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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Sikkim gets a weekend breather – single-digit infections, double-digit discharges

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:**

Twenty-four more patients have won their battle against novel coronavirus in Sikkim and were discharged from isolation facilities on Saturday. Three patients from the isolation ward at STNM Hospital, three from Paljor Stadium, 12 from SICUN-Assam Lingzey and six from Himalayan Pharmacy Institute were discharged yesterday after flushing COVID-19 from their bodies. With this addition to the number of discharged COVID-19 patients, the total number of cured & discharged patients in Sikkim now stands at 1,371.

In the meantime, nine new cases of novel coronavirus were

reported in the 24 hours ending 8 AM Sunday, taking the total number of confirmed cases reported in the State so far to 1,910. There are now 534 active cases in Sikkim.

In the daily health bulletin on Sunday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia, informed that three new cases were detected in testing of 168 samples by RT-PCR at the VRD Lab, while two of 35 samples tested by TrueNat returned positive for COVID-19. Four persons were positive in rapid antigen testing of 17 samples, he added.

While giving the break-up of new cases found in RT-PCR, he informed that two persons are from the containment zone near Saraswati Mandir at

5th Mile and one from the police quarters in Singtam.

Mr Bhutia added that one person from near Sai Mandir in Bologhari and one from Jorethang in South Sikkim were found positive in TrueNat testing.

He added that three persons, one from Indira Bye-Pass, one from Meteorological Building in Daragaon and one from Nimtar, were found positive in rapid antigen testing at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong. One person from Shanti Nagar, Singtam also tested positive in the RAT at Singtam District Hospital.

Mr Bhutia also informed today that Health Minister Dr MK Sharma has also beaten COVID and tested negative for the virus.

Sikkim signs former Rajasthan skipper Robin Bist for Ranji team

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:**

After receiving the Standard Operation Procedure for the upcoming season from the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Sikkim Cricket Association [SiCA] has resumed its activities and though dates for the domestic season are still awaited, SiCA has begun rebuilding its teams and has signed former Rajasthan skipper, Robin Bist, as a guest player for the Ranji Team.

Robin Bist is a right-hand middle-order batsman and an off-break bowler. He was part of the Delhi Daredevils squad in the Indian Premier League and also played for India-A, Central Zone, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan Cricket Association President's XI.

He was the leading run-scorer of Ranji Trophy 2011-12 in which he scored 1,034 runs, including four centuries, at an average of 86.16 in 16 innings.



He has scored over 6,000 runs in first-class cricket with 15 centuries and 34 half-centuries.

"I would like to thank Sikkim Cricket Association (SiCA), its executives and selectors who have given me the opportunity and trusted with a big responsibility. SiCA, who is promoting cricket from last 3 decades equally deserves to be remembered as one of the best states relating to cricket and it is possible if all the players (both local and guests) play together as a family and give their

best on and off the field. I have been part of the winning team in Ranji Trophy twice and would like to share my experience with the new teammates that I have learned from my captains in the past. I am looking forward to the upcoming season and want to give my best," a SiCA press release quotes Robin Bist as saying.

SiCA president, Lobzang Tenzing conveys that he is proud of the efforts made by SiCA executives and selectors in choosing the best players.

COVID-19 tally in India crosses 41-lakh mark

NEW DELHI, SEP 6 (PTI):

India's COVID-19 tally of cases went past 41 lakh with a record 90,632 people being infected in a day, while 31,80,865 people have recuperated so far pushing the national recovery rate to 77.32 per cent on Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 41,13,811, while the death toll climbed to 70,626 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 1,065 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed. The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection has further declined to 1.72 per cent.

There are 8,62,320 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 20.96 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and it went past 40 lakh on September 5.

Full Refund Must For Air Tickets Booked In Lockdown: Centre In Top Court

NEW DELHI, 06 SEPT:

Passengers must be paid full refund for air tickets booked during the coronavirus lockdown, the government told the Supreme Court on Saturday adding that if the airlines are unable to pay fliers will get credit shell up to March 31 next year. This applies to domestic and international tickets booked between March 25 and May 3 this year and will have to be refunded immediately.

This comes after the top court asked the centre's views on a PIL seeking full refund of booked air tickets during the lockdown. The centre also said the passenger can use the credit on any route of choice and should also be able to transfer it to anyone.

"The passenger can transfer the credit shell to any person, and the airlines shall honour such a transfer. The airlines shall devise a mechanism to facilitate such a transfer. By the end of March 2021, the Airlines shall refund cash to the holder of the credit shell," the government told the Supreme Court.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in its affidavit filed in the top court on Saturday said the refund must be initiated as the airlines were not supposed to book tickets during the first lockdown period.

"There shall be an incentive mechanism to compensate the passenger if there is a delay in consuming the credit shell - from the date of cancellation up to 30th June, 2020. The value of credit shell shall be enhanced by 0.5% of the face value (the amount of fare collected) for every month or part thereof between the date of cancellation and 30th June, 2020.

Residents flag danger spilling from base of Deorali ropeway tower

**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:**

Residents of Shyari Road situated below the rope-way tower in Deorali here have expressed serious concern over water continuously spilling from the rope-way today.

Residents of the area point out that there are many residential buildings on the slope below the ropeway tower and that the area has been witnessing repeated landslides from a spot just below the tower.

It is being contended that water has been flowing continuously from the retaining wall of the rope-way building and causing the mudslides.

Residents mention that the area has already witnessed two landslide so far this monsoon and highlight with worry that the slide is getting wider with the continuous flow of water from the rope-way building.

They are worried that



a serious mishap will occur if nothing is done to contain the spillage.

The residents also complain that despite repeatedly bringing the matter to the notice of ropeway authorities,

no concrete action has been taken.

They also inform that disposal of garbage from below the rope-way road was creating another problem for residents of Shyari road.

What is holding Ajoy Edwards back? A lay-person's assessment

VIKASH PRADHAN

Ajoy Edwards can rightly be seen as the changing face of politics in Darjeeling: clean, educated, forward thinking, not-driven by selfish motives, and more importantly, someone who has a genuine stake in the land and our rightful place in it, distinct from the state of West Bengal, but firmly within the bounds of the Indian union. In recent times, he has been among the few faces that have been very visible in Hills politics, as a face for the GNLF and also as the conscience of the general population and its much-needed voice.

Does Ajoy have the credentials to lead the Hills?

He is gaining acceptance among the urban population, especially the youth, however, has he managed to break the rural barrier?

Will it translate into an election mandate?

So, what is holding Ajoy Edwards back? Is it the masses that cannot see beyond the rotiwala in him or his own party that finds itself in the midst of a challenging transition: from obscurity to resurgence, with a difficult change of guards in tow?

Ajoy, with his band of fresh faces, has in the course of the past few years, single-handedly changed the fortunes of his party. From one that was headed to oblivion, he has managed to make it a force to reckon with, again, and a formidable alliance partner for any national party with ambition in the Hills.

Personally, he has been extremely loyal to his childhood friend, Maan Ghishing, so much so that he has sacrificed personal gain for his sake and

VIEWPOINT

the Party. Unfortunately, many within the party-ranks appear not to know or acknowledge that fact.

GNLF as a political outfit has seen its highs and lows. In the post Bimal Gurung era of the Hills politics, it has survived only due to a handful of die-hard supporters, many of whom have lost everything for the cause. It is this group, which survived the purge under Bimal Gurung, that has been the GNLF's biggest strength that may now be posing questions about Ajoy's legitimacy to be handling the helm of affairs. Admittedly, there is not a single

turn to pg 02



Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Government of India



PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Investor/Depositors whose shares, unpaid dividends, matured deposits or debentures etc. have been transferred to Investor Education and Protection Fund under Companies Act, 1956/2013 can now claim online refund

For Investors : How to File the Claim?

- Register yourself on IEPF Website: www.iepf.gov.in
- Fill the new web form IEPF-5 ONLINE
- Attach scanned copy of requisite documents with form
- Take print out of auto generated advance receipt and indemnity bond (IEPF website - >Forms-> Web Forms IEPF-5 -> MCA Services)
- Send all documents to the company
- Company to e-verify the claim in 30 days
- On the basis of verification report, refund of shares and amount by IEPF Authority.

Note: Claimants are advised to file e-form IEPF-5 only when all documents are available

FOR COMPANIES: How to Process?

- File the details of nodal officer in new e-form IEPF-2(IEPF website -> Forms -> Register for filling web form.
- e-verify the form IEPF-5 within 30 days of filing of the form.
- Company to retain all original documents.

For ANY QUERY Claimants can call Toll Free Number 1800-114-667 or log on to www.iepf.gov.in or send mail to Email: iepf@mca.gov.in

Note: Claimants are requested to BEWARE of any middlemen or broker for settlement of claims. The process of filing the claim to IEPF Authority is simple and transparent. The requirement of documents is enumerated in the Instruction kit as well as in the FAQ section of the official website of IEPFA at www.iepf.gov.in.

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Jadavpur University prof faces casteist abuse for post on exams amid Covid

KOLKATA, 06 SEPT [PTI]:

A professor of Jadavpur University has been subjected to casteist attacks on social media for a post about conducting final semester exams during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jadavpur University Teachers Association (JUTA) and All Bengal University Teachers Association (ABUTA) on Sunday condemned the "vicious casteist trolling" of Maroona Murmu, an associate professor of history of JU for an innocuous post on Facebook.

On September 2, Ms Murmu was subjected to a volley of casteist abuse on social media when she wrote in a Facebook post about the need to postpone the final semester exams as "one year cannot be more precious than someone's entire life."

This triggered a comment by a third year student of Bethune College on her wall that "such thinking stems from quota-centric state of mind" implying that Ms Murmu had academically benefitted being a tribal.

A hurt Ms Murmu, who did her undergraduate studies at Presidency College before doing research at JNU, expressed anguish in her reply how her opinion as an individual was ignored by a female student and wondered if someone can be called incompetent and undeserving if he/she carries a tribal surname.

This invited more trolling as many others supported the young third year student of Bethune College while support also poured in for the professor.

The Bethune College Students' Committee posted a statement on social media saying, "it is extremely disheartening and condemnable that a student of our college is still unaware of the caste dynamics in India and the need of reservations for the underprivileged. The incident in question is extremely shameful and has brought the institution into disrepute."

"Therefore on behalf of the students of Bethune College, the students committee unequivocally condemns, the comment by the third year student of the institution and resolves to stand by Dr Murmu and the struggle of all Dalits in our campus, state and country," the statement said. The JUTA said in a statement on Saturday "an innocuous comment by Professor Murmu regarding the decision to conduct terminal semester exams during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, caused a torrent of abuse to be unleashed against her on the basis of her ethnic origin."

"Her abusers have challenged among other things her qualifications to teach in one of India's premier universities. Such an attack questioning the qualifications and integrity of Professor Murmu is an attack on every teacher, not just in Jadavpur University but anywhere in the country," JUTA general Secretary Partha Pratim Ray said in the statement.

SKM's social media cell meets virtually, resolves to strengthen cell

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's social media cell convened a virtual meeting for its members from all constituencies of North District on Sunday.

The meeting was also joined by senior party leader, Education Minister KN Lepcha, party vice-president Birendra Tamling who was recently appointed Advisor to the IPR Department and other senior leaders of the party, a press release issued by SKM's social media state coordinator, Pema Tsumling Bhutia, informs.

The release adds that the social media team congratulated Mr Tamling on his recent appointment in the govern-



ment resolved to strengthen the social media cell of the party by raising public interest issues from every constituency.

The Education Minister appealed to his party's so-

cial media team to highlight party activities and genuine issues of the people.

Mr Tamling, in turn, urged SKM's social media workers to deliver on their responsibilities

towards the party and the people sincerely. The release adds that social media chief coordinator, Bikash Basnet also urged all recently appointed social media members of

the party to work in the interest of the party.

Representatives from all constituencies placed their issues and suggestions at the meeting, the release informs.

Webinar deliberates nutrition during Covid-19

SILIGURI, 06 SEPT (PIB):

Regional Outreach Bureau, Siliguri under Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Govt of India organized a webinar on the theme of "POSHAN ABHIYAN" on 06 Sept, 2020. The program was organized in co-ordination with ICDS department Govt of West Bengal and District Tuberculosis department Govt of West Bengal.

District Tuberculosis Officer, Dr Debjani Basu while addressing the webinar on the subject of "Poshan during Covid-19 Pandemic period, stressed on the importance of good nutrition. Making a short presentation on the issue, Dr Basu also elaborated on the way of boosting immunity. However, she stressed on following preventive measure of avoiding close contact, closed spaces and crowded places.

Child Development and Project Officer, ICDS, Siliguri urban, Rajkumar Modi addressed on the subject of "Poshan

to mothers and children and role of ICDS on Poshan Mission of the government. While highlighting the theme of this year Poshan Maah- "Eat right with every bite", he said that ICDS is also engaged in the overall nutrition requirement of adolescence girls and mothers as only a healthy mother can give birth to a healthy child.

ADG PIB West Bengal, Jane Namchu in her welcome address explained the importance of carrying the right message on right nutrition to all in the community.

During the second session of webinar, question and answer round was also held in which large number of ICDS workers, NGOs representatives of the region participated.

The program ended with closing remarks from TA(S) Field Outreach Bureau, Prem Sherpa, Jalpaiguri. Poshan Maah is annually observed in the month of September in the country.

COVID recovery rate rises to 77.32 pc; case fatality rate, one of lowest globally, drops to 1.72 pc

NEW DELHI, SEP 6 (PTI):

With a record 73,642 patients having recuperated in a day, India's COVID-19 recoveries have surged to nearly 32 lakh, pushing the recovery rate to 77.32 per cent while the case fatality rate, one of the lowest globally, has further dropped to 1.72 per cent as on date, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday.

There are 8,62,320 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country accounting for only 20.96 per cent of the total caseload, it highlighted.

"The spike in the daily recovered COVID-19 patients continues in the country. For the second successive day, India has clocked a record recovery of more than 70,000 patients in a single day," the ministry said.

A total of 73,642 patients have recovered and been discharged from either home or facility isolation or hospitals in a day, according to health ministry data updated at 8 am.

"With this surge in numbers of patients getting recovered on a daily

basis, India's recovery rate has been further pushed upwards to 77.32 per cent," the ministry said.

Sustained efforts by the Centre, state and union territory governments have substantially resulted in higher number of people getting identified at an early stage for the infection through very high levels of testing, it underlined.

This has enabled their timely treatment, guided by the Standard Treatment Protocol for both home or facility isolation and hospitalisation.

The Centre, in collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has led the process of continuous upgradation of clinical management skills of the ICU doctors in the dedicated COVID hospitals across the country. "These measures have resulted in saving more lives. India's COVID-19 case fatality rate, one of the lowest globally, continues to further compress. It is pegged at 1.72 per cent as on date," the ministry said.

38 families quit SDF to join SKM



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:

Thirty-eight families from Lower Borong and Lower Polok ward under Barfung constituency in South Sikkim formally quit Sikkim Democratic Front and joined Sikkim Krantikari Morcha today.

The joining ceremony was held in the presence of Advisor, State Medicinal Plants Board, Dechen Phigu Bhutia, who is also an SKM vice president, accompanied by Lobzang Bhutia, Govind Pradhan, Bishnu Sharma, Kesangla D

Lhasungpa, Ram Prasad Chettri, KB Gurung, Maita Singh Tamang, Diki Dem Bhutia, Dawa Bhutia, DEC members, CLC functionaries, youth functionaries, media functionaries and senior party functionaries, a press release informs.

GST second major attack on India's unorganised economy: Rahul Gandhi



NEW DELHI, SEP 6 (PTI): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said the NDA's Goods and Services Tax (GST) is not a tax system but an "attack" on India's poor and on its small and medium businesses, and urged all to stand against it.

Dubbing the GST as "Gabbar Singh Tax", he said it is the second major attack on India's unorganised economy, and is an "absolute failure".

He had earlier said demonetisation was the first attack on the informal sector in the economy.

As part of his video series on the economy, the former Congress president alleged that the NDA government has kept four different tax slabs to help those big industrialists with means and contacts to change the taxes under the GST regime.

"This GST is an absolute failure. Not only is it unsuccessful, it is an attack on the poor and on the small and medium businesses," he said in the video series shared on his social media platforms.

"GST is not a tax system, it is an attack on India's poor. It is an attack on small shopkeepers, small and medium businesses, farmers and labourers. "We have to recognise this attack and stand against it together," he said.

Gandhi shared the under 3-minute video on Twitter and said, "Another major reason for the historic decline in GDP is the Gabbar Singh Tax (GST) of the Modi government. It has destroyed a lot - lakhs of small businesses, crores of jobs and the future of youth and the financial health of states. GST means economic devastation."

This is the third of the four-part series by him on the economy.

Gandhi and the Congress have stepped up their attack on the Modi government over the state of the economy after India's economic growth suffered its worst fall on record in the April-June quarter, with the gross domestic product (GDP) contracting 23.9 percent.

He claimed that the GST was UPA's idea, which meant "One tax, minimal tax, standard and simple tax".

"NDA's GST is completely different. Four different tax slabs, up to 28 percent, complicated and difficult to understand," he alleged. The Congress leader said the small and medium businesses cannot pay this tax, whereas the big companies can easily pay it by employing a few accountants to do the job.

"Why are there four different rates? This is because the government wants those who have the means to be able to easily change GST, and those who don't have means, cannot do anything about GST."

"Who has the means? India's biggest 15-20 industrialists. So, whatever tax law they want to change can easily be done in this GST regime," he alleged.

Gandhi said the result of the NDA's GST is that today, the Government of India is unable to provide the GST compensation money to the states.

The states are unable to give money to state employees and teachers, he said.

Gandhi has earlier brought out a similar video series on the situation on the border with China.

What is holding...

charismatic face among them, and their view of Ajoy as a political rookie and lacking credibility stems from their difficult existence during the GJM regime and the fact that they stuck on.

In the post-105-day-banda political vacuum, the GNLF emerged from the shadows largely on Ajoy's shoulder as he played a much needed interlocutor between the Bengal Government and the victims of its suppressive efforts. This role is accepted in private by even his most strident political rivals but never acknowledged publicly, lest they cede precious political space to him. This period also saw a change of guards with fresh faces bring in new ideas and zest. However, this also gave rise to some resentment and friction between the old and new guard.

On social media and otherwise, Ajoy has emerged as the visible, new-age, vocal and charismatic face of the GNLF. He epitomises the much missed, facelift of a political personality from our Hills with a clean image, social skills and expected essential courtesy. While he may have dipped his toes into politics not very long ago, Ajoy's credentials as civil society activist and social worker runs very deep and way longer.

Ajoy has been the face and the driving force behind many social initiatives from the Darjeeling Initiative to the Edwards Foundation. While this provides him the skillset and qualifications to emerge as a potent political personality, it also raises a unique conundrum. To use a brand analogy, we see Ajoy Edwards as a brand himself, the Party as another. Adding now to the confusion is another brand, Edwards Foundation. There is no doubt at all that Ajoy, dividing time between his political and social avatars is doing good and providing much-needed service for the people and the land, however, it raises a few questions. Being the most visible and vocal face of the GNLF, is he the Party's face? If yes, who/where does Maan Ghising figure in the equation? If not, is GNLF, at present, even relevant without him?

The thinking, talking and visible heads within the Party are surely aligned and focussed towards one goal, but the synergy appears sorely lacking.

Despite being the de-facto propulsion behind the GNLF, Ajoy's place and role in not clearly defined within the party ranks. This has led to a sense of skepticism and contempt within the old guard, as many feel their space and jurisdiction trampled over and Ajoy, designation-wise, as just the President of the Darjeeling Town Unit, overstepping his powers and brief. This has manifested in a negative perception without, fuelling, again, questions about the legitimacy of his leadership role.

The GNLF in its new avatar looks to be a very democratic institution. While this has its strengths, it also suffers from the lack of a single and clear line of control and hierarchy as was seen in its past and also in the GJM. GJM did have its share of educated intellectuals, but their very thought process was reined in by an autocratic Bimal Gurung and dissidence was not often heard of. In the GNLF, as of now, the cracks are not visible but the apparent lethargy and slumber within the ranks could be a manifestation of dissent.

In the context of the 2021 assembly elections, the GJM is much depleted but Bimal Gurung is in no way a spent force. Anit Thapa is working smartly on his image and it appears to be working. Being aligned with the TMC, however, appears to be the chink in his armour. Neeraz Zimba is a GNLF insider and yet appears to be an enigma and paving his way ahead on his own.

All given, Ajoy looks a very viable face in the future of Hills politics, but the Party itself looks neither fully in nor out. It appears to have settled into a languid dormancy. Could the lack of resources be the reason for it? A lot of hopes and aspirations are pinned on Ajoy and the GNLF and it would be a big let-down if it does not rouse itself from this idleness.

What is holding Ajoy Edwards back? The answers may well be within than without!

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

LAND FOR SALE

Two plots available – 30X40 sq ft and 50X30 sq ft
Junkeri Dara, Samlik Marchak
Price negotiable
Contact : 6296366498,
9641878315, 9593262407

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

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 and is fit for offices, shopping complexes, guest houses, banks etc. Contact: 8509755220, 8348007688.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General roadside land for sale measuring 30 by 45 square feet near smile land below apica garden. Contact no. 7797885351/9733538899.

Trinbago Knight Riders keep unbeaten run intact, register 9th consecutive win in CPL

TAROUBA (TRINIDAD), SEP 6 (PTI): The Bravo brothers -- Darren and Dwayne -- shone bright with bat and bowl, while Kieron Pollard produced an all-round effort to power Trinbago Knight Riders to their ninth consecutive win at the Hero Caribbean Premier League here.

Against St Lucia Zouks on Saturday, Darren Bravo scored 50 off 42 balls while Pollard made 42 to guide Trinbago Knight Riders to 175 for five -- their third 170-plus score in a row, which they defended by 23 runs.

While defending, Darren's elder brother Dwayne (2/26) combined well with his skipper Pollard (3/35) to restrict Zouks to 152 for seven.

Trinbago rested

Sunil Narine again, and openers Lendl Simmons and Tion Webster started slowly, with a six off Scott Kuggeleijn the only boundary Simmons managed before bottom-edging to the keeper.

Mohammad Nabi's second over was expensive with Webster powering him for a maximum over extra-cover to yield 13 runs.

Kesrick Williams followed a no-ball with a free hit which Tim Seifert powered for six.

Seifert batted at three because of Colin Munro's hand fracture as the Knight Riders reached 47 for one in the powerplay.

Webster cleared the long-on fence off Zahir Khan, but the Afghan got his revenge with a quicker ball to end a good cameo.

Roston Chase gave

away five wides in an over that went for 10, but Zahir kept things tight going for just five and Mark Deyal closed the first half of the innings with an over of four. At the halfway mark, the Knight Riders were 74 for two.

Darren Bravo then hit a maximum over Zahir's head.

Zouks captain Daren Sammy introduced himself into the attack soon and marked the occasion with a wicket as Seifert sliced to Najibullah Zadran at deep point.

Pollard, back captaining after a rest, came to the middle with the Knight Riders at 94 for three after 13 overs.

Sammy gave himself a second over, but he went for 13 with Pollard top-edging a four and then clearing the ex-

tra-cover fence.

Pollard used his long handle to great effect as Trinbago Knight Riders amassed 54 runs in the last four overs to set a 170-plus target for Zouks.

Chasing, Zouks opened with Kimani Melius and Mark Deyal but the duo only managed 13 off the first four overs as Akeal Hosein and Sikandar Raza proved too hard to hit.

While Khary Pierre conceded a boundary to each opener, Melius gloved a Dwayne Bravo slower ball down the leg-side where Seifert took a good diving catch.

Andre Fletcher hit the innings' six off Fawad Ahmed, who also conceded a four to Deyal, but Raza and Dwayne Bravo kept things tight.

When a shower brief-

ly interrupted proceedings in the 10th over, the Zouks were 63 for one and needed almost 11 an over, which eventually proved too hard as Dwayne Bravo and Pollard dished out excellent powerplay bowling.

Meanwhile in the second match on Saturday, Jason Holder scored 69 and took one wicket as the Barbados Tridents defeated Jamaica Tallawahs by seven wickets.

Opting to bat, Jamaica Tallawahs posted 161 for four, a target which the Tridents overwhelmed with 10 balls to spare, reaching 165 for three.

The Knight Riders are currently enjoying a six-point lead over second-placed Guyana Amazon Warriors, who have played 10 games. Zouks are placed third in the points table.



Teacher's Day at Tiny Tots School

SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 06 SEPT:

Tiny Tots School, Rangpo-IBM celebrated Teacher's Day in the presence of all the teachers, proprietor and Principal on 05 Sept.

The principal informs that the programme started with lighting of ceremonial lamps and offering khadas to a portrait of Dr S Radhakrishnan and co-founder of the school, Lt DR Thapa.

Street Plays in Kolkata fight COVID-19 stigma, myths

KOLKATA, 06 SEPT: The stigma against COVID-19 has caused patients and health workers untold trauma in Bengal and beyond. Now, a theatre group has taken to the streets - literally - to fight against it and make sense of the myths, misconceptions and fake news about the virus.

One of the worst episodes took place on July 26 outside a state-run hospital in Bongaon, 70 km north of Kolkata. A Covid patient tried to climb an ambulance but was too weak to board it. He died trying even as the ambulance driver, fully covered in a PPE suit, stood and watched. Some people filmed the tragedy but did not

step forward even though the man's wife begged and pleaded with passersby for help. She was too frail to lift him into the ambulance. No one from the hospital emergency ward came out to help either. Reports of such horrific incidents have brought theatre artists out on the streets of Kolkata to try and bust myths and dispel stigma about Covid so the above mentioned tragedy never repeats itself.

One of the theatre groups - 'Uncertain' - has been performing their street play in different parts of the city.

Nandita Chanda, an actor in the play said, "Corona is scary, it is a pandemic, we are living in a pandemic. So Our

message is, yes, be afraid, take precautions but don't lose your humanity." "Theatre's job is to go into society and raise questions. We are compelled to do that," said Saikat Ghosh, the director of the play.

The battle against Covid stigma is being fought in villages too with jatra - a traditional Bengali theatre. The whole campaign is steered by Covid Care Network, an NGO of survivors, their families and doctors.

Dr Diptendra Sarkar of Covid Care Network, who stopped by to see the street play at Jadavpur 8B bus stand, said, "More people have died because of the stigma than the disease."

Pragati Sangh undertakes cleanliness drive at Tokal Bermiok school



SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 06 SEPT:

Pragati Sangh, a group of 20 volunteer students from Tokal Bermiok area, along with Primary School Teacher, Nevika Kafley, and Devi Basnet organized a cleanliness drive at the school premises today.

ises today.

They dedicated their drive to the teachers. Through the cleanliness drive, they also tried to generate awareness about good hygiene.

All COVID-19 protocols were maintained during the drive, a press release informs.

Safai Abhiyan by Rising Soul Sisters



SUMMIT REPORT

TASHIDING, 06 SEPT:

Newly formed Women's NGO, Rising Soul Sisters of Tashiding West Sikkim, started their engagements with a cleanliness drive at the Primary Health Centre today with the help of PHC staff.

Members of the NGO cleaned up the PHC complex and its surroundings.

They also took the opportunity to thank the doctors and staff posted at the PHC and offered them garlands to register their gratitude towards the Corona Warriors.

Teacher's Day at HCE



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 SEPT:

Harkamaya College of Education celebrated a virtual teacher's day in light of the COVID pandemic with gusto and fervour today, a press release informs.

MEd and BEd 3rd semester students put the

virtual celebration together, taking videos and snapshots from their homes. The welcome address was given by Paden Bhutia and vote of thanks proposed by Gyuzoot Lepcha. The programme was interspersed with songs, dances and poetry recitals.

Tvesa Malik finishes 4th, records career-best result outside India

FLUMSERBERG (SWITZERLAND), SEP 6 (PTI): Indian golfer Tvesa Malik finished an impressive tied-fourth at the Flumserberg Ladies Open at Gams-Werdenberg Golf Club here, to record her career-best result in an international pro event.

The 24-year-old Tvesa, whose previous best was tied-sixth at the Hero Women's Indian Open in 2019, shot a final round of two-under 70 in her first-ever Ladies European Tour Access Tour, the second rung circuit on the Ladies European Tour.

Tvesa totalled eight-under as Finland's Sanna Nuutinen claimed her third career LETAS win in a thrilling sudden-death playoff against overnight leader Stina Resen, after the pair were tied at 12-under-par.

The other Indian in the event, Diksha Dagar shot 77 in the final round to finish tied-47th.

Tvesa, who had rounds of 69-69 on first two days, started on the 10th. But once again her start was wobbly as she bogeyed the 10th. She had begun with bogey on second hole on the first day and with a double bogey on second day.

Yet Tvesa fought back well once again. She birdied 14th, 18th and second and did not drop any more shots by some steady golf. It became all the more laudable as she pushed around the bag herself.

Tvesa and Diksha will stay on in Switzerland for next week's VP Bank



Ladies Open, a 200,000 full Euro field event on the Ladies European Tour.

Nuutinen started the day two shots behind and fell further adrift with back-to-back bogeys on the first two holes.

Undeterred, the 27-year-old proceeded to put on a ball-striking masterclass in the sweltering conditions at Gams-Werdenberg Golf Club, making three consecutive birdies on 5, 6 and 7 and 11, 12 and 13 to draw level.

With four holes to go, it was all to play for as the season's opening tournament hung in the balance.

Approaching the par five 18th green, Nuutinen was faced with a 5-meter birdie putt to make the playoff.

In the playoff, both players took aggressive lines off the tee on the dog leg second hole, with Nuutinen's three-wood leaving her only 47 meters to the pin versus Resen's 80 meters.

Both players made it look easy, hitting the green to around 9 feet, with Nuutinen set to go first from more or less the same position.

Proving to be a quick learner, Nuutinen rolled home and Resen missed to claim the all-important victory.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

A walk in interview for one post of Senior Research Fellow for the Intensive Siri Cattle Breeding Area, Pokhari, West Sikkim purely on contract basis for a period of one year under the National Project on Bovine Breeding will be held on 21st September 2020, at 11.30 am at the office of Sikkim Livestock Development Board, Animal Husbandry Complex, Deorali. Candidates are required to bring testimonials in original, one set of attested copies of testimonials and one passport size colour photograph with complete application, at the time of interview.

Candidates should be present for verification of testimonials at 10.30 am on the 21st September 2020.

The details of educational qualification received, experience and remuneration are shown below:-

Name of the Post:- Senior Research Fellow(SRF)

Education Qualification:- B.V.SC & AH graduate from recognized University.

Candidates with MVSC (Animal Breeding & Genetic) will be given preference.


REMUNERATION: Rs.35,000/-per month.

AGE: Candidates should not have attained the age of 40 years as on 21.09.2020.

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer,
Sikkim Livestock Development Board.

R.O. 63/IPR/Pub/Classi./20-21 dt. 04.09.2020



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

<p>Symptoms of nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	<p>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands often with soap. ● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer ● Observe good personal hygiene. ● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. ● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms. ● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats. ● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places. ● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition ● No vaccinations available as of now ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected 	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104 District surveillance Officer EAST : 7029372100 WEST : 9593297809 NORTH : 9641957468 SOUTH : 7407691463 New STNM AMS : 9434711402</p>

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

Protecting Children from Sexual Offences

Begin by ensuring that the “compromise” culture does not touch their cases

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act has been around for a while, having been notified in June 2012, following which, inadequacies of the existing Indian Penal Code and the absence of any stringent legislation to effectively address and tackle the heinous crime of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children was resolved to a large extent. Until POCSO Act was notified, child sex abuse crimes were dealt with under laws framed for rape, outraging the modesty of women and unnatural offences. These laws were clearly not nuanced enough to address the problem or look out strongly enough for victims of such abuse. Meanwhile, child sex abuse was so rampant that the need for a specific law to deal with such violations was finally deemed urgently necessary and was finally introduced in the year 2012. Statistics bear out how desperately such law was required. Across the country, the number of cases registered under POCSO Act increased from 8,904 in the year 2014 to 14,913 in the year 2015. Admittedly, not all cases of child sex abuse are still being reported, but had this Act not been around, nearly 15,000 more such cases would have gone unreported. Sexual abuse of children, however, is not a recent phenomenon. It has clearly been around ever since sexual predators have been around which is why it falls on the entire society to ensure that the POCSO Act is routinely tweaked to plug all loopholes and consistently followed up to check on its efficacy and to inform course correction required to not only punish those who prey on minors, but also to keep more of the children informed and safe.

This brings us to an anecdote shared by a Sikkim Police cop at a recent interactive meeting convened to discuss the POCSO Act. Journalists writing about such crimes are left deeply disturbed despite being several steps removed from the incident and rarely making the effort to speak with the victims. In comparison, the rage, disgust and anguish that cops have to confront when they respond to distress call from children cannot even be fathomed. It was apparent that the cop was deeply affected by the number of cases he has processed under the POCSO Act, but what had left him even more deeply disturbed and disgusted was a conversation he once had with parents of one of the victims. These parents had apparently approached him with a request to “compromise” the case since they were being offered a sizeable “compensation” by the offending party and because of the immense pressure being brought on them to “settle” the case. On that day, his anger was directed at the parents, but stay with the incident for a while, and it becomes clear that it is societal failure at work here. “Compensating” victims and “compromising” cases is too common a response in Sikkim for it to have not been deployed in POCSO cases as well. Furthermore, most of the victims thus far have come from underprivileged families and their abusers have most often been better heeled. The victims are already at a disadvantage, but instead of continuing their trauma, the society at large and the system in particular need to get more involved.

As things stand, there are no specific provisions for the protection of the victim and his/ her family from “pressure” and intimidation. But that does not mean that no protections exist. Influencing or buying out witnesses is a punishable crime as is perjury, and it is perhaps time that the Courts cracked the whip more strongly whenever such suspicion arises. The agencies charged with effective implementation of POCSO Act can help out by keeping regular tabs on the progress of such cases in the Courts. Even in Sikkim, there have already been instances of accused walking free on technical grounds like witnesses either turning hostile or giving conflicting statements and even victim testimonies not being consistent enough to ensure a conviction. Such aberrations should immediately set off the warning bells and special investigations undertaken to ensure that no coercion or influence was exerted to sink the case. POCSO cases cannot be settled out of court, but that has not proven a strong enough deterrent for those trying to “settle”. They have devised this trick of scuttling cases by influencing witnesses and even victims. This cannot be allowed for any case, more so for those booked under POCSO Act, because the victim’s PTSD will further deepen as will their feeling of guilt and low self esteem. We already failed the children when we did not see the warning signs of initial abuse, and fail them again when we allow the abusers to walk free. Hence, the conduct of everyone involved - from the investigating agencies to counselors to lawyers to families involved - should be looked into in every acquittal to ensure that there was no foul play. Sikkim has few enough cases to invest resources and manpower to such an exercise, and it should.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Dear Dambudzo Marechera... The letters Zimbabweans wrote to a literary star

Tinashe Mushakavanhu
theconversation.com

The writer Dambudzo Marechera, who died on 18 August 1987, remains a popular figure in Zimbabwe. He is heralded by a young generation as a radical and counter-culture figure.

Marechera became an instant star when his first book *The House of Hunger* was published to critical acclaim in 1978. The novella tells of growing up in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in raw and exquisite prose, a harrowing portrait of lives disrupted and young disillusionment. The rumour is that he wrote it in a tent or squat, but then perhaps he did not, for as James Currey puts it in *Africa Writes Back*: “Marechera developed his own life story with the self-regarding obsession of an actor.”

Everything to do with his conflicted legacy had a touch of mythology. Whether it was throwing plates and cups at his hosts at the Guardian Fiction Prize ceremony, trying to burn down a university library, or travelling without a passport between countries and continents.

His magnum opus, *The House of Hunger*, came immediately after his expulsion from New College, Oxford university. Though his publishers desperately expected him to produce the ‘great Zimbabwean novel’, Marechera’s later work was inconsistent. He saw two more books published: *Black Sunlight* (1980) and *Mindblast* (1984). Further work was released posthumously: *The Black Insider* (1990), *Cemetery of Mind* (1992) and *Scrapiron Blues* (1994).

After confounding critics and foes, and leading an erratic lifestyle, the writer was dead at 35. Marechera embodies celebrity and politics, spectacle and radicalism, universality and self-aggrandisement. What endears him to a generation of readers is his refusal to offer easy answers or present static identities for his fictional characters or for himself.

But who is Dambudzo Marechera? I never met him. He died when I was four years old and has always been an enigma. But I recently discovered a set of old letters which reveal the real import of Marechera’s influence.

A VISIT TO THE ARCHIVE

For a long time I associated the National Archives of Zimbabwe with bureaucracy and viewed it as an unwelcoming security zone. My early visits were focused on accessing the Marechera papers, or what remains of them. The more I visited, the more items went missing, and sometimes they were truncated. When I told friends about the appearance, disappearance and reappearance of materials, many suggested that the institution has a general suspicion of researchers and that it censors information.

It was during one of these visits that I saw a

folder that contained a neat pile of hundreds of handwritten letters. The melodramatic structure and rhetoric of the letters disturbed the stable meanings I held about Marechera, especially their expressions of psychic pain, longing, desire, frustration, boredom, and the material details of the correspondents’ private lives – that now make them irresistible, intimate public archives.

The letters are valuable historic documents;



their inclusion in the national archives was a fate their writers could never have imagined. The value of these letters depends on their continued circulation. Yet, they have been ignored by researchers who have hollowed out black testimony in constructing the figure of Marechera. Much of the Marechera scholarship is scaffolded on white memory.

The letters function as a space of knowledge and confession and are complex objects positioned at the intersection of personal, institutional and memorial motives.

THE STORY DOCTOR

Addressed in care of the Dambudzo Marechera Trust, the letters were dispatched after Marechera’s death from urban townships, rural areas, growth points, mining compounds, farms; places that only appear in the news during election season or moments of catastrophe. In death, Marechera ruptures the view of Zimbabwe as a little corridor that starts in Harare and ends in Bulawayo. These letters provide a unique psychological and physical map of his enduring influence – a community forged around issues of privacy, of friendship and of individual freedom.

The correspondents feel comfortable talking to Marechera. They know he will never scold them for what they say. He is ordinary like them, but constantly harassed by the state and its security apparatus. Most are school dropouts who absconded to join the war and came back to no jobs or unwell-

coming families.

After the war, they were expected to grow up quickly and join the army of nation builders. But there were no systems created to deal with the traumas of war. Many returned with stories and nightmares and didn’t know how to share them, or where to turn for help. The government bureaucrats were unconcerned.

Marechera decided to be the story doctor who provided an outlet for people to vent. He opened a small office in the Harare City Centre. The office was minimalist, it had no furniture; there was a phone in the corner. Marechera had decided to build a healing platform outside the official system. He understood the sickness that was all around him that could only be cured through storytelling sessions. The writing surgery operated for four days before it was shut down by government agents. At least 1,000 young people had consulted Marechera.

They turned to Marechera who was the resident philosopher in Harare’s nightclubs and bars. They eagerly identified with his iconoclasm. To them, his was a fearless voice that undermined

every kind of complacency and hypocrisy.

DEATH THAT REFUSES TO BE KILLED

One letter, dated 18 May 1989, reads:

“Never before have I encountered an author so seriously dedicated to his pen and voice as the late Dambudzo “Desperate” Marechera. He remains my luminary in my poetic endeavor; his courageous denunciation of “filthy first citizens” an undying inspiration to me. These are the bigots, now coming to the foreground dead and alive because of their sins, who kept Dambudzo well under foot till his death.”

From the perspective of the speculative enterprise, Marechera’s death was a necessary death, a death that has had movement, that created a schism in the Zimbabwean imagination. For the political class it was good riddance, but for multitudes of young people Marechera’s death was the awakening.

It was a new type of death that refused to be killed. Marechera’s transcendence to the afterlife became an expression of the radical and new logic, a speculative process.

His death is the moment he is born again, every utterance of his name is a recreation of who he was, of who he should have been. He changes with every memory, every retelling. If Dambudzo Marechera had not existed, Zimbabwe would have invented him.

[the writer is Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of the Witwatersrand]

Undressing for Redress: The significance of Nigerian women’s naked protests

BRIGHT ALOZIE
theconversation.com

Social media went abuzz on July 23, 2020, when hundreds of women – mostly naked – staged a protest in the northwestern state of Kaduna, Nigeria. Wailing and rolling on the ground, they protested at the killing of people in ongoing attacks on their community.

The protesters, mostly mothers, demanded justice and called on the government, security agencies and international community to intervene.

Such naked protests are not new in Nigeria. Traditionally, among the Igbo and Yoruba of Nigeria, stripping naked signifies a curse against those targeted. Sometimes, mothers strip naked to put a curse on their truant sons or disloyal husbands. In some cases, it signifies their willingness to die for a cause.

Nigerian women have historically employed naked protests to seek redress – with success. In my book chapter contribution on this subject, I documented numerous naked protests dating back to the colonial period. I drew the conclusion that through the spectacle of such protests, women have rewritten the script on their bodies and used nakedness as an instrument of power, rather than shame, in making their voices heard.

Historically, in western and non-western worlds, women have used their bodies to protest unacceptable treatment by those in power. In Africa, the nakedness of women, especially mothers and grandmothers, is a historical and symbolic “shaming” tactic. Women’s enacting nakedness on their own terms disrupts dominant notions that depict their bodies as passive, powerless, or as sexual objects for sale.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NAKED PROTESTS

Most studies have focused on the role of clothing in society and demonstrated how it can change the perception of an individual. Sadly, there is little research on naked protests, perhaps because society frowns on public displays of the naked body.

The unclothed female body is a powerful site of protest. By protesting naked, women have resurrected traditional forms of sociopolitical protests and resistance like the custom common among Igbo women known as “sitting on a man” or “making war” with men. This custom was a practice where women showed their disapproval of abusive men, men who failed to provide for their family or who disregarded market rules. Dressed as men in preparation for war, the women wore only loincloths with ferns on their heads, smeared ashes on their faces and carried sticks with palm fronds. They would dance around the house singing lewd and insulting songs that questioned the offender’s manhood, and would pound on the house using their pestles and in severe cases, destroyed the house. They would continue this activity until the offender repented. This act was viewed as the ultimate means by which women sanctioned wrongdoers.

History records several naked or half naked protests by women caused by displeasure with government policies or incidents seen as too dangerous to be ignored. These protests were mostly successful in achieving their objectives.

Naked protests are always employed as a last resort. This was the case in colonial southeastern Nigeria when in 1929, hundreds of naked and half naked women took to the towns of Owerri, Calabar and Aba. They protested harsh colonial policies.

An English lieutenant described the women as nearly naked, wearing only wreaths of grass round their heads, waist and knees:

“(I began) telling the women not to make noise. They took no notice of me and told me that I was the son of a pig and not of a woman ... (They) were calling the soldiers pigs ... (and) they didn’t care if the soldiers cut their throats.”

This protest resulted in the famous Ogu Umunwanyi or Aba Women’s War. Before the incident, the protesters had employed other means like petitioning the colonial authorities. Eventually, “making war” on the officials became the last resort. About 50 women were killed and 50 others were wounded.

Also, in the 1930s, members of the Abeokuta Women’s Union in southwestern Nigeria walked half-naked in protest against the Alake of Abeokuta’s political actions and forced him into exile.

On July 8, 2002, about 600 semi-clad or naked women from six communities in the oil-rich southeastern Nigeria occupied the main oil terminal of Chevron Texaco. They protested how their water and land had been contaminated by the presence of Chevron Texaco, through oil spills and gas flares. They accused the company of gross exploitation of the people of the region and not distributing enough of the wealth it obtains from oil. They also demanded infrastructural changes.

Before then, their men had tried but failed. The actions of these women resulted in a peace meeting with Chevron Texaco. The company agreed to hire local workers, contribute to local infrastructure, set up a micro-credit scheme to help village women start businesses of their own, and provide communities with

schools, hospitals, water, and electricity systems.

Naked protests also dramatically enact protesters’ willingness to put their bodies on the line in order to advance a political cause, such as opposition to government and military interventions. This was the case on May 20, 2017 when some female members of the Indigenous People of Biafra staged a protest in Abiriba, Abia state, against an alleged attack on them by the Nigerian Army. Some women were unclad while others wore undergarments and wrappers.

Similarly, in July 2013, nearly 100 women walked naked through Kokoritown in Delta State to protest the “unacceptable siege” on their community by the Nigerian army.

CONCLUDING INSIGHTS

The symbolic resonance of protesting naked has ensured the endurance of the “undress tactic” among Nigerian women today. It has also signalled a return to the old fashioned but effective form of women’s resistance. To fully understand this symbolism, we must not view the protesting naked female solely in sexual terms, as a commodity or an object without regard to their dignity.

Indeed, the female body is a site of immense power both inside and outside. Through naked protests, women engage in re-scripting and reconfiguring their bodies.

These women who have stripped naked to wage a righteous war must be duly acknowledged. So, when you see “our mothers go naked again”, remember that they represent power, subversion and resistance to the dominant scripts engraved on their bodies – scripts of subordination, passivity, sexuality, subservience and vulnerability.

[the writer is Lecturer in History, West Virginia University]

139 new cases push Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 4,914



ITANAGAR, SEP 6 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally inched closer to the 5,000-mark on Sunday as 139 more people, including 20 security personnel, tested positive for the infection, a senior health official said.

The fresh infections have taken the north-eastern state's caseload to 4,914, he said.

The Capital Complex region reported the high-

est number of new cases at 58, followed by 13 in West Siang district, State Surveillance Officer, Dr L Jampa, said.

Barring 16, all the new patients are asymptomatic and they have been shifted to COVID-19 care centers, he said.

"Six Army men, nine Assam Rifles jawans, three Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel and two policemen are among the new pa-

tients," Jampa said.

As many as 101 more people have been cured of the disease and discharged from hospitals, he said.

Arunachal Pradesh now has 1,525 active COVID-19 cases, while 3,381 people have recovered from the disease so far, and eight patients have succumbed to the infection, the official said.

The recovery rate among the COVID-19 pa-

tients in the state now stands at 68.80 per cent, he said.

The Capital Complex region, comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, has the highest number of active cases at 293, followed by West Siang district (189), East Siang (143), West Kameng (138) and Papumpare and Changlang (120 each), Jampa said.

The state has so far

tested 1,83,390 samples for COVID-19, including 3,017 on Saturday, he added. Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Passang Dorjee Sona has urged the legislators to undergo COVID-19 tests.

His appeal came after Education Minister Taba Tedir contracted the disease on Friday.

A rapid antigen testing facility will be set up on the Assembly premises on September 8 for the lawmakers, Sona said in a communiqué.

"The testing facility is being arranged in view of the spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in the state and to ensure the safety of the Assembly members who being public leaders have to frequently come in contact with the people," the speaker said.

Three lawmakers, including Tedir, Jumum Ete Deori of Lekang seat and Kalaktang MLA Dorjee Wangdi Kharma, have tested positive for COVID-19 so far.

80 new special trains from Sept 12



NEW DELHI, SEPT 05 [PTI]: Eighty new special trains will be operational from September 12, reservations for which will begin from next Thursday, Railway Board Chairman V K Yadav said on Saturday, while asserting the real timeframe for the completion of the bullet train project will be clear in 3 to 6 months.

Yadav, who was recently appointed the first CEO of the Railway Board, said within the next three to six months the status of land acquisition, delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic, for the high-speed Mumbai-Ahmedabad rail project will be ascertained.

Eighty-two per cent of the land has been acquired in Gujarat, while in Maharashtra land acquisition is only at 23 per cent, he said.

At a media briefing, the railway board chairman said, "Eighty new special trains or 40 pair of trains will start operating from September 12. Reservations will begin from September 10. These will run in addition to the 230 trains already in operation."

Yadav said the railways will monitor all the trains that are currently in operation to determine which trains have a long waiting list.

"Wherever there is a demand for a particular train, wherever the waiting list is long, we will run a clone train ahead of the actual train, so that passengers can travel," he said.

The key factor in deciding the 80 new trains was the fact that there were many stations from where the migrant workers are going back to their workplace, Yadav said.

"Many of these trains are running in the re-

verse direction of the Shramik Special trains. So, they (people) are leaving their homes and going to their workplace.

"We are monitoring the occupancy of trains and will run more trains as per demand. Among the 230 trains, the occupancy of 12 is very less. We are running them, but will reduce the number of coaches," he said, adding that the average occupancy in the 230 trains is 80-85 per cent.

Yadav said the Railways is coordinating with the state governments while deciding on the introduction of new trains.

To a question about running trains for exams, Yadav said, "We will run trains whenever there is a request from state governments for exams and other such purposes."

About the Supreme Court order to remove about 48,000 slum dwellings situated along the railway tracks in the national capital within three months, he said, "Immediate action for removing garbage along tracks taken jointly by Delhi government and the Railways in line with the top court order."

On the bullet train project, Yadav said it was progressing well and a reassessment of the timeframe for its completion will be done within the next three to six months.

He said in a linear project like the bullet train, work can only begin when a certain amount of land is available.

"We are hoping that within the next three to six months, we will be able to get to the point where we have 90-100 per cent of the land. Our designs are ready and

we are set to go. It is true that the tenders and land acquisition were delayed a bit due to the coronavirus pandemic, but I can say that the project is progressing well.

"As the COVID-19 situation improves, we will be able to start the bidding process and within the next three to six months, we will be able to get the status of land acquired and then we will be able to provide a real timeframe for the completion of the project," Yadav said.

Dismissing news reports that Japanese firms were not keen on the project any longer, he said both Indian and Japanese companies were on board and urged people not to pay heed to such rumours.

Commenting on the dedicated freight corridor and the delays, Yadav said the contractors have started speeding up work and the issues have been resolved.

Yadav also announced that the Railways will begin the recruitment process for 1.40 lakh posts in three categories from December 15. The exams could not be conducted due to COVID-19 as a computer-based exam was to take place, he said.

"The computer-based exams will begin from December 15 for the three categories of posts and a detailed schedule will be announced very soon," Yadav said.

"We had invited applications for recruitment in various categories for 1,40,640 posts. These were notified in the pre-COVID period. Scrutiny of these applications was completed, but due to coronavirus pandemic a computer-based examination could not be completed," Yadav said.

Oppn planning joint offensive against govt in Parliament

NEW DELHI, SEP 6 (PTI): Opposition parties are planning a joint offensive against the government to corner it in Parliament on issues of national security like the border situation with China, handling of the COVID pandemic, economy and GST compensation to states, sources said.

Leaders of various opposition parties are expected to meet later this week to formulate a joint floor strategy in both the houses of Parliament, they said.

The Monsoon session of Parliament will commence on September 14 amid COVID-induced changes in its proceedings.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi has convened a meeting of the party's strategy group on September 8, the sources said.

Opposition leaders are keen that various like-minded parties should work closely with each other to take on the government in Parliament. This was expressed by Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee, Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray and JMM's Hemant Soren at a recent meeting of non-NDA chief ministers with Congress president Sonia Gandhi on JEE/NEET and GST issues.

The Congress strategy group has already met once and discussed the issues to be raised during the session.

Senior Congress leaders have also been asked to contact UPA allies and other like-minded parties to put up a united fight against the government, both inside and outside Parliament.

TMC leader Derek O'Brien had earlier said that like-minded opposition parties will work together in Parliament and find common ground on public issues.

There will be a lot of teamwork among such parties in Parliament, he had said. CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said on Sunday that consultations are underway for a joint opposition strategy.

CPI leader D Raja also said that meetings of opposition leaders will be soon held in this regard.

With tensions escalating in eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control with China, the opposition will demand answers from the government on the issue.

The rapid rise in the number of COVID 19 cases will also come up for discussion. The opposition will also raise the heat in Parliament on the row over social media giant Facebook and allegations that it is soft on ruling party members when it came to applying hate speech rules.

The holding of various examinations including the NEET will also come up for discussion in Parliament. The opposition has accused the gov-

ernment of risking the lives of students and youths by holding the exams at a time when coronavirus cases are rising every day.

The Congress is also set to oppose the ordinances issued by the government in the recent past.

The government has issued as many as 11 ordinances. Congress Chief Whip in Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh, who is also the convener of the strategy group, is learnt to have told the party leaders at the last strategy meeting about the merits and demerits of these ordinances, the sources said. The leaders of opposition parties are likely to raise the issue of doing away with the Question Hour in this session. Officials have said that there will be no question hour and private members' bills, and the Zero Hour will be restricted.

The Congress leaders in both houses will be writing to the Rajya Sabha chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker seeking restoration of the Question Hour.

The Congress, the sources say, will demand short duration discussions and Calling Attention Motions on issues of Chinese aggression on India at the border, the economic slowdown and the collapse of GDP to record lows, unemployment and migrants' problems, besides on grant of GST compensation to states and the Facebook controversy.

Meanwhile, hectic preparations are on for the upcoming session which will be the first of its kind in Parliament's history due to unprecedented measures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While last-minute preparations are on including seating arrangements, security agencies are finalising plans for allowing entry to MPs, their support staff and the media.

The chambers of both houses and the various galleries will be used to seat the MPs.

The MPs, their support staff, Parliament and security staff, and the media will have to undergo COVID-19 tests prior to the session which will end on October 1 without a break.

Except for the first day, the Rajya Sabha will sit in the morning from 9 AM to 1 PM, the Lok Sabha will sit in the evening from 3 PM to 7 PM, officials said.

The Monsoon session is likely to be adjourned on the first day due to the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee, who has been the leader of both the Houses.

Besides, sitting Rajya Sabha members Amar Singh and M P Veerendra Kumar, and Lok Sabha member H Vasanthakumar have died during the inter-session period.

Trai grants Voda Idea time till Sep 8 to respond to priority plan show-cause notice

New Delhi, Sept 6 (PTI): Telecom regulator Trai has granted additional time, till September 8, to Vodafone Idea to reply to its show-cause notice on priority plan, after the company sought more time to respond.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) last month had slapped a show-cause notice on Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) over its pay-more-for-priority treatment mobile plan, saying the tariff offer "lacks transparency" and is "misleading" and not in compliance with the regulatory framework.

The regulator had initially given time till August 31 to VIL to respond, but later extended the deadline to September 4 following company's request.

A source privy to the development told PTI that VIL again wrote to the regulator stating at least 15 days are needed to respond to the elaborate 17-page show-cause notice that was issued on August 25. So, Trai has now agreed to extend the deadline to September 8 and communicated the same to the telco, the source said. A mail sent to Vodafone Idea did not elicit a response.

The regulator --

which had been probing VIL's priority plan -- had issued a show-cause notice asking the company "why appropriate action should not be initiated against it for violating the extant regulatory framework by its RedX tariff plan..."

In its show-cause notice to VIL, the regulator had said: "The RedX Tariff offer lacks transparency and is misleading and not in compliance with regulatory principles of tariff assessment contained under Telecom Tariff Order, 1999 as amended from time to time."

The sector regulator had also said it is of the view that the "claim of VIL for providing 'Priority 4G Network with faster data speeds' is not in compliance with the extant regulatory framework..."

It had said that the RedX tariff offer is in contravention of specific clauses of the Telecom Tariff Order relating to protection of interests of the consumers.

VIL's RedX tariff offer "violates the terms of license agreement" and is not consistent with stipulated technical specifications, Trai had said adding that it also did not comply with the service quality norms.

NSF pays homage to Sept 6, 1960 martyrs

DIMAPUR, SEPT 05 [NAGALANDPAGE]: Naga Students' Federation (NSF) today offered homage to the martyrs of September 6, 1960 incident where nine persons lost their lives in the hands of the Indian Armed Forces at Matikhrii village, Pochury region.

The NSF said on September 6, 1960, the Indian Armed Forces under the command of Lt Gen Thorat, 1st GOC, Eastern Command, a combined force of the 16th Sikh and Gorkha regiments came and surrounded Matikhrii village, at Pochury region and forcibly

arrested whole villagers. On the fateful day, nine persons were mercilessly tortured and killed, it said. On this day, the Federation joined the rest of the Naga people in offering homage to the departed souls "whose martyrdom has renewed our aspirations and our hopes of a brighter tomorrow with a renewed sense of direction and purpose".

The NSF said the Federation and the Nagas in general shall remain indebted and continue to honour the martyrs through the pages of history and form the fond memories in their hearts.

Jharkhand reports 1,774 new cases, 7 fresh fatalities

RANCHI, SEP 6 (PTI): Jharkhand's COVID-19 tally inched towards the 50,000-mark on Sunday with the detection of 1,774 new cases, while seven fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 462, a health bulletin said. The fresh infections have taken the state's caseload to 49,817, it said.

Ranchi district reported the highest number of new cases at 656, followed

by East Singhbhum (244), West Singhbhum (164) and Dhanbad (145), the bulletin said.

There are now 15,025 active COVID-19 cases in the state, while 34,330 people have been cured of the disease so far, it said.

The state has tested 39,777 samples for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, the bulletin added.

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Bopanna-Shapovalov enter quarterfinals of US Open

NEW YORK, SEP 6 (PTI): India veteran Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov stunned sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies in a hard-fought three-setter to advance to the quarterfinals of the US Open men's doubles event here. The unseeded Indo-Canadian pair on Saturday overcame a set deficit to beat the German duo 4-6 6-4 6-3 in a second round encounter that lasted one hour and 47 minutes.

Bopanna and Shapovalov will take on Dutch-Romanian combination of Jeal-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau in the quarterfinals.

Bopanna is the lone surviving Indian in the tournament after the exit of Sumit Nagal and Divij Sharan.

While Sumit Nagal bowed out in the second round after losing in straight sets to world no. 3 and second seed Dominic Thiem of Austria, Sharan and his Serbian partner Nikola Cicic were knocked out in the opening round of the men's doubles event by eighth seeds Nikola Mektic and Wesley Koolhof.

Nations League roundup: Mbappé gives France victory, Portugal hit four

LONDON,06 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: A slice of luck and a moment of individual brilliance from Kylian Mbappé gave France a gritty 1-0 win away to Sweden in their Nations League A Group 3 clash on Saturday.

Promoted to the competition's top tier after their group victory last year, the Swedes frustrated the world champions for the opening 40 minutes until Mbappé proved to be the difference. The 21-year-old striker got a fortunate bounce off a defender's legs as he danced through the right side of the Swedish defence before beating the goalkeeper Robin Olsen from a very tight angle at his near post.

With the clock ticking up towards 90 minutes, the Sweden winger Emil Forsberg forced a fine save from Hugo Lloris and Marcus Berg thumped a shot that was deflected wide as France held firm.

Anthony Martial, in the France squad for the first time since March 2018, came on in the second half for Mbappé and was brought down by Victor Lindelöf for a late penalty. However, Antoine Griezmann fired the spot-kick over the bar with the final kick of the game. On Tuesday, Sweden host Portugal while France take on Croatia in Paris.

Portugal, the Nations League title holders and European champions, made light of Cristiano Ronaldo's absence when they swept aside Croatia with a 4-1 home victory. Returning to action after a 10-month coronavirus interruption, Portugal hit the woodwork three times before João Cancelo fired them ahead four minutes before half-time in the League A Group 3 match.

WILLIAN FOTHERINGHAM

PARIS, 06 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: There were two surprises after Wednesday's finish when Adam Yates pulled on the yellow jersey of the Tour de France, which he wore into the first Pyrenean stage of the race on Saturday. The obvious shock was in the way that Yates was awarded the maillot jaune – the passive verb is important here – when Julian Alaphilippe and his Deceuninck-Quick-Step team made an unlikely unforced error that earned the French favourite a time penalty. More disconcerting perhaps was the fact it has taken the best part of seven professional seasons before either Adam or his twin brother, Simon, wore the most fabled jersey in cycling.

The group of Britons who have worn the maillot jaune is select, each among the greatest bike racers to have been produced by these shores. The list starts with Tom Simpson, who held it for a single day in 1962, but whose other honours include the world road title and a string of one-day Classics: Milan-San Remo, the Tour of Flanders, Bordeaux-Paris, Giro di Lombardia. Chris Boardman (1994, 1997, 1998) was an Olympic gold medallist in 1992 and his work at British Cycling and as the mayor of Manchester's cycling supremo make him arguably the most influential racer Britain has produced.

Sean Yates (1994) won a time-trial stage in the Tour de France in 1988, which remains the fastest without full aerodynamic kit; he is still a cult hero to British racers. Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome need little introduction: Wiggins is (together with Chris Hoy) the most



successful British Olympian, and the first UK Tour winner.

In Tour terms, Froome is just behind the greatest legends on four overall wins; only Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Induráin have worn the yellow jersey for more days. Mark Cavendish led the Tour for a single day in 2016, but has won more stages in the race than anyone bar Merckx.

So Adam Yates is in exalted company, but there is an implacable logic to the progress he and his twin brother have made since they joined the Australian team Orica-GreenEdge – now Mitchelton-Scott – at the end of 2013. Apart from moving onward and upward, the only pattern that can be discerned is that when one has taken a stride forward, his twin

has matched or exceeded him. Thus far, of the two, Simon has arguably been more successful, taking the overall title in the Vuelta a España in 2018 and two stage wins in the Tour de France last year.

Adam struck earlier, however. In his first professional season, he won the Tour of Turkey and a year later, he was the first Briton to win the San Sebastián Classic one-day race; the following year, he became the first Briton to win the white jersey for best under-25 in the Tour, taking fourth overall. Among British cyclists, only Froome, Wiggins and Geraint Thomas have finished higher up the standings. That year, Yates was involved in a bizarre crash when the inflatable “red spider” that marked the final kilometre deflated

just as he was passing underneath at the end of a mountain stage.

He also earned the nickname of “The Shadow” because of his ability to remain in the lead group in the mountains without making any flamboyant efforts. “I’ve done that all my life,” he told me. “Not just at the Tour – watch any other race and I’ll be close to the back looking at the group, working out who looks good. It’s the way I like to ride. It works for me.”

In 2016, he and his team manager, Matt White, were adamant that stage wins were the goal rather than the overall standings. This year, after two Tours when his challenge for the yellow jersey stalled disturbingly, the pair said exactly the same: stage wins would be the target. But as White explained, the two objectives

are far from mutually exclusive: if a rider is trying to sniff out stage-winning opportunities, that can help your cause in the overall battle. Had Yates not had the nous and the legs to go with Alaphilippe's attack on stage two in Nice – despite knowing he would struggle to out-sprint the Frenchman – he would not have ended up within reach of the yellow jersey.

Simon and Adam will go their separate ways at the end of this season. Simon remains with Mitchelton, while Adam joins Team Ineos, which can only induce a wry smile given that the British team were in a position to sign the pair in 2013 but did not want both of them, while Orica did.

Although the duo have always performed well together – they won the British Madison championship as juniors in 2010 – they have rarely ridden as a unit at Orica/Mitchelton, and racing as individuals has hardly been damaging for them.

In 2013, Simon rode for the Great Britain under-23 team, taking a gold medal at the world track championships. But Adam was not drawn to the track side of the GB programme and opted to compete in France for CC Étupes, with the support of Yorkshire cycling charity the Dave Rayner Foundation.

Yates's move to Ineos has prompted speculation that if Egan Bernal's drive for Tour victory this year falters, the team may not be exactly displeased to see him challenge for the overall standings.

More concretely, if the Lancastrian gets close to overall victory in the Tour this year and Thomas has a poor Giro d'Italia, the Welshman may find Ineos looking an increasingly crowded place to be.

Fran Kirby: 'The cardiologist said if I didn't slow down, I wouldn't play again'

LOUISE TAYLOR

LONDON, 06 SEPT [THEGUARDIAN]: Fran Kirby knew something was wrong, very wrong, when she could no longer climb her stairs without resting halfway. The Chelsea and England No 10 – once described as her country's Mini Messi – was also suffering stabbing chest pains, breathlessness, nausea and dizziness. Medics feared her career could be over.

“I was extremely vulnerable and very poorly for a long time,” says Kirby, looking a picture of health while addressing a computer screen in the first-floor bedroom she no longer struggles to reach.

The creator whose attacking promptings are expected to provide plenty of goals for Chelsea's new £300,000 signing, Pernille Harder, had contracted a virus that attacked her heart. It was last November and Europe remained blissfully unaware of Covid-19 when a different infection took an unfortunate shine to Kirby, causing her to develop pericarditis.

Possibly the only good news was that, in Emma Hayes, Kirby had a manager prepared to go the extra mile to support a 27-year-old whose teenage years were scarred by severe depression, occasioned by her mother's death. “When I wasn't feeling great I could just go into Emma's office, cry in front of her and not feel embarrassed,” says Kirby.

“Emma's been incredible. She's been my rock; the person who made sure I was protected from



everything. I had no idea what the illness was but she was the one questioning the doctor all the time, asking: ‘Can we try this, can we try that?’ It meant so much. I'm never going to be not grateful for what people have done for me these last few months – Chelsea's doctor was incredible and my teammates were amazing – but Emma's top of that list: 100%.”

As Kirby jokes about her long hair and reveals she has not had it trimmed once since the European Championship in the Netherlands in 2017, it is hard to credit that concern about her condition was such that Chelsea kept the pericarditis diagnosis secret until February. Yet as soon as she started going outside again, the pandemic struck. “I'd had three months prep for it,” she says. “I'd been in self-isolation long before everyone went into lockdown.”

Now, finally, the Women's Super League is

set to resume with Chelsea – awarded the title ahead of Manchester City on a points per game basis following last season's curtailment in March – kicking off at Manchester United today.

“It'll be good to get the buzz back,” says Kirby. “The last nine months have made me realise how precious these moments, these games, are. And how you should never take things for granted. I'm really excited. I've found a new energy for everything. Most importantly, I've found myself again. I've learned a lot about myself and the people around me and how important they are. It's been a tough journey but it's definitely shaped me into who I am now.”

Kirby – dubbed “our Mini Messi” by the-then England manager Mark Sampson at the 2015 World Cup in Canada and an international whom the outgoing England coach, Phil Neville, has said he would not swap

for Brazil's much-lauded Marta – believes she has emerged a much-improved player. “If I'm honest, I feel better now,” she says. “I've come back in really good shape and I've been getting some really positive feedback from the coaches and the girls. They're saying it's like having a new signing.

“For the past few months I've been entirely focused on how I can improve. Although there was a period when the cardiologist told me that, if I didn't slow down, the illness could become chronic and I wouldn't be able to play again, I knew I was going to get over it. Getting a starting place here now is super-competitive but I like to push myself, to be a winner.”

Given Chelsea's formidable squad, such a mindset seems imperative. “There's going to be a lot of players, full internationals, on the bench who won't be happy,”

says Kirby, who has an ambitious, between-the-lines playing style. “It's a very, very competitive atmosphere but, as a squad, we're good at dealing with happiness and disappointment. No one's shouting or bragging because they're starting or moping around because they're not. Of course you have to focus on yourself as an individual but, as a team, we're very good at taking time out to speak to other players, making sure they're OK. To win things, you need that balance.”

Last winter Kirby's teammates proved critical to the maintenance of her emotional equilibrium. “I wasn't able to get out the house much at first,” she says. “I was sofa-ridden for a couple of months but the girls always made an effort to come round, even if I wasn't in the shape for conversation. That meant everything. Now I want to help them win every game, every trophy.”

California wildfire traps campers in national forest

SHAVER LAKE, CALIF. (AP): Three fast-spreading California wildfires sent people fleeing Saturday, with one trapping campers at a reservoir in the Sierra National Forest, as a brutal heat wave pushed temperatures into triple digits in many parts of state.

The wildfire burning near Shaver Lake exploded to 56 square miles (145 square kilometers), jumped a river and compromised the only road into the Mammoth Pool Campground, national forest spokesman Dan Tune said. At least 2,000 structures were threatened in the area about 290 miles (467 kilometers) north of Los Angeles, where temperatures in the city's San Fernando Valley reached 117 degrees (47 degrees Celsius).

The Fresno Fire Department tweeted late Saturday night that 63 people were rescued from the campground by military helicopters and that two of them were severely injured, 10 were moderately injured and 51 others had minor or no injuries.

"Aircraft are returning to continue rescue operations," the agency wrote. "Unknown how many more."

The Madera County Sheriff's Department said in a tweet earlier Saturday that about 150 people were at the campground's boat launch, and 10 of them were injured. "All are safe at this time," the department tweeted.

Officers also were



evacuating Beasore Meadows, a large ranch in the Sierra National Forest, on Saturday night, the department tweeted.

Agencies were coordinating an aircraft rescue for crews to safely evacuate them, The Fresno Bee reported.

Tune said the campers were told to shelter in place until fire crews, aided by water-dropping aircraft, could gain access to the site. Tune said he didn't know how close the fire was burning to the campsite.

"All our resources are working to make that escape route nice and safe for them," he said.

The lake 35 miles (56 kilometers) northeast of Fresno is surrounded by thick pine forests and is a popular destination for boating and fishing. Bone-dry conditions and the hot weather fueled the flames.

"Once the fire gets going, it creates its own weather, adding wind to increase the

spread," Tune said.

The fire broke out Friday evening. Crews worked through the night, but by Saturday morning authorities issued evacuation orders for lakeside communities and urged people seeking relief from the Labor Day weekend heat to stay away from the popular lake.

"Adjust your Labor Day weekend plans. Access to Shaver Lake is completely closed to the public due to the #Creek-Fire," the Fresno County sheriff's office tweeted after announcing evacuation orders for campsites and communities by the lake.

The California Highway Patrol shut State Route 168 to only allow access for emergency responders and evacuees.

In Southern California, a fire in the foothills of Yucaipa east of Los Angeles prompted evacuation orders for eastern portions of the city of 54,000 along with sever-

al communities, including Oak Glen, Mountain Home Village and Forest Falls. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, also known as Cal Fire, said the fire scorched at least 1.5 square miles (3.9 square kilometers) and was burning at a "moderate to dangerous" rate of spread.

A portion of the San Geronio Wilderness was closed, and hikers were urged to leave.

In eastern San Diego County, fire officials warned a fire near Alpine was burning at a "dangerous rate of speed" after spreading to 400 acres (0.6 square miles) within an hour. A small community south of Alpine in the Cleveland National Forest was ordered to evacuate.

Cal Fire said nearly 12,500 firefighters were battling 22 major fires in the state. Despite the heat, firefighters were able to contain two major fires in coastal Monterey

County.

California has seen 900 wildfires since Aug. 15, many of them started by an intense series of thousands of lightning strikes. The blazes have burned more than 1.5 million acres (2,343 square miles). There have been eight fire deaths and nearly 3,300 structures destroyed.

The heat wave was expected to spread triple-digit temperatures over much of California through Monday. Officials urged people to conserve electricity to ease the strain on the state's power grid.

Pacific Gas & Electric, the state's largest utility, warned customers Saturday that it might cut power starting Tuesday because of expected high winds and heat that could create even greater fire danger. Some of the state's largest and deadliest fires in recent years have been sparked by downed power lines and other utility equipment.

Germany ups pressure on Russia in Navalny poisoning probe

BERLIN (AP): Germany on Sunday increased pressure on Russia over the poisoning of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, warning that a lack of support by Moscow in the investigation could "force" Germany to rethink the fate of a German-Russian gas pipeline project.

"I hope the Russians won't force us to change our position regarding the Nord Stream 2" pipeline being built under the Baltic Sea, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told weekly Bild am Sonntag.

Maas also said that "if there won't be a contribution from the Russian side regarding the investigation in the coming days, we will have to consult with our partners."

He did not exclude possible punishments against Russia, telling the newspaper that "if we think about sanctions, they should be pinpointed effectively."

However, Maas also admitted that halting the building of the nearly completed gas pipeline would harm German and European companies.

"Whoever demands this has to be aware of the consequences," he said. "More than 100 companies from 12 European countries are involved (in the construction), about half of them from Germany."

The German government has come under growing pressure to use the joint German-Russian pipeline project as lever-

age in getting Russia to provide answers on Navalny. The Nord Stream 2 project would deliver Russian gas directly to Germany under the Baltic Sea when completed, bypassing Ukraine.

Navalny, a Kremlin critic and corruption investigator, fell ill on a flight to Moscow last month and was taken to a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk. He has been in an induced coma in a Berlin hospital since he was flown to Germany for treatment on August 22.

German authorities have said that tests showed that he had been poisoned with a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok group. British authorities previously identified the nerve agent, developed during the Soviet era, as the poison used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in England in 2018.

"We have high expectations from the Russians to bring light into this severe crime," Maas said. "If they have nothing to do with this attack then it's in their own interest to put the facts on the table."

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman has brushed off allegations that the Kremlin was involved in poisoning Navalny and said last week that Germany hadn't provided Moscow with any evidence about the politician's condition.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called

Navalny's poisoning an attempted murder that aimed to silence one of Putin's fiercest critics and called for a full investigation.

Merkel personally offered the country's assistance in treating Navalny. He's now in stable condition at Berlin's Charite hospital, but doctors expect a long recovery and haven't ruled out that the 44-year-old could face long-term effects to his health.

Merkel has previously rejected the idea that the Navalny case should be linked to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

The U.S. has long opposed the project, which has been increasingly a source of friction between Berlin and Washington. In early August, three Republican senators threatened sanctions against an operator of a Baltic Sea port located in Merkel's parliamentary constituency over its part in Nord Stream 2. The Mukran port is a key staging post for ships involved in its construction.

The U.S. argues the project will endanger European security by making Germany overly dependent on Russian gas. It's also opposed by Ukraine and Poland, which will be bypassed by the pipeline under the Baltic, as well as some other European nations.

In addition to the security concerns, the U.S. also wants to sell more of its own liquefied natural gas, or LNG, to Europe.

Hong Kong police arrest 90 at protests over election delay

HONG KONG (AP): At least 90 people were arrested Sunday at protests against the government's decision to postpone elections for Hong Kong's legislature, police and a news report said.

The elections were to have taken place Sunday but Chief Executive Carrie Lam on July 31 postponed them for one year. Lam blamed an upsurge in coronavirus cases, but critics said her government worried the opposition would gain seats if voting went ahead on schedule. Anti-government protests have been held in Hong

Kong almost every weekend since June 2019. They erupted over a proposed extradition law and spread to include demands for greater democracy and criticism of Beijing's efforts to tighten control over the former British colony.

On Sunday, one woman was arrested in the Kowloon district of Yau Ma Tei on charges of assault and spreading pro-independence slogans, the police department said on its Facebook page. It said such slogans are illegal under the newly enacted National Security Act.

The ruling Commu-

nist Party's decision to impose the law in May prompted complaints it was violating the autonomy promised to the territory when it was returned to China in 1997. Washington withdrew trading privileges granted to Hong Kong and other governments suspended extradition and other agreements on the grounds that the territory of 7 million people is no longer autonomous.

Also Sunday, police fired pepper balls at protesters in Kowloon's Mong Kok neighborhood, the South China Morning Post newspaper reported.

Seeking unity, NKorea's Kim vows to overcome typhoon damage

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has visited typhoon-stricken areas in the northeast, fired a top official there and promised to send 12,000 workers from Pyongyang for recovery efforts, state media reported Sunday.

It's the latest in a series of high-profile visits by Kim and his deputies to areas hit by natural disasters in recent weeks. Some experts say Kim likely attempted to project an image of a leader looking after people's livelihoods as he seeks to bolster internal unity in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and U.S.-led sanctions.

The Korean Central News Agency said that Kim on Saturday visited South Hamgyong province, which was hit by Typhoon Maysak last week. It said Kim was briefed that the typhoon destroyed more than 1,000 houses and inundated public buildings and farmland in the coastal areas of South Hamgyong as well as nearby North Hamgyong province.

KCNA didn't report any deaths or injuries in the two provinces. But the country's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said Saturday that

"dozens of casualties" were reported in Kangwon province, south of the Hamgyong provinces, and that officials in Kangwon would be "gravely punished" for failing to evacuate residents to safety.

Kim also convened a high-level policy meeting there, where he "underscored the need to make the recovery campaign from damage an important political work and an occasion of consolidating the single-mined unity," KCNA said.

Kim said authorities must issue "a general mobilization order" to ensure the swift supply of materials for rehabilitation work and urged members of the ruling Workers' Party in Pyongyang, the capital, to take the lead.

In a separate open letter to party members in Pyongyang, Kim said the 12,000-strong divisions of the party "elite" will be sent to aid recovery in South and North Hamgyong provinces.

KCNA said Kim also dismissed Kim Song Il, chairman of the South Hamgyong Provincial Committee of the Workers' Party.

Kim needs greater public support to deal

with worsening economic pain caused by U.S.-led sanctions imposed over his nuclear program, and the coronavirus pandemic that had forced him to seal off his country's border with China, its biggest trading partner and economic pipeline.

North Korea has insisted it hasn't found any virus case, a claim widely disputed by foreign analysts. Despite the pandemic, observers say Kim will likely hold a military parade and other national events next month to celebrate the 75th founding anniversary of the Workers' Party in an effort to boost his family's rule.

Late last month, Kim visited a western coastal area hit by another typhoon and expressed relief that the damage wasn't significant. Earlier in August, he visited other places where days of torrential rains flooded hundreds of houses and vast areas of agricultural land.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said after Kim's early August trip that it was rare for him to visit a flood-stricken site, saying the last time he did so was in September 2015.

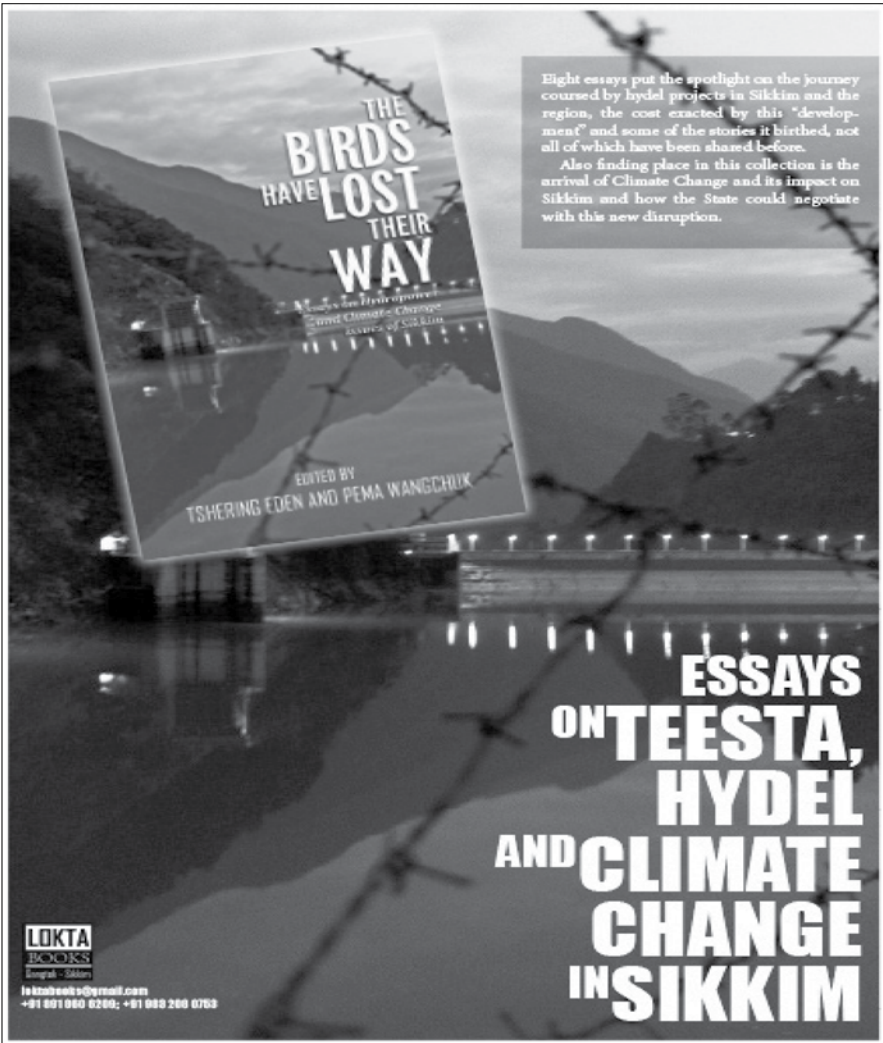
"Kim Jong-un's more

frequent visits to the provinces are intended to show a 'leader of the people' response to natural disasters," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "But this is also blunt recognition that the elite in Pyongyang are not self-reliant. Kim's increased attention to farmers reflects a worrying food supply situation in the country."

Recently, Kim has displayed unusual candor in addressing flawed systems and policies.

Kim said during Saturday's meeting that the overall anti-disaster condition in coastal areas is "poor" and that sea dikes were "not properly built." Earlier this year, he said his country lacks modern medical facilities, and also acknowledged his economic development plans hadn't been successful.

KCNA said Sunday that North Korea is bracing for another typhoon and that authorities were taking steps to prevent possible casualties and damage. South Korea's weather agency said Typhoon Haishen was expected to skirt the Korean Peninsula's east coast on Monday with heavy rains and strong winds.



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LIGHT LUNCH! The model, Kendall Jenner is spotted leaving Nobu in Malibu after grabbing lunch with sister Kylie and a group of friends.

Chloe Zhao says 'Eternals' is influence by her childhood

LOS ANGELES, SEP 6 (PTI): Filmmaker Chloe Zhao says with her upcoming Marvel tentpole "Eternals", she aims to push for marriage between "East and West".

Zhao, who is the first Asian to tackle a superhero film for Marvel Studio, said the movie is influenced by her own childhood experiences of growing up in China.

"I have such deep, strong, manga roots. I brought some of that into 'Eternals'. And I look forward to pushing more of that marriage of East and West," the filmmaker told The Hollywood Reporter.

Zhao, who made a name for herself with her 2017 indie hit "The Rider", said she is making the superhero feature from the perspective of a fan.

"How much further and bigger can we go after [Avengers:] 'Endgame'? Because I'm not just making the film as a director. I'm making the film as a fan," she said.

The story of "Eternals" is set millions of years ago when the cosmic beings known as the Celestials genetically experimented on humans to create super-powered individuals

known as the Eternals along with the villainous Deviants. The film will feature Richard Madden, Salma Hayek, Angelina Jolie, Brian Tyree Henry, Gemma Chan, Kumail Nanjiani and Kit Harington. About the star-studded cast, Zhao said it reflects the "world we live in".

"But also I wanted to put a cast together



that feels like a group of misfits. I didn't want the jocks. I want you to walk away at the end of the movie not thinking, 'This person is this ethnicity, that person is that nationality.'

"No. I want you to walk away thinking, 'That's a family.' You don't think about what they represent. You see them as individuals," she added. "Eternals" is scheduled to be released worldwide in February 2021.

"I Will Be Under Home Quarantine" Arjun Kapoor Tests Positive For COVID-19

Arjun Kapoor has tested positive for COVID-19, the actor announced in an Instagram post on Sunday. Sharing an update about his health, Arjun Kapoor wrote that he is "feeling okay" and is "asymptomatic." The actor also revealed that he has "isolated" himself at his home and will be "under home quarantine" till his recovery. In a note, Arjun wrote: "It is my duty to inform all of you that I have tested positive for coronavirus. I am feeling ok and I'm asymptomatic. I have isolated myself at home under the advice of doctors and authorities and will be under home quarantine. I thank you all in advance for your support and I will keep you all updated about my health in the days to come."

"These are extraordinary and unprecedented times and I have faith that all of humanity will overcome this virus. Much love, Arjun," he added. Arjun Kapoor is the son of film producer Boney Kapoor and Mona Shourie. Earlier in May, a member of Boney Kapoor's domestic staff tested positive for COVID-19. The filmmaker issued a statement, an excerpt of which read: "My children, our other staff at home and I,

all are fine and none of us are showing any symptoms. In fact, we haven't left

will share screen space with Parineeti Chopra, and Bhoot Police.



our home since the lockdown started." Arjun Kapoor made his Bollywood debut with the 2012 film Ishaqzaade and since then has worked in films such as 2 States, Gunday, Finding Fanny, Half Girlfriend and Mubarakam among others. The actor was last seen in the period drama Panipat along with Kriti Sanon and Sanjay Dutt. His upcoming films are Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar, in which he



Jeff Goldblum says his Jurassic Park' character now more relevant than ever

LOS ANGELES, SEP 6 (PTI): Actor Jeff Goldblum believes his role of Dr Ian Malcolm from Jurassic Park series is completely relevant in today's times when ethical use of science is a major talking point.

In an interview with People TV's Couch Surfing, the 67-year-old actor, who is reprising his character in the upcoming movie in the franchise Jurassic World: Dominion, reflected on how Dr Malcolm was ahead of his times.

As it happens, there are things that my character talks about, has always talked about, Goldblum said.

The fragility of our species and the global cooperation that's needed, and the foundation in science that's needed, and the ethical use of science that's needed to unite us in trust and connectiveness as a family. And to reach our potential and do right by ourselves and this glorious planet. All of those

things are now more relevant than ever," he added.

The actor is currently in London filming the sixth installment in the Jurassic franchise, originally developed by Steven Spielberg, and revealed that his character's ethos will be maintained in the Colin Trevorrow-directed movie.

Already in this plot, there are things we're finding are already apropos," he added. Production on the film, which was halted at Pinewood Studios in the UK in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resumed in July.

"Dominion" will also see actor Chris Pratt reprise his role as dinosaur wrangler Owen Grady and Bryce Dallas Howard as Claire Dearing alongside Justice Smith, and BD Wong, with other original "Jurassic" stars Sam Neill and Laura Dern returning as Dr Alan Grant and Dr Ellie Sattler.

The film is scheduled to be released on June 11, 2021.

Ciera Payton to play Wendy Williams in biopic

LOS ANGELES, SEP 6 (PTI): Actor Ceira Payton has been roped in to play television host Wendy Williams in an upcoming biopic on her life set at Lifetime. According to Deadline, P-Valley actor Morocco Omari will star as Williams' ex-husband Kevin hunter. The Chi helmer Darren Grant is set to direct the film and production is scheduled to start this month.

The biopic, scheduled to premiere next year, will be executive produced by Williams as well as Will Packer and Sheila Ducksworth.

The film will be paired with a feature-length documentary on Williams.

It will focus on the highs and lows Williams has experienced in her career, from her upstart days in urban radio to the success of her talk show. The project will be produced by Front Street for Lifetime.

Rihanna 'healing quickly' following electric scooter accident

LOS ANGELES, SEP 6 (PTI): Pop star Rihanna is on the mend after she recently met with an accident on an electric scooter.

On Friday, the 32-year-old singer was photographed with bruises on her face when she was spotted in a car near a restaurant here.

"Rihanna is completely fine now but flipped over on an electric scooter last week and bruised her forehead and face," a representative for the singer said in a statement to People magazine.

"Luckily there were no major injuries and she is healing quickly," they added.

On the work front, Rihanna has been teasing new music for a while now.

Her last album 'Anti' was released in 2016.

DeMarius Copes joins 'Dear Evan Hansen' film adaptation



LOS ANGELES, SEP 6 (PTI): Actor DeMarius Copes is the latest addition to the cast of Universal's feature film adaptation of the Broadway hit "Dear Evan Hansen".

The story revolves around Hansen, a high school student with social anxiety. He unintentionally gets caught up in a lie after the family of a classmate who committed suicide mistakes one of his letters for their son's suicide note.

Ben Platt, who played the title part in the stage musical, will reprise the role on screen, and "Unbelievable" star Kaitlyn Dever will essay his love interest, Zoe Murphy.

According to Deadline, in his feature debut, Copes will play Oliver, one of Zoe's friends.

Copes is best known for starring in Broadway version of hit

teen comedy "Mean Girls" and is currently a member of the touring Philip Company production of "Hamilton", the award-winning play by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Also part of "Dear Evan Hansen" cast are Julianne Moore, Amy Adams, Danny Pino, Amandla Stenberg, Colton Ryan and Nik Dodani.

Stephen Chbosky is attached to direct the movie, while Steve Levenson, who wrote the book for the Broadway musical, is penning the script.

Music and lyrics are by Academy Award-winning duo Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, whose credits include musicals "La La Land" and "The Greatest Showman".

Pasek and Paul are also on board as executive producers.

Marc Platt and Adam Siegel will also produce the film.

ARIES:

We, as human beings, love our stories. Stories that often portray us as the victim. Be aware of how and where this narrative is playing out in your life, and all the ways in which you are blaming your circumstances for the lack of security in your life. In moments of silence you could discover that the root of this issue lies in your childhood. Word for the wise: healing your inner child could help you clear the baggage of past karma.

Tip: Work through your inner child traumas.

TAURUS:

You're leaving the past and all the turmoil associated with it behind. This is a time of transition, Taurus. Trust that you're being led towards calmer shores. But before you move to the next level, you're being asked to slow down, breathe, and reassess the lessons you've been asked to pay attention to over the last few months. Remember to be gentle with yourself as you do. Decluttering your schedule will help you make space for the rest and rejuvenation you need right now.

Tip: Take a break.

GEMINI:

You know what they say, Gemini! Life has other plans. You'll find that this theme is playing out beautifully in your story. Watch how Destiny intervenes on your behalf and opens the gates that were once tightly secured. You're also likely to attract serendipitous encounters and receive flashes of inspiration as you go about your day. Pay attention to what your helpers from the unseen realms are urging you to look at.

Tip: Destiny is about to pull some major strings on your behalf.

CANCER:

While free will plays an important role in determining the course of our lives, there are certain things that are written in the stars. You're stepping into a beautiful period of your life, Cancer. A time when Destiny will reveal its grand plan to you and fulfill your many dreams and desires. Notice the people you're crossing paths with as well. They are helping you form a bridge between where you are and where you want to be.

Tip: Destiny is about to intervene.

LEO:

Recognising what isn't good for you is just as important as recognising what is. Today, you're finding the strength and courage needed to break a vicious cycle. Stepping into the unknown can be intimidating. But, the cards want you to know the journey you've undertaken will ultimately liberate you. This is also a time of closure. A time of releasing the old stories "and" relationships that have been weighing you down. What you will realise in the process: chaos and conflict have served as a catalyst for positive change.

Tip: Release the old story now.

VIRGO:

Letting go is a big theme this weekend. Like the lions, you're being asked to recognise that which is no longer serving you, the old stories that have served their purpose in your existence. Cut the cords where you need to and do so with loving awareness. Remember, you're not alone, Virgo. You never were. You ancestors are coming through strongly at this point to provide you with the help and support you need in this realm.

Tip: Recognise what is no longer in alignment with your truth.

LIBRA:

The past few weeks have felt like a wild, wild ride through the multiverse. It's been a time of massive revelations and breaking out of the old. You need a break, Libra, and this weekend is bringing with itself the opportunity to put your feet up. If you've been at odds with somebody lately, you'll find the courage and strength required to put a balm on the old wounds and play peacemaker.

Tip: It's time to put your feet up.

SCORPIO:

There's a deep inner knowing within you, one that's helping you recognise that things are happening for you, not to you. You attracted certain experiences into your life in order to break past limiting patterns and meet your true power. There's no going back from here, Scorpio. This weekend finds you stripping away the false layers, amping up the self-love quotient, and embracing the parts of you that you have rejected. Watch how the doors that were once closed will open for you to reaffirm that you're on the right path!

Tip: Things are happening for you.

SAGITTARIUS:

There are no shortcuts, Sagittarius. No magic formula that will take you to the desired destination. The cards are reminding you that it's important to keep the long term vision in mind as you commit to the hustle. You've got this! Your interpersonal relationships are also taking centre stage. You're re-examining the bonds that have been weakened with the passage of time and tide and actively working towards making amends. Remember, healing is not an overnight process. So be patient with the other person.

Tip: It's time to mend certain relationships.

CAPRICORN:

They say your vibe attracts your tribe—a cliché that holds true for where you are, Capricorn. You are surrounded by all the people you love. People who are holding space for you to reach your highest potential. A prayer of gratitude is in order. For some of you, reuniting with your soulmate could be a major theme. The Universe always knows what's good for us so trust the doors that are opening up for you in this moment.

Tip: Reuniting with your soulmate may be on the cards.

AQUARIUS:

Sometimes we try every trick in the book, but the doors that are locked refuse to open. And then, there are times when major pathways open up for us as if by divine intervention. If the cosmic cues are anything to go by, the latter will play out beautifully in your existence. All you need to do is sit back, relax, and allow your guides to lead you in the right direction. You know what's right for you, Aquarius. Let go of the need to discuss it with other people.

Tip: You're about to witness major miracles.

PISCES:

Self-care may sound counterintuitive at a time like this, self-indulgent even. But, the secret of the Universe is that everything works inside out. In other words, it's only by showing up for yourself fully that you are able to hold space for others and fulfill your sacred purpose in this world. Today, despite what your conscious mind is telling you to do, take time off to nurture yourself. Start by asking yourself the question, "What can I do to make myself feel good?"

Tip: Everything works inside out, Pisces.