



**KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN'S  
TOOTH FAIRY DELIVERY  
SETUP FOR SON REIGN  
IS SIMPLY MAGICAL**  
*pg 08*

**TELL ME WHY?**  
*pg 04*

**ENGAGING STORY ABOUT  
AMBITION AND POWER:  
TWINKLE KHANNA ON HUMA  
QURESHI'S MAHARANI**  
*pg 08*



# SummitTIMES

Vol 06 | Issue140 | Gangtok | Monday | 31 May 2021

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | RS. 5

## CM CHAIRS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO REVIEW COVID MANAGEMENT

### SICB facility to be re-appointed as Covid Hospital for South and West districts

**GANGTOK, 30 MAY [IPR]:**

A high-level meeting was held at Samman Bhawan today under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang to review Covid-19 management in the State.

The meeting was attended by Cabinet Ministers, Mayor & Deputy Mayor GMC, Chief Secretary, DGP, ACS, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, Political Secretary to HCM, and officers of the Covid-19 Management Group.

After some deliberation, it was decided that the State-wide lockdown will be further extended till 07 June.

During the extended week-long lockdown, the operating duration of ration and vegetable shops has been revised and they will now remain open from 7AM to 12PM (noon).

Relaxation has been granted for agricultural activities at GPUs depending on the Covid-19 situation in the respective GPUs.

It was decided that the centralized construction activities under Roads & Bridges, PMGSY, Sikkim Garib Awaas Yojana, etc., shall be allowed with local labourers only.

The meeting discussed the current scenario of Covid-19 in the State wherein the Health Department up-



dated the house on the various measures undertaken to mitigate issues revolving around vaccination, oxygen supply, care and treatment protocols in the hospitals and functioning of Covid Care Centres across the State.

The meeting reviewed the vaccination status and procurement of additional stock. The volume of oxygen available in the State has also been enhanced, it was informed.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister said that the SICB building at Karfector will be upgraded into a designat-

ed Covid-19 Hospital for South and West districts.

A district-level Covid Hospital Set-up Committee will be formed for the upgradation and monitoring of the Covid Hospital at Karfector headed by District Collector-South. The Committee will also monitor the shifting of the SICB office to an alternative available space.

The CM also declared the Health Department and CRH-Manipal to be the only certified agencies for conducting RT-PCR and RAT Tests in the State. He also directed the Health Depart-

ment to prepare a priority list for the vaccination drive.

Expressing concern over the rate of Covid-19 spread in rural areas, the CM exhorted for active and strict policing and surveillance by local police personnel in villages. He directed the Police Department to take stringent action against those found breaching the Covid-19 guidelines and SOPs.

The Labour Department has been instructed to work in tandem with pharma companies and industries to ensure the

safety of the labourers by creating Covid Care Centres at convenient locations.

They have also been directed to mobilise a systematic manpower plan while providing certain relaxation for female workers along with an incentive for daily workers.

Earlier, Chief Secretary SC Gupta, while presenting a brief on the agenda of the meeting, stressed on the need to further strengthen the grass-roots level planning in order to achieve success in the fight against Covid-19 in the State.

## Pharma Cos to pay ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to families of workers dying due to Covid, Govt decides

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

A meeting on Covid-19 chaired by the Chief Minister today decided that pharmaceutical companies will "have to provide immediate relief (ex-gratia payment)" of Rs 2 lakh to the families of workers who die due to Covid-19, a press release from the Labour Department informs.

Emphasizing on the departmental Advisory dated 11 May, regarding payment of daily wages during the pandemic situation, it was reiterated that full wages be paid to those workers who fail to report to duty owing to having tested positive for Covid-19 as well as to all the primary contacts.

## Mass-screening for Covid underway in South district; District scored 2012/6019 in past two months

**NAMCHI, 30 MAY [IPR]:**

Since the State Government has focused on ramping up mass testing for COVID-19 so that the positive patients can be traced and treated by healthcare professionals, the South District Health Team is conducting mass testing at various locations covering both rural and urban areas.

As per information received from the Health Department, during the months of April and May, a total of 6,019 samples were collected for RT-PCR testing, 2,012 RAT tests done and the total positive cases



detected in South district was 1,714 as of this morning.

Most of the mass testing in the community is being conducted at probable hotspots

in line with the State Government's strategy that mass testing is the way forward to bring down trans-

mission rate and also to understand the

dynamics of virus transmission in the State.

Based on the results of the tests, the health team will make arrangements for the

treatment of positive patients, and for the same, cooperation from the public is a must.

The State Government has also initiated a village level monitoring team consisting of members from Gram Panchayat or Municipal Council, ASHA, Aaganwadi Worker and Volunteers who will coordinate with the medical Officer of the area for monitoring of positive people under home quarantine the team if need be will also assist in tracing the primary contacts of the COVID-19 patients.

## Three deaths and 246 new cases take Sikkim past 15K confirmed cases and 250 fatalities

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 crossed the 15K-mark today and now stands at 15,171 with the detection of 264 cases in the last 24 hours. Over the same period, the State also recorded three more COVID-deaths taking the toll to 250. All three COVID-deaths were reported from STNM Hospital.

Out of 264 new cases, 123 were reported from East District, 56 from West, 79 from South District and six from North District.

On the other hand, the figure of recovered cases further improved to 10,746 with the discharge of 130 more people from home isolation after they made full recoveries.

These 264 cases were detected from the testing of 1,207 samples collected on Saturday, of which 174 returned positive in RT-PCR testing of 894 sam-



ples, two in TruNat testing of three samples and 88 more persons were found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing of 310 samples.

There are currently 3,961 active cases of coronavirus in Sikkim, of whom 12 are currently admitted in the ICU facility of STNM hospital and 13 in the ICU of Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

## Lockdown extended along with timings for veggie and ration shops



### LIQUOR SHOPS AND CONSTRUCTIONS WITH ON-SITE LABOUR ALSO ALLOWED

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

The State Government today notified that the "complete lockdown" underway in the State will continue till 07 June. The fresh guidelines issued by the Home Department also extend some relaxations and also allowed to open are licensed liquor shops, construction sites [provided they have on-site local labour], and even factories other than pharma units [which are already allowed to operate] which can ensure on-site workforce since movement of people continues to be restricted, agricultural activities in villages without any Covid cases. Timings for shops permitted to open during the lockdown have been extended from existing 8-11 in the mornings to 7AM to noon. The new rules come into effect from 01 June.



**Pandit Keshav Khanal: THE FRONTLINE WARRIOR FOR FINAL RITES**

Pandit Keshav Khanal is a man of faith and earns the credentials of a Frontline Warrior by securing some solace for Hindu families in Sikkim which have lost a loved one to the virus. He is the priest who had the selfless courage to volunteer to perform the funeral rites of Sikkim's first Covid fatality last year. Remember, at that time even lesser was known about the virus or its transmission. What is more, ever since then, he has stepped up to perform the rituals whenever families cannot find a priest to perform the rites. Over the months, Pandit Keshav Khanal has himself come down with Covid. Thankfully for Sikkim, he recovered, and continues his service and shares that he has overseen at least 30 cremations thus far. He is also the general secretary of Hindu Swabhimani, Sikkim Branch. [from AARON RAI]



## Chamling wants students vaccinated on priority and experts to study impact of pandemic on them

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 30 MAY:**

SDF president, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, has asked the SKM Government to form a committee comprising of professionals to study the losses suffered by students due to the Covid pandemic and their grievances and plan to vaccinate students on priority with the goal to open schools in phased manner.

In his Sunday musings on Facebook responding to queries posed to him, the Mr Chamling opens by commenting that the loss suffered by students has been the "heaviest of all after the loss of lives."

With more than a

year of regular classroom learning lost, the future of students is being "robbed," he states while pointing out that an entire generation is facing a massive, unprecedented and damaging loss.

"There is a saying, the loss faced by one generation can have an impact on five subsequent generations," he underlines while suggesting that the a committee of experts be commissioned to study the losses faced by students and their grievances.

"The committee, unlike the Economic Revival Committee that was formed earlier, must comprise dedicated and able professionals," he

stresses.

This committee, he says, should "come up with actionable recommendations as soon as possible" and rues that the state government continues to remain "directionless" in this issue.

He adds that students of class X and above be vaccinated on priority over the next month so that schools can be opened in July and the re-opening for lower classes be planned in a staggered manner.

"The Government of India will soon be procuring Pfizer which is the only tested vaccine for young people from 12 and above. The Sikkim

Government must start lobbying with the Centre to get Pfizer for Sikkim students from Class X and above. It is possible," he details.

He points out that when schools eventually reopen, many students will need remedial classes and stresses that these should be planned and designed professionally so that students make up for the lost year.

He also wants the Sikkim Government to direct mobile phone network operators in the state to ensure improved connectivity in the state, pointing out that students have been complaining of poor connec-

tivity hampering their online classes.

He also states that the government must initiate a process to start assessing mental health issues, particularly of students.

He also rues that the government is ignoring advice from outside the government and is convinced that this "arrogance is aggravating the pandemic."

"Our advice mustn't be taken politically," he appeals, while stating that everyone should be willing to do anything that will improve the situation.

"Remember, right now Sikkim is the ONLY state in a red zone," he concludes.

## WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY 31 MAY 2021

*Say No to Tobacco*

*ViewPoint*

Dr BAROON SUBBA

Tobacco is number one preventable cause of death globally. To address the greatest killer the world community is working on Tobacco Control. Many states and cities in the country are working towards declaration themselves as smoke free cities/states.

Sikkim has made great progress in implementation of Tobacco Control laws which has been appreciated by many forums, national and international organizations. Globally Tobacco kills more than 7 million people every year; In India alone 10-12 lakhs people die annually due to Tobacco related diseases. In context of our state this has been a major public health challenge.

Tobacco is harmful to human health. Tobacco causes long and short term health effects. There are different diseases associated with use of Tobacco products like, oral cancers, respiratory diseases, Chronic obstructive Pulmonary Diseases, Heart Diseases, stroke, Aortic Aneurysm, Oral Cancer, Cataracts. Tobacco use has also been a detrimental factor for spread of COVID 19 viruses.

In general tobacco uses effects the entire part of body (head to foot). So we should refrain ourselves from tobacco uses. Once we are caught in giant wheel of addiction it is very hard to come out of this. World Health organization came out with the idea of observing World No Tobacco Day in the year 1987.

31st May is celebrated as World No Tobacco Day to highlight the risk associated with Tobacco and encourage the user to adopt resolution to quit the habits/reduce the smoking and other tobacco uses. Globally every year 31st May is celebrated as World No Tobacco Day. The Theme this year given by World Health Organization is "commit to Quit" The focus of theme is creating awareness about the health risk posed by consumption of tobacco, link between tobacco use and COVID 19 and other non communicable disease and to support people worldwide to give up tobacco through various initiative and digital solutions.

The World No Tobacco day is a good opportunity to raise awareness about health risk posed by the consumption of Tobacco and link between tobacco and COVID 19 and other non communicable diseases where tobacco is a risk factor.

Observation of World No tobacco Day at various State, District and Block level, Enforcement drive on tobacco control laws at various public places, disbursement of leaflets, pamphlets, IEC materials on harmful effects of tobacco, awareness activities like road shows, painting/slogan competition for children, say no to tobacco use pledge taking ceremony in various offices, schools and colleges are some of the basic activities besieged for Observance of World No Tobacco Day 2021.

However, keeping in consideration the surging of second wave of COVID 19 Pandemic and strict lock down protocols in the state, it has become a challenge to carry out the activities in public platforms/Publicly.

Therefore, on the occasion of "World No Tobacco Day 31st May 2021, through the medium of print/digital/social media, I on behalf of State Tobacco Control Cell, Health and Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Sikkim would like to extend my heartiest greetings to everyone and also appeal to everyone (users & non-users) to come together and take a pledge SAY "NO TO TOBACCO".

PLEDGE

ON THE OCASSION OF WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY I TAKE PLADGE THAT I SHALL NEVER SMOKE/CONSUME ANY TYPE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS I MY LIFE AND MOTIVATE MY FAMILY OR ACQUINTANCES NOT TO SMOKE/USE ANY TOBACCO PRODUCTS, I SHALL MOTIVATE MY COLLEAGES FOR THE SAME.

THANK YOU

*[the writer is State Nodal Officer, State Tobacco Control Cell, Health & FW Deptt, Govt. of Sikkim]*

## Horses starve to death as pandemic hits Bangladesh Tourism

**COX'S BAZAR, 30 MAY**

**[AFP]:** More than 20 horses have died of starvation in just one month at Bangladesh's most popular resort district, the animals' owners said Sunday, as the country's tourism industry reels from the pandemic's economic fallout.

The South Asian nation of 168 million people is battling a fresh wave of coronavirus infections that has stretched its healthcare system and triggered a nationwide lockdown.

The horses' owners said they were struggling to afford fodder for their animals, which are used for tourist rides at Cox's Bazar beach -- one of the world's longest.

"Once coronavirus hit, tourist numbers... sharply dropped to a trickle," Farida Begum,

spokesperson of the Cox's Bazar Horse Owners Association, told AFP.

"We are struggling to make ends meet. How can we feed the horses?"

Tourists had briefly returned to the district from December to February when infections slowed, but visits dried up under the fresh lockdown imposed from April 14.

At least 21 horses out of up to 90 used for tourists at the beach died over the past month while others were emaciated, Begum said.

During last year's lockdown, 41 horses -- including eight of Begum's own -- died, she added.

Some owners have set their horses free, hoping they can survive by eating grass or foraging for food.

The horse owners say they have been struggling to feed their own families, with many taking out loans from microlenders just to make ends meet.

"Officials from the microlender come to my home every week and badger me to pay back the loan in instalments. But unless the tourists start arriving in Cox's Bazar, I can't pay back the money," Begum said, adding that she had borrowed 100,000 taka (\$1,200).

Dozens of horse handlers usually hired by the owners to help tourists with the rides have switched to driving rickshaws or construction work.

'NO TOURISTS MEANS NO INCOME'

The resort town usu-

ally attracts more than two million mostly domestic tourists every year.

But under the nationwide lockdown, offices and markets are shut and public transport has been halted.

Horse owner Sarwar Azam told AFP that one of his animals died last week and the second was also going hungry.

The head of a local horse owners' organisation, Nishan Ahsan -- whose four animals died during last year's lockdown -- said his members had received limited aid from the government.

"During the peak tourism time, a horse can earn up to 2,000 taka (\$23) a day. We would set aside a slice of that income for the horses' food, which is expensive," Ahsan told AFP.

## Reject KP Sharma Oli's "unconstitutional" acts: Nepal opposition alliance

**KATHMANDU, 30 MAY**

**[PTI]:** Nepal's Opposition alliance on Sunday urged all state institutions not to support Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli government's "unconstitutional" and "anti-democratic" activities and expressed hope that the Supreme Court's verdict on the petitions against the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament will come in its favour, according to a media report.

A Constitutional Bench of Nepal's Supreme Court on Friday heard 30 writ petitions against the dissolution of the lower house of Parliament and fixed Sunday as the next date of hearing.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives on May 22 for the second time in five months and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19 on the advice of Prime Minister Oli.

She rejected the bids of both Prime Minister Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a government. Mr Oli and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba had staked separate claims to the premiership, saying the "claims were insufficient."

The alliance of Nepali Congress (NC), CPN



(Maoist Centre), the Madhav Kumar Nepal led-faction of the UML, the Upendra Yadav-led faction of Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) and the Rastriya Janamorchha Party held a joint meeting on Sunday, myrepublica.com reported.

The meeting was held at Mr Deuba's residence at Budhanilkantha in Kathmandu.

"We had staked claim to the post of Prime Minister with the support of 149 lawmakers. The government cannot decide on dissolving the House in this case," reads a joint press statement of the Opposition alliance.

At present, 136 votes are needed to form a majority government.

The alliance also urged all the state organs and institutions not to support the government in its "unconstitutional" and "anti-democratic" acts.

"We believe that the Supreme Court will pass the verdict in our favour," further reads the statement.

Nepal's Opposition alliance on May 24 filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court demanding restoration of the House of Representatives and appointment of Mr Deuba as the Prime Minister.

Others had also filed petitions against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

Mr Oli on Friday urged all political parties to form an all-party government and hold fresh elections, as he tried to justify the controversial dissolution of the House of Representatives twice by the President, saying a "functionless" Parliament turned out to be the main source of instability in the country.

Earlier on December 20, the President had dissolved the Parliament

and called snap polls on April 30 and May 10. However, two months later, the Rana-led Constitutional Bench on February 23 overturned the decision and reinstated the House.

Constitutional experts have criticised Mr Oli and Mr Bhandari for their complicity in tramplng upon the Constitution.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 last year after President Bhandari dissolved the House and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, amidst a tussle for power within the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

Mr Oli's move to dissolve the House sparked protests from a large section of the NCP led by his rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda".

## Centre announces social security measures for families of workers dying of Covid



**NEW DELHI, 30 MAY**

**[NDTV]:** Keeping in mind the rising number of deaths in the country owing to Corona virus pandemic, the Ministry of Labour and Employment on Sunday announced additional benefits for family of workers through Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) schemes, who have died due to the infection.

These measures, official sources said, will address the concerns of families of those workers who have died due to Covid, and help them tide over financial difficulties.

Announcing a slew of amendments, the Labour Ministry said that enhanced social security is sought to be provided to workers without any additional cost to the employer.

Currently for the insured persons under ESIC, after death or disablement due to employment injury, a pension equivalent to 90 per cent of average daily wage drawn by the worker is made available to the spouse and widowed mother for whole life and for children till they attain the age of 25 years. For the female child, the benefit is available till her marriage.

NEW MEASURES

To support the families of insured persons under the ESIC scheme, all dependent family members of the insured persons, who have been registered in the online portal of ESIC prior to their diagnosis of Covid disease and subsequent death due to it, will be entitled to receive the same benefits and in the same scale as received by the dependents of in-

sured persons who die as a result of employment injury, subject to eligibility.

However, the insured persons must have been registered on the ESIC online portal at least three months prior to the diagnosis of Covid disease resulting in death, to avail the benefit.

AMENDMENTS ANNOUNCED BY GOVERNMENT

As per the notification issued by the Ministry of Labour, the amount of maximum benefit has been increased from 6 lakhs to 7 lakhs to the family members of dead employee.

In addition to this, according to another amendment, a minimum assurance benefit of ₹ 2.5 lakh to eligible family members of dead employees will be given, who was a member for a continuous period of 12

months in one or more establishments preceding his death.

This provision is in place of the existing norm of continuous employment in the same establishment for 12 months. It will benefit contractual or casual labourers, who were losing out on benefits due to the condition of continuous one year employment in one establishment.

The ministry has also restored the provision of minimum ₹ 2.5 lakh compensation retrospectively, that is from February 15, 2020 onwards.

The number of claims on account of death under the scheme has been estimated to be about 50,000 families per year, including increase in claims taking into account estimated death of about 10,000 workers, which may occur due to Covid.



## India records single-day spike of 1.65 lakh COVID-19 cases, lowest in 46 days

**NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI):** India recorded a single-day rise of 1,65,553 new COVID-19 cases, the lowest in 46 days, taking the country's infection tally to 2,78,94,800, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The daily positivity declined to 8.02 per cent, remaining below the 10 per cent-mark for the sixth consecutive day, while the weekly positivity rate dropped to 9.36 per cent, it said.

The death toll due to the disease climbed to 3,25,972 in the country with 3,460 fatalities being recorded in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Also, 20,63,839 COVID-19 tests were conducted in the country on Saturday, taking the total number of such exams so far to 34,31,83,748, the ministry said.

The number of active cases has reduced to 21,14,508, comprising 7.58 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 91.25 per cent, it said.



The count of the daily new cases is the lowest in 46 days. India had recorded 1,61, 736 infections on April 13.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 2,54,54,320, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.17 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 last year, 30 lakh on August

23, 40 lakh on September 5, 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and one crore on December 19.

India crossed the grim milestone of two crore infections on May 4.

The 3,460 new fatalities include 832 from Maharashtra, 492 from Karnataka, 486 from Tamil Nadu, 198 from Kerala,

155 from Uttar Pradesh, 148 from West Bengal, 125 from Punjab, 122 from Delhi and 104 from Andhra Pradesh.

A total of 3,25,972 COVID-19 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 94,030 from Maharashtra, 28,298 from Karnataka, 24,073 from Delhi, 23,261 from Tamil Nadu, 20,208 from Uttar Pradesh, 15,268 from West Bengal, 14,305

from Punjab and 12,979 from Chhattisgarh.

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

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

## Vaishali wins Speed Chess Championship Qualifier-2

**CHENNAI, MAY 30 (PTI):** India's R Vaishali on Sunday won the women's Speed chess online championship qualifier 2, beating Polina Shuvalova of Russia in the final.

The 20-year-old from Chennai, a woman Grandmaster, became the second Indian to qualify for the main event of the 2021 women's Speed Chess Championship.

"I am very happy with my performance as it has come in a very strong field. I played some very good games," Vaishali, sister of Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa, told PTL.

The tournament was a nine-round Swiss tournament with the top eight finishers advancing to the knockout playoff stage.

In the semifinals, Vaishali defeated Bibisara Assaubayeva 2-0 and then edged out Shuvalova in the final.

She lost the first game on time despite outplaying her opponent. However, she bounced back and check-mated the Russian in the second to level the score.

The third and final

game was a roller-coaster. The Indian obtained a promising position from the opening but a hasty queen sacrifice appeared to set her back. However, a blunder by Shuvalova cost her dear and allowed Vaishali to secure victory.

Indian WGM D Harika had won the first qualifier to book a spot in the main event.

A total of eight qualifiers will be played and the winners will be joined by eight invited players -- GM Koneru Humpy (India), GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (Russia), GM Antoaneta Stefanova (Bulgaria), GM Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine), GM Irina Krush (USA), GM Kateryna Lagno (Russia) and GM Lei Tingjie (China) -- in the main event to be played from June 10 to July 3.

Vaishali said she had played with her brother which helped her to prepare for the event.

Vaishali, who has qualified for the FIDE World Cup to be held in Sochi, Russia from July 10, said she was looking forward to playing the event (an over-the-board one) in which the best

players will be taking part.

Apart from Vaishali, Koneru Humpy, Harika, Padmini Rout and Bhakti Kulkarni will be taking part in the World Cup.

"It (the World Cup) is a big event, a super strong event in which the best players will be taking part. I want to give my best and am preparing as well as I can," Vaishali said.

She is practising by playing over the board games with her brother and also training with coach R B Ramesh.

"I am playing with Pragu and look to learn from him. I hope this will be a great help when I get back to the over the board event."

Vaishali is also aware that not having played an across the board event since February 2020, she needs to make the changes for the format.

"I played my last over the board event in February 2020 (at the Aeroflot Open). The switch from playing blitz and rapid games to classical will be slightly difficult but I am prepared for it. Practising with Pragu also will help," she added.

## 470 infra projects show cost overruns worth Rs 4.38 lakh crore



**NEW DELHI, MAY 30 (PTI):** As many as 470 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than Rs 4.38 lakh crore, according to a report.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above. Of the 1,737 such projects, 470 reported cost overruns and 525 were delayed.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1,737 projects was Rs 22,33,409.53 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be 26,71,440.77

crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of 4,38,031.24 crore (19.61 per cent of original cost)," the ministry's latest report for April 2021 said.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till April 2021 is Rs 13,16,032.62 crore, which is 49.26 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, the report said that the number of delayed projects decreases to 375 if the delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion.

Further, for 988 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation peri-

od has been reported.

Out of 525 delayed projects, 106 projects have an overall delay in the range of 1-12 months, 123 projects (13-24 months), 179 projects (25-60 months) and 117 projects (61 months and above).

The average time overrun in these 525 delayed projects is 45.63 months.

Reasons for time overruns as reported by various project implementing agencies include delay in land acquisition, delay in obtaining forest and environment clearances, and lack of infrastructure support and linkages.

Delay in tie-up for

project financing, delay in finalisation of detailed engineering, change in scope, delay in tendering, ordering and equipment supply, and law and order problems, among others, are the other reasons, the report said.

The report also cited 'state-wise lockdown due to COVID-19' as a reason for the delay in implementation of these projects.

It has also been observed that project agencies are not reporting revised cost estimates and commissioning schedules for many projects, which suggests that time/cost overrun figures are underreported, it added.

## CBSE announces Teachers' Capacity Building programmes in AI, Information Technology

**NEW DELHI, 30 MAY [NDTV]:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced capacity building programmes in Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence for teachers. The online awareness and capacity building programme for teachers teaching Information Technology to Classes 9 to 10 students is scheduled for 10 am on May 31. Registrations

for the programme have ended.

The CBSE has collaborated with IBM to train Class 11 teachers in Artificial Intelligence (AI). The programme will be held in various batches between June 2 and July 14. There is no registration fee for both programmes.

For the AI training programme, each session will be of three days and will be based on

Class 12 curriculum, the board said.

The training agenda and invitation links will be emailed to the selected teachers, it added.

Recently, the CBSE had asked students to join the Young Warrior Movement -- a movement that seeks to engage youths in a series of easy and real-life tasks to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a joint initiative

of the CBSE, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Yu-Waah-UNICEF and a multi-stakeholder consortium of over 950 partners.

"YoungWarrior is a nationwide movement to engage five million young people to lead action against COVID-19 and impact 50 million people," a CBSE statement said.

## Aligarh hooch tragedy death toll rises to 25

**ALIGARH (UP), MAY 30 (PTI):** The death toll in the Aligarh hooch tragedy climbed to 25 on Sunday and new cases have been reported from a block along the district's border with Haryana, officials said here.

The BJP's Lok Sabha MP from Aligarh, Satish Gautam, however, said as per information gathered by him, the death toll has crossed 35.

Speaking to news persons, Gautam said his figures were based on inputs collected from different villages "where many victims have been cremated without conducting post-mortem examination".

Asked why there was a difference between of-

ficial figures and information collected by him, the MP said, "I will be meeting the officials today (Sunday) and we will discuss this issue. There is no question of hiding any fact. A person who has been a victim of this tragedy would ultimately find his name in the official death list."

The cases were limited to just the Lodha block of the district on the first day but have now spread to at least four more blocks.

The district authorities have been sending teams to villages to urge people not to consume any liquor bought even a week back.

Meanwhile, Lodha police station in-charge

Abhay Kumar Sharma has been suspended for dereliction of duty, as per an official announcement made on Saturday evening. The first death in the hooch tragedy was reported in this police station area.

District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh said a magisterial probe will reveal the exact death toll.

According to reports, some victims had consumed the killer brew even a day after the first deaths.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalandi Naithani had told news persons on Saturday that five people have been arrested so far, including Anil Chaudhary,

the alleged kingpin of the spurious liquor racket.

The police have booked a total of 12 people in three different cases. Several raids were carried out in various parts of the district.

A reward of Rs 50,000 each has been announced on the arrest of Rishi Sharma and Vipin Yadav, associates of Anil Chaudhary, the SSP said on Saturday.

Officials are seizing liquor pouches to help identify the spurious liquor stock that found its way to the government-authorised liquor vends.

The district magistrate has recommended Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the kin of the deceased.

## Haryana extends lockdown till June 7, relaxes curbs on shops and malls

**GURGAON, 30 MAY [PTI]:** The Haryana government today extended the lockdown to contain Covid cases by a week while relaxing the restrictions on shop timings and malls.

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said that even though the pandemic situation in the state has improved, it has been decided to extend the "Mahamari Alert - Surakshit Haryana" lockdown

till 5 am on June 7 while providing some relaxations.

Earlier, shops were allowed to open on an odd-even basis from 7 am to noon. Now, they can stay open from 9 am to 3 pm. Shopping malls too have been allowed to open but the number of people allowed entry will depend on the size of the mall. "For example, in a 1,000 square feet mall,

40 people will be allowed at a time, and if it has an area of 2,000 square feet, the number of people allowed at a given time will be 80," the Chief Minister said.

Schools, colleges and industrial training institutes will remain closed till June 15 as announced earlier, he added.

NDTV spoke to some shop owners on the announcement to extend the lockdown.

Mubeen Ahmed, who runs an apparel store in Gurgaon's Sadar Bazar, welcomed the decision. "The government is doing this in the interest and for the safety of the people," he said.

Gurgaon today reported 110 covid cases, its lowest daily case count since March 18. It has reported nine deaths over the past 24 hours and the positivity rate stands at 1.8 per cent.

## Monsoon two days behind schedule, likely to hit Kerala coast on June 3

**NEW DELHI, 30 MAY [NDTV]:** The onset of the annual monsoon over the Indian sub-continent has been delayed by two days. It is now expected to hit the Kerala coast on June 3, the weather department said today.

"As per the latest meteorological indications, the south-westerly winds could strengthen further gradually from June 1, resulting in a likely enhancement in rainfall

activity over Kerala. Hence, the monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to take place by June 3, 2021," a government release said today, citing India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

Isolated heavy rainfall over Kerala and Mahe may continue, though.

The cyclonic circulation over Punjab and its neighbourhood extending upto 1.5 kilometres above the mean sea level per-

sists. So does the one over east-central Arabian Sea off Karnataka coast, at 3.1 kilometres above sea level, the government release has said.

However, the monsoon itself has been delayed because the "south-westerly winds have not strengthened," according to IMD chief Dr M Mohapatra.

"We expect the situation to start improving from June 1, leading to the onset of

Monsoon over Kerala on June 3, 2021," Dr Mohapatra told NDTV.

Nearly half of India's farmland has no irrigation and depends on the annual June-September rains to grow crops such as rice, corn, cane, cotton, and soybean.

Last month, IMD had said the monsoon would be average this year, raising expectations of higher farm output, which is central to the country's economy.



## Tell Me Why?

*Ask and you might learn. Don't, if you want to keep speculating*

As the makers of a popular mint lozenge taught us about evolution in one of their advertisement spots – allow the brain to light up [batti jala-de] and experiment and one will change, grow up from the experience and, well, evolve above others.

Clearly then, on the flip side, regressive attitudes and closed minds announce a society in decay, the first signs of which manifest with declining inquisitiveness. It is because of their uninhibited inquisitiveness that children learn so much more than we ever do comparatively as grown-ups. A flagging inquisitiveness reflects a society growing indifferent to information [without which there is no grist for inquisitiveness]. Such a society stops to be dynamic, without which there can be no growth. Stop growing and atrophy sets in, and then everything tosses into a downward spiral. It goes without saying that it is inquisitiveness that led mankind out of the cave and into the world of microchips; developed language from monosyllables and clucks to discourses and epics and communication from shouted greetings to mobile phones and emoji codes, which, accept it, require some degree of imagination for older minds to decipher even if they are instinctive for the young.

It is curiosity, not necessarily necessity, that triggers invention, changes mindsets. An inquiring mind strengthens democracy, reinforces accountability and substantiates public opinion. Stop being inquisitive, give up asking questions and its back to the Stone Age when everything happened because it was destined to and no one was wiser.

Turn the mirror on Sikkim.

Whys and wherefores do not infiltrate conversations here which are invariably just litanies of complaints... a finality in dejection. And therein lies the root of most of Sikkim's problems from corruption to a poor human resource development to trust deficits to easy paranoia. The inquisitiveness appears gone, replaced by a negativism of distrust. Yes, it has to be the latter that has snuffed out enquiry. People have grown too distrusting, scoffing at imagined "ulterior motives" before they give any gesture a try-out. Once someone is convinced that a conspiracy is afoot, everything becomes suspect leading to an acceptance of failure and deflating of the energy to launch inquisitions. Examples proliferate. The government, for instance, takes a decision and while everyone nags, no one seeks an explanation or justification. But everyone speculates, and that is not necessarily healthy because before one broadcasts a speculation, enough enquiry should have been made to firm up the arguments. Don't do that, and its only conjecture that abounds. There could be two reasons for this - one, that the people have given up hope of getting answers and second, the people believe they know the reasons. Both are dangerous signs.

People cannot give up their inquisitiveness, not in a democracy where it is not only their right to ask questions, but also their responsibility. As for the belief that they know the answers, this is even more dangerous because the belief is not an informed one, it is inferred and it is in situations like these that rumours and canards gain credence.

# Group-Think: What It Is and How to Avoid It

COLIN FISHER

THECONVERSATION.COM

Former government adviser Dominic Cummings has made waves by suggesting the UK government's response to the COVID-19 crisis was "a classic historic example of group-think".

He said the more people criticised the government's plan, the more those on the inside said others did not understand. He added that, had the plans been open to scrutiny earlier, "we would have figured out at least six weeks earlier that there was an alternative plan".

Although we can't know for sure the truth of this criticism, it raises an important question about the dynamics of decision-making in groups. What actually is group-think and what does scientific research tell us about how to avoid it?

Group-think is a popular explanation for how groups of knowledgeable people can make flawed decisions. The essence of group-think is that groups create psychological pressure on individuals to conform to the views of leaders and other members.

Famous examples of group-think include the decision of the US to invade Cuba in 1961 and Coca-Cola's decision to launch "New Coke" in 1985. In these and other famous examples, groups failed to make the right choice even when they had all the information they needed right there in the room. Members failed to share their dissenting opinions and information that could have avoided embarrassing or tragic decisions.

WHAT CAUSES GROUP-THINK

How can smart people get together and come to seemingly inexplicable conclusions? There are three main reasons groups create pressure that leads to flawed decisions.

First, all humans want to feel a sense of belonging with others – our brains are wired to find our tribe, the people with whom we

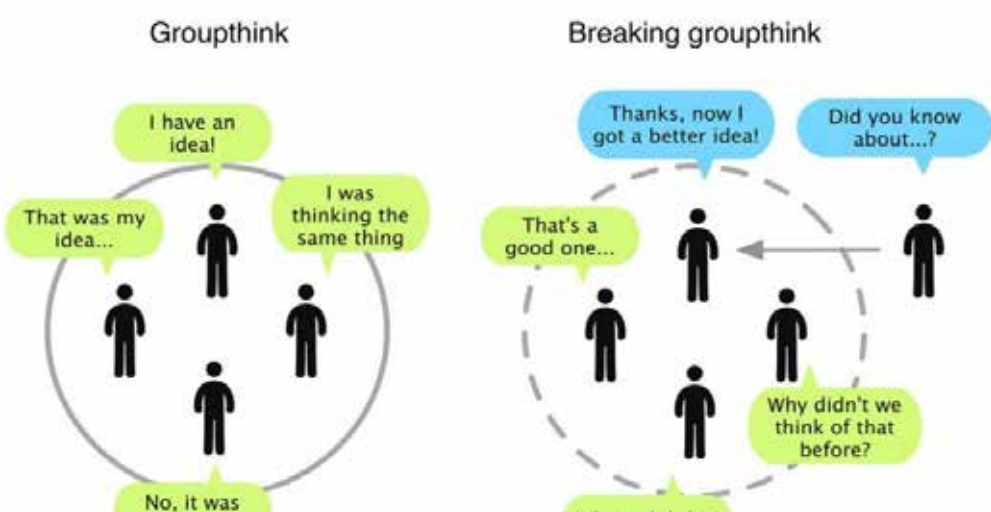
belong. In any

group situation, we want to feel accepted by other members and seek approval, consciously and unconsciously. One way to gain acceptance and approval is to find common ground with others. But, when all members do this, it has the effect of biasing group discussion toward areas of similarity and agreement, crowding out potential differences and disagreement.

For instance, if a member of a group says they like a particular TV show, other members who also like it are most likely to speak. Those who haven't seen it or dislike it are more likely to stay silent. That isn't to say disagreement never happens, just that it's less common in group discussions than agreement. When group discussions follow these dynamics over time – members expressing more agreement than disagreement – those with dissenting opinions begin to believe their views are discordant with the majority. This encourages them even more to withhold information and views that they fear (even subtly) will be met with disapproval from other members.

Second, as the old adage goes, "if you want to get along, go along". Although disagreement about the best course of action is healthy for groups – and, indeed, is the whole point of groups making decisions – healthy disagreement often spills over into conflict that gets personal and hurts others' feelings. The risk of this, however small, leads those who disagree to hold their tongues too often.

These pressures are even



stronger when high-status group members – such as formal leaders or those respected by others – express their opinions. The subtle, unspoken forces that make it feel risky to speak up and disagree with other members are extremely difficult to overcome when we know we would be putting ourselves at odds with a leader.

Third, we subtly adjust our preferences to come into concordance with what we perceive as the majority view. In other words, when we don't have a clear view of our own opinion, we simply adopt other members' – often, without even knowing it. Once we adopt that preference, it becomes a lens for the information we receive. We remember information consistent with our own preferences, but tend to forget information that is inconsistent with them. So, a member revealing a preference invisibly creates a self-reinforcing cycle that perpetuates agreement.

HOW CAN GROUPS AVOID GROUP-THINK?

The essential ingredient when trying to avoid group-think is to focus first on options and information, and to hold off preferences and advocacy for as long as possible. After determining their objectives, groups should consider as many options as possible. All members should be asked for

all relevant information about all of these options – even if the information doesn't favour options other members seem to prefer. Only after a thorough, systematic search for information should members begin to discuss their preferences or advocate for one option over another.

Leaders can play a critical role in avoiding group-think. Research has shown leaders who direct the decision-making process, but don't share their own preferences or advocate for particular options, lead groups to avoid group-think and make better decisions. Leaders that advocate for particular choices, especially early on, tend to lead their groups astray and strengthen the forces that lead to group-think.

In avoiding group-think, leaders should play the role of a detective, asking questions and collecting all the facts. Leading by trying to win a debate or litigate a court case leaves the group far more open to group-think.

Regardless of how the government made decisions in the past, they would be well-advised to make sure all decision-making bodies follow this advice. Even the smartest, best-intentioned groups are vulnerable to the basic psychology of group-think.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Organisations and Innovation, UCL]*

## Jerusalem: An Eyewitness Account From a Divided City

ADEL RUISED  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Not long after the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into force on Friday May 21, members of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) entered the al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem, reportedly using teargas and stun grenades to disperse Muslims praying there. Over the weekend, IDF personnel escorted Jewish visitors to Temple Mount, which occupies the same site as al-Aqsa and holds special religious significance as the site of the biblical temple. The waqf, or Islamic authority that controls the site, said the IDF had cleared young Palestinians from the site and barred entry to any Muslims under the age of 45. It was reported that a small number of Muslim protesters were detained. Details remain unclear.

The incidents have been reported as attempts at provocation. Over the years, al-Aqsa mosque has been a flashpoint for violence between Israelis and Palestinians and was the site of the outbreak of the second intifada uprising in 2000. This occurred after Ariel Sharon – the then prime minister of Israel – visited the site with a heavily armed defence-force escort, not long after peace talks at Camp David with then Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had failed. The five-year uprising cost an estimated 3,000 Palestinian lives.

As a PhD researcher in political science, I have been in East Jerusalem interviewing people

and trying to understand various methods of control used by the Israeli government for regulating the Palestinian population in the city. I have been observing the actions of young Palestinian activists and have been impressed by the ways in which many have avoided turning to violence, instead using peaceful forms of protest to make their point to the watching world media.

This was manifested in the early days of Ramadan (April 13 to May 12) when Israeli border police installed metal barricades at Damascus Gate Square. These gates restricted people's movement and made it impossible for local street sellers to carry on their business. It also prevented Palestinians from sitting on the steps in the square itself, which is a traditional meeting place after evening prayers during Ramadan.

So young Palestinian activists gathered in crowds in and around the square. As I watched, young activists faced off against Israeli police stationed at the barricades, singing songs and performing gymnastic exercises. Looking on, the Israeli police seemed unprepared. Neither their kit nor their rules of engagement equipped them for dealing with this form of peaceful protest.

So they used teargas and stun grenades to clear the areas. They also sprayed the demonstrators with foul chemically synthesised water, which leaves an unpleasant smell in peoples' clothing that is hard to remove. They used



mounted police to chase down, intimidate and disperse young protesters. I watched this happen from the balcony of a nearby restaurant whose owner is a friend of mine. Another friend, who was among the protesters, was sprayed with the foul water.

Protesters kept regrouping and returning. For two weeks they carried on with these demonstrations. On April 26, the Israeli authorities gave in to pressure and removed the barriers, allowing Palestinians to return to their traditional gatherings in the few days left of the holy month.

CHALLENGING COERCIVE EVICTION

Meanwhile, May 17, the date al-

located by the Israeli District Court for settlers to evict and replace several Palestinian families from their homes at the nearby neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, was getting ever closer. Israeli authorities have misleadingly described this as a "real estate dispute".

But it is widely viewed among Palestinians as a deliberate act of "ethnic cleansing" to change the demographic of this traditionally Muslim Arab neighbourhood. Settlers had been reportedly intimidating and attacking the families and demonstrators, often with the support of Israeli security forces.

Settlers reportedly resorted to both legal and violent extra-legal means, for example, spraying pep-

per at demonstrators preparing for iftar, the Ramadan breakfast meal. Once again, Palestinian activists who gathered to offer support to families slated for eviction, avoided violence, dancing the dabke and singing patriotic songs.

These activists also used social media well, regularly posting details and information on Twitter – see the hashtag #SaveSheikhJarrah – as well as Facebook and TikTok to expose aggression by settlers and explain the legal issues behind the attempted evictions.

As a result of the global attention focused on the eviction attempts and the level of support for the Palestinian families under threat, the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, ordered the eviction proceedings in the supreme court to be frozen on May 9.

AVOIDING VIOLENCE

Similarly, Israeli authorities realised that routing the "flag march" through the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem via the Damascus Gate against a background of such tension risked further violence and condemnation from the watching world. So the march was rerouted to pass through the Jaffa Gate instead of Damascus Gate, keeping marchers closer to West Jerusalem, almost on the 1967 border line.

It seems that these peaceful demonstrations were at least part of the reason that an explosion of violence was mostly avoided in Jerusalem at this time. I like to think of it as the "Jerusalem spring".

But Israeli national politics suddenly reared its ugly head. Netanyahu was realising that after

the March 23 election, he would be unable to form a government. Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, had asked opposition politician Yair Lapid to form a coalition with the defence minister, Naftali Bennett, which would have meant Netanyahu losing power.

Against this background, Israeli police raided al-Aqsa mosque. There have been reports of retaliatory violence by Muslims in the mosque, including the throwing of petrol bombs by young activists. But I was there that day and saw nothing.

Meanwhile, Hamas fighters started to launch missiles into Israel from Gaza, prompting massive Israeli retaliation. For 11 days, the world's attention was on the tiny Palestinian enclave where 2 million people were under almost constant bombardment from Israeli airstrikes.

But on May 18, Palestinians in East Jerusalem staged a one-day strike. Again, this was peaceful. Creative protests during the strike included organising chess competitions in the street outside the homes of families threatened with eviction.

After global pressure, Hamas and Israel agreed to a ceasefire on May 21. As we now know, within hours Israeli security forces had entered al-Aqsa and used force to disperse people praying. The provocation continues, but we can only hope that peaceful demonstrations will prevail and avoid another outbreak of violent conflict in this divided city.

*[the writer is PhD Researcher in Politics, Lancaster University]*



## Odisha asks RMRC to study impact of vaccines on people

**Bhubaneswar, May 30 (PTI):** With COVID-19 positive cases being reported from various districts of Odisha post double dose of the vaccination, the state government has urged the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), a unit of ICMR, to undertake a study on the impact of vaccines on the people.

“It is requested that RMRC, Bhubaneswar may carry out a follow up to assess the hospitalisation and severity among the COVID-19 positive individuals,” post vaccination as compared to non-vaccinated COVID-19 positive individuals,” Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, P K Mohapatra said in a letter to RMRC, Bhubaneswar director Dr Sanghamitra Pati.

Mohapatra mentioned in the letter that the government have been urging people to get vaccinated, maintaining that the vaccine will not only protect one from contracting the coronavirus infection, but also will prevent its progression to a severe form and thereby reduce mortality.

These findings could provide valuable insight to inform on the future vaccination road map of the state, he said.

“In this regard, you (Director RMRC) may contact the designated hospitals treating COVID-19 to collect the relevant data for the COVID-19 individual,” Mohapatra said in the May 28 letter, adding that the study may be taken on priority and findings may be shared at the earliest.

Official sources said that till May 29, as many as 76,05,646 doses of vaccines have been administered among the people of Odisha since beginning of the nationwide inoculation programme against COVID-19 on January 16.

Out of these 65.3 lakh were Covishield and 7.5 lakh doses of Covaxin till May 26.

Two days ago, the Vaccination Advisory Committee headed by Dr K Srinath Reddy and attended by Dr Devi Shetty, Dr Ramakanta Panda, Dr Subrat Acharya, Dr Lalit Kant, Dr Mrudula Phadke, Dr Dattaswar Hota, Dr E Venkat Rao, Dr Sanghamitra Pati, had suggested to the state government some measures to contain the spread of coronavirus.

They suggested to the state government to go for vaccination to reduce the cases.

# Oldest American, fastest woman on Everest return safely



**KATHMANDU, MAY 30 (AP):** A retired attorney from Chicago who became the oldest American to scale Mount Everest, and a Hong Kong teacher who is now the fastest female climber of the world’s highest peak, on Sunday returned safely from the mountain where climbing teams have been struggling with bad weather and a coronavirus outbreak.

Arthur Muir, 75, scaled the peak earlier this month, beating the record by another American, Bill Burke, at age 67.

Tsang Yin-hung, 45, of Hong Kong scaled the summit from the base camp in 25 hours and 50 minutes, and became the fastest female climber. The record 10 hours

and 56 minutes is held by a Sherpa guide, Lakpa Gelu.

A climbing accident in 2019, when he hurt his ankle falling off a ladder, did not deter Muir from attempting to scale the peak again. The retired lawyer, who began mountaineering late in life, said he was scared and anxious during his latest adventure.

You realize how big a mountain it is, how dangerous it is, how many things that could go wrong. Yeah, it makes you nervous, it makes you know some anxiety there and maybe little bit of scared,” Muir told reporters in Kathmandu.

I was just surprised when I actually got to

there (summit) but I was too tired to stand up, and in my summit pictures I am sitting down,” he said.

Muir began mountaineering at age 68 with trips to South America and Alaska before attempting Everest in 2019, when he fell off the aluminum ladder.

Climbing was closed last year due to the pandemic.

Married and a father of three, Muir has six grandchildren. The last one a boy was born while he was still on the mountains during his current expedition.

Tsang made only two stops between the base camp, located at 5,300 meters (17,390 feet), to the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit to

change, and covered the near vertical distance in 25 hours and 50 minutes.

She was lucky because there were barely any climbers on the way to the highest camp at South Col. After that, on her way to the summit, she met only climbers making their descent, which did not slow her speed climb.

There are only a few days of good weather left on the mountain this year, when hundreds of climbers line up to the summit, many having to wait for a long time in the traffic jam on the highest trail.

I just feel kind of relief and happy because I am not looking for breaking a record,” she said. I feel relieved because I

can prove my work to my friends, to my students.”

She made a previous attempt on May 11, but bad weather forced her to turn back from a point very close to the summit. She then returned last Sunday.

For the summit, it is not just not your ability, team work, I think luck is very important, she said.

An outbreak of the coronavirus among climbers and their guides at the Everest base camp has forced at least three teams to cancel their expeditions. But hundreds of others have pushed through attempting to scale the summit, at a time Nepal is in lockdown battling its worst surge in COVID-19.

# As monsoon nears Nepal will have to cope with seasonal diseases and pandemic

**KATHMANDU, 30 MAY [KATHMANDUPOST]:** The monsoon is imminent. Along with the rains, the season also brings a number of diseases. This year with Nepal’s fragile health system battling the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of seasonal epidemics will mean a double whammy, especially for rural Nepal.

“The number of new cases of waterborne diseases could rise in the coming days as we have been witnessing heavy rainfall for the last few days,” Dr Tashi Lama, superintendent of Simikot Hospital in Humla, told the Post over the phone.

According to Lama, lately, every day two to three patients suffering from severe diarrheal disease, with their health condition serious, are being admitted to the hospital.

This number is very low compared to previous years as people have been restricted to their homes but this could rise once the prohibitory orders are lifted, he said.

Thousands of people from across the country get ill with dengue, malaria, kala-azar, scrub typhus, Japanese encephalitis, jaundice, typhoid, diarrhoea, and cholera during the monsoon.

Scores die, according to the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division. The monsoon season in Nepal generally begins in mid-June.

“Coronavirus cases too are also rising in the remote villages of the district,” said Lama.

“The number of total positive cases has

reached 146 and we have 96 active cases at present in the district,” said Lama. “The coming days will be more challenging for us as we have to deal with all the seasonal diseases and pandemic at the same time.”

Public health experts have warned that at a time when the entire focus of authorities is on containment and management of the rising coronavirus cases, the country could face several other epidemics, which is normal in the monsoon season.

“Apart from containing the spread of ongoing coronavirus infections, we have our regular duties of containing the possible epidemics,” Dr Sher Bahadur Pun, chief of Clinical Research Unit at Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, told the Post. “There could be losses of lives from other epidemics too and the authorities should be prepared for the worst.”

Not only in urban centres but also in villages, coronavirus continues to be the focus of health officials.

“We are focussed on containment of the coronavirus cases,” Shankar Duwadi, health coordinator of Benighat Rorang Rural Municipality of Dhading, told the Post. “An outbreak of seasonal epidemic has not been reported yet in our rural municipality but it is not unexpected.”

Along with the seasonal epidemics, severe malnutrition is also seen among the children from the poorest communities in the monsoon season

in the rural municipality. People also die from consumption of wild mushrooms, Duwadi said.

According to him, coronavirus infections have spilled over in communities and there are 149 active cases in the rural municipality. So far, five deaths have been recorded from Covid-19 complications there.

On Saturday, Nepal recorded 4,311 new coronavirus infections taking the total infections tally to 553,422. The number of active cases stands at 111,509. With the Ministry of Health and Population reporting 116 new Covid-19 related fatalities, the death toll is 7,163.

Although the number of infections is lower than the near 7,000 mark reported in the last three days, the number of tests was also lower at 14,006 in the last 24 hours compared to about 20,000 in the previous three days. Positivity rate on Saturday was more than 30 percent.

Doctors say what is also worrying is most of the symptoms of the seasonal diseases like dengue, typhoid fever, diarrhoea overlap those of Covid-19.

“Last week, we had a patient who told me that he was suffering from fever, chest pain, body ache but came down with a negative coronavirus report even after undergoing polymerase chain reaction tests three times,” said Pun. “Chances of late diagnosis of diseases and subsequent delay in treatment due to overlapping symptoms could

make common seasonal ailments life threatening.”

The World Health Organisation’s global influenza surveillance and response system shows that at least 30 cases of A H3N2, which is known as Hong Kong flu, have been recorded in the country since the beginning of 2021. These symptoms are exactly like those of Covid-19 but the ailment can be treated with timely diagnosis.

In Humla too, several patients suffering from seasonal influenza have come to the hospital for treatment in recent times, according to Lama.

But with the focus on the pandemic, health workers may not be getting the training that they require to treat the seasonal epidemics.

Officials at the Ministry of Health and Population admit that some health workers, who were recently recruited or hired to deal with pandemics, have not been provided training to deal with seasonal diseases.

Earlier, the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division trained medics serving in state-run health facilities across the country, supplied testing kits and kept medicines in stock in view of the outbreaks.

With the implementation of federalism, however, the responsibility of controlling epidemics has come on the provincial and local governments’ shoulders but they too are embattling

the coronavirus pandemic.

“Provincial as well as local governments have been provided the budget to deal with the epidemics,” Lila Bikram Thapa, a senior public health administrator at the Division told the Post. “Health agencies under all three tiers of governments have to deal with all possible epidemics, along with the coronavirus pandemic.”

However, all this may simply be too much for the country’s severely stretched health infrastructure.

## Odisha to construct 380 km saline embankment

**BHUBANESWAR, MAY 30 (PTI):** To protect Odisha’s coast which is vulnerable to tidal surge, the state Water Resources (WR) department has chalked out a plan to construct a 380 km saline embankment at an estimated investment of Rs 1,944 crore.

This was stated by Engineer-in-chief, Water Resources department, Jyotirmay Rath on Saturday after a meeting chaired by WR secretary Anu Garg.

Rath said: “A detailed project report (DPR) is being prepared under the supervision of Water Resources department for the first-phase construction of a 380 km saline embankment at a projected cost of Rs 1,944 crore”.

He said the construction of saline embankment will be done by packing stones along the coast. To prevent these stones

from getting separated during high tide, they will be covered with iron nets. In order to prevent strong onshore wind speed, there will be massive plantations along the embankments, he said.

Rath said that the 52 km saline embankment in the districts of Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam, constructed between 2013 and 2016 at a cost of Rs 135 crore, is still intact and protecting the coast.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during the review meeting with Prime Minister Modi on Friday has stated that the state has a long coastline of 480 km, a major portion of which is vulnerable to storm surge.

Saline water entered into around 125 villages due to storm surge as an impact of the cyclone Yaas which made landfall near Dhamra in Bhadrak district.

## Chinese climber becomes first blind Asian to scale Mount Everest

**MOUNT EVEREST, 30 MAY [REUTERS]:** The 46-year old Chinese Zhang Hong has scaled the tallest peak in the world from the Nepal side, becoming the first blind man in Asia and the third in the world to climb Mount Everest.

“No matter if you’re disabled or normal, whether you have lost your eyesight or you have no legs or hands, it doesn’t matter as long as you have a strong mind, you can always complete a thing that other people say you can’t,” Zhang told Reuters.

Zhang completed the 8,849 metre-high Himalayan feat on May 24 along with three high altitude guides, and returned to the base camp on Thursday.

Born in southwestern Chinese city of

Chongqing, Zhang lost his sight at the age of 21 due to glaucoma.

He was inspired by Erik Weiheymayer, a blind American mountaineer who scaled Everest in 2001, and began training under the guidance of his mountain guide friend Qiang Zi.

Nepal reopened Mount Everest in April for foreigners after it was shut last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I was still very scared, because I couldn’t see where I was walking, and I couldn’t find my centre of gravity, so sometimes I would fall,” said Zhang.

“But I kept thinking because even though it was hard, I had to face those difficulties, this is one component of climbing, there are difficulties and dangers and this is the meaning of climbing.”

**to book advertisements in SummitTimes, call 03592-208698 9734152541**

VIDEO NEWS SECTION

SHIKIM SCAN | CapitalTIMES | Neighbourhood WATCH | Sports & Specials | ElseWhere | EICETERA

*It's easy to relax... When you can trust the News.*

**To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at**

**GANGTOK:**  
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749897695, +91-964702692  
6 for Advertisement booking at +91-993421905 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

**SILIGURI:**  
Mr. Mani Rai, M/c. Space Ads, B.R. Ambekar Building, Room No.7, 1st, 9031063973, E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irahad\_ali123@gmail.com

**KOLKATA OFFICE:**  
Irahad Ali/Intezyaz Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Merline - 2, 2nd floor, Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124344/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9030547774/ +91-9030547774

**Phone:**  
03592-208698  
+91-9832556698  
+91-9832080753

**www.summittimes.com**  
news@summittimes.com  
summittimes16@gmail.com  
advertise@summittimes.com

**Address:**  
Santo Bhawan Complex, Church Road  
Near Diesel Power House (DPH)  
Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101



# Kings of Europe: Chelsea beats City to win Champions League

**PORTO (PORTUGAL), MAY 30 (AP):** As Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta cradled the European Cup before thrusting it into the air to the backdrop of fireworks, Pep Guardiola and his distraught Manchester City players stood way behind the winner's rostrum and looked on in anguish. Champions League glory once again for Chelsea, nine years after its first title and just 123 days after manager Thomas Tuchel's season-changing arrival at the club. Yet more misery in world soccer's biggest club competition for City and Guardiola, its genius manager whose overthinking proved costly once more.

Germany forward Kai Havertz's 42nd-minute goal earned Chelsea a surprisingly comfortable 1-0 win in Porto in the Champions League's third all-English final on Saturday.

That the last match of a club season heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic was settled by a goal from Havertz felt apt, given he suffered badly after contracting the disease midway through his first year at the club having signed for nearly 100 million.

He has recovered to play a big role in Chelsea's end to the season, and showed why the club made him the centerpiece of their 300 million spending spree last off-season in the way he ran onto a through-ball by Mason Mount, rounded goalkeeper Ederson Moraes and rolled the ball into an empty net.

I really don't know what to say, Havertz said.

I waited a long time for this.

As for his fellow German,Tuchel, he only had to wait one season to get over the disappointment of losing the 2020 final when in charge of Paris Saint-Germain. Fired by PSG in December, he was hired by Chelsea a month later to resus-



citate a team that had lost its way and had dropped to ninth in the Premier League and has delivered a Champions League title four months later.

It was billed as a tactical duel between Tuchel and Guardiola, two of the world's most innovative coaches, and there was a clear winner.

Guardiola will surely regret tinkering with a settled team that had swept City to its first Champions League final and to the verge of another trophy treble, after winning the Premier League and the English League Cup.

Starting without a striker was expected Guardiola has preferred that in the Champions League knockout matches but going without a specialist holding midfielder in Fernandinho or Rodri was a ma-

jor surprise and destabilized City.

City lost its shape and its renowned composure. Seeking to win the Champions League for the third time as a coach and first since 2011, Guardiola was guilty of overthinking his tactics again in a big game as he was for City's quarterfinal eliminations at the hands of Lyon, Tottenham and Liverpool over the past three years.

I did what I thought was the best decision," Guardiola said.

It was a decision that backfired, though. Ilkay Gundogan, City's top scorer this season and a revelation in his attacking-midfield role, ended up dropping in as the anchorman in midfield and he struggled to protect City's defense.

Indeed, for Chelsea's goal, Mount had

so much time and space to thread a pass from inside his own half through the center of City's defense -- which was opened up by Timo Werner's decoy run -- for Havertz to run onto.

So, City's long, often-painful and lavishly funded journey to the summit of European soccer remains incomplete. The sight of its star midfielder Kevin De Bruyne coming off the field in the 60th minute, slightly wobbly and clearly concussed after a clash for heads with Antonio Rudiger, just added to the pain and made a comeback even more unlikely.

Sergio Aguero came on in the 76th minute for his final appearance after 10 trophy-filled years at City, but the Argentina striker couldn't produce any

late heroics this time.

City's players slumped to the ground at the final whistle as Rudiger sprinted the length of the field to celebrate with the nearly 6,000 Chelsea fans who made up the 14,110 attendance at Estadio do Dragao, a late replacement venue for the title match that was originally scheduled to be staged in Turkey.

Tuchel played with his daughters on the field. Christian Pulisic, who came on as a second-half substitute to become the first American player to feature in a Champions League final, posed with the trophy in a USA sweatshirt.

Mount burst into tears when he saw his father in the stands, What a team Man City are you have seen what they did in the Premier League," Mount said.

It was such a tough game. We got a goal and defended well the whole game.

City never had the control Guardiola so craves and could easily have conceded more on the counterattack.

Werner, who worked the channels well behind City's full backs, had already squandered two great chances before the goal, first miskicking from Havertz's cut-back and then shooting tamely at Ederson from close range.

In the second half, Pulisic ran onto Havertz's pass but slipped a shot just wide of the post.

That didn't stop Chelsea becoming the 13th multiple European champion, adding to its title from 2012 and Tuchel becoming the third straight German to coach a Champions League-winning team after Liverpool's Juergen Klopp in 2019 and Hansi Flick at Bayern Munich last season.

It's a huge step to arrive in the final and it's an even bigger one to bite your way through and to make it all the way to the cup, Tuchel said.

It's a fantastic achievement.

## Cologne beats Kiel with early goals to stay in Bundesliga

**KIEL (GERMANY), MAY 30 (AP):** Cologne kept its place in the Bundesliga after recovering from a first-leg setback to beat second-division Holstein Kiel 5-2 on aggregate in the promotion-relegation playoff.

Kiel won the first leg 1-0 on Wednesday as it bid to reach Germany's top tier for the first time. But it was in trouble almost immediately in a frantic opening to Saturday's second leg, with three headed goals in the first six minutes, on Cologne's way to winning the second game 5-1.

Jonas Hector pulled Cologne level overall in

the third minute with a looping header off Ondrej Duda's cross, but Kiel hit back 64 seconds later with Lee Jae-Sung's header on the rebound after a counterattack. That restored a 2-1 aggregate lead for the second-tier team, until Sebastian Andersson headed Cologne back in front two minutes after. At 2-2 Cologne had the advantage on away goals.

From there on it was all Cologne as Andersson scored yet another header in the 13th and Rafael Czichos blasted a rebound into the top corner to make it 4-1 on the day. Ellyes Skhiri scored the fifth late on.

Kiel looked to be showing fatigue in the later stages after a hectic finish to its season. Kiel had several games rescheduled in March and April after coronavirus outbreaks and had extra games with a run to the semifinals of the German Cup.

Cologne fired coach Markus Gisdol with six games remaining of the league season and hired the 67-year-old Friedhelm Funkel, a veteran specialist at relegation battles. His team won three of the next six to make the playoffs as

Schalke and Werder Bremen became the two teams relegated automatically to the second tier. Funkel's job was only ever an interim appointment and he will be replaced by Steffen Baumgart for next season.

Kiel was German champion in 1912 in a regionalized playoff system but hasn't played top-division soccer since the Bundesliga was founded in 1963. Kiel's failure to beat Cologne means the only two promoted teams next season will be Bochum and Greuther F rth.

## Analysis: Tinkering Guardiola too clever for his own good

**PORTO (PORTUGAL), MAY 30 (AP):** Imagine telling Pep Guardiola a decade ago he wouldn't be lifting the European Cup again.

The wait goes on. Three times falling short in campaigns with Bayern Munich. Now a fifth failure with Manchester City. For all his coaching genius, Guardiola can be too clever for his own good.

A 10-year wait to return to a Champions League final after the second of his Barcelona successes is a long time to spend thinking about how to lift the cup again. And overthinking, if the strategy to take on Chelsea was anything to go by on Saturday.

Tinkering for the biggest game in City's history, the unfamiliar lineup sent out by Guardiola was beaten by a coach in only his 30th match in charge of Chelsea.

As City awaits its first European title, Thomas Tuchel delivered Chelsea's second only four months after replacing Frank Lampard. Make no mistake: City had no one to blame but itself on a night when it had only one shot on target as Chelsea won 1-0 in Porto.

Maybe little surprise then that Sheikh Mansour didn't turn up in Portugal to attend what would have been his second known match since buying City 13 years ago.

Even with all the cash City's Abu Dhabi ownership has lavished on Guardiola to shape the

squad in his own guise, there's a brutal reality. He's still not won the Champions League without a team containing Lionel Messi.

How differently things could have been if Messi had been able to force his way out of Barcelona as planned. Time for another summer pursuit of the 33-year-old Argentine, perhaps? Prizing the unsettled Harry Kane from Tottenham could take 200 million.

We've got used to City playing without strikers. Yet, in the desperate search for an equalizer, Gabriel Jesus and then

Sergio Aguero were sent on.

There would be no fairytale ending for Aguero with a repeat of the late drama that saw him clinch City's first Premier League title in 2012. The Premier League trophy has been lifted another four times since then three times under Guardiola including last Sunday but the quest to win the biggest prize in European football goes on.

There was the unexpected setback of losing the playmaking ingenuity of Kevin De Bruyne over concussion fears after an hour.

But just why did Guar-

diola again shackle the creativity of Ilkay Gundogan when he's top scorer for the club this season? Instead the German was held back in a defensive midfield role while Rodri and Fernandinho started on the bench. At least one of the positional specialists have started in every game apart from one in City's 60-match season.

It's a season when Guardiola will have to settle with another double of just a frustration by City's high expectations that didn't exist until the 2008 takeover the Premier League and League Cup.

## Series against India might see people get rotated more: Anderson

**LONDON, MAY 30 (PTI):** Closing in on becoming England's most-capped Test cricketer, veteran seamer James Anderson says players might be rotated more in the marquee five-match series against India later this summer since the games will be taking place in quick succession.

The pacer, who is the world's highest Test wicket-taker among fast bowlers with 614 scalps from 160 matches, will turn 39 in July.

Speaking about the England & Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) much-debated rotation policy, he said, "The five Tests against India might be a different story with back-to-backs in quite quick succession. That might be where people get rotated a bit more."

England will play the Kiwis in two Tests

starting June 4 and then host India in a big-ticket five-match series later in the second half of the English summer.

"The rotation in the winter was completely understandable with the amount of cricket we had and the amount of time in bubbles that we were spending," Anderson was quoted as saying by 'ESPNcricinfo'.

"It's going to be slightly different this summer. If everything goes well, I think it will start to get relaxed. We won't be in the sort of bubble life that we've experienced in the last 12 months. So, there might be not as much reason to rest people."

Anderson is looking forward to playing all Tests this summer, including the five against India and two versus New Zealand prior to

that.

"Yes. I'd love to play all seven Tests this summer. There are five Tests against India after these two Tests against New Zealand, and then the Ashes after that. So, we want to start this summer well."

He added, "So hopefully, if we do pick our strongest team we (Anderson and Stuart Broad) would like to think that we're both in that. And we'd love to share the new ball together, yes."

"Stuart and I have sent a few texts to each other saying it'd be nice if we did get to play together. Obviously, it's completely down to the coach and captain."

"But I think, from the team's point of view, we want to get some momentum going into a big summer," he

said.

Besides standing on the verge of becoming England's most-capped Test player, Anderson is also eight shy of completing 1000 wickets in first-class cricket.

He calls the numbers mind blowing.

"1,000 wickets does seem like a lot," he said.

"In this day and age I don't know if it's possible to get that many first-class wickets any more. With the amount of cricket that's played, there doesn't seem to be that longevity in bowlers any more, and there's loads of T20 cricket and whatever else going on around the world. It feels a lot."


Regarding equalling former skipper Alastair Cook's record of most Test appearances, Anderson said he is proud of it but never imagined he would get there in million years.

DONATE BOOKS FOR NOBLE CAUSE  
TO BUILD LIBRARY

If anyone willing to donate books or  
support through  
Finance, than you are most welcome

"GIVING IS NOT JUST  
ABOUT  
MAKE A DONATION ,  
ITS ABOUT MAKING  
DIFFERENCE"

For more Details Contact ; 6294745117,8768809862  
Email ; chitishchetttri7@gmail.com



SummitTIMES



# Israel: End of the Benjamin Netanyahu era may be near

**JERUSALEM, 30 MAY [REUTERS]:** Israel was gripped by political drama on Sunday over the possible imminent end of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's record run as the country's leader. After four inconclusive parliamentary elections in two years, a 28-day mandate for opposition leader Yair Lapid to form a new government runs out on Wednesday, and media reports said he was close to putting together a coalition that would end Netanyahu's 12-year stretch as prime minister.

Lapid's chances of success rest largely with far-right politician Naftali Bennett, a kingmaker whose Yamina party has six key seats in parliament.

Bennett, 49, was widely expected to announce, possibly as early as Sunday, whether he would team up with Lapid, who leads the Yesh Atid party.

But first, Bennett

would have to rally his own party's legislators behind joining what Netanyahu's opponents have described as a government of "change" comprising factions from the left, centre and right.

Still short of a parliamentary majority after a March 23 election that ended in impasse, such a diverse grouping could be fragile, and would require outside backing by Arab members of parliament (Palestinian citizens of Israel) whose political views differ sharply from Yamina's.

Bennett has maintained public silence in recent days, with Likud party chief Netanyahu fuelling speculation his own tenure was about to end in a tweet and video on Friday. "Real Alert," he wrote, warning a dangerous "left-wing" administration was in the cards.

Yamina announced late on Saturday that Bennett would meet and update its legislators on Sunday, after re-



ports emerged he had agreed to a deal in which he would serve first as prime minister before handing over to the centrist Lapid.

A former defence minister, Bennett has reversed course before over removing Netanyahu, 71, a right-wing leader in power consecutively since 2009, and now on trial on corruption charges that he denies.

With an agreement

with Lapid widely reported to have been finalised just before fighting erupted on May 10 between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, Bennett said during the hostilities he was abandoning efforts to form a coalition with the centre and left.

But a ceasefire is holding, a recent wave of street violence in Israel between Palestinian citizens and Jews has ebbed, and a Lapid-Ben-

nett partnership could be back on course.

Israeli political commentators, however, are taking nothing for granted.

"The anti-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu government of change is still not an accomplished fact," political columnist Yossi Vertter wrote in the left-wing Haaretz newspaper on Sunday.

"It's premature to pop

open the champagne, and also too early to wear sackcloth," he said, questioning whether Yamina's lawmakers could withstand pressure from the right against a deal with Lapid.

If Lapid, 57, fails to announce a government by Wednesday, a fifth Israeli election since April 2019 – a prospect Bennett has said he wants to avoid – is likely.

## Australia leader Morrison visits New Zealand leader Ardern

**NICK PERRY CHRISTCHURCH (NEW ZEALAND), MAY 30 (AP):** Growing friction with China and how to re-open borders after the pandemic will likely be among the topics discussed by the leaders of Australia and New Zealand in their first face-to-face meeting since the coronavirus outbreak began.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison arrived in the tourist resort of Queenstown for an overnight visit Sunday. He greeted his New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern with a traditional Maori hongi, in which the pair pressed noses together.

Morrison is the first major world leader to visit New Zealand since both countries shut their borders last year to contain the virus.

The neighboring countries opened a quarantine-free travel bubble last month, although a recent outbreak of the virus in Melbourne has prompted New Zealand to suspend the travel bubble with Victoria state.

Morrison's visit came as New Zealand was dealing with extensive flooding in the Canterbury region following heavy rains. Video footage showed one farmer being rescued by helicopter from a raging river, while other swelling rivers threatened to flood thousands of homes.

The choice of Queenstown for the meeting was deliberate as New Zealand tries to revive its battered tourism industry. Queenstown has been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic, although tourism oper-



ators say they expect a boost from Australian tourists during the upcoming ski season now the travel bubble has begun.

The changing dynamics with China have been a big topic in both countries.

Australia's relation-

ship with China has deteriorated significantly. China has blocked some Australian exports after Australia excluded China-based telecommunications company Huawei from its 5G phone network and called for an independent investigation into the origins of

the coronavirus.

New Zealand has also been more outspoken against China on some issues in recent months, although has so far maintained better relations with the superpower than Australia.

Ardern said she would talk with Morri-

son about the pandemic recovery as well as key regional challenges and security issues.

Our relationship with Australia is our closest and most important and this has never been more evident than in these trying times for the world, Ardern told reporters.

## Brazil protesters denounce Bolsonaro over COVID crisis

**BRASILIA, 30 MAY [ALJAZEERA]:** Protesters have taken to the streets across Brazil to protest against far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 459,000 people in the South American nation. Bolsonaro has been widely criticised for downplaying the risks of the coronavirus and eschewing public health measures, such as lockdowns and curfews.

A Brazilian Senate commission is conducting an investigation into his government's coronavirus policies, including whether it failed to secure COVID-19 vaccines, touted unproven drugs, and pressured local leaders who sought to impose health restrictions.

Holding signs reading "Bolsonaro out" and "Impeachment now", protesters rallied in at least 16 Brazilian cities and towns on Saturday to demand his resignation, including Salvador, Belo Horizonte, and the capital, Brasilia.

"We must stop this government. We must say 'enough is enough,'" businessman Omar Silveira told the AFP news agency at a rally in Rio de Ja-



neiro that drew approximately 10,000 people.

Reporting from Rio, Al Jazeera's Monica Yanakiew said many demonstrators had turned out despite earlier concerns over holding large public protests during the pandemic.

"It came to a point where now they say we really have to go out and show that there is an opposition to Bolsonaro's government," said Yanakiew, adding that left-wing parties and civil society organisations were also present.

"[They are] chanting about everything, even about Pales-

tine – basically they're asking for Bolsonaro's impeachment and they're asking for more vaccines and for public health and public education," she said.

"The common denominator is they want Bolsonaro out."

Bolsonaro has remained defiant despite the criticism, however, and he continues to reject coronavirus-related restrictions.

Last weekend, he joined thousands of his supporters in a motorcycle rally through Rio de Janeiro and promised not to impose a national lockdown.

"Without any scientific proof, governors and mayors have imposed confinement or curfews ... We are ready to take all the measures necessary to guarantee your freedom," Bolsonaro said on May 23.

But recent polls show the former army captain's approval rating is dropping – Datafolha recently said 45 percent of Brazilians said his government is "bad" or "terrible" – and he could face a stiff challenge from ex-President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in next year's presidential elections.

While Lula, who served as

president from 2003 to 2011, has not confirmed he intends to run, recent surveys show that he would beat Bolsonaro if he does.

A Brazilian Supreme Court judge opened the door for Lula's return to politics in March when he threw out corruption convictions against the Workers' Party leader. The top court later upheld that decision.

Lula slammed Bolsonaro in March for his handling of the pandemic, saying "Brazil will not withstand it if this man continues to govern in this way".

## Remains of 215 children found at closed indigenous school in Canada

**OTTAWA, 30 MAY [AFP]:** The remains of 215 children have been discovered on the grounds of a former boarding school set up more than a century ago to assimilate Canada's indigenous people, according to a local tribe.

A specialist used ground-penetrating radar to confirm the remains of the students who attended the school near Kamloops, British Columbia, the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc tribe said in a statement late Thursday.

"Some were as young as three years old," said chief Rosanne Casimir, calling it "an unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented" by school administrators.

Its preliminary findings are expected to be released in a report next month, she said.

In the meantime, the tribe is working with the coroner and museums to try to shed further light on the horrific discovery and find any records of these deaths.

It is also reaching out to the students' home communities across British Columbia and beyond.

"My heart breaks for the families and communities impacted by this tragic news," Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett said in a tweet, offering government support for their "healing as we honour loved ones lost."

The Kamloops Indian Residential School was

the largest of 139 boarding schools set up in the late 19th century, with up to 500 students registered and attending at any one time.

It was operated by the Catholic church on behalf of the Canadian government from 1890 to 1969.

Some 150,000 Indian, Inuit and Metis youngsters in total were forcibly enrolled in these schools, where students were physically and sexually abused by headmasters and teachers who stripped them of their culture and language.

Today those experiences are blamed for a high incidence of poverty, alcoholism and domestic violence, as well as high suicide rates, in their communities.

A truth and reconciliation commission identified the names of, or information about, at least 3,200 children who died from abuse or neglect while attending a residential school. The exact number remains unknown.

At the Kamloops school, the principal in 1910 had raised concerns that federal funding was insufficient to properly feed the students, according to the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc statement.

Ottawa formally apologized in 2008 for what the commission later termed a "cultural genocide" as part of a Can\$1.9 billion (US\$1.6 billion) settlement with former students.

## Austrian Muslims to sue government over 'Islam map'

**VIENNA, 30 MAY [ALJAZEERA]:** A leading Muslim group in Austria has said it plans to file a lawsuit against the government of Chancellor Sebastian Kurz for unveiling a controversial "Islam map", according to Austrian media reports.

Muslim Youth Austria lambasted the government for publishing a "political Islam map", which identifies the locations of mosques and Muslim associations around the country.

"The publication of all names, functions and addresses of Muslim institutions and institutions that have been read as Muslim represents an unprecedented crossing of boundaries," the group was quoted as saying on Saturday.

Integration Minister Susanne Raab launched a website on Thursday, called the National Map of Islam, with the names and locations of more than 620 mosques, associations, and officials and their possible connections abroad.

The group Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGOE) warned against stigmatising all Muslims living in Austria "as a potential danger to society and the democratic legal order in the country".

This campaign is fueling racism and "exposes Muslim citizens to a massive security risk", the IGGOE added.

The Austrian chancellor has repeatedly lashed

out at what he calls "political Islam".

According to the integration minister, the map was not aimed at "placing Muslims in general under suspicion".

The objective was "to fight political ideologies, not religion", she said.

Reports of anti-Muslim attacks in Austria have increased since a deadly attack in Vienna last November.

The map has raised tensions between Kurz's conservative Austrian People's Party and its coalition partner, the Green Party.

The Austrian Green Party's spokeswoman for integration and diversity Faika El-Nagashi wrote on Twitter on Thursday that no member of the party was involved in it or informed about it in advance.

She added the project "is contrary to what integration policy and dialogue should look like".

In a statement posted on Twitter on Saturday, Turkey's foreign ministry said Austria's "xenophobic, racist and anti-Islam policies poison social cohesion and participation".

"It is important for Austria to stop targeting immigrants and Muslims by labelling them and to adopt a responsible policy," it said.

Germany's Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Michael Chalupka also expressed concern and called on Raab to take the website down.



# Book tells stories of josh, grit

NEW DELHI, MAY 30

(PTI): Supriya Paul, who made it to the Forbes list of self-made women in 2020, curates stories of some unique individuals in her new book with an aim to reach those who are searching for hope and comfort during these trying times. “All You Need Is Josh: Stories of Courage and Conviction in 21st-century India” is a collection of 30 awe-inspiring real life stories of people bracing odds and obstacles and achieving their dreams.

The stories in the book, edited by Paul and published by Bloomsbury, include that of an aspiring astrophysicist who wanted to walk on the moon; the first person with a disability to top the civil services examinations; a domestic help who is now a published author; an Army officer who amputated his own leg; a transgender woman who was expelled from her house; a Dalit child bride who now runs a business worth Rs 1,000 crore, and many more.

Filled with anecdotes and life-changing missives, these stories seek to remind readers that it does not matter the circumstances into which one is born - what matters most is having the josh to overcome all odds and chase dreams.

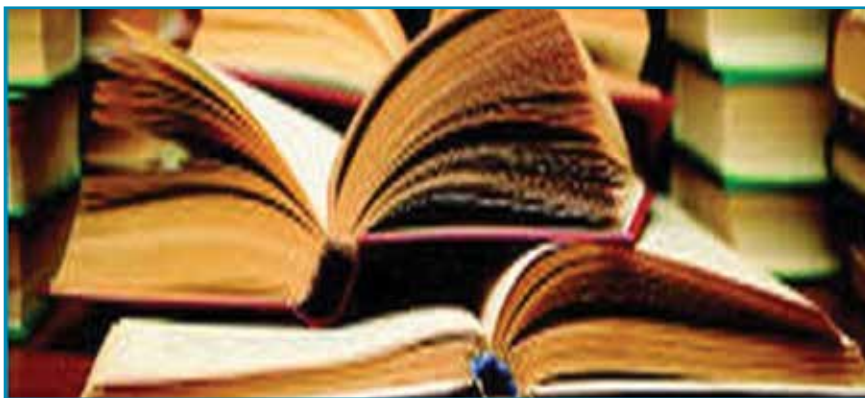
The book, Paul says, is an opportunity for her to share the backbone of Josh Talks, a platform she co-founded with Shobhit Banga.

“Shobhit and I firmly believe that stories have the power to create phenomenal social change and we keep exploring new mediums and formats to share our stories with newer audiences whether it’s in the form of a podcast or short films. Our viewers had in fact suggested the idea of a josh book and that’s how ‘All You Need Is Josh’ was born,” Paul told PTI.

“Out of the 4,000 odd stories that we have recorded so far, we decided to curate some of the most viewed and impactful stories in the form of a book so that they can reach every household in India. I really hope that through this book, we can reach those who are searching for hope and comfort during these trying times,” she says.

Paul has been receiving messages from readers in the last few weeks that in these tumultuous times, the book has offered them a ray of hope.

“Each individual whose story has been featured in the book has gone through extraordinary hardships and struggles



but their resilience and determination helped them find their way. ‘All You Need Is Josh’ reminds you of just what the title suggests - that it does not matter the circumstances into which one is born - what matters most is having the josh to chase your

dreams,” she says.

Josh Talks was started in 2015 with a mission to unlock human potential.

According to Paul, in the pandemic times, there is a need to focus more on stories of grit and inspiration.

“At a time when people are overwhelmed from listening to the news and more uncertain about the future than ever before, I hope stories in the book can be their light at the end of the tunnel.

“Usually, it’s when we start to lose hope that we begin to struggle mentally, these stories will give the readers the strength to carry on. I really hope that the stories offer hope and resilience to the readers as we face the crisis together,” she says.

She is also of the view that mainstream media often does not give space to such stories and even the manner in which such stories are told is different.

“We observed a growing appetite in Bharat for more diverse content, especially in vernacular languages and the internet made it possible for us to fill this gap that is present in mainstream media,” she says.

“We make an effort to identify speakers that our audience can relate to - we have an in-house research team which extensively researches and chooses individuals with extraordinary life journeys.

“More importantly, we don’t just focus on their success but also their failures - which makes them more human and easier for the audience to empathise with the speakers and emulate their achievements,” she adds.

According to Paul, in the last few years, “we have seen our stories change millions of lives - from inspiring a young man in Madhya Pradesh to quit his job and contribute to his community by contesting elections in his village to giving a woman in Bihar the strength to walk out of an abusive marriage; from equipping a young man in Punjab with the skills to find his first job to giving a Tuberculosis survivor in Mumbai the josh to live”.

## Engaging story about ambition and power: Twinkle Khanna on Huma Qureshi’s Maharani

Actress-turned-author Twinkle Khanna is currently binge-watching Huma Qureshi’s show Maharani. How we know this? Courtesy Twinkle’s recent Instagram post.

The 47-year-old author, on Saturday, shared a video of herself on Instagram sharing her review of the 10-episode-long political-drama Maharani. In the video, Twinkle Khanna can be seen talking about how she liked watching the show.

“I have been watching this show called Maharani on SonyLIV and it has me gripped. Huma Qureshi plays this illiterate housewife who then goes on to becoming the CM and I thought it was interesting to see a woman not only hold her ground but who is able to dominate the social and political arena,” Twinkle Khanna said in the video.

She went on to talk about some of the subtle details from the show like



the constant slipping of Huma Qureshi’s ghooonghat (veil), that added the touch of realism to the show.

“I kept noticing how in the beginning even her ghooonghat (veil) completely covers her and as the show progresses it keeps slipping a little little behind till it’s just about covering her bun,” she said.

“To me these little touches add a sort of realism as well as they show me a journey. It’s an engaging story and Huma is just fabulous as the Mahara-

ni. For me this was completely a must watch,” she added.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Twinkle Khanna said that Maharani is “totally worth the binge” and heaped praises on Huma Qureshi for her performance.

“Totally worth the binge! An engaging story about ambition and power with great performances especially by Huma Qureshi. You go girl,” she wrote in the caption of the post.



**SUNNY SIDE UP!** Cute couple Elsa Pataky & Chris Hemsworth are seen embracing while out for breakfast in Sydney, Australia.

## Kourtney Kardashian’s Tooth Fairy delivery setup for son Reign is simply magical

Kourtney Kardashian just made us believe in fairies. The mom of three revealed that the Tooth Fairy visited her 6-year-old son Reign Disick shortly after he lost his tooth, and sprinkled some magic along the way.

The Poosh founder posted about the amazing visit on her Friday, May 28 Instagram Story. One video shows the dusting of glitter all around a sleeping Reign’s room—a sign that there’s magic in the air, no doubt. Another reveals the tiny door and grassy fairy patch, which the Tooth Fairy uses to get from her world to ours.

Kourtney, who clearly has some sort of special relationship with the Tooth Fairy, noted in her Instagram Story,

“Only the tooth fairy has the key to this fairy door.”

The Keeping Up With the Kardashians star also shared the note—written on tooth-shaped stationary, of course—that the Tooth Fairy left for Reign. “I’m too tiny to bring you a toy,” the note, which was placed in an adorable fairy-sized mailbox, read. “Use this \$ to pick one you love.”

This isn’t the first time the Disick kids got a visit from the so-called Tooth Fairy. In 2016, Kourtney shared on KUWTK that she had given her son Mason Disick \$100



“from the Tooth Fairy” simply because it was the only cash she had in her purse. In 2019, Penelope Disick got a similar surprise to Reign after she lost her front tooth, with a small door for the Tooth Fairy and plenty of glitter in her bedroom.

### ARIES:

The exploration of magic continues to be a big theme in the Aries HQ. There is a deep yearning to meet your true self. The radiant being of light who is merely Source energy in disguise. Remember, you are not bound by the rules of the matrix. The portals of the other world are open to those who harbour within them an insatiable desire to realise the truth.

### TAURUS:

Things are looking lit in the Taurus HQ. The cards are talking about a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that you have consciously called into your existence. You are a manifesting maven, and you don’t even know it! Remember, putting yourself out there is important at a time like this. Getting the right people to notice you will give your career the boost that is required at this moment.

### GEMINI:

There are deadlines to meet, presentations to make, Zoom meetings to attend, and dishes to clean. Being indoors doesn’t have to be an overwhelming experience, Gemini. This is a time of establishing new rituals. Time-saving hacks can go a long way in freeing up mental space so you can focus on what matters the most: your creative endeavours too. Think about that one thing you always wanted to do, but didn’t quite get the chance to delve into. Now is the perfect time to sign up for those guitar lessons, or give bartending a shot.

### CANCER:

The ‘my way or the highway’ approach isn’t going to

work this time. Somebody’s got to give, Cancer. Could that somebody be you? Word for the wise: find a middle ground between your desire and theirs. When in doubt, choose the path of least resistance. The more gentle you are in the manner with which you communicate your truth, the easier it will be to restore balance.

### LEO:

Sometimes we miss out on opportunities because the timing isn’t quite right. On other occasions, we let something precious slip away because we do not fully believe in our ability to do justice. Could the latter hold true for you, Leo? Have you let go of something golden because you didn’t believe you had something special within you? The good news is, you will be presented with a second chance in the days to come. Repeating the affirmation “I am enough” will help you move mountains this time around.

### VIRGO:

We all say hurtful things when we’re triggered, and you’re no exception to the rule, Virgo. The bad news is, you are likely to find yourself in situations that bring out the worst in you. The good news is, these events are 100 per cent avoidable. Word for the wise: tread cautiously and leave your ego out of controversial conversations.

### LIBRA:

There comes a point in every seeker’s journey where the voice of the guru without interferes with the voice of the guru within. A time when the holy books and scriptures, no matter how revered, cease to provide comfort. Accept where you are in your journey towards self-realisation

and redirect your focus towards that voice of wisdom within. You are being called to embody your truth in a manner you never have before. Remember, you came to this planet with a sacred mission.

### SCORPIO:

Often, we grow up with limiting beliefs around wealth, which convince us that we cannot experience happiness and abundance at the same time. But, this is far from the truth. The more you work on the shadow aspects of your personality, the more you transmute your fears, the greater your capacity to receive becomes. What the Universe wants you to remember now and for the rest of your life: there will never be a dearth of love, money, and opportunities in your world.

### SAGITTARIUS:

Sagittarius, you’re feeling all kinds of creative today. Creative in a way that everything you pour your energy into becomes play. Don’t let those who adhere to the rules of the matrix convince you against your methods. Your heart knows you’re being honest to your craft, and that’s the only litmus test that matters. As such, perfecting the art of effortlessness will continue to be a big theme for you. Word for the wise: become a conduit for the divine forces to come through.

### CAPRICORN:

There are so many kinds of love, Capricorn. The together-forever kind of love. The we-could-be-more-but-life-has-other-plans kind of love. The timing-was-just-not-right kind of love. The I’m-too-scared-to-define-

this-relationship kind of love. And, the I-know-we’ll-find-each-other-in-another-lifetime kind of love. Today, you’re being asked to acknowledge each one of these connections from your past, present, and future, and all the wonderful souls that have made your life as luscious and flavoursome as it is today.

### AQUARIUS:

Today, the cards are urging you to take a good look at the ideas you are streaming directly from a higher source of consciousness. Not one of these ideas is random, Aquarius. They are all in alignment with your sacred purpose and a part of the contract you committed to before you made your way to the earthly realm. So, trust your instinct and take the next step without delay. As you do, renounce that cloak of invisibility too. It’s time to be seen and heard, beautiful! PS: A sibling, an old friend or colleague could be instrumental in helping you take your work to the next level!

### PISCES:

Albert Einstein once said, “Great minds have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinion courageously and honestly.” Your thoughts exactly, Pisces. The next chapter of your life is about embracing your inherent wildness, bringing bold ideas to life, and challenging the status quo. The good news is, you’re not walking this path alone. Your soul crew is just as committed to fighting this battle with you.