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Now to make the young connect and care
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Soil failure tears away section of building in Mangan, affects 17 families

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 12 JUL:

A building in the heart of Mangan Bazaar which used to accommodate shops and had 17 families residing in it, saw a section peel away from main structure and collapse into a landslide which had been tugging at its foundation for a while now.

What remains of this building belonging to former Member of Parliament Soloman Saring, located below Mangan Police Station is also in a critical state. The building had been in a vulnerable condition for the past several months because of the soil failure behind it which has also damaged several other houses in the area.

The district administration, police personnel, NDRF teams, MNP officials, Councillors and locals helped evacuate the shops and residents from the building and people living nearby were

also alerted after signs of a collapse became obvious early in the day today.

Later in the day, a meeting with all the 17 affected families was held at the Mangan Nagar Panchayat Complex. The meeting was also attended by the Lachen Mangan MLA Samdup Lepcha accompanied by DM(N), SP(N), ADM(N), DFO Forest department, SDM, MEO(MNP), Councillors, NDRF staff.

The MLA consoled the shocked families and assured to take up the issue with the Chief Minister and secure them ex-gratia payment. While that official process was awaited, he handed over Rs 5,000 to each affected person from his own savings and advised them to stay alert and safe.

In an open discussion, it was decided that the Raffong Khola and Rimit Khola slides be managed properly and proper drainage ensured for Mangan.

Diesel price hiked, again

NEW DELHI, JUL 12 (PTI): Diesel price in the national capital on Sunday inched towards the Rs 81 per litre-mark following a rate hike after a four-day hiatus.

Diesel price on Sunday was increased by 16 paise per litre, according to a price notification of state-owned oil marketing companies.

This took the retail selling price to Rs 80.94 per litre in the national capital -- the highest ever.

There was no change in petrol price for almost two weeks, and it continues to be priced at Rs 80.43 per litre.

Rates vary from state to state

depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

While diesel price was last revised on July 7, petrol rates were last changed on June 29.

In the last five weeks, diesel price has increased on 24 occasions while petrol rates have risen 21 times.

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle on June 7 totals to Rs 9.17 for petrol and Rs 11.55 for diesel.

In Mumbai, petrol is priced at Rs 87.19 -- unchanged since June 29, while diesel rate was hiked to Rs 79.17 litre from Rs 79.05.

ASKCBKS thanks State Govt for notifying 10% reservation in central govt employment for EWS



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUL:

Akhil Sikkim Khas Chettri Bahun Kalyan Sangh [ASKCBKS] has thanked the State government and Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] for having issued a notification formalizing 10% reservation in central government jobs for Economically Weaker Sections which fall under State OBC list.

ASKCBKS had convened an executive committee meeting here at its office on Sunday where it passed a formal resolution to this effect.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, ASKCBKS president, Raju Basnet, informed that the meeting also passed a proposal to thank the State government, the CM, state government officials and employees and frontline workers for working effectively to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Sikkim.

He added that the meeting has also thanked the people of Sikkim for supporting the guidelines and directions of the State government in the fight against COVID-19.

He informed that the meeting also thanked the CM for providing the Old Sadar Thana premises to ASKCBKS to open an. He further informed that the CM has also promised to support the construction of a Khas Nepali Bhawan at the same complex.

About the State Government notification extending reservation to EWS in central employment, Mr Basnet pointed out that there was already job reservation for the State OBC in Sikkim and now, with this additional reservation, EWS will benefit substantially.

He urged the youth in the general category to take full advantage of opportunities in central government and also assured to set-up a help desk at the ASKCBKS office to extend support and guidance to youth in this category.

ASKCBKS president informed that members of ASKCBKS have contributed around Rs 8 lakh towards the Chief Minister Relief Fund and thanked the community for supporting the government in this difficult time.

He informed that the meeting has also decided to launch a web-portal of the organization to start an online membership drive. He mentioned that the meeting has further strengthened the organisations women's wing, youth wing and advisory council by adding more experienced members.

He also appealed to the State government to urge the National Commission for Backward Classes to hold a fresh hearing if there has not been a positive outcome to the last hearing held in 2015 to pursue Scheduled Tribes status for the 11 leftout communities of the State.

Landslides pepper West Sikkim

RUDRA KAUSHIK

GYALSHING, 12 JUL:

A wet Sunday which saw incessant rain has caused massive landslides at various places across West Sikkim bringing normal life to a grinding standstill.

Traffic was disrupted at various stretches due to landslides triggered by heavy downpour. However, restoration work is being initiated at the affected sites by the concerned department.

The Pelling -Yuksam state highway was rendered inaccessible after a major portion of the road was swept away by a flash flood at Famrong Falls.

Locals inform that restoration work could take a week or more.

"The landslip is massive and increased volume of water flowing through the stream will create hindrance to road reconstruction work," a local said. However, in order to access Yuksam-Tashiding, the alternate route via Legship is open at present.

Landslides also damaged property at Lower Pechrek under Geyzing-Bermiok constituency. The poultry farm, milk collection centre and a vehicle of TB Chettri were damaged. An electricity pole has also been uprooted there.

The BDO and panchayat members visited the landslide-hit areas and assessed the damage today.

The road that connects Gyalshing with Sakyong and other nearby villages was also blocked the near SSB



camp of Yangtey due to a massive landslide. Accumulated mud, slush and debris was still being removed at the time of filing this report.

Bina Rai, a resident of Sakyong is living in constant fear because the slide which has peeled away from, near her house. She was rescued and evacuated in time from her imperiled building by alert neighbours.

The helipad road is blocked by a massive mudslip near Norbu Ghang Resort in Pelling.

Narayan Khatiwada, a local businessman, informs that the landslide was massive and clearance was not possible in a hurry.

CS chairs meeting to discuss Rongli situation

GANGTOK, 12 JUL [IPR]: In the wake of 23 positive cases of COVID-19 detected from Rongli on 11 July, Chief Secretary SC Gupta called an urgent meeting at Teesta Lounge, Tashiling Secretariat with Principal Secretary, Health, Secretary Health, Secretary, Coordination, Secretary, Land Revenue and Chief Engineer GREF, District Collector, East and SP, East to discuss containment measures.

The District Collector, East, informed that Rongli Bazaar area has been declared as a containment zone. The ingress and egress of people and vehicle

would be totally restricted. Only vehicle carrying Essential Commodities would be permitted to enter and only those shops selling essential items would be allowed to remain open. The Chief Secretary directed that the entire Rongli sub division should be brought under lockdown for more effective containment. DC East was asked to issue necessary lockdown order in this regard.

The Health Department informed that a health team has been sent to Rongli today for RT-PCR testing of all primary contacts of the infected persons. Further, it was also informed that



all personnel and staff of ITBP, SSB and GREF would be subjected to antigen testing immediately upon entry at Rangpo.

The Chief Secretary also interacted with the District

Collector, North and SP, North over video conference facility to discuss the latest situation in Dzongu and other parts of North District, which have been cut off due to heavy rainfall.

India's COVID tally climbs to 8,49,553

NEW DELHI, JULY 12 (PTI): India added a record 28,637 cases of coronavirus infection on Sunday pushing the country's COVID-19 tally to 8,49,553, while the death toll climbed to 22,674 with 551 people succumbing to the disease in a day, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The number of recoveries stands at 5,34,620, while there are 2,92,258 active cases of coronavirus infection presently in the country, the updated data at 8 am showed.

"Thus, around 62.93 per cent of patients have recovered so far," an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases include foreigners. This was the third consecutive day that COVID-19 cases in the country have increased by

more than 26,000.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 1,15,87,153 samples have been tested up to July 11 with 2,80,151 samples being tested on Saturday.

Of the 551 deaths reported in the last 24 hours, 223 are from Maharashtra, 70 from Karnataka, 69 from Tamil Nadu, 34 from Delhi, 26 from West Bengal, 24 from Uttar Pradesh, 17 from Andhra Pradesh, 12 from Bihar, 10 each from Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir, nine from Telangana, eight each from Assam and Punjab and seven from Haryana.

Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan reported six deaths each, followed by Odisha with five, Goa with three, Kerala two and Puducherry and Tripura one fatality each.

Turn Page 2

Minister visits flashflood affected Lower Pechrek and Majhgaon

GYALSHING, JULY 12 [IPR]: Gyalshing Bermiok MLA, Minister Lok Nath Sharma, visited Lower Pechrek and Majh Gaon wards under Pechrek HeePatal Gram Panchayat Unit, West Sikkim, today and took stock of the damage caused there by a flash-flood triggered this morning at around 9AM.

He was accompanied by Block Development Officer Hee Martam Prativa Tamang, DPO/ West DR Bista, Assistant Engineer RDD Tashi Bhutia, Junior Engineer Public Works Deptt. Thupden Bhutia, Veterinary Officer Rinchenpong Dr Wangchuk D Bhutia, officials and local public.

Minister Sharma took detailed inspection of the affected area from Lower Pechrek to MajhGaon and directed the concerned officials to make comprehensive assessment of the damaged properties. Minister Sharma also handedover

ex-gratia of Rupees 10,000 each to eight families from his personal account and also assured to provide all required support from the government.

It was informed that a total of twenty five families are affected by the flashflood.

The dwelling house of Bal Bir Chettri was completely washed away while houses of Jagan Nath Sharma, Phul Maya Chettri, Laxuman Chettri and Bhim Badhur Chettri sustained extensive damage.

Veterinary Officer [Rinchenpong], Dr Wangchuk D Bhutia, informed that a poultry shed was also damaged killing 100 ready for sale chicken and 200 chicks.

Milk Producers Cooperative Society, Pechrek was also damaged by the flash flood.

Earlier, Minister Sharma also inspected sliding site at Martam Laminitaar.

Heavy rain inundates Siliguri



SUMMIT REPORT SILIGURI, 12 JUL:

The wall of a house collapsed due to heavy rain here at Pegani Pada in North Shantinagar area last night, even as reports of

downed electricity poles and damage to other houses have come in. Two people were injured in rain-related mishaps in Siliguri overnight. Many wards of Siliguri Municipal



Corporation are inundated with water entering homes in the low lying areas. Parts of Phulwari Dabagram have been the worst hit with more than 50 families severely

affected. Heavy water logging was also reported from Nipania village of Phulbari gram panchayat. The water level of the Mahananda has also risen to worrying levels.

Efforts begin to resume construction of Rangpo Indrakeel Prayag



SUMMIT REPORT RANGPO, 12 JUL:

Rangpo residents have come together to begin the construction of Rangpo Indrakeel Prayag, a project that has been stuck for two decades.

Duga resident, Sudip Pradhan, social worker, Bhupal Baraily, councilor Pinku Prasad, Sajjan Agarwal, Rajendra Gupta, Mukesh Agarwal, Rajkumar Agarwal and Avinash Prasad along with other residents have proposed to call a meeting of the civil society so that they can begin the construction.

Christians undertake plantation drive at cemetery

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 12 JUL:

St Thomas Church, Gangtok, St Paul the Apostle Church, Tadong and Sikkim Catholic Association organized a plantation drive, Go Green!, at the common Christian burial ground here at Chandmari on Sunday.

The drive was organized in compliance with the directives of the Ecclesiastical Department of Sikkim and with support received from Forest Department.

The plantation drive was attended by Dean of North East Sikkim Deanery and Principal, St. Xavier School, Pakyong, Fr Francis Banerjee,



president of Burial ground committee, Pastor Joseph Tamang and retired Secretary of the State government, CP Dewan as special

invitees along with 60 members of participating churches. It is informed that COVID-19 SOPs were followed during the

programme. It is further informed that Sikkim Catholic Association has been organizing plantation drives across the State.

AP records new single day high of 1,933 cases, 19 deaths

AMARAVATI, JULY 12 (PTI): A new daily record of 1,933 cases pushed the coronavirus tally in Andhra Pradesh to 29,168 on Sunday.

The COVID-19 toll escalated to 328 as the state reported a fresh single-day high of 19 deaths, the government said in its latest bulletin.

In the last 24 hours ended at 10 AM, a total of 846 patients

were discharged from hospitals upon recovering from the infection, it said.

So far, 15,412 coronavirus infected patients had recovered in the state, leaving 13,428 active cases.

The gross 29,168 positive cases included 26,336 locals, 2,403 from other states and 429 foreign returnees.

Guntur district now

crossed the 3,000 mark, with 3,019 cases behind Kurnool (3,405) and Anantapuramu (3,290).

The state so far tested 11,53,849 samples with a positivity rate of 2.53 per cent but the recovery rate slumped to 52.84 per cent.

The mortality rate remained at 1.12 per cent, as per the government statistics.

Meanwhile, there

were widespread complaints about poor quality of food being provided to patients and bad sanitation in government-run COVID-19 hospitals.

“Based on the complaints, the Chief Minister has directed that the Joint Collector (Development) in each district be made the nodal officer to check the quality of food and also sanitation in hospitals.

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India's COVID tally

Of the total 22,674 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra accounted for the highest 10,116 fatalities followed by Delhi with 3,334 deaths, Gujarat 2,032, Tamil Nadu 1,898, Uttar Pradesh 913, West Bengal 906, Madhya Pradesh 644, Karnataka 613 and Rajasthan 503.

So far 348 people have died of COVID-19 in Telangana, 309 in Andhra Pradesh, 297 in Haryana, 195 in Punjab, 169 in Jammu and Kashmir, 131 in Bihar, 61 in Odisha, 46 in Uttarakhand, 35 in Assam and 29 in Kerala.

Jharkhand has registered 23 deaths, Puducherry 18, Chhattisgarh 17, Goa 12, Himachal Pradesh 11, Chandigarh seven, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura two and Ladakh have reported one fatality.

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

Maharashtra has reported the highest number of cases at 2,46,600 followed by Tamil Nadu at 1,34,226 Delhi at 1,10,921, Gujarat at 40,941, Uttar Pradesh at 35,092, Karnataka at 36,216 and Telangana at 33,402.

The number of COVID-19 cases has gone up to 28,453 in West Bengal, 27,235 in Andhra Pradesh, 23,748 in Rajasthan, 20,582 in Haryana and 17,201 in Madhya Pradesh.

Assam has 15,536 instances of the infection, Bihar 15,373, Odisha 12,526, and Jammu and Kashmir 10,156 cases. Punjab has reported 7,587 novel coronavirus infections so far, while Kerala has 7,438 cases.

A total of 3,897 have been infected by the virus in Chhattisgarh, 3,613 in Jharkhand, 3,417 in Uttarakhand, 2,368 in Goa, 1,949 in Tripura, 1,593 in Manipur, 1,337 in Puducherry, 1,182 in Himachal Pradesh and 1,077 in Ladakh.

Nagaland has recorded 748 COVID-19 cases, Chandigarh 555 and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu together have reported 471 cases.

Arunachal Pradesh reported 341 cases, Mizoram 227, Meghalaya 207, Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 163 infections so far, while Sikkim has recorded 151 cases.

“Our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR,” the ministry said, adding that 3,024 cases are being reassigned to states.

State-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation, it added.

CM greets Sikkim on Bhanu Jayanti

GANGTOK, 12 JUL (IPR): Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has extended his warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of 206th Bhanu Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya.

In his message he stated that Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya was a great scholar who made an everlasting contribution to Nepali literature by translating the great epic Ramayana from Sanskrit to Nepali

language. He stated that the younger generation in particular needs to be guided by his noble deeds.

The contribution of Bhanu Bhakta Acharya was not limited to translating the epic Ramayana but he also wrote many Nepali poems. His contribution to the unification of Nepali language has given us the strength of unity and continuation of traditional practices. By the translation

of the Ramayana, the Nepali speaking people started to learn to read and write in the language resulting in literacy among the Nepali population. The verses of Ramayana became so popular that in every occasion its recitation became a part of celebrations. The people of Sikkim have rightly followed the knowledge imparted in Ramayana through his work.

The Chief Minister hoped that the

Sikkimese people will continue to celebrate and get inspired by his contributions to Nepali literature. Bhanu Jayanti must be envisioned as a festival of learning.

He has called upon the people of Sikkim to continue safeguarding and promoting their rich culture and traditions and prayed that this auspicious occasion brings peace, prosperity, progress and strengthens fellowship among the people of the state.

Chamling highlights Adikavi's role in uniting Nepali community

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUL:

Sikkim Democratic Front president, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, has extended 206th Bhanu Jayanti greetings to the people.

In his message, Mr Chamling highlights that

Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya worked to bind the Nepali community together through language by translating the Ramayan into Nepali.

An SDF press release issued by its general secretary [press & publicity] Kavita

Subba informs that Mr Chamling further expressed that the Nepali community came together due to the contributions of the Adikavi and his contribution was still inspiring the people to accept diversity and towards development of the culture. He

further expressed that Bhanu Jayanti should be observed for unity and tranquility and emotional unification.

He has called on intellectuals, language experts and intellectuals to think and decide to celebrate Bhanu Janyanti as Unification Day.

Plantation drive by SSB at Nambu



SUMMIT REPORT

GIALSHING, 12 JUL:

A plantation drive was carried out today by personnel of B-Coy of 72BN Sashatra Seema Bal (SSB) of Nambu Yuksam at Nambu SSB camp and adjoining areas today and around 250 saplings planted.

The plantation drive was conducted under the supervision of SSB Deputy Commandment Om Prakash Singh.

The personnel of the SSB, with the help of local people, planted various types of saplings plants in

and around of SSB Nambu camp and nearby village areas in order to make these areas beautiful and healthy for living. Besides this, villagers were also motivated to grow more trees to make the areas lush green. Speaking to SummitTIMES, Inspector of SSB Nambu Camp, Amrit Kumar said, “The programme was organised by maintaining social distancing, keeping in mind the threat of COVID-19, around 250 saplings of various plants were planted around the camp area of Nambu SSB Camp.”

Former India cricketer Chetan Chauhan tests positive for COVID-19

NEW DELHI, JUL 12 (PTI): Former India cricketer and Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Chetan Chauhan has tested positive for COVID-19.

The development of Chauhan testing positive for the dreaded virus emerged late on Saturday night from the tweets of former India players Aakash Chopra and R P Singh, who wished him a speedy recovery.

“Chetan Chauhan ji is also tested positive for #COVID?19. Sending best wishes in his direction too...get well soon, sir,” Chopra tweeted.

“Just heard about @ChetanChauhanCr ji Chetan has tested positive

for #coronavirus . Praying for his speedy recovery,” R P Singh wrote.

The 72-year-old underwent the COVID-19 test on Friday and has been reportedly admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi PGI hospital in Lucknow.

Chauhan's family members will undergo COVID-19 tests and they have been put under home quarantine for now. Chauhan holds the Sainik Welfare, Home Guards, PRD and Civil Security ministry in the UP cabinet. Till last year, he served as the sports minister of the state.

Chauhan, a two-time former Lok Sabha MP, is one of the few former

international cricketers who have contracted the virus.

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi and Scotland's Majid Haq were among the high-profile names to test positive and recover from the infection.

Known to be a gritty player, Chauhan played 40 Tests between 1969 and 1978 and scored 2084 runs at an average of 31.57 with 97 being his highest score. He also played in seven ODIs, scoring 153 runs from them.

He and Sunil Gavaskar formed a successful opening partnership, scoring over 3000 runs together with 10 century stands in numerous Tests in the 1970s.

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FOR RENT:

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

FLAT FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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



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Fresh lot of rapid information

CAEPHT and SMU organise awareness Program for agricultural workers addressing COVID

GANGTOK, 12 JUL (IPR): An awareness program for agricultural workers during COVID-19 was organized at Nimthang in East Sikkim on 11 July. The program was jointly organized by College of Agricultural Engineering and Post-Harvest Technology (CAEPHT) Ranipool, in collaboration with Sikkim Manipal University, Tadong under the aegis of MoU signed between two universities.

The program started with welcome address by Principal Investigator, Prof NS Chauhan, CAEPHT centre of All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Ergonomics and Safety in Agriculture (ESA). He informed the house that project team is continuously conducting frontline demonstration and training of need-based farm equipment for the benefits of the farmers of the state. In addition, adoptive trials of improved farm equipment are



also undertaken to validate and to design refine the equipment to make them matching anthropometric dimensions and strength of the workers of the Sikkim. Important features of farm equipment, suitable for terraces of Sikkim, were explained to the farmers. Farmers were also informed that they

may contact the project team to organize the frontline demonstration and training for operation and on-farm maintenance of improved farm equipment.

The program was also attended by Associate Professor, Dr Saumen Gupta and Associate Professor, Dr Remon Chhetri, College of Physiotherapy, Sikkim

Manipal University Tadong, project team of the AICRP on ESA, CAEPHT, Ranipool and more than 25 farmers of nearby villages.

In his address, Dr Remon Chhetri described the precautions and safety measures to be observed by the farm workers before, during and after performing

the field operations especially in the context of COVID regime. He also demonstrated appropriate method of wearing facemasks and to maintain social distancing while performing field operation. Dr Saumen Gupta informed the house that improper use of farm machinery for longer duration could lead to various health hazards and preventive measures to be followed to avoid or reduce these effects. He also narrated the ways and means to cope up such issues without compromising with efficiency of the work output.

Many farmers have shown the interested to volunteer in the health-related studies on the agricultural workers. The program concluded with vote of thanks proposed by PI of the project, Dr NS Chauhan. The house was informed that number of joint programs are being planned for the benefit of the farmers.

Milk Collection Center inaugurated at Budang



SUMMIT REPORT RHENOCK, 12 JUL:

Despite inclement weather, a strong turnout was noticed at the opening of the recently constructed Milk Collection Center at Budang

village under Budang-Kamerey GPU of Rhenock constituency here in East Sikkim today.

Joining the villagers were area MLA Bishnu Kumar Khatiwara and Sikkim Milk Union MD Dr AB Karki.

Chisopani FC dribbles for environment, undertakes plantation drive

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 12 JUL:

Chisopani Football Club of South Sikkim carried out a plantation-cum-cleanliness drive at Chisopani Fatak and Himalayan Grace Academy on Saturday.

The drive had the participation of the Panchayat of the area, Hemlata Chhetri, Borbotay Panchayat, Sovla Khati,

Himalayan Grace Academy Principal, SK Gurung and members of the club along with players and people of the area.

On the occasion, Chisopani FC president, Dik Bahadur Chhetri stressed that environment plays a vital role in life and that it was the responsibility of the people to save the environment.

He stressed that plantation drives were very important to decrease global warming.

“Our vision is to promote young talent from remote areas who are good in sports. We don't focus only on playing and engage in social activities as well. The main reason to open this club is to promote the talent of the youth at



higher levels,” he said.

The club was established in the year 2010 and was registered with the State

Government recently on 21 May. It has more than 50 members and more than 20 playing regularly for the club.

ViewPoint

Bicycles will return now

PRIYANKA SAURABH

The craze of bicycles is increasing day by day in the Corona period. Now due to the lockdown, people are becoming more aware of the changed lifestyle and environment. Only then the purchase of bicycles is also increasing. Today, apart from the youth, engineers, professors, doctors, retired employees and professionals have also started buying bicycles to improve their health

Bicycles are a useful means of transportation in times of crisis. In this era, cycling is cheap and accessible as well as beneficial in terms of health. But our governments have thought very little about bicycles in town planning. The Indian middle class, running after the modern glamor, considers cycling to be inferior anyway.

But today in the Corona era, bicycles are the solution to a lot of problems. Our thinking has become like that of the elite. We build roads for cars or four-wheelers, cyclists are nowhere not on our map. Even the newly settled cities, sectors, or sub-towns of the country do not even have bicycle lanes. And wherever it is, people do not use it, because the bicycle is not in our thinking or people think that riding a bicycle is a matter of low status. But now I have come to understand that it is very important to walk in harmony with nature.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the Cycles for Change Challenge towards the early implementation of cycling initiatives in Indian cities. Under the Smart Cities Mission, all the cities, the capitals of the States and Union Territories, and all the cities of the country with a population of more than 5 lakh will be able to take part in this challenge which is being started with the objective of sustainable development of cities.

Significantly, this challenge was started by the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs on June 25, 2020. It aims to help develop an integrated vision to motivate Indian cities to implement cycling-friendly initiatives quickly in response to Covid-19 and to promote cycling among citizens as well as experts. So that an approach can be developed to promote the practice of cycling.

Under this challenge, the scheme will be encouraged by collaborating with the civil society organizations, experts, and volunteers of the cities. The cooperation of common citizens can play an important role in this initiative. This challenge will be implemented mainly in two phases. The first phase of the Challenge will be implemented by October 2020, in which all the cities will focus on promoting the practice of cycling and formulating necessary strategies in this regard.

After this, a total of 11 cities will be selected in the second phase and several guidelines from national and international experts will

be provided for furthering their respective schemes and making necessary improvements in them. It will be implemented by 2021.

Experts believe that ‘the Government of India is committed to assisting cities in developing high-quality transport systems.’ This challenge of the government is aimed at educating the general public, experts, city cycling groups, bicycle manufacturers, and dealers. A great way to connect to the unit. Through this, the concept of sustainable transport in cities will be promoted. This initiative will help in achieving the dual goals of promoting active mobility in cities as well as promoting health.

According to a survey by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, the use of bicycles in major cities around the world could increase by 50-60 percent once the Covid-19-generated lockdown is eliminated. To take advantage of this opportunity, major cities around the world are considering expanding their bicycle network, for example, Paris announced in April the construction of a 650-kilometer cycle route.

Significantly, this is also a great opportunity for Indian cities to encourage the common people to use clean and healthy means of transport like bicycles and create a conducive environment in this regard. The Smart Cities Mission is an initiative that motivates and supports Indian cities to implement cycling-friendly initiatives quickly in response to Covid-19.

Cycling has increased by 50-65% when cities come out of the lockdown. Cities around the world are getting the opportunity to expand their bicycle networks and public bicycle-sharing systems. Increasing cycling can help cities improve green economies. Cycling for short distances can bring an annual profit of Rs 1.8 trillion to the Indian economy.

In this era of the corona, the bicycle has become a simple, cheap, and convenient means of maintaining health. It is also helpful in the social distance along with avoiding traffic jams. There is a lot of craze among the youth in the market today for stylish bicycles equipped with the latest technology of branded companies. Yes, now we just have to give up our feudal mentality that lower-class people ride bicycles.

It can be seen that cycling on a wide scale will also help in creating a sense of equality. At the moment, the situation is that the taller the car, the bigger the man. But now the thinking is taking a turn in the time to come, if the upper class, bureaucrats and capitalists of the big metropolis now go out for office on bicycles, the splendor of bicycles will return even in small towns, villages, and towns.

It is my wish that our lovely bicycle returns to spring in all our lives. We need awareness every day instead of celebrating a ‘Special Cycle Day’ to spread awareness among the public. This is the right time to call for a ‘bicycle revolution’ and to give a resounding answer to Corona.

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**RAJ BHAVAN
GANGTOK, SIKKIM**

MESSAGE

On the occasion of 206th Bhanu Jayant, Hon’ble Governor, Shri Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim.

In his message, while congratulating all the people, Hon’ble Governor said, “The works of writing and literature in Nepali language by Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya ji is very commendable. The translation of the epic Ramayana by him from Sanskrit to Nepali was certainly historical. Due to his composition, he was honored with the title of “Adikavi”.

He bridged the gap between cultural and literary that existed between the communities of the hill and the mainland India through his immortal epic Ramayana- the tale of Lord Rama. Legend poet Bhanu Bhakta was not limited to a particular language and geography only. Bhanu Bhakta as a poet who has played a crucial role in strengthening Nepal-India relations. Many Indian writers and poets often talk about Nepali writers and Nepali literature. There are many Nepali writers in India who have been contributing to strengthening those relations.

On this occasion, let’s pay homage to Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya and revitalise our endeavour towards the development and preservation of this great language and tradition. I urge my fellow Sikkimese to continue fostering the cross cultural harmony engrained in our way of life since ages while working towards the enrichment of great Nepali literature.”

JIA (PR) to Governor
SKM/GOV/JIA(PR)/2020/3
12th July, 2020

So, Sikkim Can Plant

Now to make the young connect and care

So, now every State is making a big splash with focused statewide tree plantation drives and even Union Territories have adopted the practice. Like some other ideas born in Sikkim that have caught on, this too was first attempted here with the Smriti-Van and 10 Minutes to Earth initiatives. And in these times of bigger, better, the 10-Minute dedication has been expanded to an entire Day for Mother Earth. While one understands the occasional requirement for flamboyant tokenism, Sikkim could still have set up a better template for others to emulate if it had invested professional follow-up and a third-party audit of the programmes to refine them further and improve its success rate. Such an evaluation was undertaken once in the earlier years, but these initiatives have been underway for more than a decade now and more detailed data should have been collated by now. Be that as it may, given the continuing ferocity with which press releases continue to pour in about plantation drives [the MLAs has after all been tasked to plant a thousand saplings each in their respective plantations], and the details of the number of saplings planted and the dignitaries who participated, it is established yet again that Sikkim can be inspired to care for the environment. What is also obvious is that saplings were indeed planted. Even children, cooped in by the lockdown, might have received some excitement having planted little ones of big trees who will now grow up with them.

In a world where countries are building arguments about why they should be allowed to pollute more, this earnestness comes as welcome relief. There is nothing new about plantation drives; that is a tokenism that the world community evolved long back as a fig leaf for World Environment Day to cover the abuse that it subjects the environment all year round. What is new however is that the 10-Minute dedication has been reasonably successful and although the Day for Mother Earth still does not have the same zing, it has potential to become a grander celebration. What Sikkim needed to have actually done, however, was build up on this introduction and help a generation rediscover the close understanding that the people here had evolved of the land they lived in.

Environment Studies is now a compulsory part of the syllabus, but it is woefully alien and too generalized. The text books are little more than repackaged Geography lessons. Environmental Studies is more than that, it includes cultural relationships with the land and should be more about learning to live with the environment than a sanitized introduction to environment per se. Sikkim is perfectly positioned to make EVS [as Environmental Studies is known in schools], relevant and fruitful. Students, say in Delhi, might need textbooks because they have only concrete and tarmac around them, but depending on textbooks alone in Sikkim only distance students here from nature that surrounds them. What is more, the State already has a rich tradition of sustainable dependence on the environment, aspects of which form an integral part of traditional lifestyles here. That knowledge base is only one generation distance in the past. It can still be reclaimed. As part of Environmental Studies, students in Sikkim should be learning about the concept of sacred groves maintained by village communities, learn of the stories of mythical powers of its water bodies and understand how people effectively protected them from pollution [and eventual loss] - by reinforcing their surroundings by presenting them as abodes of easily angered nymphs or protecting deities. The young need to also learn of the traditional hunting practices in which animals were killed only for food, and never as game or in retribution.

If the environment has to be protected and conserved, people need to go back to tradition, not turn to more rules and penalties. Tradition needs to be invoked, not as blind faith, but a the only pragmatic and practicable option. The falsehood perpetuated by babus that forests and wildlife need to be 'protected' from the lay people needs to be demolished. Wildlife was not wiped out by hunter-gatherers, they were pushed into extinction by city dwellers on indiscriminate weekend hunts. The forests were not lost to the need of villagers, but were consumed by the greed of the cities - that insensitive obsession for silver-fir paneled rooms in concrete jungles. The young need to understand this, and then learn of how their own respective communities connected with nature and lived with it, how they adjusted their lifestyles around it and how they worked their belief structures into it to weave conservation and sustainable practices as part of that one aspect that no one can argue with - Faith.

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Afghanistan's COVID-19 crisis has been fuelled by armed conflict

CHRISTIANE WILKE & MOHD KHALID NASEEMI
THECONVERSATION.COM

The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing the inequities in access to health care around the globe. In Afghanistan, the spread of the virus has been ignited by decades of armed conflict and reconstruction efforts that have prioritized cutting public expenditures over strengthening the Afghan health-care system.

Powerful states and institutions have long tried to shape Afghanistan in their own image — by war or by policy. They are responsible for creating the conditions under which Afghans are extremely vulnerable to the ravages of COVID-19.

The first case of coronavirus in Afghanistan was confirmed on Feb. 24, 2020, in Herat province. As of July 8, 33,594 cases and 936 deaths have been confirmed. Nonetheless, only 77,501 people have been tested to date, which is why the confirmed cases are estimated to be only a tenth of the actual case numbers.

For example, the government of Herat province estimated that in the week leading up to June 12, 280 people died in the province of suspected COVID-19 without ever seeing a medical professional.

ARMED CONFLICTS INVOLVING SUPERPOWERS

The uncertainty about the scope of the pandemic in Afghanistan is a symptom of the social and political upheaval in the country. Since the 1979 invasion by the Soviet Union, Afghanistan has been the stage for armed conflicts involving global superpowers. In 2001, a United States-led military coalition invaded the country for the ostensible purpose of defeating al Qaeda.

These successive conflicts have displaced many Afghans: In a country of 38 million people, 1.1 million people are currently internally displaced and another 1.7 million people are refugees who have recently returned from Iran or Pakistan.

These populations suffer from precarious housing and work situations. The ongoing conflicts have uprooted citizens, destroyed infrastructure like roads and hospitals and heightened the demands on the health-care system. In 2019, at least 3,403 civilians were killed and 6,989 were injured in armed conflict.



Health-care professionals and facilities have frequently been targeted by armed groups, and Afghans cite conflict-related insecurity as a key barrier to health care.

RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS FLAWED

Shortly after the 2001 invasion, the U.S. and international financial institutions started to implement a reconstruction program that directed international contributions through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which is controlled by the World Bank. As journalist Naomi Klein reported in 2005, the fund “has already managed to privatize health care by refusing to give funds to the Ministry of Health to build hospitals. Instead it funnels money directly to NGOs.”

Those aid agencies build clinics and operate them through grants and contracts. This policy benefited international non-governmental organizations, but failed to build the capacity of the Afghan Ministry of Public Health.

Reconstruction loans by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are tied to conditions that typically mandate limits on public spending and have been found to have adverse effects on the human right to health.

After more than 15 years of governance through international financial institutions, the International Monetary Fund insists

on prioritizing a “balanced budget” over increases in social spending even though it recognizes that Afghan government spending on health care is vastly insufficient.

As a result of this underfunding, there's a shortage of health-care professionals: There are only 9.4 skilled health professionals and 1.9 physicians per 10,000 people in Afghanistan. Rural areas have as few as 0.6 physicians per 10,000 residents.

FRAGMENTED HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

The international funding priorities have fragmented and stratified the Afghan health-care system: NGOs operate many free specialized clinics, but are vulnerable to funding cuts and depend on international forces for security.

The free public health clinics are often mere shells. Patients report the clinics lack qualified personnel and often run out of essential medicines, and underpaid doctors working in public clinics urge patients to attend their “more lucrative after-hours private practice” instead. As a result, patients face significant financial barriers to health care.

According to a 2015 study, one in five patients reported losing a close friend or family member due to lack of health care over the previous year. These numbers are bound to rise further as

the coronavirus charts its path through the country.

Nationally, out-of-pocket expenses paid by patients account for up to 73.3 per cent of all health-care expenditures, central government funding for 5.6 per cent and international donor funding for 20.8 per cent.

Although more than half of Afghans live in poverty, they have been required to shoulder the majority of the burden of paying for their health-care system.

UNIQUELY VULNERABLE

The pandemic highlights global and local inequalities, but it hides responsibility for the conditions that enable the spread of the coronavirus.

The NATO countries, including Canada, that have spent resources on violently transforming Afghanistan according to their own agenda need to understand that the combination of prolonged armed conflict and the concerted under-funding of health care have made the residents of Afghanistan uniquely vulnerable to the virus.

Without massive support for social services and health care, Afghans will continue to have to choose between COVID-19 and hunger.

[Christiane Wilke is Associate Professor, Department of Law and Legal Studies, Carleton University; Mohd Khalid Naseemi is Research Assistant, International Affairs, Carleton University]

How one woman pulled off the first consumer boycott – and helped inspire the British to abolish slavery

TOM ZOELLNER
THECONVERSATION.COM

While many companies have trumpeted their support for the Black Lives Matter movement, others are beginning to face consumer pressure for not appearing to do enough. For example, some people are advocating a consumer boycott of Starbucks over an internal memo that prohibits employees from wearing gear that refers to the movement. And advocates are urging supporters to target other companies under the Twitter tag #boycott4blacklives.

Consumers boycotts, which put power into the hands of people of even modest income and can lend a sense of “doing something” in the face of injustice, have a mixed track record. There have been some notable successes, such as consumer-led efforts to end apartheid in South Africa. But others, such as boycotts of the National Rifle Association and of Israel, have yielded little.

But it may hearten Black Lives Matter consumer activists to learn that the first-ever boycott – organized over 50 years before the term was even coined – was ultimately a success, if not in the way the woman behind it intended. I stumbled upon this history during research for my just-published book about the end of slavery in the British Caribbean.

BLOOD SUGAR

In the 1820s, Elizabeth Heyrick felt disgust over Britain's enslavement of people on islands such as Barbados and Jamaica in the West Indies, where large sugar plantations produced virtually all the sugar consumed in Western Europe.

Although England banned the British Atlantic slave trade in 1807, it still permitted people to own slaves in its colonies in the early 19th century.

Heyrick joined the abolition movement from a position of privilege and wealth. But after an early marriage to a hothead husband ended with his death in 1797, she converted to Quakerism

and vowed to give up “all ungodly lusts.” She eventually found a passion for the antislavery movement, though with marked frustration for the slow-moving process of pushing bills through the English Parliament.

Contemptuous of the male abolitionists in Parliament whom she regarded as too willing to appease the wealthy slaveholders who clung to slavery as an economic pillar, Heyrick launched a campaign to get ordinary Britons to quit using the sugar produced on these islands and for grocers not to carry it.

If people must have the “sweet dust,” she said, they should at least make sure it was grown in Britain's colonies in the East Indies – Bengal and Malaya – where canefield laborers were impoverished but at least technically free.

Her campaign involved writing a series of booklet-sized polemics. In one such broadside, she asked those who favored gradual emancipation to reflect “that greater victories have been achieved by the combined expression of individual opinion than by fleets and armies; that greater moral revolutions have been accomplished by the combined exertions of individual resolution than were ever effected by acts of Parliament.”

Heyrick pulled no rhetorical punches:

“Let the produce of slave labor henceforth and for ever be regarded as ‘the accursed thing’ and refused admission to our houses,” she wrote. “Abstinence from one single article of luxury would annihilate the West Indian slavery!!”

Her focus on citizen-driven change through deliberate consumer activism was unpopular with her contemporaries who preferred negotiations among government officials to achieve their ends.

THE BAPTIST WAR

Heyrick grew despondent with the seeming lack of progress from her boycott effort and died in 1831 without seeing her goal of “imminent emancipation” achieved. Her passing was

barely noticed by British newspapers, yet her efforts would come to bear astonishing results very soon after her death.

Heyrick could not have known that an enslaved Baptist deacon in Jamaica named Samuel Sharpe was – while she was pushing for a boycott – reading about the anti-slavery movement she did so much to fuel, almost certainly including the “Quit Sugar” movement.

Heartened by the news that many people in the faraway capital of the empire were actually sympathetic to him and his fellows, he began to formulate his own revolutionary vision and preached about it and his plans for rebellion to select groups of elite slaves.

Sharpe's rebellion, known as the Baptist War, began on Dec. 27, 1831. The uprising lasted less than two weeks and resulted in the destruction of dozens of buildings and killing of at least 500 slaves – both during the fighting and in reprisals. A giant pit had to be dug outside Jamaica's Montego Bay to hold all the bodies. Sharpe was hanged a few months later.

But the mere demonstration of military competence – the rebels defeated the island militia in at least one head-to-head confrontation – made an impression like no other uprising had before and helped inspire the British Parliament to pass the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which abolished slavery in the West Indies. Full freedom wasn't achieved until 1838.

The headlines of 19th century newspapers thus performed a double-function as they crossed the Atlantic. News of the sugar boycott helped inspired enslaved people to revolt, and news of their visceral unhappiness to the point of mayhem helped inspire the British Parliament to push for immediate abolition – which is what Heyrick had been saying all along.

[the writer is Professor of English, Chapman University]

535 new COVID-19 cases in Assam

GUWAHATI, JUL 11 (PTI): Two COVID-19 patients have died and 535 new cases were reported in Assam on Saturday, taking the tally to 16,071, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

A 40-year-old woman and a 55-year-old man died, but Sarma said these could be added to the total only after the death audit board ascertained whether the “underlying cause of death is COVID-19”.

Addressing a press conference, the minister said all deaths where COVID-19 is the underlying cause will be certified by a death audit board according to the Indian Council Medical Research's guidelines.

The two who died at the Guwahati Medical College Hospital were COVID-19 patients, with the woman having a history of pneumonia, type-2 diabetes and hypothyroidism, while the man had a history of kidney ailment who had been intubated and ventilated, Sarma said.

Out of the 37 deaths, 23 were reported this week with the single highest of eight deaths on Friday.

The minister said the case fatality rate in the state was 0.23 per cent against the national average of 2.69 per cent.

The number of coronavirus cases rose to 16,071 with 535 new infections, including 410 from Guwahati city, where the tally climbed

to 6,631.

Meanwhile, the 14-day lockdown in Kamrup Metropolitan district, under which Guwahati city falls, was scheduled to end on Sunday at 6 pm but has been extended another week till July 19, Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna said.

The number of recovered increased to 10,426 with the discharge of 578 patients on Saturday. There are 5,607 active cases.

“The discharged number doubles that of active cases, and that’s a good news in a time like this”, Sarma tweeted.

“The state, with a recovery rate of 63.39 per cent is fourth in the country after Delhi, Gujarat and West Bengal,” he said.

Assam has so far tested 5,37,831 samples so far and the positivity rate is 2.96 per cent, with 15,754 per million population being tested, the minister said.

Meanwhile, Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti leader Akhil Gogoi, who was arrested by the NIA for his alleged role in violent protests in Assam last year against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, tested positive for the novel coronavirus inside the Guwahati Central Jail, an official said.

A total of 55 inmates, including Gogoi, have tested positive at the jail, forcing the authorities to issue orders for taking samples of all the 1,069



prisoners and seal the entire premises for an indefinite period.

NDFB leader Ranjan Daimary, jailed in connection with the 2008 serial blasts in Guwahati, was among the 55 inmates of Guwahati Central Jail to test COVID-19 positive.

BJP's Sadiya MLA Bolin Chetia became the third legislator in the state to test COVID-19 positive and has been admitted to Tinsukia Civil Hospital, a health official said.

The Health Department will allow home quarantine to non-symptomatic COVID-19 patients only if they sign an undertaking agreeing to certain conditions, Sarma said.

The patient will be allowed home quarantine if they can ensure that their neighbours and the societies have no objection, there are no elders in the family, they have a private physician checking on them every three hours, have a pulse oximeter in the house

and should be able to come in personal vehicle to the hospital, he said.

“The Health Department does not prefer home quarantine as there is a risk of transmitting the disease to others in the house, particularly the elderly and children, and we want to ensure that all COVID-19 patients will be available for timely treatment,” he said.

The social set-up in Assam is such that usually “three generations live together in a house and if the patient is not isolated, then there are chances that one person may infect 10 others,” he said.

“There is, however, constant requests from patients for home quarantine and though they have the freedom of choice but we cannot allow them to infect others. We can allow it only if they fulfil the above conditions,” Sarma added.

Flight passengers coming to Guwahati will

now be subjected to COVID-19 antigen test at the airport and those testing negative will be allowed to go for home quarantine for 14 days, the minister said.

“It has also come to our notice that private hospitals are not admitting patients without the COVID test though we had asked them to set up testing facilities and, except for a few, most have not done so resulting in increase of morbidity and mortality rate,” he said.

Therefore, in the case of critical patients needing immediate hospitalisation, “we have decided that their results will be processed within 24 hours, provided the samples are received prior to 12 noon each day,” Sarma said.

The Health Department will also have a dedicated COVID care centre for pregnant women and children below the age of 12, and a geriatric Covid Centre for senior citizens.

Over 6 lakh people affected, 2 more deaths in Assam floods



GUWAHATI, JUL 11 (PTI): The flood rampage continued in Assam on Saturday as the deluge spread to 20 districts, affecting 6.02 lakh people and claiming two more lives, the disaster management authority said.

A person died in Kokrajhar district and another in Dhubri district, taking death toll due to the deluge to 66, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said in a bulletin.

The flood-hit districts include Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Charaideo, Biswanath, Udalguri,

Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Morigaon, Nagaon, Golaghat and Tinsukia, it said.

The worst-affected district is Dhemaji, followed by Barpeta and Lakhimpur.

The flood waters have submerged 1,109 villages and 46,082 hectares of crop area across Assam. District authorities have set up 92 relief camps and distribution centres in 11 districts, where 8,474 people have taken shelter, the ASDMA said.

The Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger

mark in Dibrugarh, Neamatighat in Jorhat, Tezpur in Sonitpur and Dhubri town, the bulletin said.

Embankments, roads, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure have been damaged at various places in Lakhimpur, Biswanath and Dhemaji districts, the ASDMA said.

It added that a total of 46 camps out of 223 at the Kaziranga National Park, 12 out of 25 camps at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and six out of 40 camps at Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park were inundated.

Tripura registers second COVID-19 death

AGARTALA, JULY 11 (PTI): Tripura registered its second COVID-19 fatality on Saturday after a 72-year-old man died at a hospital here, officials said.

He was admitted at the Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) on Friday with COVID-19 symptoms and liver ailments, health secretary Sanjay Kumar Rakesh said.

The man was a

resident of Khowai district, which is about 50 km from here, he said.

“He was admitted with hepatic liver ailment to the Agartala Medical College and his swabs were also tested, which came positive. He died at 8 PM this evening,” the official said.

A 42-year-old man died on June 9 last in the same hospital due to the

coronavirus infection.

Tripura has so far registered a total of 1,932 cases, of which 1,372 persons were discharged after recovery.

Currently, 541 persons are undergoing treatment in different COVID care centres in the state, while 345 persons are quarantined at different facilities and 4,860 are in home quarantine.

6 fresh COVID-19 cases in Arunachal; count rises to 341

ITANAGAR, JUL 12 (PTI): Six more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, taking the northeastern state's tally to 341 on Sunday, a senior Health Department official said.

Five of the six fresh cases were reported from the Capital Complex region comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, while one new infection was detected in West Kameng district, he said.

The number of active cases has increased to 214 while 125 people have recovered and two patients have died, the official said.

Of the five new cases reported in the Capital Complex region, three are from different areas of Naharlagun while two

health workers at state-run Tomo Riba Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (TRIHMS) also tested positive for the infection, State Surveillance Officer Dr L Jampa said.

The new patient from West Kameng district had returned from Uttarakhand and was housed in a quarantine centre, he said.

“All the patients are asymptomatic and they have been admitted to COVID care centres,” Dr Jampa said.

Five people recovered from COVID-19 in Changlang district on Saturday and have been advised 14-days home quarantine and self-monitoring, he said.

The state government on Saturday extended

the lockdown in the Capital Complex for another week till 5 pm on July 20 in view of the spurt in COVID-19 cases in the region.

The lockdown which was imposed in the region on July 6 was scheduled to end at 5 pm on July 13.

The Cabinet decided to extend the lockdown for another week due to a spurt in COVID-19 cases in the capital region, Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar told reporters in a virtual press conference on Saturday evening.

Several new patients in Naharlagun do not have any travel history, he said.

During the lockdown period, intensive surveillance will be carried out at C, E and F sectors in Naharlagun.

Contact tracing will also be intensified during this period.

The lockdown will also see all the frontline workers from various departments undergo COVID-19 tests, Kumar said.

“We have sufficient quantity of antigen test kits for testing of all frontline workers and suspects,” Kumar said.

The Capital Complex region has so far registered 119 cases, highest in the state, followed by Changlang (33), West Kameng (20), Namsai (13) and Lower Subansiri (12).

The state, which had remained virus-free till May 23, witnessed a sudden spurt in COVID-19 cases after residents started returning from other parts of the country.

Australia to offer residence option to 10,000 Hong Kongers

SYDNEY, JUL 12 (AP): The Australian government says it will offer around 10,000 Hong Kong passport holders currently living in Australia a chance to apply for permanent residence once their current visas expire.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government believes China's imposition of a new tough national security law on the semi-autonomous territory means pro-democracy supporters may face political persecution.

That means that many Hong Kong passport holders may be looking for other destinations to go to and hence why we have put

forward our additional visa options for them, Acting Immigration Minister Alan Tudge told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television on Sunday.

In order to obtain permanent residency, applicants would still have to pass “the character test, the national security test and the like, Tudge said.

So it's not automatic. But it's certainly an easier pathway to permanent residency and of course once you're a permanent resident, there's then a pathway to citizenship there,” he said.

If people are genuinely persecuted and they can prove that case, then they can

apply for one of our humanitarian visas in any case.

Morrison announced last week Australia suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong and extended visas for Hong Kong residents from two to five years.

The move comes after China bypassed Hong Kong's Legislative Council to impose the sweeping security legislation without public consultation. Critics view it as a further deterioration of freedoms promised to the former British colony, in response to last year's massive protests calling for greater democracy and more police accountability.

The national security law prohibits what Beijing views as secessionist, subversive or terrorist activities or as foreign intervention in Hong Kong affairs.

Under the law, police now have sweeping powers to conduct searches without warrants and order internet service providers and platforms to remove messages deemed to be in violation of the legislation.

China's foreign ministry said it reserved the right to take further actions in response to moves by Canberra.

The consequences will be fully borne by Australia, spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters at a daily briefing on Thursday.

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Why Tottenham are stagnating under José Mourinho, who has yet to evolve

JONATHAN WILSON

LONDON, 12 JUL [THEGUARDIAN]: As they prepare for the north London derby on Sunday, who would you rather be: Arsenal or Tottenham? For the past four years, it wasn't a question that required much consideration. Even in 2015-16, when Arsenal last finished above Spurs, it felt freakish. The trajectories of the two clubs seemed clear: Spurs were rising, replete with gifted young players and blessed with a charismatic manager whose ideas were notably modern, while Arsenal were sinking in the dotage of a managerial great whose best years were behind him but whose departure would inevitably bring turbulence.

Arsène Wenger's retirement in 2018 did lead to chaos – or perhaps more accurately, exposed the chaos that was already there. With Ivan Gazidis and Sven Mislintat leaving, only Raul Sanllehi remains of the triumvirate who were supposed to replace him. Major concerns remain about recruitment and particularly the influence of the agent Kia Joorabchian.

The first two games after the shutdown were a distillation of Bad Arsenal, a limp defeat at Manchester City enriched by some slapstick defending, followed by a farcical collapse at Brighton. But three weeks on, the mood seems far brighter. It's not only that Arsenal won four games in a row (including an FA Cup victory at Sheffield United that was rooted in a quality they have not



recently been associated: resilience). Nor that their first-half performance in Tuesday's draw with Leicester was sharp and focused. It is the general sense that their manager has a plan, has been able to communicate it to his players and, while there is still a huge amount of work to do, there is a sense of progression.

This detached run-in may end up playing into Mikel Arteta's hands since it has given him a largely consequence-free run of games to clarify his thinking. The future suddenly seems to have no place for Matteo Guendouzi, while the huge promise of Bukayo Saka has been underlined and there have been opportunities for Joe Willock, Eddie Nketiah and Reiss Nelson. Suddenly, it's Arsenal who have the fleet of exciting prospects.

Youth development had been a defining feature of Mauricio Pochettino's Tottenham but the appointment of José Mourinho was

a step away from that. Quite what it was a step towards is harder to say. Certainly, the recent games against Everton and Bournemouth suggest it is not something anybody will want to watch. Bournemouth have yielded 105 shots on target this season; not one of them came against Spurs on Thursday.

All that potential now seems to be splitting into two camps – those who are struggling to live up to their promise and those who are considering leaving.

The redevelopment of White Hart Lane was necessary but, as Arsenal know, the impact of stadium investment on squad development can be severe. The timing for Spurs could hardly have been worse, given the pandemic means they cannot benefit from the increased capacity and enhanced corporate facilities.

Then there is the familiar problem of Mourinho. Having

appointed him, it is only reasonable that Daniel Levy should give him time to instil his theories and at least a couple of transfer windows to fashion the squad to his liking. There are still those who will insist he is a born winner, but it's increasingly hard not to feel that we have seen this all before and know how it plays out. The sense is that the endgame has begun.

The "Special One" press conference was closer to Gazza's tears than to today. Mourinho proudly asserted he was not one from the bottle; that bottle would be vintage now.

What happened at Porto and then those first two years at Stamford Bridge have as much to do with the modern game as Arrigo Sacchi's Milan or Brian Clough's bolshiness had to do with early Mourinho – they were part of the background culture from which he had grown but had little

direct relevance. malmsey, murdering his nephews in the Tower, ending Anders Frisk's career – probably shouldn't have been excused on the basis of a knowing glance and a quip that made a good headline.

Even the most ardent revolutionary becomes in time the weary establishment. Years cool the fire of passion and with it what was believed the light of truth. Does even Mourinho believe in his methods any more? Criticism of him has come to feel routine. Nothing he does has shock value, very little raises a smile.

Since his time at Real Madrid, it has felt as though he has distrusted players, been unable to relate to them as he did at Porto, Chelsea and Internazionale, whose players in discussing him can still seem like members of a cult. He has always sought to generate a sense of siege, but the players used to be inside the walls.

As he rails, again, about the deficiencies of his squad, you wonder whether it means anything other than that there has been no reinvention (and even the perceived need for reinvention implies the old model had failed). And yet a huge contract that runs until 2023 means the endgame could have a long time yet to run.

Both north London clubs have their difficulties. Both can look back to a recent past when things were a lot less complicated than they are now. But as Tottenham stagnate, there is at least at Arsenal the sense of a plan slowly being put in place.

Barcelona and Vidal keep pressure on as Ronaldo rescues Juventus



MADRID, 12 JUL [AP]: Lionel Messi notched a 20th assist of the season to help a lacklustre Barcelona secure a 1-0 win away to Real Valladolid on Saturday, maintaining the pressure on La Liga leaders Real Madrid.

Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal struck the only goal of the game in the 15th minute, firing into the net off the post after being played in by Messi, who now has almost as many assists in the league as his 22 goals. Yet Barça failed to build on their early advantage and were forced to grind out the victory. Valladolid were twice foiled by Marc-André ter Stegen.

The win takes second-placed Barcelona on to 79 points after 36 games, one behind Real Madrid who can restore their four-point advantage when they visit Granada on Monday.

A late goal by Diego Costa ensured 10-man Atlético Madrid clinched a Champions League berth after edging Real Betis 1-0. Costa used his chest to knock in a free-kick in the 74th minute after his team lost Mario Hermoso to a red card for a hard tackle from behind.

Lazio had another let-off two minutes

later when Filip Djuricic hit the bar.

But they took the lead in the 33rd minute when Manuel Lazzari ran half the length of the pitch and crossed to Luis Alberto who, after a heavy first touch, scored despite Manuel Locatelli's challenge.

Sassuolo replied seven minutes after the restart when Caputo got free on the right, rolled the ball to Raspadori and the 20-year-old was this time able to celebrate his first Serie A goal.

Lazio rallied, only to suffer a knockout blow. The ball was swung in from the left, Gian Marco Ferrari got up at the far post and headed the ball across goal for Caputo to nod into the net.

The Roma midfielder Nicolò Zaniolo scored his first goal since returning from injury to complete a 3-0 win at Brescia which pushed the hosts closer to relegation. Federico Fazio scrambled the ball home after indecision by the Brescia defence to put Roma ahead three minutes after half-time. Just after the hour, Carlos Pérez released Nikola Kalinic to add the second. Zaniolo, sidelined for five months after suffering a knee injury in January, came on as a substitute in the 66th minute and needed only eight minutes to add the third from Diego Perotti's pass.

Hoping for shorter quarantine period for Team India during Australia tour: GANGULY

NEW DELHI, JUL 12 (PTI): BCCI President Sourav Ganguly wants a shorter than mandated quarantine period for the Indian team when it travels to Australia for a Test series this year as "we don't want the players to go that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks".

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the rules of the game, which restarted with the ongoing Test series between England and the West Indies. Players have to be in quarantine for two weeks and be tested for the virus before they can take the field in empty stadiums for now.

But Ganguly is hoping that the Indian team will get some relaxation during its tour of Australia, comprising four Tests, including a day-nighter, later in the year.

"...we have confirmed that tour. In December we will be coming. We just hope the number of quarantine days get reduced a bit," Ganguly told India Today show "The Inspiration".

"Because we don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very,



very depressing and disappointing. We are looking at that, the quarantine thing," he said.

"And, as I said Australia and New Zealand have been in good position except Melbourne. So from that point of view we will be going there and hopefully the quarantine days will be less and we can get back to cricket."

Australia has over 9,000 confirmed cases and more than 7500 of them have recovered. The number of fatalities stands at 107.

Ganguly also said that the Australia series will be career-defining for skipper Virat Kohli.

"My presidentship tenure, I don't know whether I will survive by this December or not. But his captaincy tenure is going to be a yardstick. This will be a milestone series.

"I have been in touch with him, telling him 'you have got to

stay fit. You haven't played cricket for six months....," he said.

"You have got to make sure your best bowlers are ready for the tour and fit. Whether it's (Mohammed) Shami, whether it's (Jasprit) Bumrah, whether it's Ishant, whether it's Pandya, they have to be at the top of their match fitness when they land in Australia," he added.

The former India captain also spoke about the many challenges that he has encountered in ensuring that the Board continues to function amid the pandemic.

"This is unreal. For four months, we haven't been to the office in Mumbai. This is my seventh or eighth month as BCCI president out of which four months have been taken away by COVID," he said.

"So we have been working on video conferencing but that's what it is. I can't change it. I have to accept it and try and do the best I can in this situation.

LeBron won't wear social justice message on Lakers jersey

WASHINGTON, JUL 12 (AP): LeBron James says his thoughts on social justice can't be contained on the back of a basketball jersey. The Los Angeles Lakers superstar won't wear one of the NBA-approved social justice messages on the back of his jersey when the NBA resumes competition later this month in the Orlando bubble.

It was no disrespect to the list that was handed down to all the players, James said Saturday in a conference call from Florida.

I commend anyone that decides to put something on the back of their jersey. It's just something that didn't seriously resonate with my mission, with my goal."

As part of the NBA's recognition of the nationwide invigoration of the social justice movement sparked by the death of George Floyd, NBA players are allowed to choose from a lengthy list of possible messages for their jerseys during the league's restart.

James is among just a few who declined to choose one of the messages, he said.

I would have loved to have a say-so on what would have went on the back of my jersey, James said.



"I had a couple of things in mind, but I wasn't part of that process, which is OK. ... Everything that I do has a purpose, has a meaning. I don't need to have something on the back of my jersey for people to understand my mission or know what I'm about and what I'm here to do."

The 35-year-old superstar has a long history of social involvement and advocacy for progressive causes. James speaks frequently of what he feels is a responsibility to campaign for positive social change from his powerful position in sports and pop culture.

This is the mission I've been on for a long time now, James said.

It's great that a lot of people's ears are opening. A lot of people are understanding, a lot of people are recognizing. A lot of people still don't get it, and a lot of people are still afraid to talk about the racism that goes on in America, especially

for our people. ... But we have some ears, and we will continue to push the envelope and let everyone know that we are human as well. We don't want to be just be used for our God-given abilities.

JaVale McGee, the

Lakers' veteran center, said he will wear Respect Us on his jersey in Orlando.

It's a blessing to have this platform, said McGee, whose asthma has him being particularly cautious during the pandemic.

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For first time, U.S. records more than 70,000 new coronavirus cases in single day

The new peak is driven by an explosion of cases in California, Florida and Texas and other states.

The United States saw another record day for new coronavirus cases, surpassing 70,000 for the first time, according to an NBC News tally Friday.

The record high came follows multiple case peaks since June, including 45,557 single-day diagnoses reported June 24, a 45,942 one-day increase June 27 and more than 46,500 new cases recorded Tuesday.

Sunbelt states experiencing surges including California, Florida, Texas and Georgia contributed to the record tally. California reported 7,798 new cases Friday, and



state officials said they're considering releasing about 8,000 inmates from a prison system battered by the virus.

In South Florida, NBC Miami reported that seven area hospitals have no intensive care

beds available as a result of being inundated with virus patients.

Texas reported 95 coronavirus-related deaths Friday as Gov. Greg Abbott warned that the state would revert to a "lockdown" if the

numbers don't improve and mask-wearing doesn't become more widespread.

In Houston, the region's 12 busiest hospitals are increasingly turning down new emergency

room patients and have been using the space for coronavirus intensive care.

In Georgia, officials recorded 4,484 cases Friday. NBC affiliate WXIA reported it was a single-day case record.

The three U.S. counties with the highest number of daily cases Friday are Los Angeles, Chicago's Cook, the Phoenix area's Maricopa, respectively, according to Johns Hopkins University of Medicine.

Last week U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-New York, who chairs the House Oversight Committee, warned in a memo to the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus that personal protective equipment supplies were getting low.

Trump wears mask in public for first time during pandemic



WASHINGTON, JUL 12 (AP): President Donald Trump wore a mask during a visit to a military hospital on Saturday, the first time the president has been seen in public with the type of facial covering recommended by health officials as a precaution against spreading or becoming infected by the novel coronavirus.

Trump flew by helicopter to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in suburban Washington to meet wounded servicemembers and health care providers caring for COVID-19 patients.

As he left the White House, he told reporters: When you're in a hospital, especially ... I think it's a great thing to wear a mask."

Trump was wearing a mask in Walter Reed's hallway as he began his visit. He was not wearing one when he stepped off the helicopter at the facility.

The president was a latecomer to wearing a mask during the pandemic, which has raged across the U.S. since March and infected more than 3.2 million and killed at least 134,000.

Most prominent Republicans, including Vice President Mike Pence, endorsed wearing masks as the coronavirus gained ground this summer.

Republican governors have been moving toward requiring or encouraging the use of masks as the pandemic has grown more serious in some states in the South and West.

Trump, however, has declined to wear a mask at news conferences, coronavirus task force updates, rallies and other public events.

People close to him have told The Associated Press that the president feared a mask would make him look weak and was concerned that it shifted focus to the public health crisis rather than the economic recovery. They spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private matters.

While not wearing one himself, Trump has sent mixed signals about masks, acknowledging that they would be appropriate if worn in an indoor setting where people were close together.

But he has accused reporters of wearing them to be politically correct and has retweeted messages making fun of Democrat Joe Biden for wearing a mask and implying that Biden looks weak.

Questions remain whether Trump will wear a mask with any regularity.

The wearing of masks became another political dividing line, with Republicans more resistant to wearing them than Democrats. Few masks were seen at recent Trump campaign events in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Phoenix and South Dakota's Mount Rushmore.

The only time Trump has been known to wear a mask was during a private part of a tour of a Ford plant in Michigan.

On its website, Walter Reed carries this recommendation: Whenever you're out in public, like at your local grocery store or pharmacy, where it's difficult to maintain 6 feet of social distance, you should wear a cloth face covering.

The facility also notes that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the coronavirus

US: Coronavirus deaths take a long-expected turn for the worse

NEW YORK, JUL 12 (AP): A long-expected upturn in US coronavirus deaths has begun, driven by fatalities in states in the South and West, according to data on the pandemic.

The number of deaths per day from the virus had been falling for months, and even remained down as states like Florida and Texas saw explosions in cases and hospitalisations and reported daily US infections broke records several times in recent days.

Scientists warned it wouldn't last. A coronavirus death, when it occurs, typically comes several weeks after a person is first infected. And experts predicted states that saw increases in cases and hospitalisations would, at some point, see deaths rise too. Now that's happening.

It's consistently picking up. And it's picking up at the time you'd expect it to," said William Hanage, a Harvard University infectious diseases researcher.

According to an Associated Press analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University, the seven-day rolling average for daily reported deaths in the US has increased from 578 two weeks ago to 664 on July 10 still well below the heights hit in April.

Daily reported deaths increased in 27 states over that time period, but the majority of those states are averaging under 15 new deaths per day. A smaller group of states has been driving the nationwide increase in deaths.

California is averaging 91 reported deaths per day while Texas is close behind with 66, but Florida, Arizona, Illinois,



New Jersey and South Carolina also saw sizable rises. New Jersey's recent jump is thought to be partially attributable to its less frequent reporting of probable deaths.

The impact has already been felt by families who lost kin and by the health care workers who tried to save them.

Rublas Ruiz, a Miami intensive care unit nurse, recently broke down in tears during a birthday dinner with his wife and daughter. He said he was overcome by the number of patients who have died in his care.

I counted like 10 patients in less than four days in our ICU and then I stopped doing that because there were so many, said the 41-year-old nurse at Kendall Regional Medical Center who lost another patient Monday.

The virus has killed more than 130,000 people in the US and more than a half-million worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University, though the true numbers are believed to be higher.

Deaths first began

mounting in the US in March. About two dozen deaths were being reported daily in the middle of that month. By late in the month, hundreds were being reported each day, and in April thousands. Most happened in New York, New Jersey and elsewhere in the Northeast.

Deaths were so high there because it was a new virus tearing through a densely populated area, and it quickly swept through vulnerable groups of people in nursing homes and other places, said Perry Halkitis, the dean of the Rutgers University School of Public Health in New Jersey.

Many of the infections occurred before government officials imposed stay-at-home orders and other social-distancing measures. The daily death toll started falling in mid-April and continued to fall until about a week ago.

Researchers now expect deaths to rise for at least some weeks, but some think the count

probably will not go up as dramatically as it did in the spring for several reasons.

First, testing was extremely limited early in the pandemic, and it's become clear that unrecognised infections were spreading on subways, in nursing homes and in other public places before anyone knew exactly what was going on. Now testing is more widespread, and the magnitude of outbreaks is becoming better understood.

Second, many people's health behaviours have changed, with mask-wearing becoming more common in some places. Although there is no vaccine yet, hospitals are also getting better at treating patients.

Another factor, tragically, is that deadly new viruses often tear through vulnerable populations first, such as the elderly and people already weakened by other health conditions. That means that, in the Northeast at least, many of the vulnerable people have already died,

Halkitis said.

Now, the US is likely in for a much longer, slower burn, Hanage, the Harvard researcher, said. "We're not going to see as many deaths (as in the spring). But we're going to see a total number of deaths, which is going to be large.

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DOGGY DUTY! Actress Olivia Wilde dressed comfortably as she took her dog for an hour-long walk in LA.

Katy Perry Comments on Kanye West's Presidential Run: 'The Job Is Best Suited for Someone With Experience'

Katy Perry offered her opinion about Kanye West running for president in a virtual interview with the U.K.'s Hits Radio on Friday (July 10).

The pop star, who called in for a 16-minute video chat about topics including her upcoming album, being in quarantine, her pregnancy and her dog's birthday, was prompted with the question: "We all know that 2020's one of the weirdest years so far ... How do you feel about Kanye West making it even weirder by becoming president?"

Perry didn't hesitate to share her thoughts.

"I think, you know, what we've learned looking back is that the presidential job is best suited for someone with experience and that is a pro in their field," she responded.

"I think we have seen and learned from experience that when we don't have pros in position, that it can get a little wild," Perry added.

"I love Kanye," said Perry. "He is amazing. I just, you know, I love him as an artist. And I think he's an incredible disrupter as an artist and a conversation-maker as an artist. And that's what I love the most about him."

Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania' turns six, team relives the memories

MUMBAI, JUL 11 (PTI): Varun Dhawan and Alia Bhatt-starrer "Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania" clocked six years on Saturday and the team took a trip down memory lane reflecting on the journey and making of the film. The 2014 romantic comedy film was written by Shashank Khaitan and also marked his directorial debut. It was produced by Karan Johar under his banner Dharma Productions.

The movie featured Dhawan as Humpty Sharma, Bhatt as Kavya Pratap Singh and Sidharth Shukla as Angad.

The team including Dhawan, Bhatt, Khaitan, took to their respective Instagram

Stories to share a small video giving a glimpse into the world of Humpty and Kavya, their banter, romance and other memorable moments from the film.

"6 years and they're still going strong. Celebrating the new-age filmy love story that remains timeless! #6YearsOfHSKD

#HumptySharmaKiDulhania @karanjohar @apoovamehta18 @Varun_dvn @aliaa08 #ShashankKhaitan #HSKD" Dharma Productions posted on their official Twitter handle. Following the commercial success of "Humpty Sharma...", Khaitan followed it up with another film "Badrinath Ki Dulhania" with the same pairing.

Esha Deol quashes rumours of Hema Malini being hospitalised: She's fit and fine

MUMBAI, JUL 12 (PTI): Actor Esha Deol on Sunday rubbished rumours that her mother, veteran star Hema Malini was admitted to a hospital.

There were reports that the 71-year-old actor was rushed to a hospital due to poor health.

Taking to Twitter, Esha asked people not to react to misinformation.

"My mother @dreamgirlhema is fit & fine! The news regarding her health is absolutely fake so please don't react to such rumours!" she tweeted.

"Thanks to everyone for their love and concern," the actor-author added.

The rumours started to spread after megastar Amitabh Bachchan and his son, actor Abhishek Bachchan tested positive for COVID-19 and were admitted to a city hospital on Saturday.

The Bachchans, who are at Nanavati Hospital, shared their health update on Twitter on late Saturday night.

"I have tested COVID positive. Shifted to Hospital. Hospital informing authorities, family and staff undergone tests, results awaited," Amitabh, 77, tweeted.

"All that have been in close proximity to me in the last 10 days are requested to please get themselves tested," he added.

"He has been moved to the isolation ward of the hospital," Nanavati Hospital sources told PTI.



Soon after his father posted his tweet, quelling speculation about his health, Abhishek also tweeted.

"Earlier today both my father and I tested positive for COVID 19. Both of us having mild symptoms have been admitted to hospital. We have informed all the required authorities and our family and staff are all being tested. I request all to stay calm and not panic. Thank you," Abhishek tweeted.

"The BMC has been in touch and we are complying with them," he added.

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said the complete Bachchan clan, including veteran actor Jaya Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, have

underwent swab test for COVID-19.

"Swab test have been taken of all the other family members, including Jaya ji and Aishwarya ji. Their reports are awaited. They have undergone RTPCR test..." he said.

Meanwhile, designer Riddhima Kapoor Sahni also slammed rumours that her mother Neetu Kapoor and brother, actor Ranbir Kapoor, have tested COVID-19 positive, urging people not to spread misinformation.

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the coronavirus case tally in Mumbai rose to 91,457 on Saturday with 1,308 new patients found.

Get well soon: Dharmendra wishes speedy recovery for 'courageous younger brother' Bachchan



MUMBAI, JUL 12 (PTI): Veteran actor Dharmendra on Sunday wished speedy recovery for his frequent co-star, megastar Amitabh Bachchan, who along with son, actor Abhishek Bachchan was tested positive for the novel coronavirus. Dharmendra and Amitabh have worked together on several hits of the 1970s-80s including "Sholay", "Chupke Chupke" and "Ram Balram".

The 84-year-old star said he is sure his "courageous younger brother" will bounce back in no time.

"Amit, get well soon. I am sure of my courageous younger brother... he will soon be fit and fine in a day or two..." Dharmendra wrote on Twitter.

The father-son duo shared their health update on Twitter on Saturday night.

"I have tested COVID positive. Shifted to Hospital. Hospital informing authorities, family and staff undergone tests, results awaited," Amitabh, 77, tweeted.

Abhishek, 44, followed his father's tweet, saying, "Earlier today both my father and I tested positive for COVID 19. Both of us having mild symptoms have been admitted to hospital. We have informed all the required authorities and our family and staff are all being tested. I request all to stay calm and not panic."

According to Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope, the Bachchan family, including veteran actor Jaya Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, have undergone swab test for COVID-19.

"Their reports are awaited," Tope added.

Dharmendra also extended support to Jaya, his "Guddi" co-star.

"Jaya, don't worry... everything will be fine my brave baby... Look after yourself and everyone at home... Love you all... take care," he added.



Dharmendra's wife, actor-MP Hema Malini also took to Twitter to wish good health to Amitabh.

"Amit ji has tested positive & has been admitted to Nanavati hospital. I pray for his well being & I'm sure that with all our collective prayers, he will come out of this safely (sic)" Malini, who has worked with the actor in films like "Sholay", "Trishul", "Baabul", "Baghban" among others, said.

There were also rumours that Malini was rushed to a hospital due to poor health.

Debunking the reports, her daughter, actor-author Esha Deol on Sunday said Malini was "fit and fine".

"The news regarding her health is absolutely fake so please don't react to such rumours!" she tweeted.

As per BMC, the coronavirus case tally in Mumbai rose to 91,457 on Saturday. There are 22,779 active patients in Mumbai.

ARIES:

Gone are the days when you needed to bury yourself in a pile of work in order to validate your existence. You understand the importance of silence, of being, of non-doing. Today, you're being asked to delve deeper into 'shunya', or what the Buddhist philosophy describes as 'nothingness'. Meditate. Self-reflect. Become an observer of your thoughts as you move beyond your mind with every breath you take.

TAURUS:

Emotional ups and downs could be a constant in the Taurus HQ. Be gentle with yourself. There is no rush to do anything or get anywhere. Give yourself the time you need to integrate on a mind, body, and soul level. Some of you could be facing a reality check on the interpersonal front. The relationship you've been investing in has been one-sided all along.

GEMINI:

Embrace the unbecoming. Honour the process of shedding old skin and letting go of dated beliefs. Healing is never a straight road. It is synonymous with both the ebb and the flow. But you have a way of making messy look beautiful. Trust that you will have blow-your-mind revelations when you sit down to converse with your wounds! This is also a time assessing your relationship with your soul circle and nurturing the ties that bring a smile to your face.

CANCER:

Ready for a cup of truth tea, Cancer? The most

powerful love spell you will ever perform is the one that invokes your love for yourself. This is a time of immense transformation in your world. You no longer feel the need to apologise for who you are or fit yourself into boxes that were never meant to be yours. Today, you're letting go of the need for external validation as you find a sense of wholeness within yourself.

LEO:

It's a coffee and book kind of day in the Leo sanctuary. You're in the mood to escape into a fictional world created by authors you love and engage in imaginary conversations with your favourite characters. Who's to say what's real anymore? Some of you may be in the midst of redirecting the course of your career. Do you have the expertise required to make the given change? If not, now is a good time to brush up on your skills or sign up for a course that will help you move closer to your goals. PS:

VIRGO:

Your time is your currency. Your energy is your currency. Be mindful of what you're giving your attention to. The cards are urging you to examine the projects at hand. There's a good chance the ones you're focused on are not in alignment with your highest good. But you don't need us to tell you what is supporting your growth and what isn't, do you? One word: prioritise.

LIBRA:

The earthly realm or wheel of samsara, as told by the

Buddhists texts, is synonymous with pain and suffering. To be human is to sign up for experiences that may not always be pleasant in nature. But, what does one do when they are faced with a karmic cycle? Libra, you can only bring forth the energy of change by acknowledging the karmic lesson. So call upon your higher self for assistance. Reflect upon what it is that needs to be transformed within.

SCORPIO:

It doesn't matter how many times you have had your heart broken. Everything transpired for a higher reason—this you believe with your whole heart. You're grateful for where you are now: a place of joy, harmony, and love. For coupled Scorpions, this could be a time of deepening their commitment, of standing by each other in a way you never have before. Single Scorpions could realise there is more to this connection than meets the eye.

SAGITTARIUS:

What is your relationship with joy, Sagittarius? What are the things that awaken the song in your soul and bring a smile to your face? Let's forget about the to-do lists for a second and focus on the inner landscape. Write down the things that bring you closer to your higher self—the things that make you feel one with the stream of creative consciousness

CAPRICORN:

Every great artist knows that inspiration strikes unexpectedly. Today, instead of chasing the metaphorical

Muse, step back and focus on the tasks at hand, mundane ones included. Who knows? You may channel the best idea of your life while scrubbing the dishes. As such, you'll find that doing things with your hands is rather therapeutic. Not to mention, the best way to get out of your head. Consider gardening, drawing, painting, brewing potions, cooking up a storm, and other DIY projects to stay connected with that stream of creative consciousness.

AQUARIUS:

You may feel like the foundation on which you have built your life is collapsing (Yes, we're talking about 'tower moment' in tarot lingo!). But here's something to think about: the Universe never takes away what is truly meant to be yours. Today, instead of resisting the process of transformation, become aware of what is no longer in alignment with your path. This will give you the courage you need to surrender where you have been pushing against the flow.

PISCES:

There are times when we tempt fate, tread the path less trodden, and move forward with courage and conviction despite the risks this entails. And then there are times when we examine the plan of action thoroughly, carefully consider each move, and play it safe. If the cosmic climate is anything to go, you will find comfort in going by the book and taking necessary precautions at every step. Some of you may be dealing with the repercussions of your past errors, in which case damage control is the need of the hour.