



PUNE MAN RECEIVES RS 19K EARBUDS INSTEAD OF RS 300 LOTION, AMAZON'S RESPONSE WINS HEARTS
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VIGGO MORTENSEN TO RETEAM WITH GREEN BOOK' DIRECTOR PETER FARRELLY

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Summit **T**IMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Sikkim detects 50 COVID-positive cases in one day, it now has 60 active cases

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Sikkim has been aggressively screening its returnees, especially those returning from COVID hot-spots across the country. Where RT-PCR testing, the only definitive test for Novel Coronavirus, is provided only to symptomatic patients, the State Government here has undertaken to extend RT-PCR testing to all returnees from hot-spots, laying special focus on those returning from Maharashtra. As a result, COVID-positive people are being detected early.

Today, for instance, Sikkim recorded its highest single-day detections with 50 new positive cases. While 14 cases were confirmed in the morning from tests conducted overnight, another set of 36 positive cases were confirmed in the evening from tests completed through the day.

All the 50 new cases are returnees and all were in quarantine centres.

With the addition of these cases, the total numbers of active COVID-19 cases in the State now stands at 60.

In a special health bulletin posted late Friday evening, Health Department Director General-cum-Secretary, Dr PT Bhutia informed that a total of 412 samples were put through RT-PCR testing at the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at STNM Hospital on Thursday of which 14 were found to be positive while 60 results were flagged as doubtful.



SIKKIM COVID-19 SPECIAL HEALTH BULLETIN

He informed that these 60 samples were run again today and 36 of these tested positive for COVID-19.

He informed that contact tracing for all the 50 new cases has begun.

Details of the 36 cases were still being collated at the time of going to print.

Meanwhile, providing details of the 14 earlier cases, Dr Bhutia informed that a two year old child was also among these 14.

Among 14 positive cases, 12 have returned from Maharashtra while two from West Bengal.

Dr Bhutia detailed that while nine of the 14 patients were quarantined at Bahai School-Ranipool, three were lodged at Epica Garden, also in Ranipool, and two at Paljor Namgyal Girls School.

About the youngest COVID-positive patient, Dr Bhutia informed that the child was quarantined at the PNGS centre along with its mother but the mother has tested negative. They had returned from Siliguri in a taxi till Rangpo.

Media reports meanwhile informed that another lady with a three year old child has also tested positive while her child is negative. This had left everyone in a quandary until a heartwarming resolution was worked out by the two mothers - they offered to look after each other's babies - the COVID-positive lady taking care of the two year old in the isolation ward while her child is in the care of the mother who had tested negative and is lodged in a quarantine facility.

This was not just a day for stressful news and moods should be uplifted by the fact that Sikkim's first and second COVID-19 patients tested negative in the second screening test as well today and will be discharged tomorrow.

Dr Bhutia further reassured Sikkim that the spike in the number of cases should not lead to fear as the authorities here were expecting the numbers to spike when returnees arrived from hotspot zones. Adequate preparations had already been put in place, he reiterated.

He added that all COVID-19 positive cases are asymptomatic thus far so currently the main focus was on observation and routine testing.

South-West Monsoon arrives in Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

South-West Monsoon has set in major parts of North Bengal, Sikkim and major portion of Gangetic West Bengal including Kolkata on Friday.

An IMD press release mentions that Southwest

Monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra & Marathwada, remaining parts of Telangana, some parts of Vidarbha, some more parts of Chhattisgarh, remaining parts of Bay of Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam & Meghalaya, most parts of Odisha & West Bengal and entire Sikkim.

Educational Institutions to reopen in August

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

In a high-level meeting of the State Task Force chaired by the Chief Minister, PS Tamang today, the decision was taken to reopen educational institutions in Sikkim during the first week of August, 2020, a press release from the Education Department informs.

Earlier, educational institutions in Sikkim were likely to open on 01 July, 2020.

"However, given the current rise in the cases of COVID-19 infection and further need of abundant precaution, decision of reopening of educational institutions on July 01, 2020 has been rethought now," the release states.

The reopening of educational institutions including all schools, colleges, universities, Teacher Education Institutes and private educational establishments would be in compliance with the UGC and the central government directives.

Meanwhile, examination on some more subjects of the CBSE are scheduled for July 2020, such

examinations will be conducted in all the Senior Secondary Schools in Sikkim. The CBSE has declared all Senior Secondary Schools as examination centres now in order to maintain social distancing and avoid commuting to a common centre.

Given the fact that there are students appearing in examinations in Sikkim side from across the border, the Department has already instructed the candidates to apply for change of examination centres in the CBSE districts where they are currently stranded. Therefore, Sikkimese students of West Bengal side have the option to appear at a centre in Kalimpong or Darjeeling districts or wherever they are, the release mentions.

Most of the candidates have already opted for change of centres. Those who have applied for entry in to Sikkim side have to undergo quarantine and write examinations. A third option is to transport those who could not avail the other two options. There are very few such candidates for this option.

SJA convenes discussion for better research on web based legal portals

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Sikkim Judicial organized two days discussion with the technical team for better research on web based legal portals on 06 and 07 Mar, 2020. The Chief Judicial Magistrates and Judicial Magistrates attended the programme on 6th March while on the 07 March District & Sessions Judges were the participants. There were two sessions on both the days. The First Session was on Research on SCC Online. The Resource Person was Regional Manager, Sumit Dhawan, East

Region Eastern Book Company Pvt Ltd, New Delhi. The second session was on Research on Manupatra. The Resource Person was Assistant Manager, Lochan Kumar Hazarika, Manupatra, Guwahati.

In both the sessions the Resource Persons apprised on the various features of their Research sites. They also explained the various methods to carry out effective research in an efficient manner on their site. During the programme, the Resource Persons were able to clarify the doubts and problems faced by the participants.

Coronavirus cases in Maharashtra cross one lakh-mark

MUMBAI, JUN 12 (PTI): The number of coronavirus cases in Maharashtra on Friday crossed the one lakh-mark, a grim milestone, with the tally reaching 1,01,141 as 3,493 new patients came to light, the state health department said.

The death toll rose to 3,717 with 127 new deaths being recorded.

1,718 patients were discharged after recovery during the day, taking the number of recovered patients in the state to 47,796, the health department said in a release.

The worst-affected Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) accounts for 75,658 cases and 2,563 deaths. The Mumbai city alone has reported 55,451 coronavirus cases and 2,044 deaths.

Of the 127 deaths recorded on Friday, 50 deaths occurred in the last two days while the rest took place between May 20 to June nine.

The release said that out of 127 deaths, 106 were reported in MMR including 90 in Mumbai alone.

So far 6,24, 977 people have been tested for

coronavirus in the state, the statement added.

5,79,569 people are in home quarantine and 28,200 are in institutional quarantine.

There are 75,067 hospital beds available in 1,553 institutional quarantine facilities.

The state's mortality rate is 3.7 percent and the recovery rate is 47.3 percent, said the health department.

Among other hotspots, Malegaon city has reported 865 cases and 65 deaths, Jalgaon district 1,197 cases and 105 deaths while Jalgaon city has reported 347 cases and 15 deaths.

Pune city has reported 9,581 cases and 419 deaths, Solapur city 1,501 cases and 113 deaths, Satara 717 cases and 27 deaths, Aurangabad city 2,351 cases and 123 deaths, Akola city 906 cases and 34 deaths, Nagpur city 903 cases and 12 deaths.

The state's COVID-19 figures are as follows: Positive cases 1,01,141, New cases 3,493, Recovered patients 47,796, Deaths 3,717, Active cases 49,628, People tested so far 6,24,977.

India records over 10,000 COVID-19 cases in single day, tally nears 3 lakh

NEW DELHI, JUNE 12 (PTI): For the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak, India recorded over 10,000 new cases in a day taking the tally to 2,97,535, while the death toll rose to 8,498 with a record single-day spike of 396 fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The country has registered 10,956 new coronavirus infections in the last 24 hours till Friday 8 am.

India on Thursday went past the United Kingdom to become the fourth worst-hit nation by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Worldometer.

The number of active cases stands at 1,41,842, while 1,47,194 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said.

"Thus, around 49.47 per cent patients have recovered so far," an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases include foreigners.

Of the 396 new deaths reported till Friday morning, 152 were in Maharashtra, 101 in Delhi, 38 in

Gujarat, 24 in Uttar Pradesh, 23 in Tamil Nadu, 12 in Haryana, 10 in West Bengal, nine in Telangana, six in Rajasthan, four each in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, three each in Bihar and Karnataka, two each in Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Puducherry and one in Jammu and Kashmir.

Out of the total 8,498 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 3,590 deaths followed by Gujarat with 1,385 deaths, Delhi with 1,085, West Bengal with 442, Madhya Pradesh with 431, Tamil Nadu with 349, Uttar Pradesh with 345, Rajasthan with 265 and Telangana with 165 deaths.

The death toll reached 80 in Andhra Pradesh, 72 in Karnataka, 64 in Haryana and 59 in Punjab.

Jammu and Kashmir has reported 52 fatalities due to the coronavirus disease, while 36 deaths have been reported from Bihar, 18 from Kerala, 15 from Uttarakhand, nine from Odisha and eight from Jharkhand.

Chhattisgarh,

Assam and Himachal Pradesh have registered six COVID-19 fatalities each, Chandigarh has five, Puducherry has two, while Meghalaya, Tripura and Ladakh have reported one COVID-19 fatality each, according to ministry data.

More than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to comorbidities, the ministry's website stated.

The highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 97,648 followed by Tamil Nadu at 38,716, Delhi at 34,687, Gujarat at 22,032, Uttar Pradesh at 12,088, Rajasthan at 11,838 and Madhya Pradesh at 10,241, according to the health ministry's data updated in the morning.

The number of COVID-19 cases has gone up to 9,768 in West Bengal, 6,245 in Karnataka, 5,983 in Bihar and 5,968 in Haryana.

It has risen to 5,429 in Andhra Pradesh, 4,574 in Jammu and Kashmir, 4,320 in Telangana and 3,386 in Odisha.

Assam has reported 3,319 novel coronavirus

cases so far while Punjab has 2,887 cases. A total of 2,244 people have been infected by the virus in Kerala and 1,643 in Uttarakhand.

Jharkhand has registered 1,599 cases, while 1,398 cases have been reported from Chhattisgarh, 913 from Tripura, 470 from Himachal Pradesh, 417 from Goa, 366 from Manipur and 332 from Chandigarh.

Puducherry has 157 COVID-19 cases, Ladakh has 135, Nagaland has 128, Mizoram has 102, Arunachal Pradesh has 61, Meghalaya 44 while Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 38 infections so far.

Sikkim has reported 14 cases, while Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu together have reported 30 infections.

The ministry's website said that 8,315 cases are being reassigned to states and "our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR".

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

ICSE says it will conduct std 10 exams in Maha in July

MUMBAI, JUN 12 (PTI): The Indian School Certificate Examination (ICSE) board on Friday told the Bombay High Court that it would be holding its standard 10th examinations in July with all safety precautions.

The Maharashtra government, on the other hand, said that holding exams now was not feasible in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told the court that the COVID-19 situation in the state was serious

and hence it would not be feasible to hold examination for pending ICSE papers.

The central board in its affidavit, however, argued that it does not require the state government's permission to conduct the examinations.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice S S Shinde was hearing a petition filed by Arvind Tiwari challenging the ICSE's decision to hold std 10 examinations from July 2 to July 12

across Maharashtra. Initially, the exams were scheduled between February 27 to March 30, but exams from March 19 onwards were canceled due to the COVID-19 scare.

Tiwari in his petition claimed that since the number of COVID-19 cases is still on the rise it would be appropriate to declare results based on a graduation and assessment of past performance of students in internal exams.

226 schools in Maharashtra are

affiliated to ICSE. 23,347 students were scheduled to appear for the 10th standard examinations.

The board in its affidavit said that after relaxation of lockdown, it decided to hold the pending examinations.

However, on June 3 it received a communication from the Maharashtra school education department stating that it would not be possible for the state government to grant permission for the exams.

Doctor Safe team sanitizes Mamring

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Doctor Safe team of Mount Distilleries Limited Majhitar, East Sikkim carried out a sanitation drive at Mamring, South Sikkim, today, a press release informs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state government has issued an order that all vehicles going to West Sikkim, as

well as those traveling North or East from West district have to pass through this route. The sanitization drive started from Mamring Bridge.

Welcoming the initiative, Minister of Transport, Sanjit Kharel, including Area MLA expressed his heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all the team members and management.



SDF condemns attack on spokesperson

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Sikkim Democratic Front party has strongly criticised and condemned the attack on its spokesperson, JB Darnal allegedly by two youths here at Indira Bypass road on Friday afternoon. The party has demanded immediate and strict legal action

against the accused.

An SDF press release informs that the party spokesperson, Mr Darnal has suffered a life-threatening attack by two youths at around 2:55 PM this afternoon at Indira Bypass Road. The party has condemned that the attack happened in broad daylight in the presence of many

people.

The release alleges that Mr Darnal has repeatedly exposed the weakness of the state government and has been criticising the government in the interest of Sikkim and its people so the attack on him is a big attack on the freedom of expression and democracy.



Meeting held on Loan Mela for farmers

GYALSHING, 12 JUN (IPR):

As per the directions of Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture and IPR, Lok Nath Sharma a meeting was held today regarding Loan Mela for Gyalshing-Bermiok, Yuksom-Tashiding and Maneybong Deitam constituency at the Conference Hall, District Administrative Centre, West Sikkim.

The meeting was chaired by DC West, Karma R. Bonpo accompanied by

I. Y. T. Namcho, Assistant General Manager, Reserve Bank of India, Dr. N.M Cintury, Addl. Director (AH, LF & VS), T. N Bhutia, JD/Agriculture, Pradip Bhandari (State Loan Consultant), along with branch managers of various



banks in the district, Panchayats, SHGs and other dignitaries.

During the meeting all the schemes related for the benefits of farmers like KCC, DEES, MUDRA, MSME, etc. were discussed in details aiming to provide adequate and timely credit support from the banks to the farmers for their

cultivation.

During the deliberation, DC West stated that the farmers need to be properly sensitized about the loan schemes hence all the banks must support and educate them properly before processing the loan. He also advised that priority needs to be given to the progressive

farmers. While giving KCC loan, the fasalbima (Crop insurance) must be made mandatory to reduce the defaulters and to cope up the loss of the farmers.

Stressing on the milk production, he mentioned that the West District has the potential of being the majority stakeholder in the milk production

arena within the state. He also stated that in the field of milk production NABARD should lend separate subsidy to West District for motivation and support to the progressive farmers.

Mr Namcho, AGM/RBI apprised the house about the guidelines of RBI and said that every loan must be disbursed according to RBI guidelines and every Wednesday is kept as farmers meet and farmers query day.

At the outset, Mr Pradip Bhandari State loan consultant brief the house in details about the schemes like KCC, DEES, MSME and MUDRA. He also keep his valuable suggestions and ideas for the support and development of the farmers.

Retina – What We Must Know About it

DR TSHERING WANGCHUK BHUTIA

The retina is the innermost, light-sensitive layer of tissue of the eye of most vertebrates. The optics of the eye create a focused two-dimensional image of the visual world on the retina, which translates that image into electrical neural impulses to the brain to create visual perception. It serves a function similar to that of the film or image sensor in a camera.

It is the retina which responds to bright light and mediate high-resolution colour vision during daylight illumination (also called photopic vision) and respond to dim light and mediate lower-resolution, monochromatic vision under very low levels of illumination (called scotopic vision).

Also, it is the series of ongoing activities in the retina which helps us to identify the colours around us and therefore responsible for our colour vision.

This complex structure however is affected in a multitude of disease conditions which could lead to sight threatening situation. It affects the young and the old likewise.

VITREO RETINA is a subspecialty of Ophthalmology and it deals with the medical as well as the surgical management of the conditions affecting the vitreous and retina. It is the branch of medical science which is constantly upgrading itself over the recent years in terms of diagnosis and management.

Few of the eye and systemic conditions that involve the retina are discussed below.

1. DIABETES AND EYE

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a global epidemic with significant morbidity. Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is the specific microvascular complication of DM and affects 1 in 3 persons with DM. DR remains a leading cause of vision loss in working adult populations. Patients with severe levels of DR are reported to have poorer quality of life and reduced levels of physical, emotional and social well-being and they utilize more health care resources.

Epidemiological data from India suggests the prevalence of DR is 18% in the urban and 10.4% in the rural India. It means DR is found in every 5th person with diabetes in the urban and in every 10th person with diabetes in the rural areas of India.

ADVANCED DIABETIC EYE DISEASE

Every Diabetic must get his eye examined thoroughly regularly so as to know the status of his eye so that a proper

intervention in the form of medicines, intra vitreal injections, Lasers or surgery could be done at the right time. Here at STNM Multispecialty hospital, we thoroughly screen diabetic patients on everyday basis and we have started with intravitreal eye injections in our hospital. We also soon hope to start with the laser and surgical facilities very soon. Early screening and appropriate management helps the patient from getting blind.

2. RETINAL VEIN OCCLUSIONS

Retinal vein occlusion (RVO) is the second most common retinal vascular disorder after diabetic retinopathy. Retinal vein occlusions are divided into central (CRVO), hemi (HRVO), and branch retinal vein occlusions (BRVO). BRVO is a venous occlusion at any branch of the central retinal vein. Appropriate intervention has to be carried out to save the vision.

BRVO has many known ophthalmic and systemic risk factors including age, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, ocular hypertension, and glaucoma.

3. AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATIONS

Age-related macular degeneration is the most common cause of sight impairment in those aged over 50. It causes a gradual loss of central vision, which we need for detailed work and for things like reading and driving. Edge vision (peripheral vision) is not lost.

4. RETINOPATHY OF PREMATURITY SCREENING

Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) is an eye disease that can happen in premature babies. It causes abnormal blood vessels to grow in the retina, and can lead to blindness. As such every preterm baby is routinely screened for specific management.

The retina is also affected in multiple other disease and conditions for example in high myopes, people with infections like tuberculosis, HIV AIDS, rheumatological problems and also those who are on long term medications.

We at STNM Multispecialty hospital are working forward to give our best service to the people of Sikkim. And also hoping to start with the laser and surgical facilities very soon.

[The writer is MS, FAS, FVRS, VITREO RETINA SPECIALIST STNM MULTI SPECIALTY HOSPITAL]



SMU awards PhD to SMIMS faculty member

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) has awarded Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Anatomy to Thoudam Bedita Devi, a teaching faculty of Department of Anatomy, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS) for her thesis "Secular Trend in the Cephalometric Characters of the Meitei Males of Manipur Valley", a press release informs.

The PhD was awarded on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners of the Sikkim Manipal University in the Open Defence Viva-Voce Examination conducted on 08 Jun, 2020 through Online Video - Conferencing mode (Microsoft Team) involving expert examiner from a Foreign



University.

She pursued her research work under the Supervision of Prof & Head, (Dr) Binod Kumar Tamang, Department of

Anatomy, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Health & Medical Sciences, Prof & Head, (Dr) S Jibonkumar Singh, Department of Anthropology, Central

University, Manipur and Prof & Head, (Dr) ThNaranbabu Singh, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal, Manipur.

The Doctor of Philosophy will be awarded to her during the next Convocation of Sikkim Manipal University (SMU).

Plantation drive begins in Rhenock

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUN:

Plantation of 1000 saplings was launched at Rhenock by Area MLA, BK Khatiwara, today in a programme organised by Rongli SubDivision Forest (Territorial) at Rhenock Forest office.

ACF (T), BS Tamang briefed about this Sikkim Government plantation programme in a welcome address while the MLA talked about the importance of plantation drives.



ICSE says it will conduct std 10 exams in Maha in July

MUMBAI, JUN 12 (PTI):

The Indian School Certificate Examination (ICSE) board on Friday told the Bombay High Court that it would be holding its standard 10th examinations in July with all safety precautions.

The Maharashtra government, on the other hand, said that holding exams now was not feasible in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told the court that the COVID-19 situation in the state was serious and hence it would not be feasible to hold examination for pending ICSE papers.

The central board in its affidavit, however, argued that it does not require the state government's permission to conduct the examinations.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice S S Shinde was hearing a petition filed by Arvind Tiwari challenging the ICSE's decision to hold std 10 examinations from

July 2 to July 12 across Maharashtra.

Initially, the exams were scheduled between February 27 to March 30, but exams from March 19 onwards were canceled due to the COVID-19 scare.

Tiwari in his petition claimed that since the number of COVID-19 cases is still on the rise it would be appropriate to declare results based on a gradation and assessment of past performance of students in internal exams.

226 schools in Maharashtra are affiliated to ICSE.

23,347 students were scheduled to appear for the 10th standard examinations.

The board in its affidavit said that after relaxation of lockdown, it decided to hold the pending examinations.

However, on June 3 it received a communication from

the Maharashtra school education department stating that it would not be possible for the state government to grant permission for the exams.

The state government requested the ICSE board to either postpone its exams or rely on internal assessment.

The ICSE, however, was of the opinion that examinations had to be held and told the court that all safety measures would be undertaken.

If a student is unable to attend the exam because he or she is suffering from COVID-19 or a family member is suffering from it, or if he or she is residing in a containment zone, such student can appear for re-examination in September 2020, the board said.

The court posted the matter for further hearing next week.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

Contact: 980201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

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CM attends webinar on e-Office in North-Eastern States

GANGTOK, 12 JUN (IPR): A workshop on the implementation of e-Office in the North Eastern States was convened today through webinar under the Chairmanship of Minister of State (PP), Dr Jitendra Singh, DoNER, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, and Department of Atomic Energy and Space, Government of India.



The Chief Ministers, IT Ministers, Senior Officers of all the North-East States participated in the workshop.

The Government of Sikkim was represented by the Chief Minister, MP Lok Sabha, MLA Sorong, Chief Secretary, Secretary to CM, Secretary IT, Secretary DOP, SIO NIC and other officers of the State Government.

The workshop was conducted duly focusing on the flagship programme of the Government of India-Digital India (e-Office) in all the North Eastern

States which seems to have gained significant importance during the pandemic.

The Chief Minister thanked the Minister for organizing this workshop exclusively for the North-East States. He presented the status of Information Technology in Sikkim along with the challenges faced by the state and proposed initiatives for improving the IT penetration in the region. He highlighted

some of the initiatives to be taken up by the State Government on priority which are as follows:-

1. Last-mile internet connectivity up to GPU level and video conferencing system.
2. Upgradation of State Data Centre.
3. Training of Government officials and staff for rolling out E-Office.
4. Citizen Facilitation Centre up to Block level.
5. A surveillance system to be installed.

6. E-governance initiatives in all departments.

7. Creation of IT parks.

Further, he sought support from the Ministry to roll out various IT based projects in the State and also assured of submission of projects within a week.

The Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh apprised that the State will see the light of an Independent

Administrative Command and Control Centre which had earlier been placed to the Ministry of Information Technology (IT). He directed Secretary, DoNER to pursue the matter with Secretary, IT immediately. He also reiterated the importance of Shillong Declaration and its contents propagating e-Office, paperless office and Quality Digital Citizen-Centric Services.

Further, a Joint Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of DoNER and representatives from Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, IT, NIC, NEC and concerned States shall be constituted to fast track various IT initiatives in the North East States. The deadline for setting up e-Offices across North-Eastern states is 2022. The success of IT will also facilitate the resurgence of the economy in the States.

Workshop on Video Conferencing organised by SJA

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 12 JUN: Sikkim Judicial Academy organised a workshop on "Use of Video Conferencing Facility" for Judicial Officers on 06 Jun, 2020. The resource person during the workshop was Registrar General, Karma Wangchuk Bhutia, High Court of Sikkim, a press release informs.

The Workshop was conducted over Video Conference. The Resource Person gave a brief overview of the E-Courts Project and discussed the technical aspects in Video Conferencing. It was informed that 2007 saw the commencement of the E-courts Project in the country.

Phase-I of the Project was primarily concentrated on providing computer

hardwares to the Courts of the country. In Phase-II apart from Courts, Judicial Academies and State Legal Services Authority were also included in the E-Courts Project. Further, Phase-II also concentrated on connecting Courts and Prisons.

It was informed that on 20 Sept, 2017 Sikkim was the only State in the country to have successfully connected the Courts with the Prisons. The High Court of Sikkim had also issued guidelines to carry remand over Video Conference of the inmates housed in the Prisons.

The Resource Person also apprised on the Case Information System (CIS). It was informed that in CIS- 3.0, the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) has

been launched which enables live exchange of data between the Courts, Prison, Forensic Laboratory and Police. It was informed that in Sikkim as of now the Courts have been connected with the Police. With the help of ICJS, it would become very easy to monitor cases.

The resource person then discussed the rules for video conferencing for Courts, 2020 notified by the High Court of Sikkim on 3rd June 2020. The Rules spells out the procedure in detail of cases conducted using the Video Conference Facility. Resource person also shared some of the Landmark judgments of the Supreme Court of India which upheld the usage of video conferencing facility in court proceedings.

HC asks North DMC to pay salaries of its resident doctors

NEW DELHI, JUN 12 (PTI): The Delhi High Court Friday directed North Delhi Municipal Corporation (North-DMC) to pay by June 19 the salary for March to the resident doctors in its six hospitals, including Kasturba Gandhi and Hindu Rao.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan also asked the Delhi government to release funds to North DMC so that it can pay the April salary of the resident doctors of its hospitals by June 24.

The bench also issued notice to the Centre, Delhi government, North

DMC and various doctors' association seeking their stand on the PIL initiated by the high court on its own.

The detailed order is awaited in the matter which is listed for further hearing on July 8.

Delhi government was represented by Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain and additional standing counsel Satyakam, while the Centre was represented by its standing counsel Anil Soni.

Satyakam and Soni said the amount to be paid, each month, to the resident doctors of the six North DMC hospitals

comes to around Rs 8 crore.

The high court on Thursday initiated the PIL based on news reports that doctors of Kasturba Gandhi Hospital have threatened to resign as they have not been paid salaries since March this year.

The news reports also stated that recently doctors of North MCD-run Hindu Rao hospital had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over non-payment of their salaries for last three months.

The court took suo motu notice of the news reports and initiated the PIL.

SICA discusses preparations for upcoming season

SUMMIT REPORT

Gangtok, 11 Jun: Following lockdown relaxations, Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) Executives have started their district tour to meet the district bodies and players, and to discuss resumption of training and preparation for the upcoming season, a press release informs.

SICA is awaiting Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the calendar of events for the current season.

However, currently the players are in contact via the internet with



their trainers, coaches, physiotherapists and it has been noticed that very few players are participating in the Webinars. The

office mandates 100% attendance of the players in such Webinars now onwards, the release mentions. On Thursday,

SICA executives, president, Lobsang Tenzing, vice president, Karma Gelay Dorjee, secretary, Tshewang Lama

and treasurer, Naresh Kr Agarwal met the North District Cricket Association (NDCA) and North District Players at Mangan, North Sikkim. Various issues were discussed and a plan of action is being formulated to improve cricket in the Schools and District levels. For a start, NDCA has been sanctioned three concrete pitches with net facilities along with bowling machines.

The next meeting of the district will be held for East District, followed by subsequent meetings with the West and South District Cricket Associations.

Junior doctors give up stir in Hyderabad, resume duty

HYDERABAD, JUN 12 (PTI): Junior doctors at the state-run Gandhi Hospital here, who struck work from June 9 in protest against the attack on a doctor by kin of a deceased COVID-19 patient and over their demands, including decentralisation of coronavirus patients' treatment, resumed duty on Friday after health minister E Rajender's assurance to address grievances.

Gandhi hospital Junior Doctors Association (JUDA) president Lohith Reddy

told PTI that they have resumed duty.

"Keeping public health in consideration, especially in view of the pandemic we are fighting and trusting the ministers reassuring words, JUDA has decided to conditionally call off the strike and resume duties with immediate effect," the Association said in a release.

The management of SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infections) and treatment of symptomatic COVID-19 patients would be decentralized and

provision made for treating of such cases in respective district hospitals and all private medical colleges, it said.

The minister assured that recruitment of Special Protection Force (SPF) as per a previous Government Order was underway and would be provided soon in all government medical colleges/hospitals, the release said.

As discussed with the minister, JUDA would form a committee, which would follow up with him regularly (through video

conferencing) for the next 15 days, on updates of their demands, it said.

"We are hopeful that the honble health minister shall personally take care of these demands so that we dont have to boycott duties again in a more intensive manner after 15 days," it said.

The junior doctors began their agitation on Tuesday night following an attack on a duty doctor by the kin of a deceased COVID-19 patient.

Two people who allegedly assaulted the doctor have been

arrested, a police official said on Wednesday.

The Minister, who condemned the attack, had held talks with the junior doctors and assured that their problems would be resolved.

They, however, continued their agitation on Thursday.

As Gandhi hospital is the only government hospital where COVID-19 patients are treated, the junior doctors wanted it to be decentralized, allowing other hospitals in the state also to treat patients.

Waiver of interest charged during moratorium: SC asks Centre, RBI to hold meet in three days

NEW DELHI, JUN 12 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India to hold a meeting within three days to decide on waiver of interest on interest for deferred payments of instalments for loans during the moratorium period announced in wake of the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

The court was hearing a plea filed by a Agra resident on the issue.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, S K Kaul and M R Shah said the question is not of waiver of complete interest for entire moratorium period but it is limited only to interest charged on interest by banks.

It posted the matter for further hearing next week. During the hearing, the

bench said that it is trying to take a balanced view of the matter, and only wants that wider measures should be adopted.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said that he had sought a meeting with the RBI.

The bench said that if the RBI reply "goes much beyond the query posed by us there will be a lot of opinions on it".

Our query is very limited on whether there can be waiver of interest on interest, it said.

It asked the Centre to file an affidavit after holding the meeting with the RBI on the decision taken.

The bench was hearing a plea filed by Gajendra Sharma, in which he has sought a direction to declare the portion of the RBI's March 27 notification "as ultra vires to

the extent it charges interest on the loan amount during the moratorium period, which create hardship to the petitioner being borrower and creates hindrance and obstruction in 'right to life' guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution of India".

Sharma has also sought a direction to the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to provide relief in repayment of loan by not charging interest during the moratorium period.

On June 4, the top court had sought the Finance Ministry's reply on waiver of interest on loans during the moratorium period after the RBI said it would not be prudent to go for a forced waiver of interest risking financial viability of the banks.

The top court had said there are two aspects under consideration in this matter - no interest payment

on loans during the moratorium period and no interest to be charged on interest.

It had said that these are challenging times and it is a serious issue as on the one hand, moratorium is granted and on other hand, interest is charged on loans.

On May 26, the top court had asked the Centre and the RBI to respond to the plea challenging levy of interest on loans during the moratorium period.

The RBI in its reply has told the top court that it is taking all possible measures to provide relief with regard to debt repayments on account of the fallout of COVID-19 but it does not consider it prudent to go for a forced waiver of interest, risking the financial viability of the banks it is mandated to regulate, and putting the interests of the depositors in jeopardy.



What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

<p>Symptoms of nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	<p>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands often with soap. ● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer ● Observe good personal hygiene. ● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. ● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms. ● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats. ● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places. ● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome. and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition. ● No vaccinations available as of now ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected 	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104</p> <p>District surveillance Officer</p> <p>EAST : 7028372100</p> <p>WEST : 9583297809</p> <p>NORTH : 9641957468</p> <p>SOUTH : 7407681463</p> <p>New STNM</p> <p>AMS : 9434711402</p>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

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Make Space for People in the Public Domain

Enough of dictating terms while pretending to confer

Certificates of Identification, Old Laws, land acquisition, statehood, identity chauvinism, territorial integrity, seat reservation, evacuation of stranded Sikkimese... these are some of the issues that have been traditionally been in the news here. There have been many comments issued in the public domain on these matters, but start scratching the nature of reactions and it quickly becomes apparent that most of the voices come out from the same bouquet of opinionators. Public opinion is claimed by those who have traditionally usurped the privilege to speak from the people, an empowerment which now allows them to dictate even though they might be claiming to be conferring and set the agenda even when they are supposedly trying to build consensus.

There is a small clutch of voices which occupies the public domain and while there is nothing wrong in holding opinions and broadcasting them, the quality of debate suffers in the absence of variety or new voices. The region, unfortunately, is afflicted by a paucity of representative voices which can claim to be genuinely speaking for a wide section of people. The public space is monopolised by political viewpoints, each comment anchored in the political position projecting the view. It does not help that political personalities and leanings infiltrate other organisations with ease and get their views echoed from there as well. The ruling and the Opposition groups and all sections and fronts aligned with either of them react on expected lines and never surprise with the positions they take and rarely enlighten with lucid explanations or justifications. And no, they stopped explaining their actions a long time ago.

The priority for them is to embarrass or dominate the other side and this they pursue with spite instead of reason. The media allows them the platform to exchange their barbs, and while all of this can be very entertaining, it is rarely informative. Refer to the short list with which this piece begins and it becomes obvious that though many allegations, counter allegations, justifications and claims have been made on these issues, the issues themselves remain largely under-explained and widely misunderstood. Because the political voices get so belligerent in these debates, the unattached voices hesitate from entering the discussions because that would attract immediate political branding which most apolitical stances would be uncomfortable with. It is time that this hesitation was overcome, because the people's right to know and understand is suffering as a result.

The process can be initiated if genuinely apolitical groups and organisations, even social organisations, overcame their passivity and engaged more energetically on issues that concerned the people, tried to understand them better and then shared their informed stands. Until that happens, as far as the people are concerned, they will view debates on all issues only as rants and counter-rants between political opponents, not as important discussions which could affect them.

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Coronavirus: the psychological impact of 'shielding' indoors – and how to move on

JO DANIELS

THECONVERSATION.COM

For the last three months, around two million people have "shielded" themselves against the novel coronavirus by staying indoors, on recommendation of the UK government. On May 31, however, the guidelines were updated to enable those who are clinically vulnerable to go outdoors if they wish. But they must remain vigilant and won't be able to visit their loved ones under new plans to ease restrictions by creating "support bubbles".

It's not hard to see that spending so long stuck indoors worrying about a potentially fatal infection must be hard to cope with psychologically. The new measures may indeed be a source of further anxiety rather than relief for shielders – particularly when you consider that, of those who have died as a result of COVID-19, 91% had a pre-existing health condition.

Other factors that contribute to psychological harm for this group include coping with cancelled clinics, difficulties accessing medication, reduced exercise and lowered mood. Some perceive they are being stigmatised as a result of being forced to disclose to others that they are clinically vulnerable. Despite this, shielders have been largely neglected in government briefings and news items.

While many clinically vulnerable people ultimately feel safe at home during the pandemic, studies looking at the psychological impact of patient isolation report high levels of fear, loneliness, boredom and anger. This is especially relevant for over 70s, many of whom will already be struggling with social isolation, multiple health problems and compromised mobility. This is concerning, as loneliness is associated with higher mortality rates, particularly in the older population.



So being able to step outdoors should come as good news. The outdoors can offer pleasurable activities to elevate mood, social support and independence. These things could kick-start the virtuous cycle of doing more enjoyable activities that make you feel good, resulting in improved mood and increasing motivation to do more.

But is this enough of an incentive to step outside the safe zone of the home? Many are fearful.

BARRIERS TO THE OUTSIDE

Around half of people with medical conditions already struggle with anxiety and/or depression. So it is very likely that, in the context of a global health threat, those shielding will see further deterioration in their mental health. This can come with a lack of motivation and create a barrier to taking those first steps outside.

For those with underlying health problems, it is vitally important to maintain vigilance, both in terms of precautionary measures and checking physical symptoms. But this can easily become excessive, which can serve to increase anxiety and, in turn, physiological symptoms. This is a vicious cycle that can make people avoid going outdoors.

And when we avoid something due to anxiety, we stop ourselves

from finding out what would have happened had we persevered. We didn't get to see that it would have been ok – strange, overwhelming, but psychologically survivable.

OVERCOMING FEARS

It is important that those who have been shielding keep following advice and safety precautions – do no more, no less. But even though it may feel hard, these people can go out. For most, it is about becoming used to the new experience of being outdoors. Once the first unexpected close encounter is dealt with, things may start to feel easier.

When it doesn't, it can help to accept and understand your anxiety. Anxiety presents as worries about what might happen next, but also in many physiological ways such as palpitations, shakiness, chest tightening – this is adrenalin and caused by the fear response. Fear is a normal response to an abnormal situation. You can begin to tackle it with coping strategies such as physical exercise, breathing exercises/meditation and challenging unhelpful thoughts.

It is important to keep our thoughts accurate and in perspective, stay in the here and now and treat ourselves with self-compassion when things don't go as planned.

For the most anxious, a gradual return to the outdoors may be best. A long walk in a busy park on a Saturday morning will undoubtedly

lead to a peak in anxiety and may make the outside world feel overwhelming and unsafe. Instead, it may be better to start with a short walk at a time and place where there are fewer people around.

It is also important to appreciate the positive shift that stepping outside brings. This can be used to revisit hobbies and activities that bring pleasure and to engage your social network. A good reason to go out is a vital motivator when anxiety is a driving force to stay in.

Most people with clinical vulnerabilities lived with uncertainty even prior to COVID-19, adapting to changing medical circumstances and responding to health threats. Such people are often highly resilient and armed with a repertoire of adaptive coping strategies.

In some ways, the "vulnerable" may in fact be better equipped to deal with these uncertain circumstances than others. But some will need professional help moving forward. Either way, now is the time to collectively mobilise to support those shielding to step forward and reclaim life: keep your distance, stay in touch, and offer compassion to those who need it most.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Bath]

A few superspreaders transmit the majority of coronavirus cases

ELIZABETH MCGRAW

THECONVERSATION.COM

The coronavirus has traveled the globe, infecting one person at a time. Some sick people might not spread the virus much further, but some people infected with the SARS-CoV-2 are what epidemiologists call "superspreaders." Elizabeth McGraw, the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics at Pennsylvania State University, explains the evidence and why superspreaders can be crucial to a disease's transmission.

WHAT IS A SUPERSPREADER?

Early in the outbreak, researchers estimated that a person carrying SARS-CoV-2 would, on average, infect another two to three people. More recent studies have argued, however, that this number may actually be higher.

As early as January, though, there were reports out of Wuhan, China, of a single patient who infected 14 health care workers. That qualifies him as a super spreader: someone who is responsible for infecting an especially large number of other people.

Since then, epidemiologists have tracked a number of other instances of SARS-CoV-2 superspreading. In South Korea, around 40 people who attended a single church service were infected at the same time. At a choir practice of 61 people in Washington state, 32 attendees contracted confirmed COVID-19 and 20 more came down with probable cases. In Chicago, before social distancing was in place, one person that attended a dinner, a funeral and then a birthday party was responsible for 15 new infections.

During any disease outbreak, epidemiologists want to quickly figure out whether superspreaders are part of the picture. Their existence can accelerate the rate of new infections or substantially expand the geographic distribution of the disease.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUPERSPREADER?

Whether someone is a superspreader or not will depend on some combination of the pathogen, the patient's biology and their environment or behavior.

Some infected individuals might shed more virus into the environment than others if their immune system has trouble subduing the invader. Additionally, asymptomatic

individuals – up to 50% of all those who get COVID-19 – will continue their normal activities, inadvertently infecting more people. Even people who ultimately do show symptoms are capable of transmitting the virus during a pre-symptomatic phase.

A person's behaviors, travel patterns and degree of contact with others can also contribute to superspreading. An infected shopkeeper might come in contact with a large number of people and goods each day. An international business traveler may crisscross the globe in a short period of time. A sick health care worker might come in contact with large numbers of people who are especially susceptible, given the presence of other underlying illnesses.

Public protests – where it's challenging to keep social distance and people might be raising their voices or coughing from tear gas – are conducive to superspreading.

HOW BIG A PART OF COVID-19 ARE SUPERSPREADERS?

Several recent preprint studies, which haven't yet been peer-reviewed, have shed light on the role of superspreading in COVID-19's dispersion around the globe.

Researchers in Hong Kong examined a number of disease clusters by using contact tracing to track down everyone with whom individual COVID-19 patients had interacted. In the process, they identified multiple situations where a single person was responsible for as many as six or eight new infections.

The researchers estimated that only 20% of all those infected with SARS-CoV-2 were responsible for 80% of all local transmission. Importantly, they also showed that these transmission events were associated with people who had more social contacts – beyond just family members – highlighting the need to rapidly isolate people as soon as they test positive or show symptoms.

Another study by researchers in Israel took a different approach. They compared the genetic sequences of coronavirus samples from patients inside the country to those from other places. Based on how different the genomes were, they could identify each time SARS-CoV-2 entered Israel and then follow how it spread domestically.

These scientists estimated that 80% of

community transmission events – one person spreading the coronavirus to another – could be tracked back to just 1-10% of sick individuals.

And when another research group modeled the variation in how many other SARS-CoV-2 infections a single infected person tends to cause, they also found there were occasionally individuals who were very infectious. These people accounted for over 80% of transmissions in a population.

WHEN HAVE SUPERSPREADERS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN AN OUTBREAK?

There are a number of historical examples of superspreaders. The most famous is Typhoid Mary, who in the early 20th century purportedly infected 51 people with typhoid through the food she prepared as a cook.

During the last two decades, superspreaders have started a number of measles outbreaks in the United States. Sick, unvaccinated individuals visited densely crowded places like schools, hospitals, airplanes and theme parks where they infected many others.

Superspreaders have also played a key role in the outbreaks of other coronaviruses, including SARS in 2003 and MERS in 2015. For both SARS and MERS, superspreading mainly occurred in hospitals, with scores of people being infected at a time.

CAN SUPERSPREADING OCCUR IN ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES?

Yes. Researchers have identified superspreaders in outbreaks of diseases caused by bacteria, such as tuberculosis, as well as those caused by viruses, including measles and Ebola. Just as appears to be the case with the coronavirus, some scientists estimate that in an outbreak of any given pathogen, 20% of the population is usually responsible for causing over 80% of all cases of the disease.

The good news is that the right control practices specific to how pathogens are transmitted – hand-washing, masks, quarantine, vaccination, reducing social contacts and so on – can slow the transmission rate and halt a pandemic.

[the writer is Professor of Entomology and Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Dynamics, Pennsylvania State University]

3 Army personnel among six new COVID-19 cases in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, JUN 12 (PTI): Six more people, including three Army personnel, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Arunachal Pradesh, taking the total number of cases in the state to 67, a health department official said on Friday.

Three Army men tested positive for the disease in Singchung sub-division of West Kameng district on Thursday night, while two persons were detected with the infection in Changlang and one in Longding, he said.

"The three Army personnel had recently returned from Bihar, while the two from Changlang had come from Noida and the one from Longding had travelled back from Gujarat. They are asymptomatic and lodged in quarantine centres," State Surveillance Officer Dr

L Jampa said.

The Army has its own protocol and the three would be managed by them, he said.

Contact tracing has been initiated, Dr T Taipodia, who is dealing with the COVID-19 management in Arunachal Pradesh, said.

West Kameng district's COVID-19 nodal officer Dr Kesang Wangda has issued an advisory to civilians living in and around the Army cantonment areas of Tenga and Dahung, requesting them not to enter into restricted areas unnecessarily. One of the three Army personnel is a doctor, sources said.

Arunachal Pradesh has 63 active cases, while four patients have recovered from the disease.

Among the active cases, 42 are from Changland district,



followed by three each from East Siang and West Kameng, two each from Namsai and Lohit and one each from Lower Dibang Valley, Tawang, Upper Siang, Tirap, Longding and West Siang districts.

Five active cases are from the capital complex -- comprising Itanagar

and Naharlagun.

According to a bulletin of the health department, a total of 13,479 samples were tested in the state till Thursday, while results of 1,627 are awaited.

The first case in Arunachal Pradesh was reported in April 2, after a 31-year-old man

tested positive for the disease following his return from a religious congregation in Delhi. He was discharged from a hospital on April 16.

After almost six weeks, the state had registered its second case on May 24, after a student who had returned from Delhi tested positive for the disease.

BJP wins Arunachal Pradesh Rajya Sabha seat



ITANAGAR, JUN 12 (PTI): BJP nominee Nabam Rebia won the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Arunachal Pradesh on Friday in the absence of any contestants, an official of the state election office said.

Rebia was declared winner after the time for withdrawal of nominations ended on Friday as there was no other candidate in the fray, Joint Chief Electoral Officer D J Bhattacharjee said.

The veteran politician was the only candidate to file his papers for the

election. He had filed his nomination on Monday and it was found valid after scrutiny on June 10, Bhattacharjee said.

Mukut Mithi of the Congress is the incumbent Rajya Sabha MP from the northeast state. His tenure will end on June 23.

Rebia, who represented the state in the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 1996 to 2002 and again from 2002 to 2008 as a Congress member, had also served the state as an Assembly speaker and a cabinet minister.

The Election Commission had on June 2 issued notification for holding election to the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Arunachal Pradesh along with other states.

The 60-member Arunachal Pradesh assembly has 41 BJP MLAs, seven of the JD(U), four each of the Congress and National Peoples Party (NPP), one of Peoples Party of Arunachal one and three Independents.

The JD(U) and the NPP are supporting the Pema Khandu-led BJP government.

No coercive action against pvt firms for non-payment of full wages during lockdown: SC

NEW DELHI, JUN 12 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre and states not to take any coercive action till July end against private companies, which have failed to pay full wages to their employees during the coronavirus-induced lockdown period.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M R Shah said industries and employees need each other and they should sit together to arrive at a settlement on the issue of payment of wages.

The bench, which passed an order in the matter, asked the state governments to facilitate such settlement process and file its report with the labour commissioners concerned.

It also asked the Centre to file an affidavit within four weeks with regard to the legality of Ministry of Home Affairs' March 29 circular which had mandated payment of full wages during the lockdown period.

The bench posted the petitions filed by various companies against the

March 29 circular, for further hearing in last week of July.

The apex court asked the Centre and state governments to circulate its order through labour departments to facilitate the settlement process.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in its March 29 circular, had asked all employers to make payment of wages to their workers without any deduction for the period their establishments were under closure during the lockdown to contain COVID-19.

The Secretary (Labour & Employment) had also written to chief secretaries of states to advise employers not to terminate employees from their jobs or reduce their wages amid the challenging situation of the pandemic.

Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, had earlier told the court that as the people were migrating after the lockdown, the government came out with the notification to ensure that the workers are paid to help them in staying put at



workplaces.

The top law officer had referred to the provisions of the National Disaster Management Act to argue the validity of the March 29 circular.

The Centre had also filed an affidavit justifying its March 29 direction saying that the employers claiming incapacity in paying salaries must be directed to furnish their audited balance sheets and accounts in the court.

The government had said that the March 29 directive was a "temporary measure to mitigate the financial hardship" of employees

and workers, especially contractual and casual, during the lockdown period and the directions have been revoked by the authority with effect from May 18.

While requesting the top court to dispose of as infructuous the batch of pleas challenging the March 29 notification, the government had said the "impugned notifications have outlived their life and adjudication of the same would only entail an academic exercise as it would not be in the interest of the public to seek recovery of salaries paid to employees and workers for the said 54 days".

Chacha Chaudhary series to hit OTT platform soon

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 12 (PTI): The iconic Indian cartoon hero Chacha Chaudhary series will soon be aired on the OTT (over-the-top) platform for the first time.

The Thiruvananthapuram-based Toonz Media Group has signed an exclusive deal in this regard with Disney+ Hotstar VIP, a press release here said.

"We are excited about Chacha Chaudhary boarding the OTT platform for the first time which will give an opportunity for the complete family to relive, entertain and engage with Chacha & Sabu.

And to have Disney+ Hotstar VIP as our OTT partner for the series is like theicing on the cake," said P Jayakumar, CEO of Toonz Media Group.

Meanwhile, the second season of the

series will also be aired on the Disney Kids Channels in India, following the Season 1's huge popularity among children across the country.

Production has begun for the new episodes of the show, which will include 52 episodes of 11 minutes and will be aired across Disney Kids Channels network in India, besides the Disney+ Hotstar VIP platform, a press release said.

The quintessentially Indian comic superhero, who has entertained generations of readers, Chacha Chaudhary has been an integral part of India's pop culture since it was first created by legendary cartoonist Pran Kumar Sharma in 1971.

The adaptation of the comic book into an animated series was championed by Toonz, with the vision to

develop Chacha as the number one animation IP from India.

Season 1 of the series was launched on Disney in June 2019 following an exclusive TV deal with Toonz.

Besides its success on the small screen, Chacha Chaudhary has today grown into a 360-degree brand with more than 500 titles published, 250,000 books sold to date, comics published in 5 languages, massive exposure through 35 newspapers in ten languages and free E-comics on Google's free wifi in 100 railway stations across India in 18 languages.

Chacha's merchandise was released to the young and adults fans earlier this year and the kids merchandise is expected to launch in market by late 2020.

Chacha's core Indian values with mental

strength should be good inspiration for kids and whole family at these times,

Nikhil Pran, CEO of Pran's Features said.

Toonz has recreated the iconic cartoon in animation.

Although primarily a nostalgic, growing-up staple for the pre-millennial generation, Toonz has taken special effort to make the animated adaptation of Chacha Chaudhary relevant for the millennial audience as well.

For this, subtle tweaks were made to the show, like the introduction of a new character - Pappu Pendrive who is a gadget freak.

The highlight of the series, however, remains its focus on the themes of problem solving, adventure, humour and reinforcing the message of good over evil.

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USA Cycling announces long team for delayed Tokyo Olympics

NEW YORK, JUN 12 (AP): Officials from USA Cycling plan to take advantage of the yearlong delay of the Tokyo Olympics caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and a big step came with the announcement Thursday of a preliminary roster in three of its disciplines.

The governing body revealed the names of 38 riders who could eventually compete in Tokyo in road racing, mountain biking and track cycling the BMX teams will be announced at a later date.

That not only gives the riders a chance to better formulate a plan to peak next summer but also gives USA Cycling the opportunity to promote them to a sports-starved world.

"This is one of the few areas where the COVID situation is helping us," USA Cycling chief executive Rob DeMartini told The Associated Press.

"Typically, we would have announced a long team eight weeks out, but this year we have an abnormally long period of time to work with the long team more specifically. We have now a year to both train and develop them in a more focused way, but also market them in a better way."

The American team took home two golds and five medals total from the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016, and USA Cycling has set an ambitious goal of seven medals in Tokyo.

There is ample reason to believe the team will achieve the goal, too, given what some members of the long team have accomplished over the past year.

Chloe Dygert won the time trial world championship and finished fourth in the road race in the English town of Harrogate last September, then joined Jennifer Valente, Emma White and Lily Williams in shattering the world record in the team pursuit on the track.

Meanwhile, Kate Courtney is the reigning mountain bike World Cup champion.

"It's going to be an interesting year," Courtney told the AP.

"I'm really focused on the next month or two in terms of training. I think we have a really good plan to make the most of it."

"That's the immediate focus. We're doing a fundraising and all kind of little things but the long-term goal is obviously to end the season strong and be ready to stand on the start line."

Courtney's spot is secured after her fifth-place finish at last year's world championships, and the Americans could add two discretionary nominations if their national ranking holds into next year.

Lea Davison, Haley Batten, Hannah Finchamp, Erin Huck and Chloe Woodruff were the other women chosen for the long team.

Can you hear the drums, Fernando? Sevilla triumph on silent return



SID LOWE LONDON, 12 JUN [THE GUARDIAN]: Sevilla are breaking the rules already but who can blame them? The leaflet of instructions handed to every club on the eve of La Liga returning to action insists "players should avoid or minimise physical contact with celebrations" yet when the time finally came, they couldn't help themselves, a pile of players building in the corner before an empty stand where euphoria would normally erupt. There was still almost half an hour left in the Seville derby, Spain's first game back, but a second goal had secured victory over Real Betis, the team they most like to beat at the Ramón Sánchez Pizjuán.

They had waited a long time for this, and the goal that effectively ended this game was wonderful. Lucas Ocampos had opened the scoring from a debatable penalty soon after half-time and now it was Fernando, who couldn't hear the drums but could hear his teammates shouting right in his

ear, voices echoing round. Four first-time touches from a short corner had concluded with Ocampos's clever backheel lifted into the path of Fernando, who finished with a glancing header.

Ninety-three days after it shut down, Spanish football was back and Sevilla had a deserved 2-0 win on a night that was always likely to feel a little strange and in which it was victory enough to play. We will get used to it, but after three months away, attention was always likely to be turned as much on how everything looked and felt as on how the teams played. By the end, it felt good for Sevilla. At the final whistle Ocampos, who had been withdrawn to a smattering of applause, pulled off his mask and leapt on to Luuk de Jong's back. "We dedicate this to the fans who couldn't be here," he said.

At the start, the teams came out in single file, substitutes making their way to the stands in gloves and masks, occupying a handful of

rows and sitting apart as the starters made their way to the pitch – a walk that looked a little lonely without the roar that's supposed to accompany them, especially on a night like this. Giant lettering spelt out EL GRAN DERBI but there was little of what makes this game grand: the people.

As the teams emerged and headed to their own half, no handshake and no posing for pictures, Sevilla's anthem played – recorded in advance and ringing around the wide, red space. There was a minute's silence before the game and then 90 minutes' silence during it. Unless you were on the other channel, where Spanish TV offered recorded sound and computer-generated fans, who didn't move much, more multicoloured backdrop than hardcore ultras.

There was a game at least and it was good too, the pace quicker than might have been feared, the intensity announced by an early encounter between Sergio Reguilón and Emerson down by the corner flag. There

was an early shout when Sevilla's goalkeeper, Tomas Vaclik, picked the ball up suspiciously near the edge of his area, but most of what unfolded did so at the other end. A Sergio Canales shot that did not trouble Vaclik was all that Betis produced in the opening 45 minutes.

Sevilla produced more. Ocampos and Munir El Haddadi especially impressed, as their team opened out the pitch and moved on to the front foot. Ocampos's shot from a tight angle could be heard as it hit the bar after he wriggled through two challenges, and more chances followed. Jules Koundé headed just wide at the near post, more alone from the corner than he had realised. De Jong, too, headed past the post, supplied by Munir's superb ball from the left.

Just before half-time, De Jong turned cleverly and spread the ball to Ocampos, whose shot thudded against Joel Robles's palms. Joan Jordán could not get his shot off, deep inside the area. Sevilla might have

thought they would regret not taking those opportunities until 10 minutes later Antonio Mateu Lahoz – welcome back to Spain's box office referee – saw something in a crowd of jumping players and blew for a penalty. Replays showed Marc Bartra might have had just enough of a forearm on De Jong's neck to justify the decision, or at least to prevent the VAR overruling it. "Incredible," Bartra called it.

Ocampos scored and raced to the corner, while a sound engineer pressed the button marked cheer. He was followed by teammates, but not engulfed. That reticence soon evaporated when that magnificent second followed and Sevilla's superiority was sealed.

Betis did react, Diego Lainez showing flashes of quality, Emerson putting one shot wide and Joaquín seeing another blocked, but they had waited too long. Everyone else had waited three months and now, at last, the football is back.

Juventus and Milan take centre stage for 'high-adrenaline' return of Italian football

NICKY BANDINI LONDON, 12 JUN [THE GUARDIAN]: Consider this weekend as the antipasto, leading us into an Italian footballing feast. Serie A will return on 20 June, with the first of 124 games that are scheduled to be played in a span of only 44 days. Until then, fans can whet their appetites with the final rounds of the Coppa Italia, which resumes with Juventus hosting Milan on Friday night.

The first legs of this season's semi-finals were played on 12 and 13 February – a full four months ago. Both took place at San Siro in Milan, a city that would find itself close to the epicentre of Europe's coronavirus outbreak. Nobody could have imagined such a scenario back then. The first confirmed case in the Lombardy region was not diagnosed until a week later.

There have been moments when the resumption of this season seemed impossible. The owners of several Serie A clubs went public in March and April with their belief it was time to call the whole thing off. Even now, opinion is divided. More than 34,000

people have died in Italy of Covid-19, and more than 16,000 of those in Lombardy alone.

Hardest hit has been Bergamo, home to Atalanta – whose first-time run to the quarter-finals of the Champions League had been this season's great footballing fairytale. The thought of seeing that free-scoring team on the pitch again will delight some supporters, but not all. A group of Ultras greeted news of Serie A's return by hanging a banner outside their stadium. "Disgusted by an absurd decision," it read. "You chase the millions, not the ball."

Similar protests have been made elsewhere, but it would be wrong to imagine that fans speak with one voice. There is relief, for many, to be found in the return of familiar pastimes and passions. The decision to stage the remaining cup fixtures before Serie A's return was made at the request of Italy's minister for sport, Vincenzo Spadafora, because the rights for these games are held by the state broadcaster Rai, meaning they will be free-to-air.

Negotiations are ongoing to make some league games available

to everyone, too, though there are legal obstacles to overcome. Domestic broadcast rights in Italy are sold in specific categories of free-to-air or pay-TV packages that cannot be modified later. The government itself is arguing these are exceptional circumstances.

More critical to the success of this attempted restart will be the evolution of quarantine regulations. As things stand, a positive test for any individual player would oblige their entire team to isolate for 14 days. Plainly, there is no room in the schedule for such a scenario. The hope among football's administrators is the government's scientific committee will soften its position as the number of coronavirus cases nationally continues to fall.

The Italian Football Federation's president, Giuseppe Gravina, declared himself "optimistic" on Wednesday, noting the downward trend of the epidemiological curve. He has already raised the possibility of allowing a small number of fans back into stadiums before the end of the season,

observing that cinemas and theatres are being allowed to reopen (with restricted capacities) from 15 June.

For now, football will take place strictly behind closed doors. Friday was supposed to mark the opening day of Euro 2020, with Italy hosting Turkey in the tournament opener at a packed Stadio Olimpico in Rome. A domestic cup semi-final, played to an empty Allianz Stadium, is not quite the same thing, but Juventus' game against Milan still has plenty riding on it.

The first leg ended in a 1-1 draw, Cristiano Ronaldo converting an injury-time penalty to rescue the Bianconeri from what would have been a surprising but deserved defeat. Despite sitting 22 points clear of Milan in the league standings at the time, and holding more than 60% of possession, they barely carved out a chance until the Portuguese's late overhead kick struck Davide Calabria's arm.

This game may look very different. Milan will be without the suspended Theo Hernández, their best performer this season, as well as the injured Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Juventus

Competition should be fair and not batsman-dominated: Ishant on saliva ban



MUMBAI, JUN 12 (PTI): Senior India speedster Ishant Sharma believes that the ban on saliva to shine the ball will make things easy for batsmen and it needs to be ensured that the competition remains fair.

The ICC on Tuesday said that it has decided to ban the use of saliva to shine the ball in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ishant, who has played a whopping 97 Tests, reasoned that if the bowlers don't shine the red ball, used in the longest format of the game, then it won't swing helping batsmen.

"If we don't shine the red ball, it doesn't swing and if it doesn't swing then it becomes really easy for the batsman. I think the competition should be fair and not

a batsman dominated game," the 31-year-old said on Star Sports show 'Cricket Connected'.

Saliva is primarily used on a new ball while sweat is used on the old ball when reverse swing comes into play.

The lanky pacer, who has 297 Test and 115 ODI wickets to his name, feels that bowlers will need to take special precautions to ensure that they don't use saliva as it is an old practice.

"I feel that the most important thing will be avoiding the use of saliva on the ball and refraining from shining the ball."

"We will have to take special precautions for this as we are used to shining the ball, especially the red ball," said Sharma, who represents Delhi in domestic cricket.

Saliva is important for spinners too as it helps in getting drift: Chahal

NEW DELHI, JUN 12 (PTI): It's not just the pacers who will be at a disadvantage due to the ban on use of saliva but spinners too will suffer as they won't get the required drift during middle overs, feels India's top wrist spinner Yuzvendra Chahal.

The ICC has banned the use of saliva on ball as an interim health safety measure in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic -- a move that has raised concerns about the game becoming even more batting friendly.

"When you use a natural element like saliva, it helps pacers with swing and spinners with the drift," Chahal said on 'ESPNCricinfo', specifically talking about white ball cricket.

Drift in cricketing terminology is the sideways movement in the air when a slow bowler tries to impart spin.

"If as a spinner, I cannot get drift in the middle overs, the batsmen will have it easy. This is something that will affect every bowler in the world. I will have to figure out a solution once I start bowling in the nets," Chahal, who will be turning 30 next month, said.

The spinners also complement the pacers in shining the ball, said Chahal, who has 146 wickets in 94 games.

"Spinners use saliva too to maintain the shine of the ball because we are aware that pacers will bowl after us or are bowling from the other end," he

added. "And I would like to maintain the condition of the ball in a way that it helps pacers whenever they come. Pacers also think the same way. When they see spinners coming, they refrain from shining the ball too much. This is how we plan things."

On to his own game and the wiry leg-spinner said one advice from Harbhajan Singh during his first IPL stint at the Mumbai Indians has stayed with him forever.

"...Harbhajan Singh once told me - back your skills as a bowler. My strengths are varying my pace and beating the batsman in flight."

"I have seen a lot of spinners change their actions while bowling at the Chinnaswamy. I can sense their fear, I then tell this to the batsmen in my team so that they can attack him," Chahal said.

He feels that his attacking instincts are considered beneficial by both Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

"Virat Kohli or Rohit Sharma, whoever the captain is, they want us to pick up wickets. Even if I concede 70 runs in my 10 overs but pick up three wickets in the middle overs, it will benefit the team," said Chahal.

"The pace of the game also quickens when spinners are operating from both ends. If there is turn on offer, it becomes difficult to play spinners in the middle overs. We have always believed in going for wickets in the middle overs," Chahal added.

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Cyber attack shuts Australia's biggest brewer just as pubs reopen

A ransomware attack has shut down the biggest brewer in Australia and New Zealand, cutting supplies to pubs and restaurants just as the countries emerge from coronavirus lockdown, the company said Friday.

Drinks manufacturer Lion -- which produces popular beer brands including XXXX Gold, Tooheys, Hahn, James Boag and Little Creatures -- said the hack "could not have come at a worse time."

Investigators at the company said the outage was caused by ransomware, a cyberhack which freezes a target's computer systems until a payment is made.

"We immediately shut down all our systems as a precaution, and we have continued to work with cyber experts to determine how much longer our systems will be impacted," Lion said in a statement.

The company gave no details about any ransom demands and said it was taking longer than expected to bring its production systems back online. The brewery shutdown came just as pubs and restaurants across New Zealand and Australia have been gradually reopening after being closed in March to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

Sporting life is also returning to normal, with crowds of up 10,000 people to be allowed into Australian



sports stadiums from next month, and New Zealand preparing to welcome back fans at its Super Rugby Aotearoa tournament, which kicks off on Saturday.

"This attack could not have come at a worse time for Lion, particularly for our valued pub and club customers who are in the very early stages of recovery following the COVID-19 closures," it said.

"We're working to bring our breweries back online as soon as possible. In the meantime, we will be managing our stock levels very closely and may see some temporary shortages," it said.

Milk production by Lion has also been halted by the cyber attack, which occurred on Monday, it said.

Two-thirds of sponsors unsure about 2021 Olympics: poll

Two-thirds of Tokyo 2020's corporate sponsors are undecided on whether to continue supporting the Games now the event has been pushed to 2021, according to a new survey.

In the poll published late Thursday by Japanese public broadcaster NHK, 65 percent of the sponsors surveyed said they had not made up their minds about whether to extend their financial backing for another year.

According to NHK, some companies voiced concerns that their promotional activities around the Games could be curtailed due to crowd-reduction measures imposed against the coronavirus.

They were also worried the Games could be scrapped altogether, with several senior Olympic officials saying the Tokyo Olympics must take place next year or not at all.

Many also said they had not decided whether to extend their sponsorship because they had not yet opened negotiations with the organisers -- suggesting they may be open to persuasion.



Tokyo CEO Toshiro Muto revealed later Friday that the organising committee had not contacted the sponsors due to the coronavirus state of emergency that was declared in Japan just after the Games were postponed in late March.

However, he sought to ease their concerns that the Games would not take place.

"I don't think there is anyone who can really promise that the Olympics and Paralympics will be held in 2021 for sure -- 100 percent in any circumstance," he admitted.

But he stressed that the sponsors should be assured of

the "commitment and dedication" from the organising committee to "somehow holding the Olympics."

More than two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents said coronavirus had taken a toll on their own financial situation, as Olympic organisers face having to fund the unprecedented postponement of the Games.

- 'Gold sponsors' - Muto again refused to put a price tag on the additional costs of postponing the Games by one year, but the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has set aside \$800 million.

According to the latest budget, the Games were

due to cost \$12.6 billion, shared between the organising committee, the government of Japan and Tokyo city.

Tokyo 2020 "Gold" sponsors include such Japanese household names as Canon, NEC and Asahi Breweries, while car giant Toyota is a worldwide Olympic sponsor.

According to the latest version of the Tokyo 2020 budget, local sponsorship was due to bring in \$3.3 billion, more than half the projected revenues of \$5.9 billion.

Since the postponement, officials have been stressing the need to slim down the Games, both in terms of costs and organisation.

Trump considering suspending H1B, other visas: report

WASHINGTON, JUN 12 (PTI): US President Donald Trump is considering suspending a number of employment visas including the H-1B, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, in view of the massive unemployment in America due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to a media report.

The proposed suspension could extend into the government's new fiscal year beginning October 1, when many new visas are issued, The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, quoting unnamed administration officials.

That could bar any new H-1B holder outside the country from coming to work until the suspension is lifted, though visa holders

already in the country are unlikely to be affected, the daily reported.

The H1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

Such a decision by the Trump administration is likely to have an adverse impact on thousands of Indian IT professionals. Already a large number of Indians on the H-1B visas have lost their jobs and are headed back home during the coronavirus pandemic.

The White House, however, said that no final

decision has been made and the administration is considering various proposals.

The administration is currently evaluating a wide range of options, formulated by career experts, to protect American workers and job seekers especially disadvantaged and underserved citizens but no decisions of any kind have been made, White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said in a statement.

In addition to the H-1B visas, the suspension could apply to the H-2B visa for short-term seasonal workers, the J-1 visa for short-term workers including camp counselors and au pairs and the L-1 visa for internal company transfers, the financial

daily reported.

Meanwhile, the US Chambers of Commerce CEO Thomas Donohue on Thursday wrote a letter to Trump, expressing concern over his reported move on temporary work visas.

As the economy rebounds, American businesses will need assurances that they can meet all their workforce needs. To that end, it is crucial that they have access to talent both domestically and from around the world, Donohue wrote in a letter to Trump.

According to The Hill newspaper, Donohue said that American businesses need L-1 visa holders, who have a work visa valid for a relatively short amount of time, for necessary expertise.

White House eyes travel from Mexico as source of virus spike

WASHINGTON, JUN 12 (AP): The White House is floating a theory that travel from Mexico may be contributing to a new wave of coronavirus infections, rather than states' efforts to reopen their economies.

The notion was discussed at some length during a meeting of the administration's coronavirus task force in the White House Situation Room Thursday that focused, in part, on identifying commonalities between new outbreaks, according to two administration officials familiar with the discussions.

COVID-19 cases are currently rising in nearly half of states across the country, according to an Associated Press analysis. That includes Arizona, where hospitals have been told to prepare for the worst, and Texas, which now has more than 113,000 deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was deploying teams to Arizona and other hotspots to try to trace the outbreaks and contain them, according to the officials, who spoke on

condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly describe internal conversations. CDC officials and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In addition to Arizona, other states experiencing recent spikes of infections include California, Texas and North Carolina particularly within the Hispanic community.

As a result, the task force is looking at whether those spikes may be tied to legal travel between the U.S. and Mexico, which is experiencing an ongoing severe coronavirus outbreak.

Mexico has had more than 133,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases and nearly 16,000 deaths, according to data from Johns Hopkins University dramatically fewer than the U.S., which has surpassed 2 million cases and more than 113,000 deaths.

The U.S. and Mexico entered into a joint agreement in March to restrict non-essential travel along the countries' border to try to contain the spread of the coronavirus, though American citizens and many others are still

allowed entry to the U.S., including those conducting commercial traffic and agricultural workers.

Still, cross-border travel is down substantially, and the U.S. State Department continues to urge Americans to avoid all international travel due to the pandemic.

Trump has long tried to use Mexico as a scapegoat, painting the country as a source of crime and disease in the U.S. And he has used the pandemic crisis to push forward some of his most hard-line stalled immigration proposals, including blocking asylum cases and placing new limits on green cards.

In addition to its theory about Mexico, members of the White House task force were also exploring other potential causes for the recent uptick in numbers, noting that circumstances likely differ by location.

Delays in test reporting and the fact that some infected people take multiple tests in order to get an all-clear to return to work are among the other theories that are being explored, but would not account for the increase in hospitalizations seen in some states.

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CUP OF JOE FOR JOEY! The actress, Joey King takes a stroll while drinking a cup of coffee with her mom.

Jessica M Thompson to direct horror thriller 'The Bride'

LOS ANGELES, JUN 12 (PTI): Director Jessica M Thompson is set to helm the horror thriller titled "The Bride".

A source told Variety that Thompson, who directed the critically acclaimed "The Light of the Moon", is on board the film set at Screen Gems.

"Polaroid" scribe Blair Butler has penned the original script with revisions by Thompson.

Emile Gladstone, who backed the horror hit "The Curse of La Llorona", is attached to produce.

"The Bride" revolves around a young woman who attends a grand destination wedding, unaware of the horrors around the corner.

Thompson's feature debut "The Light of the Moon" saw "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" star Stephanie Beatriz as a successful New York City architect who struggles to regain control of her life after an event turns her world upside down.

The film, which Thompson also wrote, edited and produced, won the audience award for best narrative feature at the 2017 SXSW Festival.

Her most recent project was the upcoming TV series "The End", starring Frances O'Connor, Morgan Davies and Harriet Walter.

Viggo Mortensen to reteam with 'Green Book' director Peter Farrelly

LOS ANGELES, JUN 12 (PTI):

Actor Viggo Mortensen is set to collaborate with his Green Book director Peter Farrelly on a movie adaptation of the book The Greatest Beer Run Ever: A True Story of Friendship Stronger Than War.

According to Variety, Mortensen will be playing a supporting role in the yet untitled film.

The book, written by Joanna Molloy and John Chickie Donohue, is based on the true story of Donohue, who left New York in 1967 to find out and share a few drinks with his childhood friends in the Army, while they were fighting in Vietnam.

Farrelly will be co-writing the Skydance project with Brian Currie and Pete Jones.



David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, Don Granger and Andrew Muscato will serve as producers.

The project marks Farrelly's first directing effort after 2018's critically acclaimed Green Book,

which was nominated for five Academy Awards. It won three Oscars, including best picture and screenplay for Farrelly, and best supporting actor for Mahershala Ali.

Pune Man Receives Rs 19k Earbuds Instead Of Rs 300 Lotion, Amazon's Response Wins Hearts

The man who is being called "the luckiest on earth" is Gautam Rege who received wireless earbuds worth Rs 19,000 instead of a skin lotion of Rs 300. Amazon's goof-up has gone viral on Twitter after the internet user posted the image of the package where the Bose SoundSport Wireless Headphones can be seen next to a Surf Excel detergent. Moreover, what has further left tens of thousands of people with a jaw drop is that Rege informs Amazon has refused to take back the order because it was "non-returnable". The tweet has been liked by over 21,000 people and most of them tagged Amazon to receive the same kind of order.

'I now believe in God'

Rege's experience with Amazon India has not only left thousands speechless but few of them even said they "now believe in God". Many tagged Amazon in their comments and said: "surprise me". Some



internet users made memes using reactions from Bollywood movies and others just wondered what would have happened to the person who must have ordered expensive earbuds but received a skin lotion. One of the netizens offered Rege to exchange the Bose earbuds for "amazing" skin lotion. The market price of the earbuds that Rege received is Rs 18,900.

Lil Twist claims he was Justin Bieber's drug charge scapegoat in the 2010s

It's probably too late now to say sorry.

Rapper Lil Twist is claiming that his friendship with Justin Bieber, 26, in the early 2010s evolved into that of a drug-charge scapegoat, per the whims of Bieber's management.

Twist, whose real name is Christopher Lynn Moore, made the claims on Philadelphia radio personality Mina SayWhat's podcast Mina's House Wednesday.

"If they would have put weed charges on Justin in his early career," Twist, 27, explains, "It would have been bad on him. So I got a call one day saying, 'Twist, do you really love this kid?' I said, 'Yes.'"

"They said, 'Cool, if you love him then you can take the heat for him because you can come off a little weed charge. You're associated with Lil Wayne. You're a rapper.'"

Twist doesn't offer specifics, but presumably,

he's referring to Bieber's enfant terrible phase, which included egging a neighbor's house, the infamous bucket-pee episode, and a 2014 DUI arrest.

Meanwhile, Twist notched two separate arrests in 2013 while driving Bieber's cars. Also in 2013, TMZ reported that Twist threw a marijuana-filled party at Bieber's mansion while the singer was allegedly in Europe.

"It got to a point where I didn't even have to be there at times and they were putting it, 'Twist did it, Twist did it, Twist did it,'" Twist added. "It became overwhelming."

However, a source familiar with the situation tells Page Six says that, while "Justin and Twist don't have a relationship anymore, Justin wishes Twist well and finds these comments unfortunate and completely untrue."

ARIES: What is the secret to a harmonious relationship? Compassion—lots of compassion—and a healthy dose of acceptance. You can't change people, Aries. But you can learn to love the so-called flaws as much as you love the light aspects of their personality. You'll find that this is the secret to transforming the most difficult equations. Given that the past is also coming up in a big way, you are likely to be contacted by somebody you parted ways with. Yes, you have the strength, courage, and wisdom within you to let bygones be bygones. Just ensure you don't blur the boundaries or get carried away in any way.

TAURUS: Not everything can be explained logically. The realm of emotions is no less mysterious than the world of occult. Today, instead of trying to attach a story to what's coming up, be present to it. Turn to the world of art and movement in order to release your burdens. Some of you may find free dancing therapeutic. Others may feel inspired to channel their inner Wordsmith. Let your heart be the compass, Taurus, as you repeat Louise Hay's affirmation, "I feel safe in the rhythm and flow of ever-changing life."

GEMINI: Life is a beautiful amalgam of yin and yang; of darkness and light. Both the doing and non-doing aspects of creation are equally

important, Gemini. So don't glorify one over the other. Given that things on the work front are reaching a fever pitch, you will be tempted to slack on self-care. Remember, balance is your magic work. So channel the spirit of Julia Roberts from Eat, Pray, Love and embrace the concept of 'dolce far niente' with a vengeance.

CANCER: The cards are urging you to re-examine your relationship with yourself. Are you where you want to be? If not, what's keeping you from embracing your true power? Issues related to self-worth may arise, reminding you that there is inner work to be done. Some of you may feel like you're constantly playing the role of the nurturer in every relationship. Sometimes, the only way to get people to notice what you are doing is to take a step back. Say 'no'. Draw a boundary. Refuse to show up at the cost of your own mental health. This will make you uncomfortable initially, but it will also help in restoring the balance.

LEO: Being 'connected' all the time can be exhausting. You know what you need today? A mental, physical, and emotional reboot. Connecting with nature is a wonderful idea. Walk barefoot in your lawn or hop over to a garden in their neighbourhood (with adequate safety measures, of course!). Do you find joy in doing things with your hands? Cooking,

gardening, sketching, and painting are some of the mediums you could experiment with. PS: Remember to keep your phone on flight mode as you tend to your inner temple.

VIRGO: Are you living in a world of half-truths, Virgo? Have you been betraying yourself in order to protect the ones you love? Know that in doing so you are simultaneously being of disservice to yourself and those around you. Today, you're being asked to stand tall and speak your truth, no matter how daunting this may feel in the beginning. Those who love you will respect you for your integrity and vow to meet you halfway.

LIBRA: Here's a cup of truth tea, Libra: great people spend too much time doubting their potential, while mediocre people get ahead in the game. The difference between the two boils down to self-confidence. On which end of the spectrum do you lie? Are you a fan of major risks or do you find comfort in playing it safe? It's a 'go big or go home' kind of week. So, let go of your resistance to change and take a shot of courage. Doing that one thing that you fear the most could just be the secret to long-term success.

SCORPIO: "The gates of mystery stand ever ajar, and those who will pass through into the spacious domicile of spirit," said Canadian-born author and mystic Manly P Hall. These

words best describe the inner illumination you are experiencing; the realization that you are not your body, you are your soul. Practicing the divine arts is also a big theme for you. Bring out the oracle cards and the crystals, Scorpio. What you need to remember as you astral travel to other realms, however, is that the people around you may or may not be adept at the art of telepathic communication. Instead of leaving things to imagination, tell them exactly where you are and what you expect from this connection—verbally.

SAGITTARIUS: The Magician in tarot is, as the name suggests, a portal of magic. It depicts a figure in a rather medieval robe with one hand towards the heavens and the other pointing towards the earthly realm. If he was walking in the midst of us today, I'm pretty sure his T-shirt would read 'As above, so below'. Wait! What does that have to do with you? Well, the fact that he chose to show up in your reading as a reminder to adopt the given catchphrase. Remember, everything starts with an idea, Sagittarius. If you can imagine it, it means you possess the power to create. The real question is: how and where will you be tapping into your magical potential today?

CAPRICORN: Sometimes things fit together beautifully. At other times, they become the cause of chaos.

What is your reality reflecting back at you, Capricorn? Could you be trying to hold on when the Universe is asking you to let go? Today, you're being asked to assess the relationships that are now past their expiration date. If you feel like you have nothing in common anymore, that's okay. Wish them well and continue to walk on your path. It's either in or out this time. Grey areas just don't cut it anymore.

AQUARIUS: It's time for some tough love, Aquarius. Have you been trying to get to a certain destination without putting in the required work? Short cuts will only take you so far. Hustling hard, on the other hand, will help you lay a solid foundation for your future. But that doesn't mean the journey is going to be tedious and lacklustre. The cards are urging you to find a middle ground between your practical and your intuitive side. This is the secret to unlocking your true potential.

PISCES: Just in case somebody hasn't told you this in a while: you look gorgeous in that kaftan, your smile is contagious, and about a 1,000 people would kill themselves for that derrière. Today, you're in the mood to celebrate yourself, flaws and all, because Society doesn't get to tell you what you should or shouldn't look like. Celebrating your soul circle is also big on your agenda. Throw a virtual party if you cannot meet physically. A bring-your-own-kombucha do sounds like the best way to bring in the weekend.