



**ED SHEERAN AND WIFE  
CHERRY ANNOUNCE BIRTH  
OF DAUGHTER LYRA**  
*pg 08*

**TAKING POT-SHOTS  
AT CORRUPTION**  
*pg 04*

**20 NEW SEXUAL ASSAULT  
COUNTS FILED AGAINST  
ADULT FILM ACTOR**  
*pg 0 8*



# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## With 18 fresh cases and 12 discharges, Sikkim's active COVID count rises to 429

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

Sikkim's total tally of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 reached 1,670 with reports of 18 new cases in the 24 hours ending 8 AM Tuesday. What also got highlighted yet again is the problem posed by carelessly provided information while being screened for COVID. Today, as has already happened twice in the recent past, yet another person could not be traced on the phone number provided after testing positive for COVID-19.

There are now 429 active cases of COVID-19 in the State. Also today, with 12 more patients making full recoveries, the total number of cured & discharged COVID-19 patients stands at 1,237.

Among those discharged are two from the isolation ward at STNM Hospital and 10 from the COVID Care Centre at Himalayan Pharmacy Institute, Majhitara. In the daily health bulletin

released on Tuesday evening, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam G Bhutia informed that the 16 out of 190 samples tested by RT-PCR at the VRD Lab in STNM Hospital on Monday returned positive for COVID-19, while two samples tested positive in rapid antigen testing of 82 samples.

He added that all 16 samples screened via TrueNat were found negative for COVID-19.

In the break-up of 16 new cases of COVID-19 found in RT-PCR testing, he informed that one person from below Greendale School, Tadong [Gangtok], one from Greendale School Road, one from Gairi Gaon, Tadong [Gangtok], one from below Tamang Gumpa in Upper Sichey [Gangtok] and one from Lingding Road tested positive.

He added that one person from Rangpo Mandi Bazaar and one from Upper Rangpo, one from a paid quarantine facility, four from Aho, one



from DPH Colony, Saramsa, one from Shyari in Gangtok and one from SIRD South Sikkim were also found positive in RT-PCR testing.

He went on to inform that authorities have not been able to make contact with a 50-year-old from Sichey, who had tested positive in RT-PCR screening. The phone number provided by him was not getting

through. The State IEC Officer has appealed to the person, if he learns of this news, or others who might know him to immediately contact officials.

It is also informed that an army personnel returnee from Shipgyar tested positive in rapid antigen testing at Rangpo screening centre and another person from Jorethang was also found positive in RAT.

## New SOP for entry to Sikkim, including short duration visits

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

Health Department has Issued Standard Operating Procedure for entry/return to Sikkim from 01 Sept onwards. As per the new SOP, those who are permanent residents of Sikkim or have a house in Sikkim or are residing here since two years will be allowed to enter the state through online registration. They will have to undergo 11 days quarantine.

Workers/labourers will be allowed entry on the request of employer/company/contractor/business proprietor who will be responsible for

quarantine, testing and all other expenses for treatment in case the worker tests positive for COVID-19.

Those wishing to enter Sikkim for a short visit not exceeding 7 days will be allowed entry only through Rangpo check post through online registration.

Such visitors will be sent to designated paid quarantine facility and tested via RTPCR on payment at STNM Hospital flu clinic within 48 hours of arrival. In case of negative report, they will be allowed to relocate to a hotel/guest house/ any other accommodation of their choice.

In case of positive report, they will be treated as per standing SOP of Health Department at their own expense. The charge for paid quarantine facility is fixed at Rs 2000 per room or Rs 1000 per individual on sharing basis.

The charges for RTPCR test is Rs 3500 per person, which will be deposited at the paid quarantine facility along with the quarantine charges. Such persons can bring self-driven vehicle to the state. They can also bring hired vehicle provided the vehicle returns the same day.

If a person has a valid negative RTPCR test or Truenat report conducted within last 3 days prior to his or her arrival to the state, they will not have to be tested in the state.

Rapid Antigen Test at Rangpo and Melli will be discontinued from 01 Sept 2020 as the test is unreliable and the person will have to undergo quarantine regardless of whether he/she tests negative or positive.

There will be no testing for returnees after completion of quarantine and testing will only be done on development of symptoms from seventh day onwards.

## Federalism during the time of COVID-19, A legal analysis

**KAZI SANGAY THUPDEN**

In recent times, there has been widespread discourse amongst the citizens of our State on the letter dated 22.08.2020 issued by the Home Secretary, Govt of India. The said letter refers to the Guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (hereinafter DMA) dated 29.07.2020 namely para 5 of UNLOCK-3 and directs the Chief Secretaries of various State to abide by the said Guidelines, specifically to ensure that no restrictions are imposed on inter-state and intra-state movement of person and goods. The letter contained a warning that disobedience on removal of such restrictions were violative of the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (hereinafter MHA) under the DMA.

The pertinent question that now arises in the minds of most people are, would our state abide by the said letter or continue the said restrictions?

The present article seeks to deliberate on this legal predicament faced by our State, purely in terms of the constitutional aspect of the conundrum, with the object that the average reader may acquire some familiarity on the legality of the said issue. A word of warning, the present issue and matters related to the Constitution are extremely vast, therefore I will in all earnestness endeavour to keep

the said discussion as simple as possible, and touch a myriad of related issues in a brief manner.

Separation of Powers under the Constitution

At the outset, it is pertinent to note that the Constitution of India, envisages a dual polity (cooperative federalism) with a strong centralizing tendency i.e. There exists a clear demarcation of power between the Centre and the States, with the Centre able to exercise its power on the states only in certain circumstances, in a manner provided for under the Constitution. In the words of Dr BR Ambedkar the Constitution is 'a Federal

Constitution in as much as it establishes what may be called a Dual Polity (which) ... will consist of Union at the Centre and the States at the periphery each endowed with Sovereign Powers to be exercised in the field assigned to them respectively by the Constitution. Yet the Constitution avoided the tight mold of federalism in which the American Constitution was caught and could be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances.'

More specifically, Article 246 read with the 7th Schedule of the Constitution distributes law making power between the Centre and State

into 3 lists namely List 1 (Union List), List 2 (State List) and List 3 (Concurrent List). Thus, subjects matters under list 1 would fall squarely within the exclusive competence of the Parliament i.e. Centre, subject matters falling under List 2 would be within the exclusive competence of the State, and finally for subject matters falling under List 3 the law making powers are shared between the Centre and the State, subject to the principles of repugnancy.

The purpose of undertaking the exercise of analyzing this separation of powers is primarily to ascertain the legislative competence of the directions in

the letter dated 22.08.2020/ Para 5 of the Unlock-3 guidelines dated 29.07.2020 viz. removal of restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement of person and goods. It is interesting to note that the relevant subject matters in the 3 lists that touch upon the said issue are as under - **List 1**

1. Item 23- Highways declared by or under law made by Parliament to be national highways.  
2. Item 42 - Inter-State trade and commerce.  
3. Item 81- Inter-State migration; inter-State quarantine

**List 2**

1. Item 1- Public order  
2. item 2 - Public health  
3. Item 26 - Trade and commerce

within the state

Therefore, it would be plausible to conclude that the provisions in the letter dated 22.08.2020/ Para 5 of the Unlock-3 guidelines dated 29.07.2020, directing removal of restriction on inter-state movement of goods and person would be a valid direction, and the Centre has the competence to issue such directions. Furthermore, the Centre is constitutionally empowered to issue directions to the States, for the same, under Article 257 of the Constitution.

Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Guidelines there under

The pertinent question that now stands is, can the centre issue statutory directions such as Unlock-3 to the States, in matters exclusively within the domain of the State? In order to ascertain the said issue we need to begin by examining the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The said act provides an active role for the Centre in connection with Coordinating Advising and Management during periods of Disaster. This can also be observed in the Object of the act which states as follows-

'An Act to provide for the effective management of disasters and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.'

**Turn Page 3**

## COVID-19 tally in India climbs to 36,91,166

**NEW DELHI, SEP 1 (PTI)** With 69,921 people testing positive for coronavirus infection, India's COVID-19 tally mounted to 36,91,166, while recoveries surged to 28,39,882 on Tuesday pushing the recovery rate to 76.94 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The death toll climbed to 65,288 with 819 new fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.77 per cent.

There are 7,85,996 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 21.29 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 and went past 30 lakh on August 23.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 4,33,24,834 samples have been tested up to August 31 with 10,16,920 samples being tested on Monday.

Of the 819 fresh deaths, 184 are from Maharashtra, 113 from Karnataka, 91 from Tamil Nadu, 85 from Andhra Pradesh, 63 from Uttar Pradesh, 52 from West Bengal, 49 from Punjab, 20 from Madhya Pradesh, 18 from Delhi, 14 from Gujarat, 13 from Rajasthan, 12 from Uttarakhand, 10 each from Assam, Odisha and Tripura.

Nine fatalities each have been reported from Goa, Telangana and Jammu and Kashmir, eight from Chhattisgarh, seven each from Haryana,

Jharkhand, Kerala and Puducherry, four each from Bihar and Chandigarh, three from Himachal Pradesh while Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered one fatality.

Of the total 65,228 deaths, Maharashtra has reported the maximum at 24,583 followed by 7,322 in Tamil Nadu, 5,702 in Karnataka, 4,444 in Delhi, 3,969 in Andhra Pradesh, 3,486 in Uttar Pradesh, 3,228 in West Bengal, 3,020 in Gujarat, and 1,453 in Punjab.

So far, 1,394 people have died of COVID-19 in Madhya Pradesh, 1,056 in Rajasthan, 836 in Telangana, 703 in Jammu and Kashmir, 689 in Haryana, 582 in Bihar, 492 in Odisha, 417 in Jharkhand, 306 in Assam, 294 in Kerala, 277 in Chhattisgarh and 269 in Uttarakhand.

Puducherry has registered 228 fatalities, Goa 192, Tripura 113, Chandigarh 56, Andaman and Nicobar Islands 46, Himachal Pradesh 38, Ladakh 34, Manipur 28, Meghalaya 10, Nagaland nine, Arunachal Pradesh seven, Sikkim three and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu two.

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

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

## Fact Finding Committee on incidents of medical negligence submits report

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

The three-member Fact Finding Committee constituted to examine incidents of alleged medical negligence in Central Referral Hospital, Tadong and STNM Hospital, submitted its report to the Chief

Secretary last Friday. Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, said that the Committee has submitted both reports [on one incident in CRH Tadong and one in STNM Hospital] and its recommendations have been placed before the government. On 24 August, the

State Government had constituted the three-member committee headed by senior bureaucrats of the State; Principal Secretary, Health Department, K Srinivasulu, Secretary Urban Development & Housing Department, Sarala Rai and Secretary Coordination for COVID-19, Rinzing Chewang.

## WB govt to handover freehold land deeds to people residing in 119 refugee colonies

**KOLKATA, SEP 1 (PTI)** The West Bengal government is planning to handover freehold land title deeds to over 20,000 people residing in 119 refugee colonies of the state, a senior official said on Tuesday.

For the purpose, the state government is preparing a database and an initial list of around 15,000 residents is ready while another one of around 6,500 people is getting prepared, he said.

"Once the list is complete, it will require the approval of the chief minister after which the date of distribution of the land title deeds by her will be fixed," he said.

In March this year Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had distributed freehold land title deeds to the residents of 94 refugee colonies in the state.

She had announced about taking similar measures to distribute freehold land deeds to residents of another 119 refugee colonies.

The entire survey was conducted by officials of the state Land and Land Reforms and Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation department amid the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Of the residents of the 119 refugee colonies around 3,500 beneficiaries are from neighbouring Howrah, Hooghly, North and South 24 Parganas and Nadia districts, he said.

There are a large number of people from Alipurdwar, Jalpaiguri, Malda, Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts, the official added.

According to the official, a freehold land title deed owner will not be able to sell the land for the first 10 years.

## Assam govt spent over Rs 730 cr on COVID-19 management

**GUWAHATI, SEP 1 (PTI)** The Assam government on Tuesday said it has spent more than Rs 730 crore for various expenses related to management of COVID-19 pandemic in the state.

Out of the total Rs 730.72 crore spent, Rs 579.9 crore was released by the state health and family welfare department and National Health Mission (NHM), while the remaining Rs 150.81 crore was spent

by the revenue and disaster management department, Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

In a written reply to a query by Congress MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi, Sarma said "COVID-19 pandemic is still continuing in the state. Audited statements from different districts are yet to be received. As such it is not possible to provide the actual expenditure."

Giving details of the expenditure of Rs 579.9

crore, the minister clarified that this figure reflects partial spending which has been compiled as of now.

"So far, the Government of Assam and NHM has released Rs 579,90,31,071.30 for various expenses related to COVID-19.

However, actual expenses and expenses to be incurred in the coming months ... can be finalised only after final audited statement is available," he added.

**Turn Page 2**



## Ex-gratia provided to Lower Bhasmey resident

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

A team of officials and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha functionaries visited the house of one Buddhiman Lohar in Lower Bhasmey, East Pendum GPU under Rhenock constituency, whose house has been severely damaged due to heavy rains. He has been shifted to a temporary shed constructed by SKM youth, a press release informs.

The team led by SDM Rangpo, Himmat Rai and BDO Pakyong, Nilkantha Bhandari handed a cheque of Rs 1,01,900 from the Department of Land Revenue & Disaster Management to Mr. Lohar as ex-gratia.

Later, the team inspected several damaged houses in Lower Bhasmey and



Upper Bhasmey Wards. During the visit, they found that several houses in Lower Bhasmey and Upper Bhasmey Wards have been severely damaged due to heavy downpour this monsoon.

The SDM and BDO assured that the department and government will provide all possible help for damaged house compensation and rebuild of damaged houses soon. The visit was

directed by area MLA cum Chairman (STCS), Bishnu Kumar Khatiwara, the SKM release mentions. Also present were, SKM general secretary Press & Publicity cum Social Media, Boom

Tshering Yonzon, Nari Vice Convener, Prabh Pradhan, CEC, LM Yonzon, East District Youth Organization Secretary, Angdup Yonzon and Ward Panchayat, Robin Muktan

## Lingmoo Payong GPU sanitizes schools

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

In view of the directions issued by Education Department on school staff to report to duty, Lingmoo Payong Gram Panchayat Unit undertook a massive sanitization drive of all school premises under the jurisdiction of the GPU, a press release

informs.

The sanitization and disinfection programme is an effort of the GPU to ensure clean and hygienic environment for our gurus (teachers) who will be coming to attend schools from far off places and different corners of the state.

The sanitization drive started from

Upper Lingmoo JHS and Pepthang PS under the guidance of Panchayat members and PRI functionaries and covered all the schools viz. Badamtam PS, Lingi Payong SS, Kau PS and Darakharka PS.

Gram Panchayat Unit has thanked everyone who extended support in this sanitization programme.

### Assam govt spent over....

Sarma informed the House that the government has spent Rs 199.72 crore on infrastructure, Rs 3.86 crore WAS GIVEN to medical colleges, Rs 52.95 crore for testing, Rs 75.82 crore for medicines, Rs 37.69 crore for medical equipment, Rs 42.89 crore on transportation and Rs 3.41 crore on awareness campaigns.

Besides, the health and family welfare department and the National Health Mission also released Rs 1.07 crore for additional manpower, Rs 1.6 crore for administrative expenses and Rs 160.88 crore for financial assistance to those stranded outside the state, he added.

Along with these amounts, the revenue and disaster management department has released Rs 150.81 crore so far as immediate assistance for repairing the quarantine centres, Sarma said in a written reply to a separate query by Congress MLA Rekiuddin Ahmed.

About assistance from the Centre, the Minister said the state's health and family welfare department and the National Health Mission have received a total of Rs 196.82 crore from the union government under three different heads.

"In addition, Rs 50,00,000 as insurance support has been released under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package to the family of one deceased COVID warrior already and four more are under active consideration," he added.

Sarma also informed the House that a total of Rs 116.1 crore has been received as contributions from 53,534 people in the account of the Asom Arogya Nidhi till August 15 to support the government's efforts in handling the pandemic.

"Not a single penny of this amount has been used so far. We formed an advisory committee to better utilise this money received from the public. It has suggested we spend the money on COVID-19 vaccine and for medical research. We are considering the proposals," he added.

Sarma also said that donations were received by the Chief Minister's Relief Fund also, but as the amounts for different calamities are not recorded separately it is not possible to tell the exact amount of contributions for COVID-19.

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**CLASSIFIEDS**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at dam 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 Baazar (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.



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# LOCKING & UNLOCKING COVID-19 IN INDIA (The Algorithm & The Sikkim Situation Report)

**MK SUBBA**

Antiviral drugs, vaccines & medical research: The global treasure hunt for the elusive vaccine against the Covid-19 is where the might of all the super power nations, the multinational companies, Pharmaceutical giants and even the 3rd world countries are investing time and big investments to outrace each other to give the world the 1st vaccine to finally contain the spread of Covid-19 globally and save precious lives. Well globally, at present there are some 110 vaccine candidates for Covid-19 in different stages of research & development whereas 8 vaccine candidates are in the clinical trail stage. In India, the vaccine capital of the world, the Zydus-Cadilla's vaccine candidates the 'ZyCoV-D' has entered the 3rd phase human trail testing stage and similarly, the Bharat Biotech, is on course to develop 'COVAXIN' in collaboration with ICMR. The ICMR & Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) acknowledges and approves the phase II human clinical trial of the Oxford University – Astrazeneca vaccine candidate for Covid-19, 'COVISHIELD' to begin shortly which will be manufactured in India in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India, Pune, for mass scale production in India to reach its billion people and rest of the world too. As Bill Gates States that the Indian Pharmaceutical giants can produce the Covid-19 vaccine even for the entire world. In July, The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) had already approved the medical use of the Gilead's antiviral drug, "Remdesivir" under the Indian brand name, "DESEREM" for emergency use in severe Covid-19 patients. Earlier, in June, the DGCI had approved another antiviral drug, "FAVIPIRAVIR", marketed as Fabiflu, manufactured by Glenmark Pharmaceutical again for emergency to treat mild to moderate Covid-19 patients. ABangaluru Centre for Advanced Research and Development (CARD) has developed a small drum like device called SHYCOCAN – SCALENE which operates on a regular 110/240 V- 50/60 Hz power which can be fixed in offices, Schools, Malls, Hotels, Airports, or any close area in all environments inhabited by people, which can kill the coronavirus by producing high velocity electrons that would prevent the transmission of corona virus through air or by surface. The device has got the regulatory approval of the USA & European Union already. Further, a startup under the aegis of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has developed a portable, movable & collapsible 16- bedded & 30-bedded hospitals for Covid-19 to meet up challenges of availability and accessibility of health facilities in remote parts of our country.

Sikkim Situation Report: Sikkim in the early phase of the pandemic (March-May) enjoyed the media and national fame and accolades of having '0' positive cases until the first positive case was detected on the 21 May at the J.N.V, quarantine Centre, Ravangla, south Sikkim, the patient being a returnee from Delhi's Hydrapuri area – a red zone, little did we realized that the perfect storm of the pandemic was whirling towards Sikkim as from 05 May onwards with the returnees coming home from different parts of the country & aboard, the inevitable was bound to happen. Into June, positive cases started piling up and on 07 July the 130 GREF Camp at Rongli reported the first cluster outbreak in Sikkim of 6 positive cases, than 23 case on 09 July followed by 15 case on 12 July which included 1 police personal & 1 health worker and by 21 July Rongli recorded 116 cases adding up to 252 cases including the surrounding areas before being de-notified as containment zone again. During the same phase, in the close vicinity the Rhenock SSB camp recorded 43 positive cases and in the month of July moving into August saw cluster outbreak in 13 Pharmaceutical companies ITBP & SSB camps across various locations all over Sikkim and the primary & secondary contacts traceable to far flung areas of Sikkim, like Sombaria, Yuksom, Budang, Timborbung

and Parengoan in West Sikkim. Thus as of now as per the latest figures, Sikkim records 1475 positive cases, 1054 recoveries, 418 active cases, 3 deaths and total number of Covid-19 test ( RT-PCR/ True-nat/ RAT) coming to 38,296, taking Sikkim present population to be around 6.58 Lakhs. The spread of the virus forcing all top health institutes, the new STNM, The CRHM, Tadong, District Hospital at Namchi, Gyalzing, Jorethang & Singtam, the administrative center of Tashiling Secretariat, the Agriculture & Horticulture, the Forest Secretariat and the District Administrative Centre, East District, the otherwise bustling Lall bazar, Gangtok and many individual Building and housing complexes to be declared as containment zones across different periods and the latest being the District Administrative centres and many local area lockdowns and Nakabandis were self-imposed across various areas and localities across Sikkim by the public themselves too. However, the algorithm of Covid-19 in Sikkim looks bearable, with the following figures: taking base parameters as (i) Total population of Sikkim: 6.58 lakh, projected figure 2020, (ii) Total covid-19 tests conducted=38,296, (iii) Total recoveries= 1054, (iv) Deaths=3, (v) Active cases= 418, (vi) Total no. of Covid-19 cases = 1475.

(i) Total positively Rate (TPR) = 3.85% (ii) Recovery Rate = 71.14% (iii) Fatality Rate = 0.20% (iv) Testing Rate = 5.8%, The caveats being, the total number of testing is low & slow as at this rate Sikkim will take another 5(1/2) years to test all its population or some 2 years for 50% completion assuming that it took 4 months to conduct the 38,296 test. Looking at the shortfall and urgency, the VDRL at the CRHM, Tadong should commence its Covid-19 testing of samples after approval of the NABL, ICMR & further augmented by TRUENAT, CBNAAT & RAT, as testing, testing and testing can only help in containing & mitigating the spread of Covid-19 in Sikkim. Firstly, the back log of the Government of Sikkim not establishing Covid-19 testing Laboratory in Sikkim during March-May phase of the Lockdown clearly has resulted in Sikkim failing up to establish a well-integrated plan to counter the first exponential surge of positive cases in Sikkim. Secondly, The Government of Sikkim, ignoring the necessity of segregating demarcating & establishment of a "DEDICATED COVID-19 HODPITAL" & a NON-COVID-19- GENERAL HOSPITAL even into the 6th month of the pandemic is not only a breach of the Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) under the Disaster Management Act-2005 but its inhuman and a ticking time bomb that has already claimed innocent lives as two people from far flung areas of Sikkim have died due to non-enactment of any guiding & binding principles of non-adherence to such an important aspects the Covid-19 SOPs in Sikkim between the New STNM, Sochyakgang & The CRHM, Tadong, Gangtok. Further, the slide continuous with non-designation of any center as Covid Care Centre (CCC) & Covid Health Centres (CHC) both mandatory with well-equipped isolation bed, oxygen supported beds and stand by ambulances. The administrative lapses further continued with non-enforcement of the guidelines on disinfection of common public places including entrance lobbies, corridors and staircases, office rooms, meeting rooms, cafeteria, handrails, public counters and official machines to be cleaned disinfected & sanitized if possible twice daily including installation of hand sanitation station in all office premises. Outer areas like bus stands, taxi stands, shopping arcades, wet market, any exposed areas are prioritized to be clean & disinfected.

The high level breach of Covid-19 SOPs continued with department of information & technology putting up requisition for entry of five technicians from Kolkata & Delhi to attend to some maintenance works of the State Data Center at Secretariat, Tashiling, Gangtok on the 06 August, which was granted by the District Magistrate (East) and also permitted them to attend the work place without undergoing

a mandatory 14 days quarantine period. Further, the technicians were officially scheduled & allowed to meet top bureaucrats, MLAs & officers of the Government of Sikkim on different dates w.e.f. to 11 till 15 August including unscheduled visit to even the South-West District, all this permitted by the District Collector East Sikkim, who has absolute power and the responsibility to enforce all the SOPs of the Covid-19 as per the section 34 of the DMA-2005. This high end lapse lead to the Secretariat office being contained and all the bureaucrats, MLAs had to undertake Covid-19 tests and quarantine as the three of the five technicians became symptomatic and also tested positive meanwhile their Inadvertent proximities with their local co-workers contacts made them test positive too. This not being the first time lapses as in the month of July the 252 positive cluster outbreak in Rongli was as a result of the 130 GREF camp not being notified as a quarantine Centre even though the District Magistrate knew that there were incoming and outgoing of the GREF personals from Sikkim on a regular basis at the designated camp at Rongli. All these on the backdrop of the infamous Melligate episode-drama of the "IN-IN-OUT-OUT" involving the high flying guests of the Director General Of Sikkim Police and the 29 employees of the Alkem pharmaceuticals company who were under quarantine suddenly went missing, SUTUK-SUTUK into thin air. Its almost a full circle here in Sikkim from being a Covid-19 zero positive case few months back and the heightened praises accolades and paparazzi to witnessing the virus spread into the community transmission level, just that the pandemic is so unforgiving and unpredictable. The Government of Sikkim since the early phase of the lockdown (1.0) in March, and into lockdown (2.0) & (3.0) exited into unlocking without strategy especially on the guidance "Covid-19 Emergency and Health System Preparedness Plan" of the Government of India to strengthen the national and State health Infrastructures, upscale the prevention and preparedness measures, procurement of essential medical machineries and equipments, setting up of the Covid-19 testing laboratories and surveillance mechanisms to contain and mitigate the spread of Covid-19 in India and the geographical regions of the state and UTs as it was decentralizing all aspects of the Covid-19 SOPs to the domain of the states in a phased manner. Which is well diagnosed as India has been only spending 1.29% of its GDP on the Health sector; has 6 lakhs shortages of Doctors and 2 million Nurses and 80% of the Health sector is controlled by the private stake holders and apart from quality, accessibility remains a big hindrance for the common citizens - thus a chance to rejuvenate the health sector in India including all the states. The federal state Governments, the district and local administration, authorities and bodies including the Gram panchayats for the grassroot approach has to play a vital and indispensable role in the containment plan, which demanded a whole of the Government approach coupled with enduring political will and supplemented by reliable financial resources and competent administration. The Government of Sikkim went through the lockdown phase only with administrative priorities focusing much on the law & order enforcement on the preventive lockdown and social distancing measures and ignored the vital aspects of enhancing the community capacity and participation to develop awareness, perseverance and the rightful approach towards the pandemic, least unwarranted phobia develop amongst the masses which seems prevalent as of now. Unfortunately, with the virus accelerating, Sikkim has to fend for itself now as New Delhi in all aspects already granting intra-inter state movements of all vehicular traffics and likely reopen India into normalcy, post the first week of September, vide the unlock 4.0 means we are on our own.

**[concluded]**



## CM's greetings on Pang Lhabsol

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

Chief Minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang has extended his warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Pang Lhabsol.

In his greetings, the Chief Minister stated that on this day, Mount Khangchendzonga is invoked and prayed to protect Sikkim and wished that unity, peace and communal harmony continue to prevail in the State of Sikkim.

## Governor's greetings on Pang Lhabsol

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

On the occasion of 'Pang Lhabsol', the Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim, a Raj Bhavan release informs.

In his message the Governor has said, "Pang Lhabsol, the unique festival with cultural and historical significance to this tiny Himalayan State, gives us the insight into the Sikkimese way of life. It also provides us with the foundation of harmony and mutual respect among different sections and communities which has remained the hallmark of Sikkim's identity.

May this day remain auspicious and remind every Sikkimese towards making efforts to strengthen and preserve this unique heritage till eternity.

My sincere compliments to the people of Sikkim for their efforts over the years to promote and preserve the festival as the celebration of our unity and brotherhood with special veneration to Mother Nature."

## Governor pays homage to Pranab Mukherjee

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad paid homage to the former President of India and Bharat Ratna, Late Pranab Mukherjee, a press release informs.

The Governor offered floral tribute to the portrait of Bharat Ratna, Pranab Mukherjee, in a brief function held at Raj Bhavan today.

The Governor said, "Pranab Mukherjee was a highly esteemed leader of India, a man of government, who saw consensus as the way to administer India."



## SPCC mourns passing away of Pranab Mukherjee

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:**

Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee has expressed condolences on the demise of former President of India, senior Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee and has mourned his passing away as an irreparable loss to the country.

An SPCC press release issued by its

president, Bharat Basnet, remembers the late Mr Mukherjee as a very able and experienced politician who is being mourned by the entire country.

The Congress has extended its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and offered prayers for the peace to the departed soul. It is informed that the PCC has lowered the party flag at the party office for seven days.

## 65 new COVID-19 cases in Meghalaya; tally rises to 2,433

**SHILLONG, SEP 1 (PTI):**

Sixty-five more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya on Tuesday, taking the state's coronavirus tally to 2,433, a Health Department official said.

Two elderly persons, who tested positive for COVID-19 have also died due to comorbidity issues, pushing the coronavirus death toll to 12 in the state, he said.

Of the 65 new cases, 52 were reported from East Khasi Hills district, 5 cases from West Garo Hills, 4 cases from East Garo Hills and 2 cases each from South Garo Hills and Ribhoi district, Health Services Director Aman War said.

Seventy-three other patients were cured of the disease, taking the total number of COVID-19 recoveries in the state to 1,235, War

said. Meghalaya currently has 1,186 active COVID-19 cases, he said.

East Khasi Hills district, of which state capital Shillong is a part, has the highest number of active COVID-19 cases at 839 of which 209 are armed forces personnel, War said.

Over 84,000 samples have been tested till date for COVID-19, he added.

## Federalism during the time of COVID-19, A legal analysis

The said role can also be observed from various provisions of the Act as well. This role of managing a disaster does not preclude the Centre from issuing orders, directions and guidelines as are required or warranted by the form of any threatening disaster situation or disaster.

However, it is critical to note that the authority, while issuing these orders, directions and guidelines would also have to ensure that they do not go beyond the scope of the act, or the provisions of the Constitution.

The reason being that, these Orders, Directions and Guidelines although being Statutory in nature derive their powers from the Disaster Management Act, 2005 which was enacted by the Parliament of India. Therefore the said Orders, Directions and Guidelines issued by the authorities such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, are a form of 'Delegated Legislation'

What is delegated legislation?

The Halsbury's Laws of England defines 'Delegated Legislation' as all law making which takes place outside the legislature and is expressed as rules, regulations, bye-laws, orders, schemes, Notifications, etc. In other words, when an instrument of a legislative nature is made by an authority in exercise of power delegated or conferred by the legislature, it is called subordinate legislation or delegated legislation

The scope of delegated legislation has been elucidated by the Supreme Court in Kerala Samsthana Chethu Thozhilali Union v. State of Kerala wherein it was held that -

17. A rule is not only required to be made in conformity with the provisions of the Act whereunder it is made, but the same must be in conformity with the provisions of any other Act, as a subordinate legislation cannot be violative of any plenary legislation made by Parliament or the State Legislature.

32. In G.P. Singh's Principles of Statutory Interpretation, 10th Edn., it is stated at p. 916:

"Grounds of judicial review: Delegated legislation is open to the scrutiny of courts and may be declared invalid particularly on two grounds: (a) Violation of the Constitution; and (b) Violation of the enabling Act.

This view on the scope of delegated legislation has been reiterated by the Supreme Court in Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corp'n. v. Subhash Sindhi Coop. Housing Society, wherein it was held that-

27. Executive instructions which have no statutory force, cannot override the law. Therefore, any notice, circular, guidelines, etc. which run contrary to statutory laws cannot be enforced

Federalism and the Sovereignty of t States

As already discussed earlier The Constitution of India envisages a dual polity (cooperative federalism) with a strong centralizing tendency Thus, colloquially speaking the Constitution permits Centre to impose its will in the affairs of the State, only in certain specific circumstances, in a manner provided for in the Constitution. The extent of this centralizing tendency can be seen in the following provisions such as Article 73 which deals with extent of executive power of the Union, Article 249 which deals with Power of Parliament to legislate with respect to a matter in the State List in the national interest, Article 254 which deals with Inconsistency between laws made by Parliament and laws made by the Legislatures of States, Article 256 which deals with Obligation of States and Union, Article 257 which deals with Control of Union over States in certain cases. Article 352 Proclamation of Emergency, Article 356 which deals with Provisions in case of failure of State machinery and Article 360 which deals with provisions as to Financial emergency.

Therefore a bare reading of the abovementioned provisions of the Constitution makes it abundantly clear that the Union has the power to interfere with matters of the State subject to certain conditions such as ratification by 2/3rd of the Rajya Sabha, Declaration of Emergency by the Parliament among others. In the present situation none of these conditions have been met, for enabling the Centre to exercise its power on matters exclusively within the domain of the State.

It is interesting to note that the Supreme Court has also elucidated on this contentious issue on Centre-State Relations in some of the cases mentioned below

In State of W.B. v. Union of India, the Court held that -

Para 98. "To conclude: the Indian Constitution accepts the federal concept and distributes the sovereign powers between the coordinate constitutional entities, namely, the Union and the States. This concept implies that one cannot encroach upon the governmental functions or instrumentalities of the other, unless the Constitution expressly provides for such interference. The legislative fields allotted to the units cover subjects for legislation and they do not deal with the relationship between the two coordinate units functioning in their allotted fields: this is regulated by other provisions of the Constitution and there is no provision which enables one unit to take away the property of another except by agreement. The future stability of our vast country with its unity in diversity depends upon the strict adherence of the federal principle, which the fathers of our Constitution have so wisely and foresightedly incorporated therein. This Court has the constitutional power and the correlative duty — a difficult and delicate one — to prevent encroachment, either overtly or covertly, by the Union on State field or vice versa, and thus maintain the balance of federation. The present is a typical case where the court should stop the Union from overstepping its boundary and trespassing into the State field. I would, therefore, hold that the impugned Act, insofar as it confers a power on the Union to acquire the lands owned by the State, including coal mines and coal — bearing lands, is ultra vires. I find on Issues 1, 2 and 3 against the defendant. In view of my findings on the said issues, I do not propose to express my opinion on the additional issue".

This principle of separation of powers and sovereignty of States vis-a-vis powers granted under Constitution has been reiterated in Swaraj Abhiyan (V) v. Union of India, where the Court held that

"83. It is to be noted that State enforcement of Union laws usually gives rise to difficult questions concerning the sustainability of cooperative federalism, which we have accepted as our core constitutional ethos. In Jindal Stainless Ltd. v. State of Haryana [Jindal Stainless Ltd. v. State of Haryana, (2017) 12 SCC 1 : AIR 2016 SC 5617] , a nine-Judge Bench of this Court has reiterated the principles of cooperative federalism in India in the following manner: (SCC pp. 233-34, para 190)

"190. The Union and the States are co-equal in the Indian federal structure. Our Framers created a unique federal

structure which cannot be abridged in a sentence or two. The nature of our federalism can only be studied having a thorough understanding of all the provisions of the Constitution. Confirmation that the Union and States are co-equals in the Indian federal structure can be found in the speeches of PS Deshmukh, TT Krishnamachari and Dr BR Ambedkar before the Constituent Assembly. Common philosophy which runs through our Constitution is that both Centre and States have been vested with the substantial powers which are necessary to preserve our unique federation with clear demarcation of power. Calling India as quasi-federal might not be advisable as our features are unique and quite different from other countries like the United States of America, etc. Courts in India should strive to preserve this unique balance which our Framers envisaged, any interference into this balancing act would be detrimental for grand vision proscribed by our Makers. Amorphous nature of our federalism has been even noted by the Sarkaria Commission Report on Centre-State relationship. Cooperative federalism envisaged under our Constitution is a result of pick-and-choose policy which our Framers abstracted from the wisdom of working experience of other Constitutions."

84. The principle of federalism as present in India cannot be explained in a sentence or two; rather a detailed study of each and every provision of the Constitution would inevitably point that India has divided sovereignty in the form of Centre on one hand and States on the other. Each power house is independent in its own terms. The constitutional scheme invariably leads to the conclusion that at times these institutions meet and interact at various levels to achieve the cherished constitutional goal of cooperative federalism.

Therefore, it is evident that prima facie the Centre, would not be competent to direct the state on matters relating to intra-state/inter district movement of people and goods, unless it falls on central subjects such as national highways. The letter dated 22.08.2020 issued by the Home Secretary, Govt of India that refers to the Guidelines issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (hereinafter DMA) dated 29.07.2020 namely para 5 of UNLOCK-3 would therefore lack competence on the issue of intra-state/inter-district movement of persons and goods.

M.H.A's reliance on the orders of the Supreme Court

However, In light of the said discussion it is also pertinent to take into account the order dated 30.3.2020 of the Supreme Court in Alakh Alok Srivastava v. Union of India which had held the following:

"Section 54 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 provides for punishment to a person who makes or circulates a false alarm or warning as to disaster or its severity or magnitude, leading to panic. Such person shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to one year or with fine. Disobedience to an order promulgated by a public servant would result in punishment under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. An advisory which is in the nature of an order made by the public authority attracts section 188 of the Indian Penal Code.

We trust and expect that all concerned viz., State Governments, Public Authorities and Citizens of this country will faithfully comply with the directives, advisories and orders issued by the Union of India in letter and spirit in the interest of public safety". (emphasis supplied)

The Central Government specifically the Ministry of Home Affairs has relied on the said order in its various letters addressed to the States to ensure strict Compliance of the said Guidelines. The reasoning of the M.H.A appears to be that as the Supreme Court has taken cognizance of the directives, advisories and orders and directed its compliance. The said guidelines, advisories which are in the nature of an Order have now obtained the colour of law in the form, of an Order by the Supreme Court.

This possible reasoning of the Ministry of Home Affairs, in my humble submission seems to be flawed at best. The weaknesses in the said reasoning are as follows-

1. The said Proceedings for which this specific order was issued, was on a specific issue of the plight of migrant workers, in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2. A reading of the entire order dated 30.03.2020 in to, also buttresses the fact that only the specific issue of Migrant Workers, their conditions during the COVID-19 Pandemic has been considered by the Court.

3. The matters concerning Inter State migration are in Item 81, List 1 of the Seventh Schedule, of the Constitution therefore it is an issue for which the Union has complete jurisdiction.

4. Article 73 and Article 256 of the Constitution specifically grants the Central Government powers to exercise its executive action on States in matters under List 1 of the Seventh Schedule.

Thus it is evident to note that the manner in which the Central Agencies have been interpreting the Supreme Court's Order due to its generic wording on issue's beyond just that of migrant workers alone, would be flawed at best. Any order passed to the contrary seeking to subvert the very essence of 'cooperative federalism' by infringing on the separate legislative domains, without the procedure prescribed under the Constitution, would be bad in law.

The Supreme Court being a creature of the Constitution itself would lack the authority to pass orders contrary to the essential features of the Constitution. Further such an imaginative reasoning of the order would also result in a conflict with various decisions passed by a larger quorum of judges on the subject of cooperative federalism as held by the Apex Court in a catena of judgments

Conclusion

In conclusion, the competence of the Centre to issue instructions for removal of restrictions on inter-state travel is legitimate and well-founded, and the States are constitutionally bound to abide by such directions. On the issue of inter-district travel, the Centre would in normal circumstances lack the competence to issue such directions. However, the matter has attained some level of complexity due to the orders of the Supreme Court dated 30.03.2020, which the Centre has regularly relied on in its correspondences to the States for ensuring strict compliance of its Guidelines under the DMA. A prudent move would to engage in talks with the relevant Central Authorities to amicable sort out the issue, as well as approach the Supreme Court for clarification of the abovementioned order, taking into consideration the federal structure (with a centralizing tendency) of our constitution.

[the writer is Advocate, Supreme Court of India, NGT, CAT and Associate at Enviro Legal Defence Firm (New Delhi)]

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## Taking Pot-Shots at Corruption

*Nothing necessary about this evil*

Corruption is the use of public office for private gain. The prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 defines bribery as “a public servant taking gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of an official act; a public servant obtaining a valuable thing, without consideration from the person concerned in proceeding or the business transacted by such a public servant; and criminal misconduct”. Typical bureaucratise, we know, and requiring more than one read to comprehend. Meanwhile, since Sikkim appears to be pursuing a record of sorts when it comes to making weekly corruption-related arrests, this would be as good a time as any to discuss this, as many have called it, necessary evil.

Speak to anyone on the streets, and they will insist - and one speaks of the country and not just the State here - that work just won't get done if there was no graft involved. Most would have us believe this, but is it really so? It shouldn't, but it is. And this is because the two common interpretations of corruption are skewed. First, let us take the example of how political parties see corruption. Corruption for parties the world over is something that the opposition does. Since in most democracies the reins of office change often, parties in Opposition will blame those in power and since the opposition is invariably a former government [or a government in waiting], graft charges become convenient ploys to pin down opponents. This is not necessarily because there are too many instances of corruption [given India's dismal track-record of convictions, there appears to be too little corruption in higher places], but because corruption allegations demand no substantiation. The people will believe the corruption charges because according to them everyone is corrupt and because the investigating agencies are controlled by the State, the investigations can be made to stretch ever longer and then the courts can take up more time. Few expect corruption charges to stick, but it at least keeps an opponent occupied on another front. Examples abound, the Hawala scandal, the Bofors issue, the coal and the 3G cases and while on it, also the steady march of Sikkim's leaders in-waiting making frequent trips to Delhi with corruption charges against the present dispensation. And the list keeps growing longer with still more cases, still more allegations still more complaints. The bottomline however is that corruption charges are just sticks with which to whip up headlines or witch-hunts depending upon who holds the whip. Now, let's see how the people understand corruption. For most, it is something that gets their work done. They feed the monster to make their own lives better. That said, they still see themselves as suffering because of the corruption, not as cogs of the nexus. Many who make a noise about corruption are either politically motivated or are offended because someone else benefited from the graft when even they were in the race. This then is a corrupt practice as well.

It goes without saying that corruption cannot survive without political patronage, but blaming politicians alone will not suffice. Since it is the electorate which made them powerful enough to sidestep rules and hoodwink due process, it is also the electorate's responsibility to keep them honest. No politician will continue being corrupt or continue looking the other way if the voters send out a clear signal that they will not tolerate it. Okay, maybe they won't turn honest overnight, but will at least begin by toning down the flamboyance with which ill-gotten gains are flaunted at present. Even that would at least be a beginning and from there could start the process of addressing corruption in more practical terms as against the rhetoric [which inflames passions but does not resolve] or the equally disconcerting chest-beating which speaks of corruption in comparative terms [as if being less corrupt was a virtue of some sorts]. One needs to accept that corruption cannot be graded since one is either corrupt or honest and there are no in-betweens. It is not about being less or more corrupt, because once someone is corrupt, then the scale of the scam is decided by the opportunity available and not the sensibilities of the corrupt person. That said, crackdowns cannot take refuge behind this argument because at least the authorities need to have a better sense of proportions so that the resources at their disposal are deployed for the best 'returns'.

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# 4 things governments can do to help small business

ANDREI ALEXANDER LUX & FLAVIO ROMERO MACAU  
THECONVERSATION.COM

*So much for the v-shaped recovery.*

Australia [as also India] is set to record its biggest quarterly fall in GDP in history this week. The federal government will extend its JobKeeper wage subsidy program by six months. About 1.75 million workers, including about 1 million Victorians, are expected to rely on it till March.

But there's more to be done, particularly to help the small and medium-sized businesses taking the brunt of the COVID-19 economic impacts.

Small and medium enterprises employ about two-thirds of the workforce. They are crucial to the prosperity of local communities.

A full third are pessimistic about making it through the next three months, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' most recent survey of COVID-19 business impacts. By comparison only 18% of large companies (those employing more than 200 employees) expect difficulties in meeting their financial obligations.

Even at the best of times many small businesses struggle. Yet our research on 223 Australian business owners highlights failure (or success) isn't just the result of individual entrepreneurs' personal resources and capabilities. The local business environment plays a significant role.

As Malcolm Gladwell puts it in his book Outliers: The Story of Success:

“The tallest oak in the forest is the tallest not just because it grew from the hardest acorn, it is the tallest also because no other trees blocked its sunlight, the soil around it was deep and rich, no rabbit chewed through its bark as a sapling, and no lumberjack cut it down before it matured.”

The same is true for businesses. Even the most resourceful business owners struggle to get ahead when the environment stifles their efforts.

This is a thorny problem for governments as they turn from emergency measures to chart longer-term recovery policies.

There will, no doubt, be much debate over the usual areas – of subsidies and grants, tax breaks, red tape and industrial relations changes. But we suggest four less obvious priorities to create a favourable environment for small business.

1. GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Small businesses should be given a real advantage in procurement. Procurement policies and processes must be clear, protective and accessible to the small guys, not a maze that ends up helping only the big corporations.

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Kate Carnell, has proposed that federal government contracts worth up to A\$10 million go through a small business panel as part of the tender process. “Lowest cost is not always the best value for money,” she said. We agree, with state and local government procurement

policies being equally important.

2. ENSURE THEY GET GOOD ADVICE

One of the biggest decisions many small business owners will face will be whether to borrow money to keep their business going or cut their losses. That's something for which they should get sound professional advice.

But when small businesses are cash-strapped, cutting back spending on advisers such as lawyers and accountants can be an obvious way to save money.

State and local governments offer some (limited) support to small business advisory services. Western Australia's Small Business Development Corporation, for example, provides free advice to local government for encouraging small business.

What we need now is a national program to ensure all small business owners can get good, free professional advice.

3. ENCOURAGE LOCALISM

Encouraging consumers to “buy local” is a pillar of regional development strategies. “Buy Australian” campaigns have been around since the 1980s with the latest incarnation Buy Australian Made campaign launched in June. Its slogan: “It's never been more important to buy Australian than right now.”

The success of these campaigns is open to debate, but the general principle appears sound. A 2017 analysis of foodstuffs, for example, found greater localism associated with

more resilient and sustainable local economies.

4. PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH

The last measure is more psychological support. This has been a neglected area in the past, but improving business owners' mental health is as effective as building a stronger network or increasing cash flow.

Our calculations suggest developing hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience can improve firm performance by 38%. That's the same as building a stronger social network (38%), and twice as much as formal entrepreneurial education (15%).

With growing recognition of mental health issues, and the effects of COVID-19 crisis, government policies to promote small business should include a focus on business owners' mental health.

SO WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Together, these key factors determine whether business owners can leverage their own resources to drive performance and ride out the recession.

In the words of motivational speaker Alexander Den Heijer in Nothing you don't already know:

When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.

Hopefully that will be enough.

[Andrei Alexander Lux is Lecturer in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour, Edith Cowan University; Flavio Romero Macau is Senior Lecturer in Supply Chain Management and Global Logistics, Edith Cowan University]

## Panic attack signs – and what to do if you have one

DR JENN COOPER

THECONVERSATION.COM

We are living in scary and uncertain times, so it's hardly surprising that a new study has found the number of Google searches for “anxiety” and “panic attacks” has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Some degree of anxiety about the current situation is normal. After all, anxiety is one of the most functional human emotions we have. It's like our very own built-in alarm system that keeps us safe, warns us of danger and sends signals to our body to get ready to respond.

The global pandemic has seen a rise in threat and danger in the outside world. As a result our alarm system is switched on more than ever. We rarely get the opportunity to feel completely safe, as even in our own homes we are constantly reminded of the threat outside with the news, limits to socialising and local lockdowns.

While some anxiety is normal and helpful, it can become a serious difficulty for some, taking over every aspect of day-to-day life. In these instances, our brain tells us that everything is dangerous – making even the most normal of tasks, like going to the supermarket, or even leaving the house, seem impossible.

Anxiety can also lead to panic or anxiety attacks for some. These happen when we misinterpret something as being dangerous. It may happen when we're bombarded with messages of threat and danger, or simply when we have to leave the house. They can happen when our anxiety levels are high, and when we don't feel in control. These intense “false alarms” may make our body think we're in real danger.

Our bodies are primed for action, adrenaline pumps through our body, and our heart rate and breathing become faster to pump extra oxygen to our muscles. Our brain is telling us we are in danger and we experience sudden, intense anxiety in the form of a panic attack, in an attempt to keep us safe.

During a panic attack you might notice some common physical sensations including racing or pounding heart, feeling sick or having an upset stomach, sweating or feeling hot, shaking, hyperventilating and feeling faint.

You may also notice intrusive thoughts, such as thinking you're going to die, that something terrible is going to happen, that you may faint or lose control, that you're going crazy or that you can't cope with the



current situation.

Your behaviour may then change as a result, such as avoiding certain places, running to the loo, running away to get to safety, and getting angry.

These intense experiences are frightening, so it's no wonder people are looking to Google, to understand what is happening and to find ways to cope.

TRIGGERS

Many things can cause a panic attack, and sometimes it feels as though there's no obvious cause. Often panic attacks are triggered by feeling unsafe, either while in particular situations, or when being faced with something we have a phobia of. Some people struggle with public transport, flying or social situations – while for others it could be going to the supermarket or being in a lift that triggers one. Changes in our body can also trigger a panic attack. For instance, drinking a lot of caffeine can cause heart palpitations, which may lead to a panic attack.

Undoubtedly, the pandemic also has many triggers. For example, wearing a mask may trigger a panic attack if a person begins to feel they cannot breathe. Social distancing may make us begin to see other people as “dangerous”, so being close to people, or in busy places, could trigger a panic attack.

Panic attacks can come on really suddenly, and sometimes without warning. If you start to feel like you're having a panic attack, here are five things you can do to get through it:

1. Breathe. Breathe slowly in through your nose for a count of four, and out through your mouth for a count of four. Do this several

times.

2. Find distractions. Count back from 3,000 by six. Pull up a webpage and count all the “Ts” on the page. Focus on a picture or painting and count the colours or shapes. It's important to get your brain really distracted.

3. Reassure yourself. We often just trust our thoughts, but remember, during a panic attack we are misinterpreting the world as dangerous. Talk to yourself. Tell yourself you are safe and you will be OK.

4. Grounding. Ground yourself into the here and now. What is the date and time? What do you notice around about you? What can you hear, smell, touch and see?

5. Soothe yourself. Listen to some music, suck on a candy, carry a nice smell around on a handkerchief, or keep an object with you that you can focus all of your attention on. These are especially helpful to use before you go into a situation that makes you feel anxious to help keep you feeling grounded and prevent the panic attack from happening.

If you find that you've been experiencing panic attacks for the first time, or if they're becoming more frequent, there are plenty of self-help materials you can access to help you with anxiety and panic attacks including from Get Self Help, the NHS and The Centre for Clinical Interventions.

However, if you find that you are really struggling, speak to your GP. They can refer you for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or counselling to help you manage your anxiety and panic.

[the writer is Lecturer in Counselling Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University]



## JEE Mains held amid stringent precautions

**NEW DELHI, SEP 1 (PTI):** The Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Mains for admission to engineering colleges began on Tuesday amid stringent precautions and social distancing measures in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Staggered entry and exit for candidates, sanitisers at the gate, distribution of masks and maintaining social distancing as candidates queued up, were among the scenes witnessed at the exam centres across the country.

The exam which has been postponed twice in view of COVID-19 pandemic is scheduled from September 1 to 6.

“Hand sanitisers are being made available at the entrance of the examination centre and inside the exam hall at all times. The usual process of checking the admit cards of candidates has been replaced with barcode readers, which have been made available to the examination centre authorities,” said an official of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

“While all the candidates are asked to go to the exam centres with masks and sanitisers, once they enter the centre, they have to use the masks provided by the examination authority. Each candidate will be offered a 3-ply mask at the time of entry and expected to wear the same during the examination in order to avoid any form of unfair means at the time of examination,” the official added.

The first shift of the exam began at 9.30 am while the second shift will begin from 2.30 pm.

“Before the start of each exam shift and after the last shift ends, all seats will be thoroughly

sanitised and the work stations and keyboards will be disinfected,” the NTA official said.

Over 9 lakh candidates have registered for the JEE-Mains exam for admission to engineering courses in IITs, NITs and Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs).

Increasing the number of examination centres, alternate seating plans, fewer candidates per room and staggered entry and exit are among the steps the National Testing Agency has taken for safely conducting the crucial exam.

While the governments of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have assured students that they will provide transportation to candidates, a group of IIT alumni and students have also launched a portal to provide transport facilities to exam centres for the candidates in need.

There has been a growing chorus for postponing JEE-Mains and medical entrance exam NEET amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases.

The Supreme Court had earlier dismissed a plea seeking postponement of the two exams amid a spurt in the number of COVID-19 cases, saying a “precious year” of students cannot be wasted and life has to go on.

Based on the results of the JEE-Mains Paper 1 and Paper 2, the top 2.45 lakh candidates will be eligible to appear for the JEE-Advanced exam, which is a one-stop exam to get admission into the 23 premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). JEE-Advanced is scheduled to take place on September 27.

## Lack of medical attention claims 61 pregnant women and 877 newborns in Meghalaya

**GANGTOK, 01 SEPT:** According to an Indian Express report, at least 61 pregnant women and 877 newborns have died in Meghalaya in the last four months starting from April for want of admission to hospitals and also due to lack of medical attention because of diversion of the health machinery to fight COVID-19 pandemic, a senior health department official said. The fatalities from April to July this year were due to diseases other than the novel coronavirus.

Newborn deaths were due to lack of medical attention, care, pneumonia and birth asphyxia, Director of Health Services Aman War said.

“It is a matter of concern that the infant and maternal mortality rate has risen sharply as

the entire state health machinery is diverted to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, War told reporters Friday.

He said most of the women died because they were not admitted to hospitals or health centres for institutional delivery.

The state has an infant mortality rate of 34 deaths per 1000 live births and pneumonia is the major cause of deaths of babies at birth even as birth asphyxia is another cause, War said. He said the health department has told hospitals and health centres that they should not refuse admission to patients including pregnant women even if they come from COVID-19 containment zones.

War urged all pregnant women to register with the nearest



health centre to enable the department to do contact tracing of their well being and to allow health workers to reach out to them in case they need help and to prevent possible mishaps at childbirths.

The health services director said during the period a total of 10

persons had died due to COVID-19.

“More people have died due to other disease and not COVID-19. At least 877 newborns have died at birth and 61 women during childbirth during the period from April to July this year,” War said.

There are 12 big

hospitals in the state capital, including six privately owned. The state has a total of 28 community health centres and 139 public health centres. Besides, there is a government-run civil hospital in each of the 11 district headquarters. [courtesy The Indian Express]

## Bengali film fraternity pays tributes to Mukherjee

**KOLKATA, SEP 1 (PTI):** Bengali film fraternity mourned the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee and said he was a humble soul who loved watching films amid his hectic schedule.

Film makers Srijit Mukherji and Shiboprosad Mukhopadhyay, and actors Prosenjit Chatterjee and Dev remembered the Bharat Ratna awardee as one who never forgot his roots.

Srijit Mukherji said that he had met the former President at Rashtrapati Bhavan for the screening of ‘Jaatishwar’ and during the National Award ceremony for ‘Chotushkone’.

“An impeccable

gentleman, genuine film lover, extremely humble person despite being such a celebrated politician, an erstwhile President & a Bharat Ratna. Deepest condolences,” Mukherji said in a tweet.

While talking to PTI, the film maker also recalled how Mukherjee sat through the special screening of Jaatishwar and conveyed his appreciation.

“He never forgot his roots,” Mukherji said.

Director Shiboprosad Mukhopadhyay also remembered the screening of his ‘Muktodhara’ at Rashtrapati Bhavan and Mukherjee’s interest in films.



“Rarely in life, you come across people who leave an impact on you forever. It was incredible meeting former President Pranab Mukherjee for the screening of Muktodhara at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Rest in peace, Sir,” Mukhopadhyay tweeted.

In a tweet, Bengali film superstar Prosenjit Chatterjee said, “Our honourable former President of India and the pride of Bengal Mr. Pranab Mukherjee is no more with us.

Rest in peace sir.” Actor turned Trinamool Congress MP

Dev tweeted, “That’s a Huge loss to the entire Nation. Rest in Peace #PranabMukherjee Sir.”

Mukherjee died following a 21-day battle with multiple ailments at an Army Hospital in New Delhi on Monday evening. He was 84.

## Ramachandra Guha to come out with new book on cricket



**NEW DELHI, SEP 1 (PTI):** Historian Ramachandra Guha will come out with a book on cricket in November, which will trace the entire arc of the game in India, across all levels at which it is played and also present vivid portraits of local heroes, provincial icons, and international stars.

“The Commonwealth of Cricket: A Lifelong Love Affair with the Most Subtle and Sophisticated Game Known to Humankind” will be co-published by HarperCollins India and William Collins UK.

Publisher Udayan Mitra acquired the book in India and Arabella Pike, William Collins Publishing Director, acquired UK and Commonwealth rights (excluding India), according to a statement.

When Guha began following the game in

the early 1960s, India was utterly marginal to the world of cricket: the country still hadn’t won a Test match overseas; by the time he joined the Board of Control for Cricket in India, 50 years later, India had become world cricket’s sole superpower, the publishers said.

“The Commonwealth of Cricket” is a first-person account of this transformation and blends memoir, anecdote, reportage and political critique.

Mitra says this is the story of how Guha has engaged over nearly six decades with an endlessly fascinating game - as a player, a spectator, a fan, a writer, and a cricket administrator.

“The narrative is as enchanting as the spin of Bishan Singh Bedi and EAS Prasanna, as charming as the batting

of Gundappa Viswanath or Vijay Hazare; it transports us out of our present miseries into a magic world where on a lazy afternoon the willow meets leather, making the loveliest sound in the world,” he says.

According to Pike, the book is a “beautifully crafted memoir of Guha’s lifelong passion for cricket and a story that will enchant all who love this greatest of games”.

Currently distinguished University Professor at Krea University, Guha has authored books like “The Unquiet Woods”, “India after Gandhi”, and a two-volume biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

Guha has also written quite a few books on cricket - “A Corner of a Foreign Field”, “The Picador Book of Cricket”, “Spin and Other Turns”, “Wickets in the East”.

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# Naomi Osaka vows to keep shining light on racial injustice after win at US Open

**NEW YORK, 01 SEPT [PA MEDIA]:** Naomi Osaka vowed to continue highlighting issues of racial injustice after reaching the second round of the US Open with a hard-fought win over Japanese compatriot Misaki Doi.

Osaka, who initially pulled out of her semi-final at last week’s Western & Southern Open in solidarity with protesters, wore a face mask onto the court bearing the name of Breonna Taylor, who was shot dead by police in Louisville in March.

The 22-year-old Osaka said after her 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 win that she planned to wear a mask bearing the name of a different shooting victim for each round that she remains in this year’s tournament.

Osaka told Amazon Prime: “Actually I have seven [masks], and it’s quite sad that seven masks isn’t enough for the amount of names. So hopefully I will get to the finals and you can see all of them.”

Osaka had reversed her decision to withdraw from last week’s tournament



after discussions with organisers, only to subsequently pull out ahead of the final against Victoria Azarenka due to a hamstring injury.

And that affliction appeared evident in the way she laboured for long periods, requiring just over two hours to secure victory over an opponent who had won just one match in seven previous appearances in the US Open main draw.

“It was very difficult and I kind of expected it because I know she’s a tough opponent,” added Osaka. “I knew there was a chance it would get really long and I’ll just have to see how I feel tomorrow.”

With six of the

women’s world top 10 absent from this year’s tournament, Osaka is one of the favourites to reclaim the title she first won in 2018. But despite appearing to back up those predictions in an opening set in which she threatened to sweep Doi aside, she was left looking tired and unreliable for much of the second in which Doi fired back.

The world No89 moved into a 5-2 lead and although Osaka hit back to level, Doi kept her nerve to force the decider. Having been broken in the opening game, Doi summoned one final effort to fashion two break points in the next, but Osaka survived

and went on to claim

what was ultimately a clear if not entirely convincing win.

Nor was it entirely plain sailing for No1 seed Karolina Pliskova who dropped serve in her first game but recovered to dispatch Anhelina Kalinina. The world No3, promoted to top billing following the withdrawals of Ashleigh Barty and Simona Halep, won 6-4, 6-0 in just over an hour inside the empty Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The tournament in New York is being played behind closed doors with just a handful of support staff in attendance.

The 28-year-old Czech, beaten early on at last week’s Western

& Southern Open, said: “I felt better than in my previous match last week. I think the centre court is better place to play.

“I mean, it’s still without people, but I just felt somehow a little better. And I had a lot of practice on this court, so I felt just quite used to it. Also, just to play without people, I think that even though I just had one match without people, I thought it helped me just to know how it feels.”

Two former Wimbledon champions, Angelique Kerber and Petra Kvitova, also reached the second round with little fuss. Kerber, the 2018 winner at SW19, beat Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia, the German 17th seed prevailing 6-4, 6-4. Two-time Wimbledon champ Kvitova came through against Irina-Camelia Begu, the sixth seed winning 6-3, 6-2.

But there will be no repeat of last year’s run to the third round for 16-year-old Coco Gauff. The American bowed out at the first hurdle, going down 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 to Latvian 31st seed Anastasija Sevastova.

# Gauff suffers early U.S. Open exit in stunned silence



**NEW YORK, SEP 1 (AP):** Coco Gauff won over New York and became an instant fan favorite during her run of inspired tennis a year ago at the U.S. Open. A year later, no fans, no energy, and no singles victory for Gauff the teen sensation is out of the U.S. Open on Day 1.

A n a s t a s i j a Sevastova knocked off the 16-year-old Gauff in three sets, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4. The 31st-seeded Sevastova sent Gauff to her earliest exit from a Grand Slam tournament in four appearances. She had never lost in the first two rounds.

Just the beginning, Gauff said Monday.

I just got on tour a little over a year ago, so I still have a lot to learn and a long ways to go.

She’s good enough at 16 to impress a veteran like Sevastova.

I wish I would play like this when I was 16 years old, Sevastova said with a laugh.

Great player. Nothing more to say. I think she maybe started a bit slower than me, but she was getting better as the match went on.

Gauff lost in Louis Armstrong Stadium, where she won two matches last year and made it to the third round before losing to 2018 champion Naomi Osaka in a match that ended in tears for the teen and a hug from the winner.

After collecting a singles trophy at Linz, Austria, in October becoming the youngest WTA title winner since 2004 Gauff began the 2020 Grand Slam season by defeating Venus Williams and winning a rematch against Osaka at the Australian Open en route to the fourth round there.

Gauff was largely off her game against Sevastova and had 13 double-faults, an unsettling result after she also lost in the first round in the Western & Southern Open, the tournament that preceded the U.S. Open at the same site. She was also beaten at Lexington, Kentucky, this month in the semifinals of her first tournament after tennis was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The main part that hurt was just getting matches under my belt, getting experience, Gauff said.

That’s what I need on tour. I’m playing against people older than me who have been in more situations, difficult situations, than I have. I think the biggest thing is I just need experience.

Gauff, though, has found her voice on social issues and delivered an impromptu speech at a Black Lives Matter rally in Florida in June, when she implored the audience to vote. Gauff said she wanted to continue to speak out on racial injustice and police brutality.

I feel like, especially my generation, has been popular to speak out, not be afraid to use our voice, she said.

I think that just has something to do with it because other young people my age are also using their voice. I’m not as afraid to use it.

Sevastova had been 1-8 in singles in 2020 and got the breakthrough win she needed again in New York. Sevastova was a semifinalist at the U.S. Open two years ago.

I think it’s tough for everybody coming here, she said. But, yeah, this first hurdle, I won a match again. I think it’s going to give me a bit of confidence.

THROW IN THE TOWEL

Towel service is on a break at the U.S. Open.

The days of grabbing a towel from a ballperson between points have gone the way of fans and post-match handshakes in this pandemic-altered tournament.

Like a toddler with a security blanket, some players need that constant towel break in the heat of action as part of the routine. Some players want a towel after every point but because of the pandemic, players now need to fetch their own towels. There were boxes behind the baselines for players to lay the towels on at some courts; at others, players draped them over a fence or an advertising placard.

I have sort of like a history with the towel. I used to have a towel when I was 3, 4 years old and I would always carry it around, said Stefanos Tsitsipas, who won his first-round match.

It was like my toy, basically. The towel resembles something special in my life. It does provide some sort of amount of

comfort.

Hailey Baptiste found herself out of sorts without the towel exchange and soon out of the U.S. Open with a first-round defeat.

I think it definitely puts a little more pressure on you with the time because you have to go back and forth to get it yourself, Baptiste said.

Some points, you kind of catch yourself rushing or you have like a few seconds left and you’re running up or just kind of rushing your routine.

NO REGRETS

Croatia’s Borna Coric was among those who tested positive for COVID-19 during a no-distancing charity event organized by Novak Djokovic in June. He had mild symptoms, fully recovered, and in retrospect realizes it was a mistake to play without taking precautions.

There were some mistakes which we all did, including me, he said Monday, following a 7-5, 6-3, 6-1 win over Pablo Andujar. I think we all got a little bit loose and we can just relax.

Part of the attraction of the event was a chance to play near his hometown in Croatia.

I was sad it finished that way but it was for a good cause so I don’t have any regrets,” he said.

WORTH THE TRIP

Anhelina Kalinina was in a quandary. Should the 145th-ranked Ukrainian make the long trip to New York for the U.S. Open not knowing whether she’d be in the field? She took a chance that paid off, even though she lost in the first round.

Kalinina was on court for only 62 minutes during a 6-4, 6-0 loss to top-seeded Karolina Pliskova on Monday morning. She set off for New York needing help reaching the field she was fifth in line for a slot but moved in when other players dropped out.

Suddenly out of nowhere I was in, so actually it was a great decision, she said.

It wasn’t entirely a bad day’s work for Kalinina: She still pockets 61,000 for a first-round loss. She had limited practice time and hadn’t played a match because of the COVID-19 precautions.

Where I’m practicing, we don’t have opportunities not like here, she said.

# Lyon’s women demand their stage and are big enough to fill it

**JONATHAN LIEW**

**LONDON, 01 SEPT [THE GUARDIAN]:**

Perhaps the moment we all realised that Lyon were going to win the Champions League once again came about seven minutes before half-time, as Lucy Bronze stepped up to take a throw-in. As Bronze waited for the referee’s signal, she started absent-mindedly spinning the ball on the end of her finger, like one of the Harlem Globetrotters to which this all-conquering, lavishly-funded Lyon team is so frequently compared.

It was, in a strange way, the perfect emblem of a final that offered only the illusion of closeness. Though Wolfsburg certainly had their moments during their 3-1 defeat to Lyon in San Sebastián on Sunday night, there always seemed to be a basic, elemental difference between them: a combination of quality and extra gears, of poise and big-game experience, of which team needs to scrap and sweat for every last inch, and which has the chutzpah to start doing basketball tricks in the first half of a Champions League final.

How do you stop Lyon? Right now we have no solutions, only hypotheses. This was

their fifth Champions League in a row, and during those five finals they have trailed for a grand total of five minutes. This is a side that can ask questions quicker than any team on earth can answer them. Sit deep and they’ll pound you down. Meet them high and they’ll skewer you with pure pace, precise long balls and one of those richly condescending attacking moves that consists almost entirely of dummies. Keep it tight and invariably Wendie Renard will descend from the heavens to score the only goal of the game with a bullet-header and a scowl for wasting her time.

And yet, this is what makes Lyon so enduringly fascinating to watch: even in triumph, there’s an irresistible fragility to them. Even as they march deeper into the history books, solemnly building their empire, you can glimpse the seeds of its ultimate destruction. It is what makes them seem infallible and fallible all at once. They know that women’s football may never see another era of dominance like theirs. They know that one day one of the chasing pack, a giant of the European men’s game – perhaps Chelsea, or Barcelona, or Paris Saint-Germain

– will swallow them up, and kick the game further down the road in the process. But right now this is their time, this is their stage, and they alone are equipped to fill it.

In many ways, the crossroads at which Lyon currently find themselves is a microcosm of the broader conversation around women’s sport in the current age, a swirl of hope and optimism and doubt and vulnerability all at once.

What does success look like? Is it better to grow quickly or slowly? Can you run women’s sport along the same principles as men’s sport? And how do you build something in a landscape that (in recent times at least) has scarcely been more hostile, in a culture that seems more set than ever on your erasure?

This last question feels like the most pressing of all, given the way Covid-19 is threatening to claw back the gains that women’s sport has spent decades painstakingly winning. On Saturday, more than two months after the Premier League’s jet-powered project restart, domestic women’s football finally returned to this country with the Community Shield at

Wembley.

Rugby union’s leading women’s competition, the Premier 15s, is currently without a start date or a title sponsor. Meanwhile, England’s hastily arranged T20 series against the West Indies will be the only international women’s cricket in a summer where, miraculously, every single scheduled men’s fixture has been salvaged.

Even in tennis – individually by far the most lucrative of all women’s sports – the roll-back may be under way. Over the weekend Novak Djokovic launched his new Professional Tennis Players Association, a lobby group established to protect the interests of the world’s top-500 men’s players. Given Djokovic’s previous opposition to equal prize money in tennis (“women should fight for what they think they deserve, and we should fight for what we think we deserve”), it’s hard not to interpret this as an attempt to unpick one of the sport’s most cherished principles.

And above all, you get the sense that this inbuilt hostility to women’s sport is driven as much by ideology as it is by economics. You only have to read the comments on any women’s sport content

from a major media outlet, or the frothing misogyny that erupts whenever a woman so much as enters the conversation. This isn’t simple indifference, in the way that some are indifferent to snooker, or Formula One. It’s a genuine revulsion: the primal, guttural reaction of people who see in the mere presence of women’s sport a threat to their identity, their culture, their nauseating way of life.

This is partly why I find Lyon so powerful to watch. Occasionally you see them described as a cold, bloodless, winning machine. Yet in a year where sport has been grappling with its political dimension, we should remind ourselves that for most of history merely to exist as a woman in sport has been an overtly political act: a stand against those who want you cut down to size.

To play is to resist. When the world wants you servile, to occupy your platform, to claim your wage, to demand your stage is to make your own small protest. There are those who went before them, and those who will follow in their footsteps. But right now this is Lyon’s time, this is Lyon’s stage, and they alone are equipped to fill it.

# Zampa replaces Richardson in RCB

**DUBAI, SEPT 01 (PTI):** Royal Challengers Bangalore has named Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa as a replacement for his compatriot Kane Richardson, who pulled out of the IPL starting September 19 in the UAE.

Richardson opted out of the tournament to be with his wife for the birth of his first child. “We’re thrilled

to welcome Adam Zampa in RCB colours. He replaces Kane Richardson. Let’s #PlayBold Adam Zampa.” RCB tweeted on Monday night.

“The RCB family is excited for Kane and his wife who are expecting the birth of their first child and respect his decision to pull out of the tournament,” it added.

Zampa joins the likes of Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington

Sundar, Moeen Ali and Pawan Negi, strengthening the team’s spin attack.

“We are disappointed to not have Kane’s skills with us this IPL, as he was certainly on top of his game,” RCB team director Mike Hesson said.

“However, once we found out Kane and Nyki’s baby was due during the IPL, it’s an exciting time, and we were fully supportive

of Kane wanting to be at the birth of their first child.

Hesson felt Zampa also gives the side “extra options if conditions suit spin as expected during the tournament.”

This will be Zampa’s second stint in the IPL as he earlier played for the Rising Pune Supergiant.

The 28-year-old went unsold at the auction last year while

Richardson was bought for Rs 4 crore by RCB.

Both Richardson and Zampa are currently in the England as part of Australia’s squad for the white-ball tour.

The two teams are slated to play three T20Is and as many ODIs between September 4-16.

The 13th edition of IPL was shifted out of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Mexico's 'teflon' presidency loses some sheen but survives

**MEXICO CITY (AP):** For a president with a plunging economy and the world's fourth-highest number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths, Mexico's Andrés Manuel López Obrador isn't doing so badly.

In his second state-of-the-union address Tuesday, López Obrador is expected to tout his anti-corruption drive and public works projects, which are his two biggest obsessions, though few people think either will end up accomplishing much.

Surprisingly, he still gets 52% support for a coronavirus policy that amounts to little more than damage control with as little testing as possible and almost no contact tracing or mandatory lockdowns. It focuses instead on expanding the number of hospital beds.

"The handling of the pandemic has been tremendously bad," says Luis Miguel Pérez Juárez, a political science professor at the Monterrey Technological university, calling it "a joke" that the president almost never wears a mask.

The honeymoon for Mexico's "teflon" president is clearly over and he longer has the near sky-high approval ratings he once had. But according to a Reforma newspaper poll published Monday, López Obrador still has a 56% approval rating; that's down from a peak of 78% in March 2019. The in-person poll had a margin of error of 4



percentage points.

"Nobody has been able to hold him to better accounting on the real numbers" of coronavirus cases which are much higher than official figures because of a lack of testing, said Federico Estevez, a political science professor at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico.

"The people clearly recognize that things aren't going well, in the economy, on the streets," Estevez said, while noting that López Obrador still has majority support. "It doesn't hurt him."

Nor has López Obrador's anti-crime strategy been working; homicides are stuck at around 3,000 per month in this nation of almost 130 million inhabitants, about the same level as seen during the last two years. Drug cartels continue their bloody turf battles, and cocaine flights and fentanyl pill exports continue.

López Obrador hopes his main legacy will be going after corrupt

politicians who stole hundreds of millions of dollars in past administrations.

A lurid series of leaked videos and testimony in recent weeks has reinforced what most Mexicans have long thought — that former administrations were full of crooks — but they provide little legally admissible evidence. Most of the accusations, including videos of politicians handling suitcases full of cash, were made by a former state oil company director who himself hopes to avoid prison.

López Obrador "is using it very well, but the idea that this will allow him to get to the bottom and punish those responsible, I don't see that right now," said Jose Antonio Crespo, a political analyst at Mexico's Center for Economic Research and Training.

In fact, 58% of those surveyed in the

Reforma poll did not think the corruption cases would lead to any concrete results, while only 28% thought suspects would go to jail.

But with nothing to brag about on the economic front — GDP dropped 18.7% in the second quarter — the anti-graft campaign may be a key part of López Obrador's strategy for the 2021 midterm elections, in which he hopes to hold on to his bare majority in congress and win more governorships for his Morena party.

"This will be the central campaign strategy for 2021, to make the main issue the past, not the present," said Crespo. "The past of corruption in neo-liberal administrations that he is fighting, and not the present of unemployment, poverty, coronavirus deaths, drug gang violence; the present where there isn't too much to brag about."

With government funds less available next

year due to the economic collapse, López Obrador may compensate for reduced government largess by turning more nationalistic, on a route like that taken by populist governments in Poland and Hungary, Estevez noted: blame the "cosmopolitan elite" or foreign interference.

López Obrador has already given signs of that. Last week he accused environmentalist and Indigenous rights groups of being paid by foreign foundations to oppose his "Maya Train" project, a costly and barely feasible project to connect beach resorts, Mayan towns and archaeological sites on the Yucatan peninsula.

Like his construction of a massive oil refinery — at a time when oil prices are low and most countries are turning to renewables — the train has sparse domestic support, and has raised the ire of some Mayan communities.

But criticizing foreign influence is popular in Mexico. Recently enacted laws banning sales of junk food to minors have been carefully crafted to target U.S. companies' snacks and soft drinks, while exempting many calorie-laden Mexican treats.

"We're going to be heading toward straightforward appeals against the cosmopolitan elite," Estevez said. "In a crisis you go nationalistic, that's been a Mexican tradition."

## Pandemic brings hard times for farmers, worsening hunger



The coronavirus pandemic has brought hard times for many farmers and has imperiled food security for many millions both in the cities and the countryside.

United Nations experts are holding an online conference beginning Tuesday to brainstorm ways to help alleviate hunger and prevent the problems from worsening in the Asia-Pacific region — a challenge made doubly difficult by the loss of many millions of jobs due to the crisis.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization forecasts that the number of undernourished people will increase by up to 132 million in this year, while the number of acutely malnourished children will rise by 6.7 million worldwide due to the pandemic.

"We must come to terms with what is before us and recognize that the world and our region has changed," said Jong-Jin Kim, the FAO's assistant director-general and regional representative for Asia and the Pacific.

"We must find new ways to move forward and ensure sustainable food security in the face of these twin pandemics, as well as prepare for threats that can and will evolve in the future," Kim said.

Disruptions due to outbreaks of the illness and restrictions on businesses and travel to control them run the gamut, from crops going unharvested by migrant workers unable to reach their jobs to transport

problems to farm families selling livestock and equipment to survive, the FAO said in a report prepared ahead of the meeting.

The combined impacts of COVID-19, natural disasters such as typhoons and drought, diseases and pests such as locusts have highlighted the need to build stronger capacity to "manage multiple risks to food systems," the report said.

The FAO is urging faster deployment of high-tech tools such as drones and smartphone apps to monitor crops, pests and other farming conditions as part of a transformation of food systems to make them more resilient and reduce risks, especially for the most vulnerable small farmers in poor countries.

That includes food insecure places like Yemen, where the U.N. says more than a quarter of a million children are suffering from severe malnutrition and will die without treatment, and parts of Africa where nearly 5 million people are threatened with starvation due to locust outbreaks.

But long lines at food banks even in wealthy countries like the United States attest to the struggle to keep families fed with tens of millions newly unemployed.

In countries like Thailand, where tourism helps to keep the economy afloat, closed borders and cancelled commercial flights have had a ripple effect across many

industries.

The government has provided more than \$5 billion in emergency aid to more than 10 million farmers, the agriculture minister Pisan Pongsapitch told the conference.

But the loss of livelihoods is a long-term crisis.

The question is how to fix a broken food system, said one participant.

The FAO report released for the conference, sponsored by Bhutan, recommended providing loans to farmers to help them avoid selling their livestock and other assets to get by.

It noted that enterprising fishing villages in southern Thailand's Phuket have arranged barter deals with rice farmers in the northeast of the country. Some fisher folk in Indonesia unable to export their catches switched to netting more affordable fish that they can sell to local villages.

In many countries, farmers increasingly are using e-commerce and digital data to fine tune planting and other aspects of agriculture. Chinese e-commerce platforms are helping to match supply and demand for farm produce and other food.

On a smaller scale, FAO experts noted there were many potential home-grown solutions, literally, like farming using sacks or hydroponics, growing crickets for food and processing camels' milk to make cheese.

## Global shares mixed following Wall Street retreat

**TOKYO (AP):** Global shares meandered Tuesday after a retreat on Wall Street. France's CAC 40 was little changed, inching down less than 0.1% in early trading to 4,945.35. Germany's DAX added 0.6% to 13,018.55, while Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.7% to 5,921.03. U.S. shares were set for gains, with Dow futures up 0.2% at 28,481.0. S&P 500 futures rose nearly 0.4% to 3,511.38.

In Asia, Australia's benchmark led the declines, falling nearly 2% as the Reserve Bank of Australia decided to keep interest rates at record lows, as expected.

The Japanese government reported that the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July stood at 2.9%, little changed from recent months.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index was flat, finishing at 23,138.07, and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong also was little changed at 25,184.85. South Korea's Kospi gained 1.0% to 2,349.55.

The Shanghai Composite index added 0.4% to 3,410.61. The S&P/ASX 200 dropped 1.8% to 5,953.40.

"Stocks have had a choppy session in Asia, with investors shifting to and from between COVID resurgence, central bank stimulus, and the convincing economic rebound in China," said Stephen Innes, chief global market strategist at AxiCorp.

He noted that a survey of purchasing managers, the Caixin PMI, beat expectations at 53.1, the fastest rise in August for nearly a decade. The index is on a scale up to 100, with 50 being the cutoff between expansion and contraction.

Although the pandemic started in China, that economy has been among the first to rebound. Export-oriented nations in Asia



are likely to be instant beneficiaries of a China revival.

"This should provide a boost to local stocks as well as global commodity markets," Innes said.

Leaders of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party were negotiating over who will replace Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after he steps down.

Abe has announced he would resign due to health problems. Expectations are high his successor will continue the "Abenomics" policies he launched in early 2013, aimed at spurring growth through massive

central bank stimulus and cheap credit. Encouraging economic data as broad swaths of economies reopened this summer have helped stoke investor optimism about a recovery. The question is whether that's going to be enough to keep markets moving higher when so much uncertainty remains about the pandemic's lasting impact on companies and consumers.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil added 52 cents to \$43.13 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile

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# Ed Sheeran and wife Cherry announce birth of daughter Lyra



**LONDON (AP):** Ed Sheeran and his wife, Cherry, have announced the birth of their daughter, Lyra Antarctica Seaborn Sheeran.

The singer-songwriter said in an Instagram post that the couple's "beautiful and healthy daughter" was born last week.

"We are completely in love with her. Both mum and baby are doing amazing and we are on cloud nine over here," he wrote.

Sheeran, 29, and long-time girlfriend Cherry Seaborn married last year. Sheeran and Seaborn, 28, met at primary school in eastern England and announced their engagement in 2018.

At the end of 2019, Sheeran announced he was taking a break from work and social media after two years of touring in support of his best-selling album "Divide."

# 20 new sexual assault counts filed against adult film actor

**LOS ANGELES (AP):** Adult film star Ron Jeremy was charged Monday with 20 new counts of rape or sexual assault involving 12 women and a teenage girl, authorities said.

The charges came two months after the 67-year-old Jeremy was charged with the rape of three women and the sexual assault of a fourth.

Jeremy pleaded not guilty to the new charges in Los Angeles Superior Court and previously denied the earlier allegations.

Jeremy, whose legal name is Ronald Jeremy Hyatt, has been held in jail on \$6.6 million bail since June.

The new counts span 16 years, from 2004 to January of this year, when authorities say he sexually assaulted a 21-year-old woman outside a business in Hollywood.

The charges include five counts of forcible rape and six counts of sexual battery by restraint. They also include an allegation that he sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl at a party in 2004.

Six of the alleged assaults took place at a bar in West Hollywood where Jeremy was a regular,



prosecutors said.

After the previous charges were filed, Jeremy's attorney Stuart Goldfarb said he was "absolutely innocent." Goldfarb did not immediately reply to an email seeking comment on the new counts.

Investigators from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department put out a call for more possible victims to come forward when the initial charges were filed in June. Prosecutors said they received dozens of calls in the days that

followed.

The combined counts could bring sentences totaling more than 250 years in prison.

Jeremy, nicknamed "The Hedgehog," has been among the best known and most prolific performers in the adult film industry since the 1970s.

He was investigated and charged by a district attorney's task force formed to take on sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry as the #MeToo era gained momentum in late 2017.

## Johnny Depp Files for Defamation Case Delay to Film 'Fantastic Beasts 3'

Actor Johnny Depp has filed documents at the Fairfax County, Virginia, court to delay the defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard, so that he can proceed with filming for his role in "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them 3" in London.

Depp sued Heard in March, 2019, over an op-ed piece she wrote for the Washington Post titled "I spoke up against sexual violence — and faced our culture's wrath. That has to change" where he is not named. Under Virginia law, where the Post is printed, plaintiffs can sue for defamation by inference.

The court's current dates for the trial are Jan. 11 through Jan. 28, 2021. However, Warner Bros. is planning to commence principal photography for "Fantastic Beasts 3" from October in London and will finish only by the end of February 2021. Depp has requested the court to delay the hearing to a period between March and June, 2021.

The film is based on characters created by controversial "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling. Depp is due to reprise his character Gellert Grindelwald.



"When the Court set the current trial date in this case, Mr. Depp understood that Warner Bros. planned to shoot 'Fantastic Beasts 3' in London long before January 11, 2021," Depp's filing states. "COVID-19 disrupted the studio's plans, causing repeated postponements. With conditions in London having improved somewhat, Warner Bros. has now set a shooting schedule that conflicts with the trial date in this case."

Productions are restarting at a

rapid rate in the U.K. as the threat of coronavirus appear to have receded for the time being.

"Mr. Depp would face potential liability for breach of contract should he fail to comply with the schedule contractually dictated by Warner Bros.," the filing continues. "Though Mr. Depp is eager to proceed to trial, he faces an untenable situation over which he has no control."

A hearing on the filing will take place Sept. 11.

## Gucci Mane named in suit over South Carolina club shooting

**GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP):** Rappers Gucci Mane and Foogiano have been named in a wrongful death lawsuit filed on behalf of a 23-year-old woman who was fatally shot during a concert at a South Carolina nightclub.

The administrator for the estate of Mykala Bell filed the lawsuit in Greenville County last week, The Greenville News reported Monday.

The mother of two was standing near the stage when gunfire broke out in the early hours of July 5 at Lavish Lounge where Foogiano was performing, according to the lawsuit.



Security guard Clarence Sterling Johnson, 51, was also killed and eight others were injured, authorities have said.

Police charged Jarquez Kezavion Cooper, 22, in the shooting and said it appeared to be gang-related.

The lawsuit alleged that Foogiano and attendees

who came with him were not patted down before they entered the club and were allowed in with "deadly weapons."

The lawsuit said Gucci Mane was "believed to be" a promoter associated with the performance, though it did not say whether he was present at the event.

It also named Cooper, as well as the club's operating company, its owner and nearly a dozen other unspecified "owners, managers, operators, independent contractors, and/or security companies" accused of negligence for failing to provide adequate surveillance and security, and "permitting criminal activity," among other allegations.

The Greenville News said requests for comment from representatives for Gucci Mane and Foogiano were not immediately returned.



## RAIN ON ME! The singer, Ariana Grande delivers a top performance with Lady Gaga at the 2020 MTV Video Music Awards in New York City.

### ARIES:

Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh once said, "Many people are alive but don't touch the miracle of being alive." Just the words of wisdom you need to apply to your current circumstances. You've made so much progress over the past few months. Don't go back to the old ways. Rams who have been going back and forth with a certain someone are being asked to slow down and ask for a sign.

### TAURUS:

Have you really let go of the past and levelled up like you said you would? Word of warning, Taurus: you will be tested. Resist the urge to go back to the old way of life and direct your gaze towards what's coming up for you. Some of you may find yourself face-to-face with a toxic ex. Remember who you are, and what you are worth.

### GEMINI:

We all want to make it to the top, Gemini. But, what happens when the fame monster finds a way to control us? We lose sight of who we are, and our sacred mission on earth. Word for the wise: redirect your gaze towards what you came here to create. Let authenticity become your preferred choice of intoxicant today. Some of you may find that loneliness is catching up with you as well. Instead of numbing the pain, allow yourself to feel what's coming up in its entirety.

### CANCER:

How long are you going to play this game, Cancer? Every time they take a step towards you, you run in the opposite direction. Every time you get your act together, they decide to go MIA. Recognising how the runner-chaser dynamic is playing out in your life is the first step towards healing it.

### LEO:

Daily reminder, Leo: your desires are sacred and are coming through from the higher realms. The flashes you're receiving right now are indicating a parallel reality that is available to you in this moment. So, allow yourself to dream a little dream, but also have the courage to walk the talk. You're stepping into a brand new phase of your life where you will notice your manifestation abilities increase threefold.

### VIRGO:

Not everything we see, hear, and feel can be explained by the logical mind. How terribly boring would life be if we could! The cards are pointing towards the world of myths and mysteries and everything in between, which is opening up for you under the spell of this full moon. If you've been thinking about delving into the occult in a big way, this is your cue, Virgo. Invest in the right books and connect with teachers who can help you awaken to your inner wisdom.

### LIBRA:

Daily reminder, Libra: recognising what isn't in alignment with your truth is just as important as recognising what is. If you're holding onto a relationship that's bringing more tears than joy, it's time to relinquish the reins. Following the path of resistance will help you move to a better place.

### SCORPIO:

As somebody who's sensitive to energies, you fully understand the kind of havoc the full moon is capable of causing. Word of warning: you will be triggered. So, do what it takes to stay centred. Having a meditation or chanting practice will come in handy at this time. Some of you may find that your anger issues are coming to the surface.

### SAGITTARIUS:

Like your opposite sign, Gemini, you're warned against the fame monster as well. It's true that you are far more successful than most people your age. But, do you really want the success to get to you? The cards are urging you to focus on your mission and redirect your gaze towards what you came here to do.

### CAPRICORN:

Aren't you tired of constantly racing ahead? The cards are urging you to take a break from everything, including the BS in your own head. You don't need to wait until the weekend to put your feet up and devour your favourite book, cover to cover, as you

sip on a glass of red wine. Remember to follow a gadget-free policy as you do, and yes, your Instagram followers will live without your 'mindfulness' updates. Capricorns who are in a toxic relationship are being asked to recognise all the ways in which they are giving their power away.

### AQUARIUS:

The energy of the full moon is awakening a sense of optimism within you and encouraging you to embrace fullness of life. You're in the mood to dance to the cosmic rhythm; to celebrate each and every moment like it's a gift from the mysterious forces. The energy you're putting into the cosmos is also bringing about a positive shift in your existence. If you've been worried about things on the work and money front, trust that fate will intervene to set things right on your behalf.

### PISCES:

If you've been considering a career in music, now is the time to make a shift. Those who are already working in the field or in the process of discovering their 'gifts' are being given the affirmation that they are on the right path. Something magical is about to open for you. Lay your trust in the mysterious forces above. Remember, you are also blessed with the gift of intuition. If you've been feeling that something is 'off', don't doubt yourself. Journaling about your feelings is a good way to make sense of what's going on.