The details of these losses along with the extent of land damage are being put together for ex-gratia disbursement, as per the prescribed NCRF norms.

Advocate duo file police complaint against Pataal Lok

**SUMMIT REPORT
Gangtok, 25 May:**

Advocates Pramit Chettri and Bhawana Chettri of Malbassey, West Sikkim filed a police complaint at Soreng Police Station on 22 May against the Amazon Prime web series Pataal Lok.

In the complaint, the

two advocates have asked the police to prevent the transmission of the web series which consists of derogatory content against the Gorkha and Nepali speaking community and can promote enmity on the grounds of race, language and community.

Minister Subba inspects quarantine centre in Gyalshing

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 MAY:**

THE Minister Bhim Hang Subba visited Gyalshing quarantine centre at the Panchayat Resource Centre, Kyongsa in West Sikkim on Monday. He contributed 15 sets of mattresses and other essential items to the centre and took stock of COVID-19 preparedness

and the government's initiatives to keep the centre safe and equipped, informs an SKM press release issued by its secretary [press & publicity], Ranjana Pradhan. The release adds that the Minister also interacted with frontline workers deputed at the Centre and acknowledged them for their service.

Trio distribute health care supplies in quarantine centers



GYALSHING, 25 MAY (IPR):

Three youths of West Sikkim namely, Sonam Zigdal, Nosang Muringla and Yap Bhutia distributed 500 pieces of 3 ply face masks, 100 bottles of 500ml VLCC hand sanitizers, 50 Wildcraft hypa shield W95 masks for frontline staff, 5 hand sanitizer dispenser stands for quarantine centers at Pelling Sr Sec School, Kyongsa Girls Sr Sec School & Hostel, Pan-

chayat Resource Center and two at the District Hospital Gyalshing. The contributed items were distributed from the hands of Minister-cum-Area cum MLA of Yangthang Constituency, Bhim Hang Subba.

The items of health care were distributed in various Quarantine Centers like Pelling School, Kyongsa Girls School & Hostel, Panchayat Resource Center, Bega, For-

est Bunglow Dentam, District Hospital Gyalshing and District Administrative Center, Rabdentse West Sikkim.

The kind young men wanted to reciprocate and show their gratitude towards the frontline staffs for their contributions and hard work during the Pandemic.

The Minister then thanked the Youths for their voluntary support to the Frontline workers.

Will try to restart international flights before August: Puri

NEW DELHI, MAY 23 (PTI): India will try to restart a good percentage of international passenger flights before August, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday said, three days after announcing resumption of domestic flights from May 25.

While various states like Karnataka and Maharashtra announced their respective quarantine measures for passengers coming there through domestic flights, the minister said there was no need for quarantine if a passenger is showing green status on Aarogya Setu app.

The minister, while addressing a Facebook Live session, clarified again that the app is not mandatory for air passengers and they can instead give a self-declaration form.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, few states have questioned the necessity to restart domestic services from Monday, he admitted, adding that some hesitation was expected even as the Centre has been trying to meet their concerns.

Puri said during the session, "I can't put a date on it (restarting international flights). But if somebody says can it be done by August or September? My response is why not earlier depending on what is the situation."

When asked about the minister's announcement on resuming international services, Vistara said it will await instructions and guidelines from the Civil Aviation Ministry. Other airlines did not respond to PTI when asked about this

matter. "I am fully hopeful that before August or September, we will try to start a good percentage of international civil aviation operations, if not complete international operations," he said.

"We must have a more ambitious goal (regarding international flights). Why not start them by mid-June or June-end or in July," he added.

All scheduled commercial passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 25 when the Modi government imposed a lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

The minister said that the Vande Bharat Mission, which began on May 7, would be able to bring a total 50,000 Indians, who have been stranded abroad, home by the end of this month.

Between May 7 and May 21, around 23,000 Indians have been repatriated through flights operated by Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express under this mission. Passengers have to pay money to book a seat on any repatriation flight being operated under the Vande Bharat Mission. Puri said India is planning to bring stranded Indians from Sri Lanka through ships or flights under the Vande Bharat Mission.

The minister said if some passengers do not have smartphones, it is not as if they will not be allowed to travel for they do not have the Aarogya Setu app.

"We have said it is an advisory, it is preferable...If you do not have the Aarogya Setu app, you can give a self-declaration form," he stated.



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 MAY:**

Id-Ul-Fitr was celebrated behind closed doors and not in mosques this time. President, Anjuman-e-Islamia Rangpo, Mohammad Khalid and

his family also celebrated Eid at home.

This Eid we all should be praying to the Almighty to save all mankind which is going through rough times, said Mr Khalid.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

KUTSE SHEGU

The kutse Shegu of Late Bhaichung Bhutia of Upper Chandmari below Enchey Monastery TV. Tower "Vinakay Mission Hostel" who left for his heavenly abode on 2nd April 2020 falls on 20th May 2020. Due to the current COVID 19 situation and social distancing norms, the bereaved family would like to request all the family, friends and well wishers to pray for the departed soul in their own homes.



Chungden Bhutia (Wife)
6294475441

N.T Bhutia (Father-in-law)
9775821266

Tashi Tshering Bhutia (Brother)
9609850653/8918590228

Laden Bhutia (Sister in law)
9593785714/8918059921

India now among 10 worst-hit countries

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 (PTI): India has entered the list of 10 countries worst hit by the novel coronavirus after record spike in the number of cases for four consecutive days, pushing the tally of infections to over 1.38 lakh, surpassing Iran, according to the John Hopkins University data.

The country registered 154 deaths and a record jump of 6,977 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 1,38,845 and death toll to 4,021 on Monday with some experts attributing the spike in cases to the lockdown relaxations, including partial resumption of rail services and road transport along with the return of the migrant workers, while others say the rise in cases is due to enhanced testing capacity in the country.

Domestic passenger flights also resumed operations on Monday after a gap of two months. India is the tenth most affected nation by the pandemic after US, Russia, UK, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Germany, Turkey and France, as per the JHU data.

The country has recorded 6,088, 6,654, 6,767 and 6,977 on May 22, 23, 24 and 25 respectively. Also, the number of RT-PCR tests for detection of COVID-19 in the country crossed the 30-lakh mark on Monday.

Commenting on the partial resumption of rail and road transport services, Dr Chandrakant S Pandav, former president of Indian Public Health Association and Indian Association of Pre-

ventive and social medicine said these relaxations will create an enabling environment for the coronavirus infection to flourish.

"Now, the government will have to ensure strong surveillance and monitoring so as to curb the infection which otherwise will overwhelm the health-care system," said Pandav, former HOD of the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS.

However, Professor K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India said an increase in the number of cases reflects both an increase in testing rates and an increase in spread.

"What we need to see is the number of new tests performed per day and the number of new cases that were identified from them. We also have to see if the testing criteria have remained the same between the two periods of comparison." We may open up gradually but will have to continue case detection, contact tracing and follow personal protection measures as vigorously as possible," he added.

Noted lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar cautioned that given the COVID-19 situation right now, "India is heading towards a very chaotic situation from here on".

"The rate at which the thousands of cases are being reported per day, we will be moving upwards in the top 10 countries bracket which we have entered now," he said.

Kumar, who works at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here, said, the first lockdown and to a certain extent second phase of lockdown were "managed well".

"However, from third lockdown onwards, a series of disastrous steps have been taken by authorities, from opening of liquor shops and then resuming of flights from today. If the flights were not resumed for another two weeks, what harm would have happened," he asked.

Kumar warned that by end of June, "India is going to see a massive surge in the number of cases".

Dr Vikas Maurya, Additional Director and head of pulmonology, at Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh here, said, "with the reopening of economy, we will see a surge for sure in the initial period".

"Whether that surge will abate or continue to rise, will depend on how the situation is managed by the authorities at all levels, and how people behave in public at large," he said.

"This lockdown hopefully has taught people to be more disciplined, practice social distancing, and so, future scenario will also depend on how our demographically diverse population behaves," the doctor said.

Maurya cautioned that if the cases do not abate in few weeks, the lockdown should be imposed again, "otherwise things will go out of control".

The first two phases of the lockdown

led to 14-29 lakh COVID-19 cases being averted while the number of lives saved in that period was between 37,000 and 78,000, the government said on Friday citing various studies, and asserted that the unprecedented shutdown has paid "rich dividends" in the fight against the pandemic.

The number of active COVID-19 cases climbed to 77,103 on Monday while 57,720 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said.

"Thus, around 41.57 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said. "Through a graded, pre-emptive and proactive approach, the government is taking several steps along with the states and UTs for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19.

These are being regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level," the ministry said on Monday.

The total 4,021 fatalities include 1,635 deaths from Maharashtra followed by Gujarat with 858 deaths, Madhya Pradesh 290, West Bengal 272, Delhi 261, Rajasthan 63, Uttar Pradesh 161, Tamil Nadu 111 and Andhra Pradesh 56.

Maharashtra has reported 50,231 COVID-19 cases, highest in the country, and is followed by Tamil Nadu (16,277), Gujarat (14,056), Delhi (13,418), Rajasthan (7,028), Madhya Pradesh (6,665) and Uttar Pradesh (6,268), West Bengal (3,667), Andhra Pradesh (2,823) and Bihar (2,587).

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GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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



Mount Distilleries sanitizes transit camp established at Mining School

SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 25 MAY:

Mount Distilleries Ltd sanitized Mining Senior Secondary School and its surrounding areas today, a press release in-

forms. The School has been set up by the district administration as a transit camp for truck drivers bringing in supplies from Siliguri. Upto 50 drivers are accommodated at the transit camp on a daily basis.

Quarantine Centre at Namchi College sanitized



NAMCHI, 25 MAY [IPR]: The Panchayats and office staff of Mamley-Kamrang GPU under Namchi Block sanitized Namchi Government College Hostel today. This hostel

is being used as a Quarantine Centre.

Sanitization was also undertaken at various public places and shops under the GPU.

Additionally, face

mask and sanitizers were distributed to all frontline workers at the quarantine centre and mineral water delivered to people staying in Centre as a goodwill gesture.

Top German court grants buybacks for VW diesel car owners

A top German court ruled Monday that Volkswagen must buy back a diesel car it modified to appear less polluting, a decision that could influence the outcome of tens of thousands of other "dieselgate" cases.

Judges at the Federal Court of Justice (BGH) in Karlsruhe "effectively upheld" a lower court's ruling that plaintiff Herbert Gilbert can return his car to VW for reimbursement, but he must also accept a discount from the original purchase price for the time he used it.

Almost five years after Volkswagen's admission to cheating on emissions tests involving millions of diesel engine cars, the ruling is the first real legal setback for VW in its home country.

"Volkswagen now aims to soon bring these cases to a close in agreement with the plaintiffs," the company said in a statement, promising "appropriate offers" to affected owners.

"This judgement means legal certainty for millions of consumers and shows once again that even a huge corporation isn't above the law," Gilbert's lawyer Claus Goldenstein said in a statement. Lead judge Stephan Seiters revisited the familiar story of how VW "for many years systematically brought vehicles onto the market whose software was programmed so that they only met (emissions) limits under test conditions". Judges said the mere fact of selling the modified car to the plaintiff harmed him -- even though VW has always argued the vehicles were "usable" for their intended purpose.

Monday's hearing specifically concerned a case brought by 65-year-old

Gilbert who bought a diesel-powered Volkswagen Sharan minivan in 2014 -- just one of the 11 million cars worldwide fitted with emissions cheating software by the carmaker.

- The depreciation factor -

The judges in Karlsruhe largely confirmed a lower court's finding in favour of Gilbert, ordering VW to pay around 25,600 euros (\$27,887) and accept his return of the car.

That payout, however, is almost 6,000 euros below the original purchase price, as the judges took into account depreciation of the vehicle's value.

Both VW and Gilbert had appealed to the BGH, with the company disputing the grounds for reimbursing the pensioner while the plaintiff said he should be paid the full purchase price.

If extended to the thousands of similar cases, such discounts on the value of returned vehicles will limit the potential financial blow to VW.

The end of April also brought the closure of a mass lawsuit against the carmaker by hundreds of thousands of plaintiffs, the first of its kind and one of the biggest legal risks stemming from "dieselgate".

VW will pay out at least 750 million euros to 235,000 drivers under an out-of-court settlement reached with consumer representatives, well below the amounts paid out in the United States.

Buybacks, fines and compensation payments in the US alone account for most of the more than 30-billion-euro cost of the scandal to the manufacturer so far.

Sweet-toothed Werner bags hat-trick as Leipzig trounce Mainz

BERLIN, MAY 25 (AFP): Sweet-toothed striker Timo Werner bagged a hat-trick as RB Leipzig thrashed Mainz 5-0 to climb back to third in the Bundesliga and keep their dwindling title hopes just about alive.

When asked how he would celebrate, Werner, 24, told reporters "there will definitely be some sweets involved".

Julian Nagelsmann's side sit seven points behind leaders Bayern Munich ahead of the reigning champions' top-of-the-table clash against second-placed Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday.

Leipzig bounced back from their draw with Freiburg last weekend in their first match since the coronavirus lockdown in style, with Werner moving to within three goals of Bayern's Robert Lewandowski at the top of the league scoring charts. Werner, who has been linked with several of Europe's biggest clubs, has scored 24 Bundesliga goals this season including two trebles.

Lewandowski scored his 27th league goal this term in Bayern's 5-2 win over Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

Leipzig's victory was the 10th win for a visiting team in 18 matches since the Bundesliga restarted in near-empty stadiums.

"We could have scored a few more, but no complaints -- we're very happy," Leipzig sporting director Markus Kroesche told Sky. Werner opened the scoring in only the 11th minute, before Yussuf Poulsen marked his 250th appearance for Leipzig by heading home a Marcel Sabitzer cross on 23 minutes.

The pair reversed roles for the third when Poulsen laid the ball off for Sabitzer to make it 3-0 at the break.

Werner grabbed his second goal three minutes into the second half when Kevin Kampl played him into the area.

The visitors were attacking at will when Kampl had a goal ruled out for offside soon after.

With 15 minutes left, Poulsen's floated free-kick was met by Werner who volleyed past Mainz goalkeeper Florian Mueller to wrap up his hat-trick.

Earlier, Augsburg also eased to a comfortable away win with a 3-0 romp at Schalke.

Heiko Herrlich enjoyed a perfect first Bundesliga game on the touchline as Augsburg coach, a week after he missed their loss to Wolfsburg because he broke quarantine rules to buy toothpaste. David Wagner's Schalke continued their slide down the table, falling to eighth following another poor defensive display.

Eduard Loewen, Noah Sarenren Bazee and Sergio Cordova scored as Augsburg moved seven points clear of the relegation play-off place.

"I'm totally happy," said Herrlich, whose side host bottom club Paderborn on Wednesday, after ending a run of four straight defeats.

"We'll be celebrating quietly, because we don't have much time. But we have managed to turn things around." The 48-year-old Herrlich apologised to his squad after breaking a week-long coronavirus quarantine by leaving the team hotel -- to buy toothpaste and skin cream -- before the Wolfsburg match last weekend.

Having been as high as third last December, Schalke are winless in their last nine league games, including last Saturday's 4-0 drubbing at Dortmund. "We were extremely stupid at the start," said Wagner.

Loewen gave the visitors the lead after just five minutes with a superb free-kick which flew into the top corner from 30 metres out at the Veltheim Arena.

Subdued Eid celebrations in Odisha



BHUBANESWAR, MAY 25

(PTI): Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday greeted people on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr which was being celebrated on a low key in the state due to restrictions triggered by COVID-19 outbreak.

The festivities were devoid of enthusiasm and remained subdued across Odisha as people celebrated it indoors amid the lockdown to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

Congratulating the Muslim fraternity on the occasion, the governor wished happiness and prosperity for all. In a message, Lal also called upon the people to participate in Odisha's battle against coronavirus with dedication.

In his message, the chief minister wished peace and prosperity for all and urged people to strictly adhere to the norms of social distance

in view of coronavirus pandemic.

"I strongly believe that we will emerge victorious in the fight against Corona with peoples' cooperation," Patnaik said.

Among others, Union Petroleum and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan greeted the people on the festival. "Eid Mubarak! Greetings to everyone on the joyous occasion of #EidUl-Fitr. May this holy festival bring peace, prosperity, health and happiness for all," Pradhan tweeted.

As mosques across the state are closed for congregational prayers in view of the lockdown, the people had been asked by the religious leaders to offer namaz at home.

"We offered thanksgiving prayers at home on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, marking the culmination of the fasting month of Ramzan. We had been asked by our

elders to maintain social distance by staying at home and refrain from visiting mosques," said Mohd Sakil Ahmed, a resident of the state capital.

"Mass prayers are not permitted anywhere in the state.

Only five important persons managing the affairs of the mosques offered the prayers on the occasion by maintaining social distance," said Jajpur-based Maulana Abdul Bari.

Most people also avoided going for festival eve shopping and buying new clothes and gifts as a mark of solidarity towards those who have been hit hard due to the lockdown which has snatched away their livelihood sources, he said.

The decision to offer prayers and feast in houses has been taken to safeguard the interests of the society amid coronavirus outbreak and people are abiding by it, he said.

SHUTTER SHOT

Sikkim has proven itself to be the state of divinity and peace always and ever. Shriaadi Entertainments have come forward with a creative PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST to enhance the talent of photography in ourselves. The contest is also with an objective to set an example in the society of how a LOCKDOWN can be PRODUCTIVE!

For further details Like and Follow page Shriaadi Entertainments in Facebook and Instagram.

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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.



If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNH
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Get Involved, or Live With the 'Politics'

Politics is not inherently 'bad', but politics in everything is unhealthy

It is ironic that people will continually foist leadership roles in even social and cultural organizations on politicians, and then complain that the leaders are playing politics. When politicians get involved things are bound to be 'politicised.' While there is nothing wrong in career-politicians taking up social, cultural or environmental causes, it is also true that political presence in such initiatives compromises the core issue since the debates invariably digress to personal attacks and arguments eventually get adjusted to consolidate vote-banks. But then again, social and community organizations are so indebted to the patronage of politicians that its headliners are invariably individuals with political ambitions themselves and leverage their apolitical positions to further their pursuit of influence and power. Along the way, they compromise everything good about the organizations and issues they represent, infecting it with the shallow rabble-rousing that lazy politicians prefer.

Does that mean that politicians be distanced from concerns of the society? They cannot, because it is the people that politicians represent and their involvement should ideally be automatic and spontaneous. But involvement should not immediately translate to influence. Maybe a conscious decision should be taken to not have them head apolitical organizations or efforts, especially so in a Sikkim where, unfortunately, political positions are too straitjacketed. Those who raise an issue might have no political affiliations, but the only response they receive is from political circles. As mentioned earlier, there is per se nothing wrong with political presence, what disturbs is that this invariably is the only involvement that stakeholders receive. This is not only about protests, even required social interventions await political patronage to reach deliverance. What people sacrifice when they invite a politician to head, say a Bhanu Jayanti organizing committee, is the opportunity to felicitate fiery writers who have captured not just the mood of the people but also their readership with their incisive literary skills sharpened in the whetstone of anti-establishment sentiments. You invite a politician to get involved in aid and relief and of course political affinities will influence beneficiary lists. Get them to head social movements and you cannot complain if the debate targets people instead of ideas and arguments.

Why, really, should environmental concerns be the preserve of only the affected people receiving outside support from Opposition parties who will attach themselves to anything challenging the establishment? Why should ways and means to improve the quality of education [we talk of solutions here, not criticism] be deliberated only in seminars and workshops initiated by the State Government? Or, why should the proper functioning of cooperatives or promotion of organic farming be an obsession only of the establishment?

Those who rue the 'over politicization' of the affairs of the State need to also recognize that 'politics' is merely occupying the vacuum created by the absence of a coherent Civil Society. In an almost instinctive reaction, Sikkim looks towards the Government [and the very thinly separated ruling party] to deliver not only development, but also to engineer social reforms, and the Opposition to lend weight to dissenting voices. This is a common situation across the country, but most parts of the nation also have a reasonably mature civil society which moderates the voices and issues in the public domain. This civil society is sorely missed in Sikkim. In its absence come inferred fears and postured stands, both rather unhealthy trends. Surely, there must be many individual members of the Sikkimese society who notice the absence of a community feeling/ response at times. Is the State, or even the capital, anywhere near getting itself a Civil Society? A Civil Society is not an organised body that one can register and elect office bearers to; it is a level where individuals start thinking of more issues than just those that their immediate circles experience. It is a state where the society's reaction to issues and developments is spontaneous and free of prejudices. Simply put, it is a society that cares and is willing to get involved. Till Sikkim can do that, it will have to live with 'politicization' of all its affairs; not something that is inherently wrong or evil, but still something that leaves the public space incomplete and the people only partially represented.



Coronavirus has turned retail therapy into retail anxiety – keeping customers calm will be key to carrying on

JESSICA VREDENBURG & MEGAN PHILLIPS
theconversation.com

So you finally hit the shops and cafes after weeks of lockdown.

After disinfecting your hands, following the arrows around the shop or to your table, taking care to avoid others where possible and, in some cases, providing your contact tracing details – how enjoyable was the experience, really?

The return to shopping and eating out has certainly come as welcome relief in those countries lucky enough to be opening up. The malls are open! You can book your favourite restaurant! Goodbye home cooking, hello table service!

And for the retail and hospitality industries, among the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic, the return to trading couldn't come fast enough.

The return to normal trading, however, could still be a way off.

The new economic reality will have a profound impact on retail. Some of the routines developed during lockdown, such as cooking and baking at home or foregoing daily takeaway coffees, may continue post-pandemic if money is tight.

SHOPPING AS A SENSORY EXPERIENCE WILL CHANGE

As well as the public spacing, tracing and hygiene rules, customers may also notice an absence of certain favourite experiential elements. Is a trip to Mecca Cosmetics as enjoyable when you can't sample the products? Will Peter Alexander still smell like a cosy bedroom or the disinfectant used to clean the store?

As consumers, our senses play a major role in how much we enjoy retail experiences. Retailers have long employed the art of store atmospherics to encourage us to stay and spend.

Atmospherics – such as scent, music, touch, temperature and crowding – all help create an engaging sensory experience for shoppers and patrons. Research suggests customers will stay longer, spend more, feel better, and be more satis-

fied in a retail environment they find pleasing to their senses. The new COVID-19 environment has changed all that.

Will shoppers now prefer a reassuring freshly cleaned smell? The Hyatt hotel chain's "seamless" scent (evocative of home and comfort) was an integral part of its brand experience. But the rival Hilton chain has just announced its CleanStay initiative in partnership with the manufacturer of Lysol disinfectant.

KEEP THE NOISE DOWN AND DON'T TOUCH

In New Zealand, tips on how to stay safe under its COVID-19 alert level 2 include restaurants and bars turning down the music volume. Raised voices, it seems, generate a wider "moist breath zone" that may increase viral spread.

Reduced sound levels might help anxious consumers relax, but what will the atmosphere be like in a painfully quiet pub or restaurant? It could influence customer perceptions of the establishment, which in turn affect financial returns. Studies have found people bought more drinks in a bar when the music was louder than usual.

Retail guidelines in New Zealand recommend consumers only touch and try on merchandise they intend to buy. In the US, no touch retailing seems increasingly likely.

Such measures confound conventional retail theory, which suggests the more consumers touch, sort through, sample and try on, the more they buy. The removal of testers for products such as cosmetics, for example, significantly changes the shopping experience.

DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME

Retailers in countries entering winter will also need to think quite literally about the atmosphere in their stores. Warmer temperatures tend to create a relaxing environment that encourages shoppers to linger. And physical warmth can even enhance the perceived value of products. But poorly ventilated or air-conditioned indoor spaces have been identified as potential hot spots for the spread of COVID-19.

Will warmer stores subconsciously affect the

way shoppers react? Restaurateurs and retailers will be hoping not.

Paradoxically, the advice to keep our distance in public can lead to perceived crowding – a psychological state based on the number of individuals in a store, the extent of social interactions and the configuration of merchandise and fixtures. Higher levels of perceived crowding can lead to less positive emotions and decreased satisfaction.

Shoppers may simply choose not to enter. If they do, they might feel on edge or even overwhelmed if they are trying to keep a safe distance from others. When personal space is invaded or when personal space zones are relatively large, it can lead to intolerance or even leaving.

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT

Ultimately, if retailers and hospitality service providers want customers to return in greater numbers the goal will be to minimise the perceived risks of infection. Emotionally taxing environments can negatively affect consumer behaviour, so managing the emotional component of the retail or dining experience becomes an even more crucial part of the overall value offered.

Adapting so-called "retail theatre" to include sanitation, hygiene, and keeping consumers calm will create a new kind of psychological comfort for the COVID-19 age. But how far will some go to give themselves an edge over competitors?

From pool noodles, mannequins and glass boxes to inner tubes, will these innovative adaptations draw in the crowds or make people run in the opposite direction?

How readily customers become comfortable with the etiquette of post-pandemic shopping will dictate how effectively retail and hospitality can provide that vital sense of well-being. In time, the words "retail" and "therapy" may again sit comfortably in the same sentence.

[Jessica Vredenburg is Senior Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Marketing, Auckland University of Technology; Megan Phillips is Senior Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Retailing, Auckland University of Technology]

A year after Narendra Modi's re-election the country's democracy is developing fascistic undertones

INDRAJIT ROY
theconversation.com

As Narendra Modi and his supporters mark a year since his re-election as India's prime minister in May 2019, they can already point to achievements for his brand of Hindu nationalism.

In the past 12 months, India's parliament, the Lok Sabha, has adopted a number of key laws delivering on the electoral promises made by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). But their approach to governing has blended key elements of fascism – such as a controlled form of ultranationalism, authoritarian suppression of dissent, and an intertwining of religion and government – within a democratic framework. India's responses to the unfolding COVID-19 crisis in the country threaten to consolidate this worrying tendency.

Modi has pronounced himself at the service of Indians rather than declaring himself their supreme leader. The BJP has largely respected the popular mandate in key states, such as Jharkhand and Maharashtra, where it lost elections since regaining its national majority in May 2019. And yet India under Modi is proving that some elements of fascism can exist inside the shell of democracy – something also happening elsewhere in the world during the pandemic.

Modi's commitment to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which strives to organise society and ensure the protection of the Hindu Dharma, or way of life, is an impor-

tant illustration of this entanglement of fascism and democracy. While such a commitment would likely prevent him from seizing absolute power in India, he does not shy away from styling himself as a Hindu nationalist and is pursuing blatantly Hindu nationalist politics.

KASHMIR

In August, barely three months after returning to power on the back of a landslide electoral win, Modi's government abolished Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which guaranteed a semi-autonomous status for the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir. Politicians across the state, including supporters of its accession to India, were placed under house arrest, the internet was suspended and people were placed under a lockdown that continues today.

Even as critics challenged the new law as unconstitutional, the nationalist overtones of the move promised to unite the country behind a single idea of India where there is no special dispensation for different areas. This found support not only from the BJP's allies but also political parties that had bitterly opposed the BJP during the 2019 elections.

VIOLENCE AND PROTEST

Riding on a wave of successful legislation with little resistance in parliament, the Modi government then appeared taken aback when faced with widespread protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) it rammed through parliament in December 2019. As the re-

sult of the CAA, and an accompanying National Register of Citizens, many of India's 200 million Muslims could find themselves disenfranchised and stateless if they are not able to prove their citizenship. This religious filter goes against the principles of secularism in India, enshrined in its constitution.

While several state governments protested against the imposition of the draconian law without broader public consultation, a poll in December found many Indians were sympathetic to it.

Yet, recognising the threat posed by the CAA to the basic structure of the Indian constitution, millions of people across class, caste, religious and gender divides took to the streets in protest. At least 50 people were killed in violence in Delhi in February, several hundreds injured and many thousands displaced.

CORONAVIRUS CLAMPDOWN

By March, the COVID-19 crisis exploded in India. Modi announced the world's largest lockdown with four hours notice. The worst hit were the country's estimated 140 million migrant workers, many of who lost their jobs and were evicted. Several million of them began journeying back to the villages they call home, often on foot since public transport was suspended. India's opposition parties demonstrated their utter ineptitude by failing to mobilise to ensure dignity and justice for the millions of migrant labourers.

The stringent lockdown has provided convenient cover for the BJP to

muzzle dissent. As protestors wound up their campaigns in keeping with social distancing regulations, police in Delhi erased protest graffiti, presumably to remove any trace of the protests. As protestors wound up their campaigns in keeping with social distancing regulations, police in Delhi erased protest graffiti, presumably to remove any trace of the protests.

Dissidents are being rounded up and imprisoned under draconian colonial-era laws. The respected scholar-activist Anand Teltumbde being one case in point. Student-protestor Safoora Zargar another. Although India's thriving civil society protested vociferously, it has been effectively curtailed to online forums, thanks to social distancing regulations.

The fascistic democracy brewing in India today poses extraordinary challenges for political activists committed to defending and deepening democratic freedom. After all, the Indian government justifies its actions in the interests of the nation and its people, and continues to enjoy widespread support both at home and among liberal expats abroad.

What's happening under Modi should raise questions about the limitations of democracy as a political system. Sometimes it can facilitate rather than protect against violations of human rights and the tyranny of the majority.

[The writer is Lecturer in Global Development Politics, University of York]

Nagaland no longer green state, reports 3 COVID-19 cases



KOHHIMA, MAY 25 (PTI): Nagaland reported its “first” COVID-19 cases on Monday, when three persons who recently returned to the state from Chennai were found infected with novel coronavirus, a health department official said.

Nagaland government has not counted a person from the state who tested positive for coronavirus on April 13 in Assam after a private hospital referred him to a government facility in Guwahati. He later recovered from the disease.

Two men and a woman, all in their 20s, tested positive for COVID-19 and they are now undergoing treatment at two

hospitals in Dimapur and Kohima, Commissioner and Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department, Menukhoh John.

Their condition is stable but Nagaland is no longer a green state, John said.

“Unfortunately, 2 persons in Dimapur and 1 in Kohima have been tested positive for #COVID-19. Please do not panic.

We need to handle it with utmost care and responsibility.

Necessary action of contact tracing & containment measures are being taken and situation closely monitored,” Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio tweeted. “Our medi-

cal team is trying its best to contain the spread of the virus. Aggressive surveillance of the returnees has started. We appeal to the public not to panic and also not to stigmatize the patients,” John said.

He said the three persons who tested positive for coronavirus were passengers of the first Shramik Special train that reached Mizoram from Chennai on May 22 last.

A total of 1,328 stranded citizens of Nagaland arrived in the state in that train and they were placed under quarantine in government facilities in Dimapur and Kohima districts.

Earlier in the day,

Chief Secretary Temjen Toy expressed apprehension that Nagaland could no longer remain a corona-free state after the return of migrant people.

“Nagaland is at a very crucial stage because so far we have been Green. But with the arrival of thousands of stranded citizens from other parts of the country, we don’t know what will happen. We do not know how many will turn out to be positive,” Toy told media persons here.

The chief secretary said COVID-19 is here to stay and people should learn how to live with it by taking precautions both at the individual and institutional levels.

Recalling the initial days of HIV/AIDS breakout in the early 1990s in Nagaland, Toy said those who died of the disease were then not even allowed by the public to be buried because of panic.

“But today we have people living with AIDS among us and the number of infected people is more than those days.

There should not be any undue fear about COVID-19 as long as we are taking precautions. The time for panic is over and we have to get serious to begin to live with COVID,” Toy said.

Till Sunday, a total of 1,066 samples were tested and results of 1,001 were negative, while the outcome of 65 is awaited, he said.

The state government has not considered reopening of conventional educational institutes as of now, Toy said adding that the school education department has made arrangements to teach them through television, radio and social media.

“There is a huge risk and we would not like to take any decision in a hurry to open schools,” he said.

The current arrangement is only for classes 8 and above, and the department will soon address the problem of the students of lower classes, the chief secretary said.

UP CM moots two-pronged strategy for migrant workers



LUCKNOW, MAY 25 (PTI): In a two-pronged strategy, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to set up a migration commission to help find jobs for workers returning home and also said that any state that wants labourers from UP has to seek its permission.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home and Information) Awanish Awasthi announced the plan to set up a migrants commission on Sunday.

On the same day, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in an interaction with RSS-affiliated publications ‘Panchjanya’ and ‘Organiser’ that other states will need permission from the UP government if they want to make use of labourers from Uttar Pradesh.

About 25 lakh migrants, workers and their families, have returned to Uttar Pradesh after being stranded for weeks in other states due to the lockdown imposed to fight coronavirus.

At a meeting with senior officials on Monday, Adityanath reiterated that his government was committed to a safe and respectable homecoming for the workers and to providing them with jobs and social security.

He said this was the reason for the decision on a separate commission for them and told officials to take prompt steps for setting it up.

Adityanath has earlier told officials to work on insurance and job security for returning

workers, according to government statements.

The planned commission will look into workers’ rights, prevent their exploitation and provide an official framework to ensure socio-economic and legal support for them, the government said.

“Insurance, social security, re-employment assistance, provision for unemployment allowance are some of the factors that will be looked into by the commission,” the CM said.

Adityanath had claimed that UP’s workers were “not properly taken care of” by various states during the coronavirus lockdown.

“These workers are our biggest resource and we will give them employment in Uttar Pradesh as the state government is going to set up a panel for their employment, he recently said.

“They are our people... and if some states want them back, they have to seek permission from the state government,” he said in the interaction with RSS-affiliated publications.

According to an official spokesperson, the Adityanath government will make manpower available to other states only on a guarantee of job security.

The state government said skill mapping of about 14.75 migrant workers has already been done.

Of them, 1.51 lakh

were employed in the real estate sector, a government spokesman said.

The skill mapping exercise also found that a large number of them worked as furniture makers, building decorators, security guards, IT and electronic technicians, home appliance and automobile technicians, paramedics, pharmaceutical workers, tailors, beauticians and carpet makers, he said.

The state government will offer training, along with an allowance, to migrant workers once the skill mapping is over, he added.

“All migrant workers are being registered and their skills mapped. Any state or entity interested in inviting migrant workers will need to assure and provide for their socio-legal-monetary rights,” Adityanath said.

During the lockdown review meeting on Monday, the CM said there are employment opportunities for the workers in the MSME sector, and under the one district-one product and Vishwakarma Shram Samman schemes.

There were also opportunities in the agriculture and animal husbandry sectors, he said.

The chief minister also called for building houses for workers with the help of the economic package announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Wherever necessary dormitories should be built for them, he said.

Passenger flight service resumes in Assam after 2 months

GUWAHATI, MAY 25 (PTI): Domestic air travel resumed in Assam on Monday along with several other states, as the first flight arrived at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport here from Delhi in the morning, an official said.

The first flight to Guwahati landed from Delhi this morning, carrying 77 passengers, who were immediately taken for screening and for collection of swabs at a hotel near the airport.

Already, seven flight carrying 547 passengers arrived at Guwahati and another flight is expected to arrive later in the day with 139 people.

Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma visited the airport and the hotel to oversee the entire operation and said the Health Department in association with other departments concerned were fully capable of handling the rush.

“We are expecting 600-700 people today and it will be around 1,000 tomorrow. We are prepared for this with the help of all other departments such as transport and police and the Airports Authority of India,” he told reporters here. He said 32 flights were permitted to operate to Assam, of which only eight were operational on Monday, and the number is likely to increase in the next few days.

The minister said the state was going to face “tough times” in the next 10 days with an inflow of thousands of people.

Though Assam has six operational airports, only Guwahati has started functioning, while four more will operate from

May 28 once commercial flights from West Bengal commence.

Assam has imposed mandatory institutional quarantine for all air passengers, with some exceptions, and has been putting them up at different hotels across the state.

On the first day, a total of eight flights would land at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati from Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Imphal, and an equal number will leave for the same places, an Airports Authority of India (AAI) official told PTI.

Considering arrivals and departures, Indigo will operate 10 flights, while Air Asia and SpiceJet will ply four and two flights respectively on Monday, he said.

“We have information about 600 people arriving in Guwahati today. However, the exact number is shared an hour before the departure,” the official said. Sarma said around 8,000 persons are stuck at the moment in trains in different states due to cyclone ‘Amphan’ and they will arrive in the next few days.

“So, the next one week to 10 days will be tough for us. We have set up around 70 quarantine centres in Guwahati for the people from the city. People from other places will be taken to their home districts for quarantine there,” he added.

On the people coming from other states, the minister appealed to all to arrive before June 10 so that the state machinery can concentrate on flood management and other works from July onwards.

Amphan blow to food prices in WB



KOLKATA, MAY 23 (PTI): Vegetable prices have shot up in the city and its neighbouring areas in the aftermath of the extremely severe Cyclone Amphan as the heavy rains which accompanied it have submerged agricultural fields of the cash crop rich districts like the North and South 24 Parganas, stakeholders said.

The cyclone has hit supplies and prices of most vegetables have spurt by 20 to 30 per cent and will soar further, vendors said.

Stakeholders apprehend that the disruption in vegetable supplies is likely to worsen in the days to come.

The main supply hubs for the city are Basirhat sub-division and Bongaon in North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts. These places suffered huge damages in the cyclone.

“In Basirhat sub-division 90 per cent of its vegetable produce which were in the fields have been destroyed as they are submerged after Cyclone Amphan breached

hundreds of river embankments,” West Bengal Vendors Association president Kamal Dey said.

The cyclone, the like of which was not seen in the city and its neighbourhood for decades, also uprooted vegetable plants. They now lie submerged under stagnant rain and river waters.

H i n g a l g u n j , Hasnabad, Minakhan, Sandeshkhali I and II which were pulverised by the monster cyclone, come under Basirhat sub-division that spreads over 1,777 square km.

Farmers of Singur in Hooghly district too reported 80 per cent vegetable crop loss in the cyclone.

Taking advantage of the situation some traders have started hoarding, sources said.

There are reports too of extensive damage of paddy fields.

Taking advantage of the situation poultry meat sellers have hiked prices and are retailing at Rs 235 to Rs 250 a kg.

“The poultry meat sellers have raised the

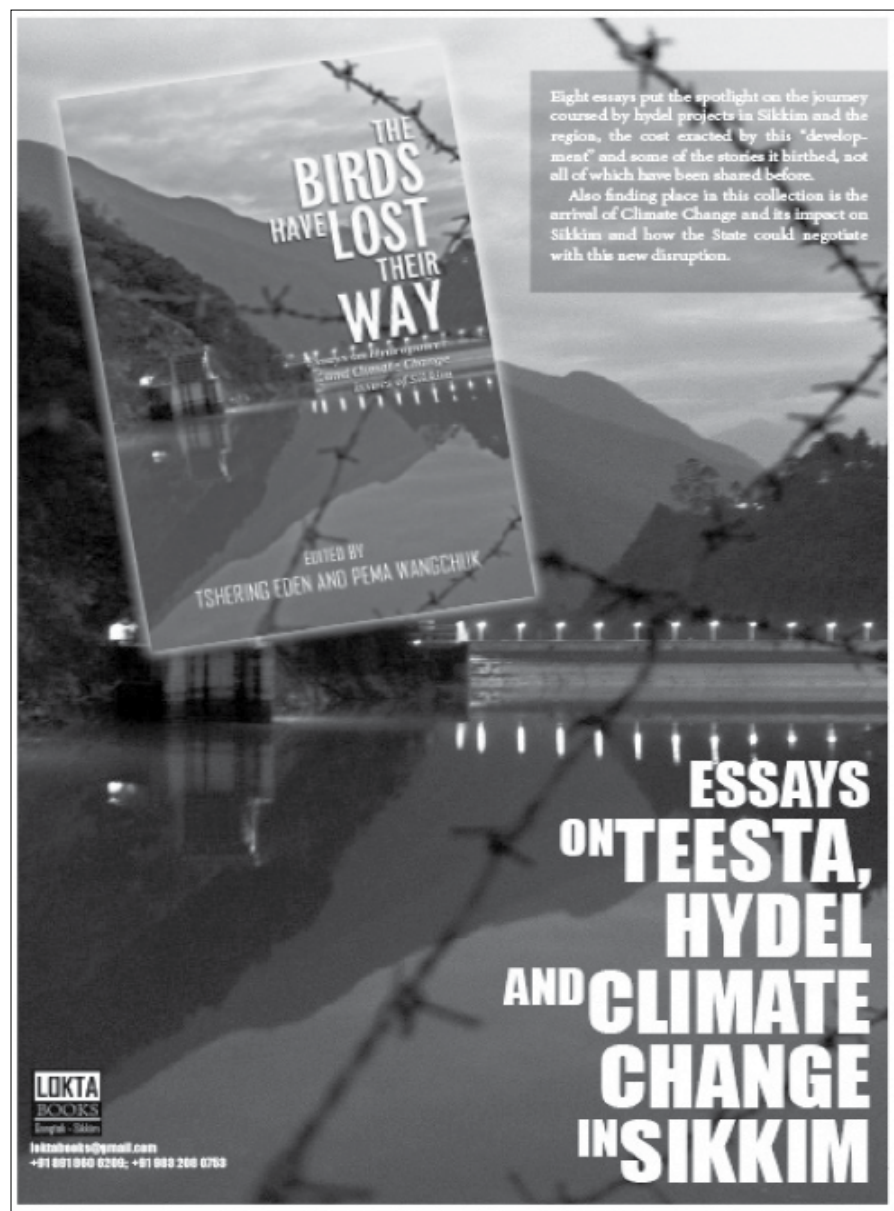
price by 150 per cent but the administration is silent,” an annoyed consumer said.

No government official could be contacted for comments on the situation.

Eightyfive people were killed and lakhs of people lost their homes as Cyclone ‘Amphan’ tore its way through six districts of the state on Wednesday, flattening houses, uprooting thousands of trees and swamping low-lying areas.

The state government has a free crop insurance for farmers but the coverage is not very high.

West Bengal had introduced Bangla Fasal Bima Yojana in June 2019 kharif season and stopped implementing Centre’s Padhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The state government had announced the crop insurance scheme in collaboration with the Agriculture Insurance Company of India (AIC). The crop insurance scheme is free of cost for the farmers since the government pays the full premium.



Premier League must finally share its riches to save English football

DAVID CONN
LONDON, 25 MAY [THE-GUARDIAN]: Even before football was plunged into crisis by the Covid-19 pandemic, influential people in the game were discussing the need for the Premier League's improbable fortunes to be shared more equally. As historic, stalwart lower-division and semi-professional clubs stare at ruin, and promised investment could drain from the grassroots, the argument is finally beyond credible dispute.

However the Premier League resolves its struggle to finish this season so that it can clutch the remainder of the TV money, it will still be a huge draw for broadcast billions when normal life finally returns. The pre-pandemic position, that the big clubs keep 93% of the current, 2019-22, £8.65bn TV deals, handing most of it to players in wages while trickling drops down for good works, does not look sustainable following the crisis.

Some sceptics raised eyebrows when the EFL chairman, Rick Parry, made his forthright arguments that football's finances need a reset and described Premier League parachute payments as an "evil that must be eradicated". Football people who are getting on a bit recall Parry as the energetic first Premier League chief executive, engineering its breakaway with the Football League's First Division clubs, and the introduction, in 1992, of parachute payments for relegated clubs.

But Parry's advocacy for financial reform, much more urgent and necessary now, is not a case of amnesia from the work he did earlier in his career. When he was headhunted by the EFL last year, in what seemed a turbulent period but now seems like a lost utopia, Parry is understood to have reminded people that he has long advocated closer union, and more distribution, between the leagues.

As early as 1995, with the 72 clubs in the Football League's three divisions still seething at the breakaway of the top division teams from sharing 50% of the TV money, Parry offered to repair some of the breach. Looking to the second round of TV deals beginning in 1997, he secured agreement from the Premier League's clubs to sell the rights jointly with the Football League, and share the proceeds 80-20.

The Football League's response caused a huge internal row at the time, since filed away with all the other huge football rows, because the board rejected the offer. Larger clubs in what is now the Championship were furious at that missed opportunity for more sharing with the Premier League and it led to reforms, including Richard Scudamore's appointment as the Football League's chief executive in 1997.

Der Klassiker returns with Bayern and Dortmund's rivalry perfectly poised

ANDY BRASSELL
BERLIN, 25 MAY [THEGUARDIAN]: Ever since the Bundesliga's fixture list was released way back in July last year, the timing has looked delicious. For neutrals, the two fixtures that tend to leap out are the confrontations between Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund. Fans have practically been able to set their watch on the arrival of the return fixture, placed within the span of a week in early April for five of the last seven seasons.

In 2019-20, the return had a twist. For the first time since 2016, the second match would be played in Dortmund, more significant than it sounds given BVB's woeful record in Munich in recent years – six successive Bundesliga losses, with three goals scored and 24 conceded. For Dortmund, another trip to their Allianz Arena field of screams in a potential title run-in would have been a major psychological obstacle.

Even if circumstance dictates that the white-hot atmosphere of Westfalen – which in 2013 prompted the recently departed Mario Götze to warm up in the tunnel on return – Lucien Favre's side will be grateful for even adjusted home comforts. The scheduling always offered hope for competitive balance, as well as for Dortmund. For everyone else, there is hope of a contest.

Now, with the Bundesliga the only elite European league back from hiatus, there will be more watching neutrals – or perhaps not-so-neutrals – watching on than ever before.



Though a crowd-free German domestic game is not the platform its proponents would have dreamed of, the on-pitch balance is almost as enticing as any could have wished for. Four points separate Bayern, chasing an eighth successive title, from Dortmund. A home win would beckon the world further into the closing stages of the Bundesliga season, via a medium familiar to millions of world football fans.

It was already neatly packaged – and had been for some time – as Der Klassiker, the German equivalent to Barcelona taking on Real Madrid. There is not quite the same historical resonance here: Bayern's decades-long dominance of the league has meant the epithet "Klassiker" has habitually been applied to a

face-off between the Rekordmeister and their biggest threat, none of whom has been exactly eternal.

That the moniker has stuck to Bayern v Dortmund is not just an expression of how successfully the Bundesliga markets itself on the international stage these days, but of how enduring this rivalry has been over the last decade. BVB's successive titles in 2011 and 2012, prefacing the 2013 Champions League final between the two teams, are responsible not only for the genesis of this rivalry, but for Bayern's apparent impregnability of the moment.

The gall of Jürgen Klopp's team in denying Bayern two years in a row, then humiliating them in the 2012 German Cup final in Berlin (which



Dortmund won 5-2 with a Robert Lewandowski hat-trick) cajoled and provoked the Bavarians into becoming the most ruthless versions of themselves. The tension has continued to crackle in the meetings since, from the robust meeting between the pair at Signal Iduna Park in May 2013, 20 days before the Champions League final, through the defections of Götze, Lewandowski and Mats Hummels.

Dortmund would like to believe they are now past the stage where they can be picked off by the Bayern behemoth – and whatever the optics were to the international stage, they had control over Hummels' exit to a far greater extent than they did those of Götze and Lewandowski. Though their budget is just

over half than that of the champions, a second straight season as a genuine title contender shows that much has changed since 2013, in expectation as much as image.

So while Erling Haaland and Jadon Sancho are forging their reputation as world superstars in Dortmund, attracting established stars is also possible. Emre Can has arrived for big money from Juventus and Hummels made the return journey from Bayern in 2018 (the former replaced the latter, who has a sore Achilles, in Saturday's 2-0 win at Wolfsburg).

Bayern have evolved too since the rivalry took hold, albeit in a more subtle way. The appointment of Pep Guardiola in 2013 underlined their ambitions to become synony-

mous with a seductive brand of football rather than simply success. Reassuring constants remain – not least the outstanding form of Thomas Müller, again superb in Saturday's 5-2 defeat of Eintracht Frankfurt – but a desire to add a cosmopolitan streak to old clichés of German grit is clear. The €80m (£71.6m) signing of French defender Lucas Hernández from Atlético Madrid in 2019 nearly doubled their previous record transfer fee paid – although the World Cup winner is only on the bench at present.

With the world watching, this is Bayern's chance to shatter the myth outside Germany that their relentless winning football is not entertaining – and, refocused under Hansi Flick, they are as irresistible as they have been at any point since the end of Guardiola's reign. At 31, Lewandowski is looking better than ever, and has scored 16 times against his former club since leaving in 2014. At the other end Alphonso Davies, the teenage Canadian winger now established as a rampaging attacking left-back with Flick, adds another dimension.

"We will have to endure phases in which Bayern will dominate," said Dortmund's sporting director, Michael Zorc, on the eve of the game with some understatement. He is well aware that doesn't preclude his side – so able on the counter-attack, as they have shown since returning to action – from winning. While the scale of the occasion may be reduced, the mere suggestion of jeopardy should be enough to beguile.

End of an era: Hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr dies

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25 (PTI): Balbir Singh Sr, one of India's greatest hockey players who won three Olympic gold medals in a stellar career, died at a hospital in Mohali on Monday after battling multiple health issues for over two weeks.

The legendary centre-forward was 96 and is survived by his daughter Sushbir and three sons Kanwalbir, Karanbir, and Gurbir. His sons are settled in Canada and he lived here with his daughter and grandson Kabir.

"He died at 6:17am this morning," Abhijit Singh, Director Fortis Hospital, Mohali, where he was admitted since May 8, told PTI.

His maternal grandson Kabir later sent out a message stating, "Nanaji passed away this morning."

The three-time Olympic gold-medallist was in a semi-comatose state since May 18 and had developed a blood clot in his brain after being first admitted to the hospital for bronchial pneumonia with high fever. He was tested for COVID-19 but reports came out negative.

Singh suffered three cardiac arrests during the course of his treatment.

Singh was cremated with full state honours and Kabir performed the last rites on Monday evening.

A police contingent fired three shots as a mark of respect to the

departed soul. His body was taken to the crematorium in a bedecked vehicle and former Indian hockey captain Pargat Singh was also present at the funeral.

Senior officials of the Punjab government and Chandigarh administration laid wreaths on the body here.

One of the country's most accomplished athletes, Singh was the only Indian among 16 legends chosen by the International Olympic Committee across modern Olympic history.

His world record for most goals scored by an individual in the men's hockey final of the Olympics still remains unbeaten.

He had scored five goals in India's 6-1 victory over the Netherlands in the gold medal match of the 1952 Helsinki Games. He was conferred with the Padma Shri in 1957.

That was the first time an athlete was conferred the prestigious civilian honour.

Singh's three Olympic gold medals came in London (1948), Helsinki (1952) as vice-captain, and Melbourne (1956) as captain.

He was also the manager of India's only World Cup-winning side in 1975.

It was the fourth time in the past two years that the former captain and coach was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

In January last year,

Singh spent more than three months in hospital because of bronchial pneumonia.

Considered at par with Major Dhyan Chand in skills, Singh was among independent India's biggest hockey stars.

Singh and Dhyan Chand never played together but are regarded as the jewels of Indian hockey, who inspired an entire generation of hockey players.

While Dhyan Chand garnered more recognition, especially since his achievements came under the British rule, Singh's exploits were no less impactful.

Born in 1924 in Punjab's Haripur Khalsa village, he was spotted by Harbail Singh, who was the then coach of Khalsa College and later coached India to back-to-back gold medals in 1952 Helsinki and 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Singh won three consecutive Olympic gold medals just like the more celebrated Dhyan Chand but lived a quieter life.

In the past few years, there was clamour for him to be honoured with the Bharat Ratna with Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh even writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding the country's highest civilian award for him.

A soft-spoken man but a hard task-master on the turf is how the players, who competed under the legend, recall him.

Babar is very close to being in same league as Kohli, Smith: Misbah

KARACHI, MAY 25 (PTI): Pakistan head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq believes Babar Azam is destined to be a world class player and is very close to being in the same league as India skipper Virat Kohli and Australia's Steve Smith.

"I don't like comparisons but Babar is currently very close to being in the same class as Virat Kohli, Steve Smith or Joe Root," Misbah said in an interview to Youtube channel, Cricket Baaz.

"He believes in the work ethic that if you want to better Kohli you have to work harder than him at your skills, fitness and game awareness."

The 25-year-old, who was named captain of the Pakistan T20 team ahead of the Australia series in October last year, was recently handed the reins of ODI team as well.

"Making him the T20 captain was a tester. We wanted to see how he will respond to this challenge. All of us agree that he has done a very good job and his biggest plus is that being among the worlds top players he leads by example," Misbah said.

"If you are a performer like Babar then it becomes easier for you to motivate the rest of the team and get things done."

"Even when I was made captain in 2010 my performances were here and there and I was in and out. But captaincy changed my game and mindset and



I became a more hard working and motivated cricketer."

Misbah said Babar always challenges himself and would get better as a captain with experience.

"He is in a zone of his own. He just doesn't want to be in the team. He just doesn't want to play for money. He wants to be the top performer for Pakistan. He is always pitting himself against other top batsmen like Kohli or Smith," he said.

"He loves challenges in the nets and on the field. He has really matured as a player and in time he will get better as a captain with experience."

Babar was the leading run-scorer of the T20I series against Australia last year. He also scored 210 runs, which included a hundred, at 52.50 in the Test series against the same opponents.

In the two-Test home series against Sri Lanka, Babar ended the series

with 262 runs with an average of exactly 262.

Misbah feels Babar had changed as a batsman when he got runs in the Tests in Australia.

"Before that he was getting runs in tests but not consistently. In Australia and in the following tests against Sri Lanka and Bangladesh he changed," he said.

Talking about his experience as a head coach, Misbah said: "Having captained, it has helped me a lot. As captain I had to manage everything and also having played under top coaches ... I have seen closely their work ethics and how they managed things."

"It is a learning process. Having remained captain it is a big advantage for coaching because you know the players and their mood swings. You know which player will respond in a given situation, which player is feeling pressure in a scenario."

Misbah said it is not

easy juggling between different roles.

"Most important thing as a coach is mentally and psychologically how you handle a group of players," the former skipper said.

"Sometimes captain and coach is different as you have to take tough decisions. Being chief selector makes it a bit difficult but I had experience of creating and managing teams, I have been building teams since 2003. Till now it is going well."

Misbah feels in Pakistan cricket there were different parameters for judging foreign and local coaches.

"I don't know why it is like this why do we have different eye for locals and foreigners. Maybe we feel they have something special. It looks like every decision by a foreign coach is right. In contrast we tend to be very critical of local coaches no matter what decision they take," he said.

Europe keeps easing as US bans travellers from Brazil

Europe inched up its coronavirus shutters a little further Monday as nightclubs, museums and swimming pools re-opened in parts of the continent.

While a post-pandemic life was gradually taking shape in what was formerly one of the worst-hit regions, the virus continued its rampage across Latin America, sparking a US travel ban for people coming from Brazil.

Rocketing infection rates in South America have pushed the worldwide caseload to nearly 5.4 million, with deaths approaching 350,000, but with the global economy battered, governments are scrambling to provide relief however they can to businesses and citizens wearying of mass confinement.

Hard-hit Spain eased restrictions in Madrid and Barcelona, with the capital's popular Retiro Park opening its gates Monday for the first time in 10 weeks.

"The reopening of Retiro brings me a feeling of serenity, gives me comfort," said Rosa San Jose, a 50-year-old schoolteacher who had come to the park to walk, wearing a white mask.

Meanwhile, restaurants, bars and swimming pools were among several types of businesses set to reopen in the Czech Republic, which has reported nearly 9,000 cases.

The nation will even allow events with up to 300 people, and Czechs are no longer obliged to wear face masks in public except in shops and on public transport.

Elsewhere in Europe, cafes and restaurants in Greece were gearing up to reopen on Monday -- but only those with outdoor service.



Nightclubs and bars were set to resume business in Iceland's capital Reykjavik, while zoos and museums will welcome visitors again in Copenhagen, and Rome's swimming pools and sports centres will also reopen.

In Asia, Japan lifted its state of emergency on Monday as new cases slowed to a crawl in the world's third-biggest economy.

- Hotspot -

But in less wealthy parts of the planet, the news was not so good.

Brazil -- the world's sixth-largest country -- has been declared the latest hotspot with more than 360,000 reported cases, second only to the United States, even as

its leader, the far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, plays down the threat from the virus.

In a sign of global concern about the outbreak in Brazil, where more than 22,000 have died of COVID-19, the White House said Sunday it would bar entry into the US of non-Americans who have been in the South American nation in the 14 days before.

Despite the crisis engulfing Brazil, Bolsonaro -- an ally of US President Donald Trump -- has repeatedly argued that lockdown measures are unnecessary and harmful to the economy.

He flouted social distancing rules again on Sunday, attending a

rally outside the presidential palace in Brasilia to greet a cheering rally, ditching his face mask, shaking hands and embracing supporters -- even hoisting a young boy onto his shoulders at one point.

The leader grinned as flag-waving supporters shouted "Legend!" and "The people support you, Bolsonaro!"

But despite the strong support from his political base, he has faced scathing criticism for his handling of the outbreak as experts warn Brazil's healthcare system is overwhelmed.

And while his government has imposed a Brazil travel ban over the virus, Trump remains frus-

trated with lockdown measures at home, and -- with 40 million jobs lost this year -- is aggressively pushing a US reopening despite the national death toll approaching 100,000. Again trying to project confidence, Trump played golf for a second straight day on Sunday, after avoiding the fairways since March 8.

The polarised opinion on lockdowns in America was on display after video footage emerged of a jam-packed swimming pool in Missouri over the weekend, despite orders mandating social distancing measures.

"Scenes such as this one... are inconceivable during the pandem-

ic. Do they all have death wishes?" one woman tweeted. Another countered: "Just Americans being free and making their own decisions and enjoying life."

- Mounting political pressure -

Despite experts warning against reopening too soon, and recommending some form of confinement measures until a vaccine or treatment is developed, governments are feeling immense pressure to ease lockdowns.

India -- which has imposed the world's biggest lockdown -- resumed domestic flights on Monday with the government desperate to get Asia's third-largest economy moving again.

But infections are still surging in India, leaving passengers and airline staff worried about the risks of travel resumption.

One airline employee -- wearing gloves, a mask and a protective face shield -- said she and many other colleagues felt "very nervous" about starting work again. "Dealing with so many people at this time is so risky," she told AFP. "I must have interacted with at least 200 people since this morning."

Adding to the mix of economic turmoil and public anger, a scandal was brewing in Britain where Prime Minister Boris Johnson was on Sunday forced to defend his top aide Dominic Cummings, who has been accused of having breached the government's own lockdown rules in March and April.

"He has acted responsibly and legally and with integrity," Johnson said of Cummings.

But Tory MP Craig Whittaker tweeted: "You cannot advise the nation one thing then do the opposite."

Bangladeshi barge sinks in Bengal river; none injured

KOLKATA, MAY 25 (PTI):

A Bangladeshi barge sank in a river in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Monday after hitting a submerged pontoon jetty that was damaged by Cyclone Amphan, officials of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) said.

All the 12 crew members of the barge, 'M V Prianka', have been rescued by the local administration after receiving an SOS call from the vessel, the officials said.

The incident occurred early in the

morning in the Hatania-Donia river in Namkhana, they said.

The left side of the barge is fully submerged in the river, they said.

"The barge MV Prianka was carrying a cargo load of about 800-900 tonnes of fly ash from Budge Budge jetty in West Bengal to Bangladesh. It was sailing during low tide and hit the submerged pontoon jetty," a barge operator told PTI.

The accident could have been averted had the state administration

marked the area, he said.

Japan set to end Tokyo's state of emergency

TOKYO, MAY 25 (AP):

Experts on a special government panel have approved a plan to remove a coronavirus state of emergency from Tokyo and four other remaining prefectures, paving the way for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to declare entirely ending the measure to allow businesses to gradually resume.

Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters that experts on a government-commissioned panel approved the plan to end the state of emergency that has lasted for more than a month and a half.

Abe is to officially declare the end of the state of emergency later Monday after endorsement from parliamentary committees. Nishimura said lifting of the emergency does not mean the end of the pandemic. He said the goal is to minimize next possible recurrences of infections while balancing preventive measures and the economy.

Abe declared the state of emergency on April 7, first in parts of

Japan including Tokyo, expanded it to the entire nation later in the month and extended it until the end of May.

Unlike a European-style hard lockdown, Japan's state of emergency is soft and largely a request for people to stay at home and for non-essential businesses to close or operate shorter hours, a strategy aiming at minimizing the economic damage.

Tokyo and its three neighboring prefectures are to reopen schools, public facilities and businesses in phases in coming weeks while watching any signs of a resurgence of infections.

Nishimura said recent data suggest that the infections have slowed enough and the medical systems are under less pressure and that it's time to gradually resume social and economic activity. Tokyo and Hokkaido, where more than a dozen new cases have been reported Sunday, still need to remain extra-cautious, he said.

Qatar virus tracing app stirs rare privacy backlash

Privacy concerns over Qatar's coronavirus contact tracing app, a tool that is mandatory on pain of prison, have prompted a rare backlash and forced officials to offer reassurance and concessions.

Like other governments around the world, Qatar has turned to mobile phones to trace people's movements and track who they come into contact with, allowing officials to monitor coronavirus infections and alert people at risk of contagion.

The apps use Bluetooth radio signals to "ping" nearby devices, which can be contacted subsequently if a user they have been near develops symptoms or tests positive, but the resultant unprecedented access to users' location data has prompted fears about state surveillance.

Qatar's version goes considerably further -- it forces Android users to permit access to their picture and video galleries, while also allowing the app to make unprompted calls.

"I can't understand why it needs all these permissions," wrote Ala'a on a Facebook group popular with Doha's large expat community -- one of several such forums peppered with concerns over the app. Justin Martin, a journalism professor based in Qatar, warned authorities in a tweet not to "erode" trust by enforcing "an app with such alarming permissions".

The government launched the "Ehteraz" app, meaning "precaution", in April and on Friday it became mandatory for all citizens and legal residents to install it on their phones.

Non-compliance is punishable by up to three years in jail -- the same term as for failing to wear a mask in public -- in a state battling one of the world's highest per capita infection rates.

- 'Highly invasive' -

Almost 44,000 of Qatar's 2.75 million people have tested positive for the respiratory disease -- 1.6 percent of the population -- and 23 people have died.

Security forces manned checkpoints across Qatar on Sunday to ensure use of the app, local media reported, alongside checking for use of masks.

Criticism of the government is rare in Qatar and laws prohibit disrespect towards officials. However, officials have said that the law on the app will be enforced with "understanding".

The app's simple interface displays coloured bar-codes containing the us-

er's ID number -- green for healthy, red for COVID-19 positive and yellow for quarantined cases. Grey indicates suspected cases or those who have come into contact with infected individuals.

Mohamed bin Hamad Al-Thani, a director at Qatar's health ministry, said that data gathered is "completely confidential".

"There will be an update for the Ehteraz app to address the issues of concern and further improve its efficiency," he added in an interview on state television on Thursday.

A new version of the software was duly released for Apple and Android on Sunday, promising "minor bug fixes", but without indicating that the invasive aspects had been removed.

The app was introduced just as authorities across the Muslim world warned that gatherings during Ramadan and the Eid al-Fitr festival that marks the end of the holy fasting month could lead to a surge of infections.

- 'Burner' phones -

"There are two key concerns... with the app," said Human Rights Watch researcher Hiba Zayadin.

It "is highly invasive, with a range of permissions allowing the government access to things that are not needed for the purpose of contact tracing, permissions that are unnecessary and present a concerning invasion of privacy."

But also "many migrant workers in the country don't have compatible phones that would allow them to download the app and comply".

Online reviews have also complained that the app drains battery power and cannot be installed on older iPhone handsets. Some have looked for ways around the policy.

"People are spending money and waiting in queues just to get burner phones to protect their privacy," wrote expat engineer Janko on one forum, referring to cheap handsets that could subsequently be disposed of.

There have been reports of a few users being wrongly classified as "quarantined" or "suspected cases".

"There's no need for photo access and other things. But it could be a good tool. It is a good way to prioritise whom to test," technology lawyer Rahul Matthan told AFP.

But "to work, they need a large number of people to use it. If people are dissuaded because of the app's overreach, then that would be a worry."

China space programme targets July launch for Mars mission

China is targeting a July launch for its ambitious plans for a Mars mission which will include landing a remote-controlled robot on the surface of the red planet, the company in charge of the project has said.

Beijing has invested billions of dollars in its space programme in an effort to catch up with its rival the United States and affirm its status as a major world power.

The Mars mission is among a number of new space projects China is pursuing, including putting Chinese astronauts on the moon and having a space station by 2022.

Beijing had been planning the Mars mission for sometime this year, but China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) has confirmed it could come as early as July.

"This big project is progressing as planned



and we are targeting a launch in July," CASC said in a statement issued on Sunday.

CASC is the main contractor for China's space programme.

Called "Tianwen", the Chinese mission will put a probe into orbit around Mars and land the robotic rover to explore and analyse the surface.

It will take several months to cover the roughly 55 million kilometres (31 million miles) distance between Earth

and Mars, which is ever-changing due to their planetary orbits.

China has already carried out a similar mission to the Moon, and in January 2019 landed a small rover on the dark side of the lunar surface, becoming the first nation to do so.

The US, which has already sent four exploratory vehicles to Mars, intends to launch a fifth this summer. It should arrive around February 2021.

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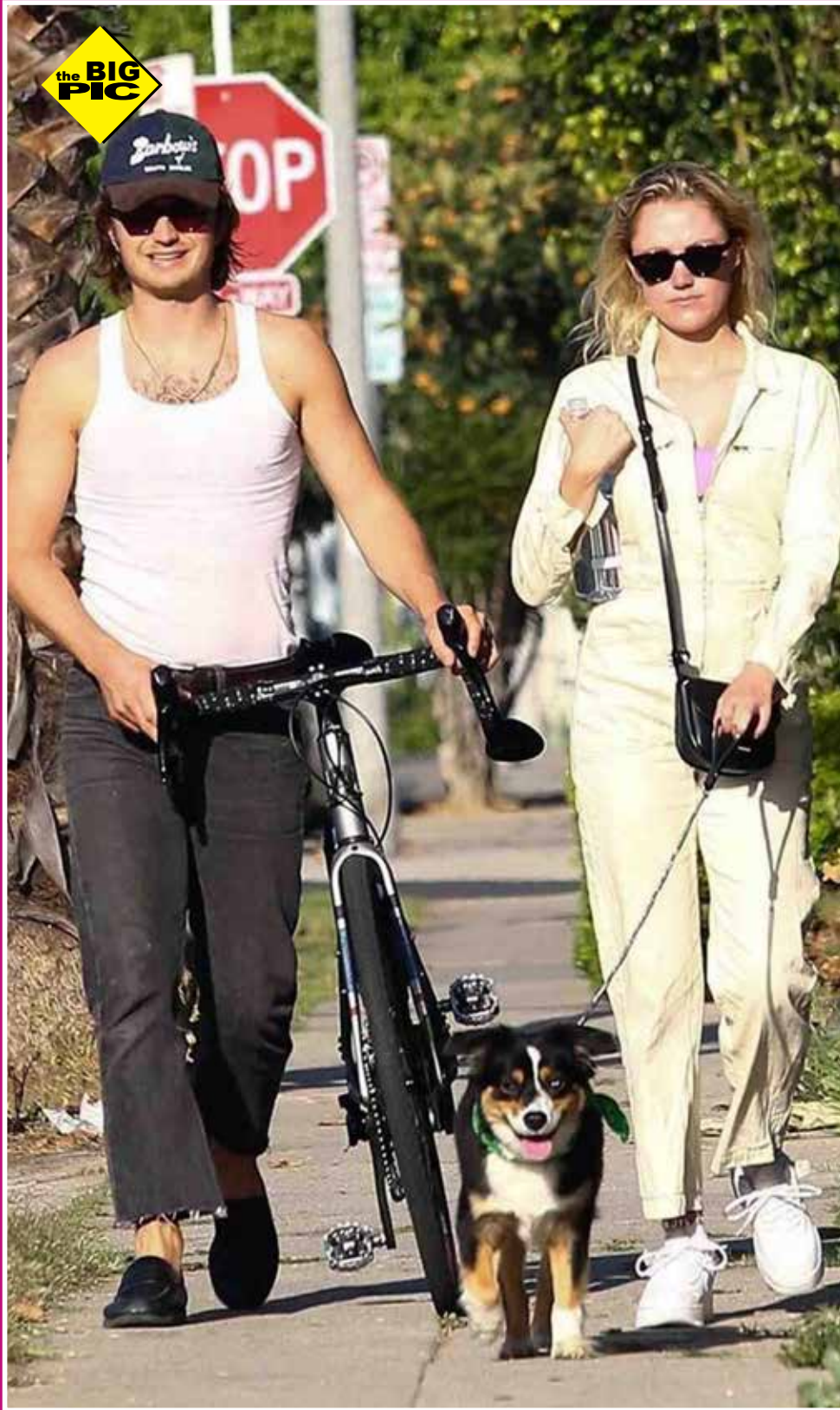
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OUT AND ABOUT! The *Stranger Things* star, Joe Keery and his girlfriend Maika Monroe enjoy a sunny walk with their cute pup in Los Angeles.

Have written music for six or seven albums during lockdown, says Boy George



LOS ANGELES, MAY 25 (PTI): Singer-songwriter Boy George says he has utilised his time during the coronavirus-induced lockdown to pen a lot of songs. The 58-year-old singer said he is looking forward to putting out his new songs under the deal with music company Primary Wave, which allows him to have copyright on his work.

I've written so much music I've got enough for six or seven albums. I'm not saying every single thing is good but I signed a deal just before Christmas with a company called Primary Wave, whose job it is to go out and place your music in movies. I own copy-

right with them. It's a new experience for me to own music, the singer told Louis Theroux's 'Grounded' podcast: 'The English musician, whose real name is George Alan O'Dowd, said he doesn't own any of the songs he created in the 80s and the publishers have misused many of his tracks to make money.

'Not only do I not own it, they can change the lyrics, give it to a burger shop. They have done that. They did a version of 'Karma Chameleon' that was about carrots and peas. Of course we see money from it but I'd pay them not to do that.

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Killing off Wolverine in 'Logan' was logical, says James Mangold

LOS ANGELES, MAY 25 (PTI): "Logan" was Hugh Jackman's swansong as Wolverine and director James Mangold says killing off the adamantium-clawed mutant was a simple, logical decision.

It was announced in 2015 that the Hollywood star would play the fan favourite X-Men character for the final time in the 2017 sequel to "The Wolverine".

The director said both he and Jackman were on board right from the outset of the film's premise.

Mangold said the process was "a lot less of a committee than you'd think".

"It was really Hugh and I at first. It seemed logical, that if it were going to be his last film, that he's either going to ride off onto the horizon or die, that you need to have some kind of curtain on his story. That's a logical assumption, right?"

"But the reason the choice was at our feet was because you needed the sense of closure. You needed some sense of an ending if you were going to end, if you were dealing with the legacy of Hugh's many performances and many films, and trying to set this part in some definitive way," he told ComicBook.com.

Jackman, who tasted international stardom as Wolverine in his first Hollywood movie "X-Men", played the role from 2000 to 2018 in the film series.

The Australian actor holds the Guinness

World Record for "longest career as a live-action Marvel superhero" for playing Logan/ Wolverine.

And contrary to their expectations, Mangold revealed, studio Fox was surprisingly in favour of killing off such a popular character when they pitched the idea.

"Frankly, even the studio didn't even



must see of the movie was going to be because it would be the end of a legend," he added.

Jackman recently admitted he departed the "X-Men" franchise at the right time.

He added that he is looking forward to some other actor take up the role in a potential new take.

Hopefully we can make something great: Neve Campbell on 'Scream' reboot

LOS ANGELES, MAY 25 (PTI): Neve Campbell says she was initially reluctant to do another 'Scream' movie without original helmer Wes Craven, but filmmaker duo Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillet's desire to honour the late director's vision has motivated her to support the upcoming reboot.

The 46-year-old Canadian actor, who played Sidney Prescott in last four installments of the slasher franchise, said she has seen the work of Ready or Not filmmakers and hopes they can create something great.

I'm not a hundred percent on it, but to be honest, the two directors have made some great work. I've watched their films, and they're really talented. They wrote a letter to me, expressing what great fans of Wes' work they are, and how honoured they are that they're getting the chance to make 'Scream 5' because the 'Scream' franchise is the reason that they're directors now. So, that was really sweet.

They really want to honour Wes' style of work and honour the movies. That was a lovely thing to hear. So, we'll see. Hopefully, we can all see eye to eye on everything and make something great, but it's

a process, Campbell said in an interview with Collider.

Actor David Arquette, who played the role of Sheriff Dewey Riley in the original film series, is already on board to reprise his part in the reboot.

James Vanderbilt and Guy Busick



have penned the new film.

The first 'Scream' movie released in 1996 with Campbell starring as Sidney, the target of the Ghostface killer, whose look was inspired by the Edvard Munch painting 'The Scream'. Courteney Cox and Arquette co-starred in all the four films, directed by Craven and written by Kevin Williamson.

Williamson is serving as the executive producer on the upcoming movie frp, , Spyglass Media Group.

Kim Kardashian celebrates anniversary with Kanye West: 'Forever to go'

LOS ANGELES, MAY 25 (PTI): Reality TV star Kim Kardashian and rapper Kanye West are celebrating six years of marriage.

The "Keeping Up With The Kardashians" star marked the occasion on social media on Sunday by sharing a few pictures with West.

"6 years down; forever to go. Until the

end," she captioned the photographs.

Kardashian, 39, and West, 42, tied the knot in 2014 at Fort di Belvedere, a 16th century fortress in Florence, Italy.

The couple share four children, North, Saint, Chicago and Psalm.

Kardashian was previously married to NBA player Kris Humphries and music producer Damon Thomas.

Venice Film Festival to go ahead with 2020 edition

LOS ANGELES, MAY 25 (PTI): The Venice Film Festival is on its course to hold the 2020 edition this September, the region's governor has confirmed. Luca Zaia, governor of Veneto, said on Sunday that the festival, which was due to take place September 2-12, will be held as planned, reported Variety.

The official's confirmation comes days after the Venice Biennale, which oversees the world's longest-running film festival among a number of other arts events, moved its Biennale of Architecture to 2021, but maintained the film festival's dates. Previously, the architecture and film festivals were meant to overlap.

Zaia said that the Biennale of Architecture was postponed due to complications in constructing the necessary pavilions. The prestigious film showcase will proceed, although he warned that fewer films are likely to be featured this year. The festival has not yet commented on plans for September.

Venice did the due diligence early May asking for concerns and suggestions regarding the upcoming movie gala. The letter, which was signed by Venice's artistic director Alberto Barbera, was meant to figure out how many filmmakers, actors and producers are willing to attend the fest. Venice previously declared that it would not go the virtual route, but said it was considering a "virtual screening room, using a safe online platform" for those who won't be able to attend but have been previously accredited.

ARIES:

The process of transformation is both painful and confusing. Who are you if you are no longer the person you used to be? Let go of the need to cling onto the masks that provide a false sense of security. Let go of the need to have all the answers. Know that Spirit is protecting you right now and in this moment. You will soon find a way to cross the troubled waters looking like the most glorious and goddess-like version of yourself.

Tip: Trust the process of transformation.

Taurus:

It's true that you've been hurt, but how long are you going to carry this pain? Know that holding onto what no longer serves you will prove to be detrimental to your mental, emotional, and physical health. A simple meditation to clear the blocks: close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and return to your Zen space. Visualise a luminescent golden ball radiating from the centre of your heart, growing in size and pulsating with energy. Let the ball of light transmute the wounds into wisdom and help your heart chakra expand.

Tip: Open your heart.

GEMINI:

Dance, drama, and movement are second nature to you, Gemini. They are your prayer for the mysterious forces. An act of being present to the cosmic currents. Today, you're being asked to turn to the expressive art to communicate that which is unsaid within you. Don't have a practice of your own? Skip your regular workout in favour of something fun and upbeat. A virtual Bollywood or belly dancing class could be the answer.

Tip: Dance like nobody's watching.

CANCER:

It's true that certain things in our lives are predetermined. But don't forget the power of free will, which reminds us that the wheels of this chariot are in our hands. So stop playing tragedy queen and see how you can clear the blocks and bring about a monumental shift. The task at hand may be challenging, but it's not impossible.

Tip: Face your fears.

LEO:

It's been an especially demanding week in the Leo HQ and you're in no mood to engage with the outside world. Here are five ways to make the most of your #SelfCareSunday. 1: A ritualistic bath complete with salts and essential oils to wash your woes away. 2: A coffee date with your favourite self-help/spirituality book. 3: A bake-a-thon with you SO or flatmate. (Did somebody say banana bread?) 4: A virtual art therapy session. 5: A guided meditation that takes you to that special place. PS: Remember to keep your phone on flight mode for the better part of today.

Tip: Hello #SelfCareMonday

VIRGO:

Art is not just a form of expression, it's a vessel for inner alchemy. Today, you're in the mood to flow with the cosmic currents, to seduce the Muse, and to paint your innermost feelings onto the canvas. Stay in your magick. Create from a space of wholeness. Know that you are a unique individual and nobody else in the world can bring forth the same flavours as you onto the table. While you're at it, let go of the idea of perfection. The more you stay true to your soul essence, the more others will be able to connect with your creations.

Tip: Stay in your magick.

LIBRA:

"Exercises are like prose, whereas yoga is the poetry of movements. Once you understand the grammar of yoga; you can write your poetry of movements." An Amit Ray quote to inspire you to nama-slay on your mat today. The combination of conscious breathing with deliberate movement is sure to bring you back to your centre and help you experience inner stillness—if only for a few moments. Sign up for a virtual class or turn to the treasure trove available online.

Tip: Experience inner stillness.

SCORPIO:

Everybody can have their 15 seconds of fame. Oh hello, social media! But only a few people manage to leave a legacy behind, one that they will be remembered for long after they are gone. What are your dreams and desires, Scorpio? Do you want to take the fast road to success or build a strong foundation that will support your vision? The choice is and has always been yours. Remember, you are exactly where you are supposed to be. Let go of the need to compare your journey with that of others.

Tip: With consistent effort towards your goals, you will be able to leave a legacy behind.

SAGITTARIUS:

Sagittarius, you're in this world, but not of it. You are discovering that you are a multidimensional being, full of magical abilities that are waiting to be realised. You are in the process of aligning with your true path and uncovering the jewels Spirit has buried deep within you. The transformation may seem daunting at first. Roll with it anyway. Yes, that means you are allowed to take up "too much" space and be a sorcerer/ess in a world full of muggles.

Tip: You are coming into your magick.

CAPRICORN:

A Ram Dass quote to awaken you. "The spiritual journey is individual, highly personal. Listen to your own truth." You are realising that the scriptures and sacred texts can only take you this far. There is nothing more profound than direct experience. So, commune with the divine forces in a way that feels authentic to you and know that you don't need an outsider to facilitate this connection. It's true that silence opens up the doorway. But your task today is to take that inner stillness into everything that you do.

Tip: You have a direct connection with the divine.

AQUARIUS:

You don't have to do this alone, Aquarius. Your soul crew is right here when you feel lost or confused. Trust that they will hold space for you to express what you are going through. In the mood to process your feelings before you reach out for support? Journaling is a wonderful tool at your disposal, one that will help you clear out the mental clutter.

Tip: As Ernest Hemingway once said, "Write hard and clear about what hurts."

PISCES:

They've left you on 'read' more than a few times and choose to reach out only when it's convenient for them. Could you be looking at this connection through rose-tinted glasses or making excuses for other people? Spoiler alert, Pisces: your delusional thinking is not serving you. Read the signs. Understand what they are revealing to you. You're better off redirecting your energy towards your own growth.

Tip: Read the signs.