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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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*"My Ministers
don't know
Hindi":*

*Mizoram Chief
Minister to
Amit Shah*

GUWAHATI, 09 Nov
[NDTV]: The state ministers don't understand Hindi and some of them don't even know English, Mizoram Chief Minister PuZoramthanga said in his letter to Home Minister Amit Shah urging him to modify the centre's order and replace the state chief secretary who does not have a working knowledge of the Mizo language.

The Chief Minister has requested that Additional Chief Secretary JC Ramthanga be named the new chief secretary in place of Renu Sharma.

"After the retirement of my Chief Secretary LalnunmawiaChuaugo of Gujarat Cadre, I requested my present Additional Chief Secretary JC Ramthanga (Manipur Cadre) to be the next Chief Secretary. However, the Home Ministry has posted Mrs Renu Sharma as the new Chief Secretary," the Chief Minister has said in the letter dated October 29, a copy of which is available with NDTV. Renu Sharma, an AGMUT cadre IAS officer of the 1988 batch, was appointed by the Centre on October 28 to take charge from November 1 as Chief secretary of Mizoram.

The same day, the Mizoram government also ordered JC Ramthanga to take charge as chief secretary from November 1, thus Mizoram now has two Chief secretaries.

"The Mizo people by and large, do not understand Hindi, and none of my Cabinet Ministers understand Hindi, some of them even have problems with the English language. With such a background, a Chief Secretary without the knowledge of a working standard Mizo language will never be an effective and efficient Chief Secretary," the Chief Minister said in his letter. "Due to this fact, the Government of India never posted a Chief Secretary who does not know the working standard of Mizo language since the creation of the state of Mizoram. Whether it is the UPA Government or the NDA Government at the Centre, this has been a practice since the creation of Mizoram State. It is a well-known fact that in other States of India, a Chief Secretary, who does not know even the basic working language of the the respective state is never posted at all," the Chief Minister added.

He then reminds Mr Shah that he has been a "faithful partner of the NDA from the beginning" and hopes that his request would be looked into.

Sikkim close to achieving 90% full-vaccination coverage, Health Secy

SAGARCHETTRI

GANGTOK, 09 Nov:

Director General-cum-Secretary Health Department, DrPempa T Bhutia today said that Sikkim has achieved the top place among States that have administered the second dose of COVID-19 vaccination to its eligible citizens due to good team work and constant support from the State and Central governments.

He stated that the State has sufficient stock of vaccines and vaccination teams have been carrying out vaccinations aggressively across the State.

It has to be mentioned here that Sikkim has administered a total of 976,622 doses of vaccine till 08 Nov. This means that 5,23,228 persons have been vaccinated out of which 4,53,383 persons have completed their vaccination schedule.

Speaking to media persons here on Tuesday, Dr Bhutia stated that 87.69% of Sikkim's population has been vaccinated against Covid-19



so far, making it one of the few states in the country to do so.

Sikkim can now be considered fully vaccinated as this figure will soon cross 90%, said Dr Bhutia.

The DG mentioned that the department has received full support in the vaccination drive from the State government and there is strong political commitment from the

Governor and Chief Minister. He added that Sikkim has also received full support and co-operation in this drive with uninterrupted vaccine supply.

He informed that there are 1,74,100 doses of vaccine in UIP Store in the State excluding 25,180 doses of vaccine with East District, 19,680 doses with West District, 4,590 doses with North Dis-

trict and 15,610 doses with South District.

Speaking on other factors, Dr Bhutia mentioned that vaccination teams have been carrying out vaccination without any break in the State. He added that the department has been getting full support from MLAs, Panchayats, Councilors, Aganwadi and ASHA workers and NGOs.

teamwork and support from the people of Sikkim," he said.

On whether there were any concerns he had over the vaccination drive, Dr Bhutia mentioned that the one matter of concern was with a few cases in which people have missed, at least on record, their dates for the second dose. This, he added, could be because some people tested positive after the first does and were observing the 3-month gap advised after recovery or people who are away from the state and took their second dose elsewhere or registered for it with a different phone number. Such technical reasons could lead to records reflecting that the second dose was still pending for such people.

On the same, he informed that the department has carried out "line-listing" of overdue second doses and health workers will be engaged to follow-up on such cases.

He said that the state aims to have the entire adult population fully vaccinated by the end of the year.

Test positivity remains low at 2.5% as Sikkim emerges from Diwali break

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 Nov:

Sikkim's daily test positivity rate of COVID-19 remained reasonably low at 2.5% on Tuesday even though testing has picked up after the Diwali holiday slump. Where Sikkim was averaging barely 160 tests per day through the holidays, yesterday, 478 samples were screened for the virus to return 12 positive cases. Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of Covidhas now reached 32,058.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of Health Department on Tuesday morning, while five new cases were detected in RT-PCR testing of 221 samples, seven cases were picked up in rapid antigen testing of 254 samples.

Of the 12 new cases, seven were registered in East District, three in West

District and two in North District. All the 90 samples screened in South Sikkim returned negative yesterday.

Over the same 24 hours, Sikkim recorded 15 more recoveries to improve the number of recoveries to 31,204, giving Sikkim a recovery rate of 98.4%.

Significantly, no Covid deaths were reported here in the past 24 hours and the toll holds at 400.

There are currently 122 active Covid cases in the State, most of whom are recovering under home isolation and only 18 of whom have symptoms severe enough to require hospitalization. Further, of the 18 in hospital, only one patient is in ICU.

On the vaccination front, only 126 Covidshieldjabs were administered on Monday - 10 people receiving their first shots and 116 completing their vaccination schedule with the second dose.

PHE Dept initiates action against consumers still with polypipe connections

BIKASH CHETTRI

NAMCHI, 09 Nov:

After completion of the six-week notice, the PHE department of Namchi has started taking action against consumers who have failed to adhere to rules mentioned in the notice issued by the department on 18 Aug.

The notice included strict prohibition on usage of polypipes for water connection from PHE water reservoir to homes and buildings, and failure to adhere to this rule would force the department to disconnect or plug the pipes, as per 1990 Water Supply Acts, without any further notice.

"About 40% of the



consumers have complied with the rules so far," said Assistant Engineer, Sonam Karthak.

He added that PHED Namchi gave time of one and a half month to consumers to replace their poly pipes with GI pipes to reduce leakage in

and around Namchi. The department has started taking action those who have failed to convert their lines, said Mr Karthak.

He further stated that the department is trying its best to ensure regular water supply in Namchi.

SICA announces 1st Women's Club Tournament

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 Nov:

Sikkim Cricket Association [SICA] has announced that the first official Women's Club Tournament will be held in January next year.

In a press release, SICA has said that this historic milestone is not just about cricket but also about women's empowerment and an event like this focused specifically on women's cricket is rare even on a national scale.

The clubs participating in the Khangchendzonga Women's Club Tournament 2022 are Alpine Sporting Club, Aakraman Sporting Club, Cricket Association of Ta-thangchen, Denzong Girls Cricket Club, HRCC Namchi, Jorethang Irises Cricket Club, Pakyong District Club and Yuksom Capitals.



The association conceptualized the tournament when hosting the 1st Khangchendzonga Tournament in 2020.

"This would later serve as a testing ground for the manner in which various strategies needed to be applied in a state

where cricket is still in its infancy and even more so for women's cricket," the release adds.

SICA states that various committees were formed and assistance from existing club management was sought to brainstorm meth-

ods needed to form an adequate number of women's cricket clubs to be able to host a tournament, since there were no existing women's cricket clubs.

Despite the second wave of the pandemic

turn to pg02

NHPC diverts Rangit for Stage-IV HEP

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 09 Nov:

Rangit was diverted through a 250 metre long and 10 metre wide diversion channel by NHPC on 07 November to allow for work to progress on Rangit Stage-IV hydroelectric project coming up in South Sikkim.

This project has come to NHPC by virtue of Jal Power Corporation Ltd, to which the project was originally awarded, now becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of NHPC.

Work on the project has remained suspended since 2013 by when Jal Power had completed



40% of the project. Eventually, the company was taken over by NHPC in March 2021.

NHPC has announced plans to commission the project within 38 months on a completion

cost of Rs938.29 Crore, a press release informs.

Upon completion, the project is expected to generate 513 million units of electricity, of which, the State's share will be 12%.

Dengue cases piling up, outbreak worst in several years: Delhi Hospital

NEW DELHI, 09 Nov [PTI]: The dengue outbreak in Delhi is "far more as compared to the last two-three years", a senior doctor at the city's Ganga Ram Hospital told NDTV today, adding that "mortality too is on the rise".

Delhi logged 1,171 dengue cases from November 1-6, after reporting 1,196 through October and 217 in September (the highest for that month in three years), according to news agency PTI.

In January, Delhi reported zero dengue cases. There were two in February, five in March, 10 in April, 12 in May, seven in June, 16 in July and seven in August.

The 2,708 cases reported so far is the most since 2018; cases between January 1 and October 30 was 612 in 2020, 1,069 in 2019, and 1,595 in 2018.

Delhi also reported three dengue deaths on Monday, taking the total number of deaths to nine - the most in a season since 2017, when ten people died.

"Around Diwali (and as winter sets in), when we expected to see cases decrease, there was an increase. This might be because, as Covid restrictions are lifted and we return to normal, people are taking it too easy and not following post-monsoon precautions," Dr Pooja Khosla, a senior consultant told NDTV.

She pointed to stagnant water (breeding grounds for mosquitoes that spread dengue) at re-opened building sites and overcrowded markets as an example of people not being careful.

The increase in dengue in Delhi, Dr Khosla also said, may be because of a rise in cases in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and other areas of the national capital region.

In UP dozens died from dengue and viral fever after a spike from mid-August.

She also said the Ganga Ram Hospital was reporting between 80 and 100 walk-in dengue cases every day, with half that number admitted. About 20 per cent of the walk-ins are serious and 10 per cent need ICU (intensive care unit), she added. "We are mainly getting regular dengue - i.e., with fever. More complicated cases - dengue hemorrhagic fever - patients with bleeding complications... they have low platelet, need ventilators or are hemodynamically unstable..."

"If we don't take timely action the number of cases will keep increasing for the next two or three weeks till winter sets in (when mosquito numbers usually decline)," she warned. Dr Khosla also underlined the fact Delhi's medical professionals had learned from the harsh lessons of Covid and, that while they may be overwhelmed, they were ready to face the dengue threat.

In 2015, Delhi went through a major dengue outbreak, with reported cases crossing 10,600 in October alone, making it the worst in the national capital since 1996.

MLA inaugurates SGAY houses in Gyalshing-Bermiok

GYALSHING, 09 Nov (IPR): The Minister-cum-Area MLA of Gyalshing Bermiok constituency Lok Nath Sharma inaugurated the newly constructed houses under Sikkim Garib Awas Yojana (SGAY) in his constituency, today. The day-long inauguration programme was begun from the Gyalshing Omchung GPU wherein he inaugurated the SGAY House of the beneficiary Ganesh Kumar Burathoki.

Thereafter, he inaugurated another newly constructed SGAY house of Dal Bahadur Poudel at Malbasey ward. He offered Khada to the family members of both the beneficiaries and emphasized on the vision of the Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang to uplift the most deprived family by establishing a well furnished single storey



RCC structure, that consists of a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen, toilet along with TV and furniture comprising of 1 sofa set, 1 centre table, 2 almira, 2 single beds, and 1 double bed. The house was constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. Seventeen lakh fifty-one

thousand including furnitures and a television.

Afterwards, he inaugurated two SGAY house of the beneficiaries Santu Ram Sharma and Kazi Man Limboo at Nazoor Tinkatari ward under Chingthang Gram Panchayat Unit. All the beneficiaries have ex-

pressed their heartiest gratitude to the Chief Minister and the state government for providing the residential house along with all essential requirements.

Minister was accompanied by the ADC (Dev.) Gyalshing Surat Gurung, BDO Gyalshing Mukesh

Dahal, BDO Hee Martam, Prativa Tamang, Chairman of the Management and Coordination Committee of Rangit Hydro Electric Power Project, NHPC Ram Kumar Chettri, concerned Assistant Engineer, Junior Engineer, officials and others.

Minister inspects Gyalshing hospital road site



GYALSHING, 09 Nov (IPR): The Minister-cum-Area MLA of Gyalshing Bermiok constituency, Lok Nath Sharma led a field inspection at the premises of District Hospital Gyalshing for the construction of secondary road for hospital building.

Mr Sharma was accompanied by the President, Gyalshing Nagar Panchayat, Devendra

Sharma, Counsellors, Chief Medical Officer, District Hospital Gyalshing, Dr Bikash Pradhan, Sub Divisional Magistrate Gyalshing, Santosh Kumar Allay, Divisional Engineer Building and Housing Department (W), Ashok Chettri, officials and others.

After taking thorough inspection, Minister Sharma interacted with the officials to seek tech-

nical possibilities in carrying out construction work. Further, he directed the concerned official to submit a Detail Project Report by first week of December.

He also discussed with Chief Medical officer to establish a Trauma Centre and Parking place in upcoming construction work of a new building within the premises.

Team of officials inspect Sikkim Professional University infrastructure

GYALSHING, 09 Nov (IPR): Under the direction of MLA (Soreng-Chakung), Aditya Golay, a joint inspection cum interaction with the University Management Committee was conducted at the campus of Sikkim Professional University situated at Budang, today.

The inspecting team included SDM (Soreng), Ranjan Rai along with Joint Director- Education Department (Soreng), S.P Sharma, BDO(Soreng), Sabina Subba along with the Zilla Panchayats in the presence of the University Management Committee headed by Vice-Chancellor, Jaswant Sukhi.

Briefing the team, Ms Sukhi spoke extensively



about the programmes and courses that are being offered at present. She also informed that both online and offline classes are being organized simultaneously for the students. She mentioned that due to covid restrictions many courses have been delayed but assured that it will be covered timely.

Discussing other issues, the SDM enquired

about the infrastructure and how the University is providing assistance to current students. Issues such as water shortage problems were also thoroughly discussed.

The discussing panel concluded that soon a follow-up coordination meeting will be conducted between the Government Officials and the concerned Stake Holders in the presence of the MLA.

New Rafale Twist: Papers show agencies didn't act on allegations of kickbacks

NEW DELHI, 09 Nov [NDTV]: As a fresh political controversy erupts over the Rafale deal, NDTV has found more evidence that Indian agencies ignored allegations that French company Dassault, the maker of the Rafale jets, may have paid crores of rupees to middlemen spanning both the BJP-led NDA 1.0 government and the Congress-led UPA.

A day ago, French portal Mediapart reported that Dassault paid almost 13 million euros (nearly 110 crores at current rates) to a middleman, Sushen Gupta, between 2002-12 to help secure the sale of Rafale fighter jets to India, but Indian agencies failed to investigate these allegations despite having access to incriminating documents on at least some of these payments.

Now NDTV has found more documents that show that in 2019, three years after India signed the Rafale deal, central agencies, including the CBI, were alerted to possible kickbacks paid by Dassault, yet they failed to act on the allegations. Such allegations could have led to a blacklist of Dassault under Indian laws.

The documents form part of the CBI's charge-

sheet on alleged corruption in the sale of 12 AgustaWestland helicopters for top leaders in India. They include a statement by Dheeraj Aggarwal, then manager of IT services company IDS, who in 2019 told the CBI that Dassault routed money to Sushen Gupta's Mauritius-based shell firm Interstellar through IDS.

The arrangement was that 40 per cent of the payment made to IDS by Dassault was to be commission for Sushen Gupta's Interstellar. IDS had allegedly helped channel 4.15 crore of Dassault's money to Interstellar between 2003 and 2006, according to Dheeraj Aggarwal.

The payment period spans the NDA government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, which was in power till 2004, and the UPA, which came to power right afterwards.

Despite including this testimony in its court filings, the CBI did not initiate a probe against the company. According to Indian laws, a company can be suspended or banned if it "resorts to corrupt practices," "unfair means" or "illegal activities" during any period of the bidding and negotiations.

RBI lifts restrictions on Diners Club International; allows onboarding of new customers

MUMBAI, Nov 9 (PTI): The Reserve Bank on Tuesday lifted restrictions on Diners Club International and allowed it to onboard new domestic customers.

The restrictions have been lifted with immediate effect, the central bank said in a statement.

The RBI had on April 23, 2021, imposed restrictions on Diners Club International Ltd from onboarding new domestic customers onto its card network from May 1, 2021, for non-compliance with the norms on Storage of Payment System Data.

"In view of the satisfactory compliance dem-

onstrated by Diners Club International Ltd. with the RBI circular..on Storage of Payment System Data, the restrictions imposed, vide order dated April 23, 2021, on on-boarding of fresh domestic customers have been lifted with immediate effect," the RBI said.

In April 2018, the RBI had directed all system providers to ensure that within six months the entire data (full end-to-end transaction details/information collected/carried/processed as part of the message/payment instruction) relating to payment systems operated by them is stored in a system only in India.

Farmers to march to Parliament on Nov 29, "Will sit wherever stopped"

NEW DELHI, 09 Nov [NDTV]: Farmer unions protesting against the Centre's new farm laws, have decided to march to Parliament on November 29 - shortly after their protest at the Delhi border completes one year. The decision was taken today by the nine-member committee of the United KisanMorchha - an umbrella body of farmers' unions.

On November 29, farmers from Ghazipur border and Tikri border will leave for Parliament House on their tractors. They said they will hold

a sit-down protest wherever they are stopped.

The farmers had warned that they would escalate their protest if the government does not revoke the controversial farm laws by November 26.

"The central government has time till November 26, after that from November 27, farmers will reach the border at the protest sites around Delhi by tractors from villages and strengthen the protest site with solid fortifications," farmer leader Rakesh Tikait had tweeted on November 1.

Akhilesh Yadav launches Samajwadi "Sugandh" perfume ahead of UP election



LUCKNOW, 09 Nov [NDTV]: Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav has launched a perfume with the Samajwadi Party's election symbol on it. Called "SamajwadiSugandh" or "Attar", a Samajwadi legislator who also runs a perfume business crafted it in Kannauj district, known for its fragrance industry.

The move was seen as one of the soft outreaches by Mr Yadav's party ahead of the UP assembly election early next year, which is likely to be fought fiercely between the ruling BJP under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the Samajwadi Party. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party is also prepping a strong campaign.

The colours on the perfume bottle resemble the Samajwadi Party flag - olive green and red. The legislator who got it manufactured said the fragrance has ingredients from "Kashmir to Kanyakumari" to represent the country's diversity.

He said Mr Yadav himself gave suggestions on how the perfume should be crafted.

The Samajwadi Party launched a similar perfume ahead of the 2017 assembly elections. The party lost badly to the BJP.

"It took two scientists about four months to perfect this perfume. Our national president gave us directions about this. This perfume has ingredients from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and when you use it, you will be able to smell the fragrance of samajwad (socialism) and brotherhood," Samajwadi legislator Pushpraj Jain said.

Mr Yadav said, "This is a good perfume. Those who use it will remind others with the fragrance of the Samajwadi Party and its ideology."

SICA announces...

creating several difficulties and delays, SICA is thankful to all members and clubs who assisted in making this tournament possible.

The tournament will also serve as a bedrock for would-be talents making it through to the Sikkim women's team, SICA further adds.

The release mentions that senior women's Coach, Amosh Rai and Nayan Tshering Bhutia will be mentoring the eight women's clubs apart from holding week-long camps in all the districts.

One noteworthy change is that unlike previous years, SICA will not completely sponsor the Clubs as this has been done to ensure a sustainable long-term model without excessive hand holding, though all required assistance would be provided, the release adds.

The remaining 5 matches of the Khangchendzonga Men's "A" Division will also start from the last week of December.

KUTSE SHEGU

Kutse Shegu (49th day puja) of Namna Dorjee, who passed away on 27 Sept, 2021 falls on 14 Nov, 2021. We therefore, humbly request our relatives, friends and well-wishers to join us in offering prayers at our residence at Arithang, Gangtok on the aforementioned date, duly following the Covid-19 protocol in place.

We also take this opportunity to thank everyone who stood by us during the time of bereavement. Your support and assistance was indeed a great solace to us. It means a lot and we are truly indebted to each and every one of you.

Chumzey Doma (Chum Maili) - wife,
Karma Doma Youtso - daughter,
Yangchuk Den Youtso - daughter,
Chopel Lepcha - son-in-law &
Jigme Norbu - son.

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96 nations agree to mutually accept vaccine certificates with India: Minister

New Delhi, 09 Nov [PTI]: Ninety-six countries have agreed to mutual recognition of COVID-19 vaccination certificates with India, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said today.

The government continues to be in communication with the rest of the world so that beneficiaries of the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination programme are accepted and recognised, thereby easing travel for education, business and tourism purposes, Mr Mandaviya said in a statement.

"At present, 96 countries have agreed to mutual recognition of vaccination certificates and also those who recognise Indian vaccination certificates of travellers fully vaccinated with Covishield/WHO approved/nationally approved Covid vaccines," Mr Mandaviya stated.

Consecutively, persons travelling from these countries are provided certain relaxations as enunciated in the Union Health Ministry's guidelines on interna-



tional arrivals issued on October 20, 2021.

For those who wish to travel abroad, the international travel vaccination certificate can also be downloaded from the CoWIN portal, the ministry said.

Among the 96 countries are Canada, the US, the UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Bangladesh, Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Angola, Nigeria, Benin, Chad,

Hungary, Serbia, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Finland, Estonia, Romania, Moldova, Albania, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Sweden, Austria, Montenegro, and Iceland.

Eswatini, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Kyrgyz Republic, Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Georgia, Andorra,

Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Maldives, Comoros, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Peru, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Brazil have also agreed to mutual recognition of COVID-19 vaccination certificates with India.

Guyana, Antigua & Barbuda, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Columbia, Trinidad & Tobago, Commonwealth of Dominica, Guatemala, El Salvador,

Honduras, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nepal, Iran, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Syria, South Sudan, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, Australia, Mongolia, and Philippines are the other countries.

"The Ministry of Health along with the Ministry of External Affairs is in continuous communication with all countries for mutual recognition of vaccine certificates, and WHO and nationally approved vaccines to facilitate hassle-free international travel across countries," the minister said.

"The Union government's commitment to accelerate the pace and expanding the scope of COVID-19 vaccination throughout the country has resulted in crossing the 100 crore milestone in administration of doses on October 21, 2021," he stated.

The cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 109.08 crore.

NHPC raising day celebrated at Rangit Power Station



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 09 NOV:

The 47th raising day of NHPC was celebrated at Rangit Power Station in South Sikkim on 08 November, a press release informs.

Ram Swaroop, Gen-

eral Manager (I/c), inaugurated the programme and also congratulated employees of Rangit Power Station and Rangit-IV Hydro-Electric Project on achieving, what he held up as a major landmark

of achieving river diversion for Rangit-IV the same day.

The celebration included cultural performances by students of DAV Public School and residents living in the vicinity of the project.

Public perception of Courts on vacation like schools not correct: High Court Judge

NEW DELHI, 09 NOV

[PTI]: The public perception of courts going on vacation like schools is not correct and an appropriate machinery must be engaged to project their hard work for an "image change", said Delhi High Court Judge Justice Jayant Nath who demitted office today.

The judge, speaking at his farewell reference organised by the high court, said that overburdening of courts with long pending cases was a known fact but the reasons for delay were not attributable to the courts themselves.

The pendency is there in spite of "huge efforts" by courts and lawyers, he said.

"It is a known fact that courts are overburdened with long pending cases. Unfortunately, the perception of a common man is to blame the court for delay in disposal of cases. Much is said about the courts going on vacations, comparing it with school vacations. I can say with full conviction that this public image is not correct," said the judge.

"The reasons for de-

lay are many but are not really attributable to the courts. All I can say is, the court needs to take some steps to project this hard and good work that is being put in place by engaging an appropriate machinery. I need not say further on this, but I feel some image change would be useful," he added.

In his farewell speech, Justice Nath advised lawyers to "be sincere" to their briefs and clients, and reminded that there was "no shortcut to success".

The judge said that the Delhi High Court was a "cosmopolitan court" where success came from merit.

"It doesn't matter from which part of the country you come from, which religion you follow, success in this court comes from merit, not from your background," he said.

Chief Justice D N Patel said that Justice Nath is a distinguished judge who will be remembered for his eminence and excellence.

Born on November 10, 1959, Justice Nath was appointed as addi-

tional judge of the high court in April 2013 and became a permanent judge on March 18, 2015.

Recently, Justice Nath had restrained various generic pharmaceutical companies from manufacturing or selling Valsartan and Sacubitril tablets, a combination to treat cardiovascular diseases, as it may amount to infringement of patent of pharma major Novartis AG.

In May, he had ruled that the Delhi government has no power to indefinitely postpone the collection of annual charges and development fees by private unaided schools as it would unreasonably restrict their functioning.

In January 2018, the judge had upheld an international arbitral award passed in the favour of Daiichi Sankyo, which paved the way for its enforcement against the Singh brothers who had sold their shares in Ranbaxy to Daiichi in 2008 for 9,576.1 crore.

Before his elevation to the bench, Justice Nath was designated as Senior Advocate by the high court in May 2006.

"Public won't forget easily": Mayawati hike in fuel prices

LUCKNOW, 09 Nov: Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati today slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party government over the increase in fuel prices and said that the public will not forget this easily.

"The way prices of petrol and diesel have increased by a record high in last few days and the way inflation has increased in the country, the public will not forget this easily," said Mayawati.

Further, she alleged that the prices which have been reduced right now will again increase once the upcoming elections in different states are over.

"Now that due to fear of defeat in the assembly elections to be held in many states, the prices they (BJP)

have reduced, will be recovered back from by public with interest, by this (BJP) party, once the elections are over. The people should remember this too," she added.

The seven states that are slated to go to Assembly elections in the year 2022 are Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat.

In the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the BJP won a landslide victory winning 312 Assembly seats. The party secured a 39.67 per cent vote share in the elections for 403-member Assembly.

Samajwadi Party (SP) bagged 47 seats, BSP won 19 while Congress could manage to win only seven seats.

Mizoram CM gets clean chit in abuse of power, corruption case

AIZAWL, 09 Nov [PTI]: A special court, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, has acquitted Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga in two cases -- one related to misuse of power and the other to possession of disproportionate assets.

Two organisations -- People Right to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram (PRISM), the erstwhile anti-corruption watchdog, and Mizoram Upa Pawl, a senior citizens' association -- had filed a case in 2009 against Zoramthanga for alleged misuse of power as a public servant to procure angle iron posts and goat-proof wire mesh from the agriculture department for his farm at Aiiipuk area in Siphir in 2007.

Back then, too, Zoramthanga was the chief minister.

The state Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) had filed an additional charge sheet alleging that Zoramthanga held assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The charge sheet said that in 2003,

Zoramthanga had declared in his affidavit that he owned assets worth ₹ 54.18 lakh, which then grew to over ₹ 1.38 crore before 2008 elections, without having registered any known source of income.

In the first case, judge Vanlalenmawia said on Monday that materials from the agricultural department were legally issued for the benefit of needy farmers. There is a provision for giving out those fencing materials under the scheme -- Assistance to Small Marginal Farmers, he said.

"In fact, under the scheme, those farming implements could be issued to Aiiipuk Farmers' Association at 50% subsidy or even free of cost depending upon the availability of the materials. Mention may be made in this regard that the Aiiipuk Farmers' Association applied to the Agriculture & Minor Irrigation department for Angle Iron posts and G.P. wire mesh and the same were given to the association," the judgment order stated.

Two Sikkim girls shortlisted for National Camp for U-19 SAFF C'ship

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 09 NOV:

Two emerging footballers from Sikkim have been shortlisted for the National Coaching Camp scheduled to be held from 11 Nov to 19 Dec in Goa.

Shridevi Subba and Laxmi Thatal, both from Dentam in West District, left for Siliguri today and will fly to Goa from Bagdogra airport on

Wednesday morning.

A Sikkim Football Association press release issued by its president, Menla Ethenpa mentions that the coaching camp will prepare the national team for the forthcoming U-19 SAFF Women's Championship to be held in Bangladesh. An arrangement has been made to reach the girls to Siliguri from where they will board the flight

to Goa on the morning of 10 Nov.

The release mentions that the duo have thanked SFA for giving them such a golden opportunity and assured to give their hundred percent to bring laurels to the state and country.

SFA president Menla Ethenpa has congratulated both the girls for their selection and extended his best wishes to them.

Two dead in suspected case of spurious liquor in Bihar's Muzaffarpur

MUZAFFARPUR, 09 NOV

[PTI]: Two persons have died in yet another suspected hooch tragedy in Bihar, a dry state where consumption of spurious liquor has claimed more than 40 lives in less than a fortnight.

The latest casualties have taken place in Muzaffarpur district where two men died in a village under Kanti police station on Monday after allegedly consuming spurious liquor.

According to Muzaffarpur senior Superintendent of Police Jayant Kant, both the deceased were residents of Sira-

siya village, where two others fell ill after consuming the liquor and were admitted to a hospital for treatment.

"The bodies have been taken for post mortem. We are recording the statements of bereaved family members as well as by those who have been hospitalized. Based on the statements we will be able to confirm whether liquor was consumed," the SSP said.

The incident took place close to the Saraiya police station area where five people had died after consuming spurious

liquor in the last week of October. This was followed by hooch tragedies in West Champaran, Gopalganj and Samastipur districts around Deepawali which together accounted for 40 deaths.

The Muzaffarpur SSP said, "We have launched a major crackdown on traders of spirit at Saraiya who have been suspected of manufacturing illicit liquor".

Sale and consumption of alcohol was completely banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government five and a half years ago.

Kerala clocks 6,409 new COVID cases, 384 deaths

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Nov 9 (PTI): Kerala recorded 6,409 fresh coronavirus infections and 384 deaths, raising the caseload to 50,27,318 and the fatalities to 34,362, the state government said on Tuesday.

With 6,319 more people recovering from the virus since Monday, the total recoveries touched 49,21,312 and the active cases reached 71,020 today, an official press

release said. Of the 384 deaths, 47 were reported over the last few days and 337 were designated as COVID deaths after receiving appeals based on the new guidelines of the Centre and Supreme Court directions, it said.

As many as 68,692 samples were tested in the last 24 hours.

Among the 14 districts, Thiruvananthapuram recorded the highest with 972 cases

followed by Kollam (789) and Ernakulam (767).

Of the new cases, 32 were health workers, 23 from outside the state and 5,988 infected through contact, with the source of it not being clear in 366.

There are currently 2,27,732 people under surveillance in various districts, of whom 2,21,995 are in home or institutional quarantine and 5,737 in hospitals.

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Centre should distribute money collected from oil price hikes: Mamata Banerjee



KOLKATA, 09 Nov [NDTV]: Claiming that the Centre has raised 4 lakh crore in the recent times from increased fuel prices, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday demanded that the money be equally distributed among states.

Ms Banerjee, during an Assembly session, alleged that the Union government has slashed excise duty recently on petrol and diesel, with an eye on the upcoming Assembly elections in five states.

"The central government has collected around 4 lakh crore from the taxes levied from selling cooking gas, petrol

and diesel at increased prices. Now, they (BJP) want the states to reduce the VAT. Where will the states get their money from?"

"The Centre should distribute that 4 lakh crore equally among the states," she said while addressing the West Bengal assembly.

The Chief Minister further said that the state has been providing several subsidies despite financial constraints.

"Whenever elections are near, they (Centre) bring down the prices. Once that is over, they increase it again. Those lecturing us on oil prices should first answer

where the state government will get its money from. The Union government does not give us our due funds," she said, targeting the BJP, which has threatened to launch a "movement" if the VAT on oil is not reduced.

Ms Banerjee also accused the central government of meting out a step-motherly treatment to Bengal during distribution of vaccines among states.

"The number of vaccines doled out to us was much less compared to what was given to states such as Uttar Pradesh. We have ensured that not a single vaccine dose gets wasted," she said.

Caught in Quotas

*Inspire ambitions for bigger,
not nooks and corners*

It is never out of season to talk about the near obsessive ambition of communities across the board to get included in some reserved category or the other. We have, in our country, quite a wide range of categories to choose from – there is the ST list, the SC recognition, the OBC, now even MBC, Bihar introduced us to the EBC grouping as well – and one can rest assured that more such segregations will be dreamed up in the coming years. Communities vie to fit in somewhere, speculate to move across to reservation-enjoying groups and seek out more quotas in newer avenues.

Why these categorizations and why this keenness for reservations?

Given the history that India emerged from in 1947, where caste alienation was extreme and jan-jatis genuinely underprivileged, a policy was required to overcome this legacy of injustice and to provide all in this country with a broad measure of equal opportunities. Since equal opportunities would not have been willingly granted and communities with centuries of oppression behind them could not be expected to benefit from an equal footing standpoint, reservations were eked out. Over the years, reservations were extended to include more communities and even women. The idea was to provide these communities/ genders with the first stepping stone to equality – access. Access to education, to jobs, to positions of power and wider exposure. This target has been met relatively well and as far as access is concerned, a wide swathe has been covered. That said, new elites have emerged within the reserved groups, from those who benefitted first from the ‘quota’ and thus became the more privileged among the disadvantaged. The obvious next step would have been to pull communities which have benefited “enough” out of the reserved categories and make space for those which still lag behind. If not that, at least consider extending the creamy layer segregation to reserved categories which currently have no such differentiation.

This, obviously, is easier said than done. For one, there is no easily quantifiable way to decide when a community has developed enough to make it on its own steam sans reservation, and for the other, there is the vote-bank politics in which saner decisions in genuine public good would be political hara-kiri. So, the nation is left with an ever overflowing bouquet of reserved sections and shrinking opportunities.

This is where the whole policy has failed. Instead of making people competitive with improved access, it has made them lazier with increased quotas. Little wonder then that more and more communities want to fit into some reserved category or the other. In fact, in the present times, when jobs are rare and competition even for education is tough, it would be foolish of community leaders not to work for a quota for their people. And so the demands keep pouring in. This is not to belittle the aspirations of any community to find a new grouping for itself, but just a suggestion that maybe it is time the country and Sikkim paused to re-read the principles why reservations and special categories were first created, whether its expressed aims are being met, and also whether the people who genuinely require reservations are receiving it or not.

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An insider's look at the Glasgow climate summit – talks intensify, amid grandstanding and anger outside

RACHEL KYTE
theconversation.com

Young people poured into the streets of Glasgow on Nov. 5, 2021, angry and impatient as the first week of the U.N. climate summit ended. Their anger is matched by anxiety in the conference halls as the enormity of what has to be achieved in such a short period of time hovers over a complex process that can become sclerotic.

I've been involved in the climate negotiations for several years as a former senior U.N. official and I am in Glasgow now. At the start of the second week, here's what I'm seeing and hearing, both inside the negotiations and outside.

A SHIFT FROM 2050 TO 2030 GOALS

To slow climate change, every part of our economies will transform, and that is reflected in the conference sessions running in parallel to the formal negotiations and in the constituencies that turned out in real strength the first week – executives from central banks, CEOs of global banks and institutional investors, young people, indigenous peoples leaders, faith communities, advocacy groups and the world's media.

There has been a shift at this year's summit, from making pledges to reach net zero emissions by 2050 to a focus on actions to cut emissions by 2030.

Research shows the world needs to cut global emissions 45% by 2030 to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 F) compared to pre-industrial times, an aim of the Paris climate agreement.

The Energy Transitions Commission, a coalition of businesses and nongovernmental organizations, calculated that if the commitments made at COP26 are delivered, it will cut the gap between today and the 1.5 C trajectory in half for carbon dioxide emissions and by almost 40% for methane. In total, the world would be about 9 gigatons closer to the 22 gigatons of emissions reductions needed.

That's a start.

BIG DEALS, BIG CLAIMS

The first week of COP26 was about building momentum – big deals and big claims outside the

negotiations, with different coalitions of countries, companies and others, pushing action forward.

Some of those pledges will likely collapse like a soufflé in the weeks and months that follow, when a company's board balks at some of the details or when they re-run the numbers under greater scrutiny.

But there were notable coalitions announcing pledges on cutting methane, ending deforestation and diverting international public finance away from fossil fuels and into clean energy. The international financial community formed a broad alliance of firms committed to net zero, attracting accusations of greenwashing.

The U.N. secretary-general announced an expert group to propose clear standards for companies and others making net zero commitments.

THE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS INTENSIFY

At this point in the negotiations, the U.K. – which holds the COP26 presidency – will drive efforts to wrap up some remaining parts of the rulebook for implementing the Paris climate agreement.

It will also be pushing for agreement on a “cover statement,” which will include a whole raft of issues. At this point, it is a long list of issues ranging from human rights, youth engagement and a just transition to more technical and procedural issues, such as how to recalibrate countries' climate commitments and actions each year and how to ensure finance flows to adaptation, not just mitigation.

A “High Ambition Coalition” is emerging, led by the Climate Vulnerability Forum, a group of around 20 countries facing high risks and sometimes existential threats from climate change. They have called for a Climate Emergency Pact that would include: a plan to deliver finance to help them adapt to climate change over the next few years, an agreement to increase those funds beyond that period, progress on finance involving loss and damage from climate change, an agreement on carbon markets, and a process for raising countries' commitments each year until the world is on track.

Now, in the second week, government ministers from the around the world are becoming personally involved in loosening log jams and taking over from their negotiators.

JOINING THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

The gulf between what's happening inside the negotiations, and what press releases from events outside the negotiating rooms are saying could widen.

Inside, negotiators cannot agree on billions of dollars in climate finance expected to flow from wealthy countries to help poorer countries. Yet on the outside, press releases discussing trillions of dollars in private investment committed to net-zero emissions imply the problem is fixed.

And on the outside, while some analysts tally commitments to see if each gets the world closer to a trajectory that keeps warming under 1.5 C, inside discussions on transparency and reporting on climate progress are stalled.

But the atmosphere is not all bleak. There is optimism that agreement on carbon markets may be found after painfully elongated talks at the summits two years ago in Madrid and three years ago in Katowice.

Ultimately, the Glasgow conference can only be called a success when emissions start to slow and reverse and wealthy nations are able to put finance and real support behind poorer communities' adaptation so they can become more resilient to the climate driven crises still to come.

OPPORTUNITY FOR TALENT

While all of this is resolved, think about this: In every meeting I have been in – with green banks in developing countries and their micro-entrepreneurs, Silicon Valley CEOs, finance chiefs, management consultancies and mayors – there is an additional concern that goes beyond the need for better policy, new regulation and a braver political class. Their concern is about the talent pipeline, or its absence. As every country, company, fund and bank shifts to a net-zero pathway, the world will need engineers, data analysts, policy experts and planners to plot the course and lead.

The transition is underway, Glasgow needs to deliver, and the world needs to train and prepare for the sprint to 2030 in a race to zero emissions.

[the writer is Dean of the Fletcher School, Tufts University]

Ditching fossil fuels will have immediate health benefits for millions - world leaders must seize the chance

ELOISE MARAIS & KARN VOHRA
theconversation.com

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted by burning fossil fuels for energy today will only be removed from the atmosphere by natural sinks – like forests and the ocean – in the next 300 to 1,000 years. That means the climate benefits of transitioning to clean energy become apparent on far longer timescales than political term limits and election cycles. A US study, for example, found that deep cuts to emissions from the energy sector will not result in climate cooling until after 2100.

The costs of mitigating climate change outweigh the immediate benefits to the climate. Politicians seeking recognition for their actions at climate change conferences like COP26 in Glasgow have little motive to deliver policies which slash emissions quickly. But there is a large, short-term benefit to eradicating fossil fuels for global health.

The same fossil fuels producing the greenhouse gases warming the Earth's atmosphere also form large

quantities of air pollutants. The pollutants most hazardous to health are small particles which can penetrate deep into the lungs. These particles have diameters of no more than 2.5 micrometers, so are called PM_{2.5}. At least 800 of these particles could fit end-to-end on the head of a pin. These fall out of the air when it rains, so they persist in the atmosphere for a much shorter time (just a few days) than CO₂.

In a study we published earlier in 2021 in collaboration with researchers at Harvard University, we estimated that exposure to air pollution from using fossil fuels globally accounts for one in five premature deaths. Our results suggest that at least 8.7 million early adult deaths could have been avoided in a single year if countries had already abandoned fossil fuels. This is equivalent to the population of Greater London.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF DE-CARBONISATION

Our estimate of premature deaths far exceeds that of other researchers, as we used a model that simulates the sources and fate of air pollution

to calculate its abundance on a much finer scale. This gives a more accurate picture of the concentrations of air pollution breathed in by people in urban areas. We then used this to estimate excess deaths using the most up-to-date health studies, which have found that air pollution is deadlier than previously assumed.

The most common causes of premature death from air pollution exposure are heart disease and lung cancer, but researchers routinely report additional illnesses. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently published much stricter health guidelines for air quality than it last recommended in 2005 based on substantial evidence that exposure to air pollution is even worse for public health than scientists had imagined.

Our study is probably an underestimate of the possible public health benefits of abandoning fossil fuels. We only accounted for one type of pollution, PM_{2.5}, which arises from burning fossil fuels. A range of air pollutants form as byproducts in all other steps of the fossil fuel supply

chain: from finding, extracting and processing fossil fuels, to storing and transporting them.

One example is formaldehyde gas, which is emitted during petroleum refining and flaring of natural gas. Formaldehyde reacts to form ozone in the lower atmosphere, where it is toxic and can exacerbate asthma symptoms.

We also only focused on adults. The relationship between air pollution and poor health in children isn't completely understood, but studies so far have shown that exposure to air pollution stunts growth and impedes brain and lung development in children. In a landmark case in 2020, air pollution was directly attributed to the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah, a nine-year-old girl in London.

The health benefits of transitioning to clean energy are substantial and can emerge quickly. They offer a tantalising opportunity for politicians to deliver immediate improvements in the lives of their voters.

[Eloise Marais is Associate Professor in Physical Geography, UCL; Karn Vohra is Research assistant, UCL]

In Kashmir, scores of PM CARES ventilators fail trial run

SRINAGAR: More than 100 ventilators supplied under PM CARES fund in Jammu and Kashmir have been found defective and "unfit for critical care" on trial runs. The ventilators supplied to the Government Medical College, Srinagar, were manufactured by three different companies. According to doctors, a trial run is not done on every machine. For every company, tests are conducted on a few machines to check the quality. The government said an inquiry will be ordered to fix the responsibility.

A query filed under the Right To Information Act has revealed that the Medical College received the ventilators under PM CARES Fund to deal with



the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. But these ventilators could be used for critical care because they had serious technical flaws.

In the RTI reply, the hospital's Department of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine

listed the technical problems which make the machines unfit for use for critical care management.

The 37 Bharat ventilators received had "compressor/heat up problems", which resulted in sudden shutdowns. The

machines were returned.

The three Agva ventilators are not functional either due to other problems like "display not working properly, problem in generating tidal volume".

Two of the 125 ventilators at the DRDO (De-

fence Research and Development Organisation) hospital that were put on trial were seen to have problems of tidal volume (volume of air delivered to the lungs) and oxygen flow. It was also seen that the ventilators stop automatically, which can put patients at risk.

Another 22 Agva ventilators stationed at the DRDO hospital are under trial, the response from the Anaesthesiology Department read.

The government has said that an inquiry will be ordered. "At this point, I can only say we will investigate it. A probe will be ordered to find out why defective ventilators were supplied," Vivik-Bhardawaj, Additional Chief Secretary Health told NDTV.

Madhya Pradesh orders safety audit of all hospitals after Bhopal fire kills 4



BHOPAL: A day after the death of four newborns in a fire at a hospital in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today ordered fire safety audit of all government and private hospitals in the state.

The chief minister said the fire at the hospital in the state capital on Monday was a result of "criminal negligence", and the guilty will not be spared.

"It was our (government's) responsibility to save these children as they were under our protection. This is a serious incident," he said addressing state ministers and government officials before the cabinet meeting.

"This is criminal negligence. Whoever is guilty will not be spared... we need to prevent such unfortunate incidents in future. All necessary arrangements should be made to avoid such incidents," he said.

The chief minister also said fire safety was now more important as oxygen plants and their supply lines were installed at various hospitals in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A major fire broke out on Monday in the

special newborn care unit (SNCU) located on the third floor of the government-run Kamla Nehru Children's Hospital building, killing four newborns.

"I had directed earlier also to conduct the fire safety audit of hospitals. Now, I am telling the chief secretary to submit a report about in which hospitals fire safety audit was conducted and which were left out," MrChouhan said.

He also ordered for the fire safety audit of all government and private hospitals of the state again to prevent such incidents in future.

He praised state Medical Education Minister VishvasSarang, who immediately rushed to the hospital here after the blaze on Monday and took care of the relief works.

"The doctors, nurses, ward boys and other people who saved 36 infants by putting their lives in danger will be feliciated," the chief minister said.

MrChouhan also said he was keen to visit the spot on Monday night, but "I was stopped so that the relief work could go on smoothly".

He said he was issuing directives to the officials throughout the

night and taking stock of the situation. The chief minister has also ordered a high-level probe into the incident, to be conducted by Additional Chief Secretary, health and medical education, Mohammad Suleiman.

Meanwhile, state Urban Administration Minister Bhupendra Singh, who is in-charge minister of Bhopal district, also visited the fire-hit hospital today along with MrSarang.

"A big tragedy was averted as the infants were timely shifted to another place. At present, we have information of four deaths. The inquiry will reveal what led to their deaths. This is a sad incident and measures are being taken to avoid such incidents in future," Mr Singh said.

According to MrSarang, a total of 40 children were admitted to the SNCU of the Kamla Nehru Children's Hospital. Out of them, 36 were undergoing treatment in different wards, he said.

Four children died in the fire that broke out probably due to a short circuit, he said.

The chief minister earlier announced compensation of 4 lakh each for the family members of the victims.

Tiger spotted in Jharkhand tiger reserve after stretch of no sightings

MEDININAGAR: A tiger was spotted in Jharkhand's Palamau Tiger Reserve (PTR), a top forest official said on Tuesday.

The sighting of the tiger on Monday evening resulted in a wave of happiness among officials and employees of the Palamau Tiger Reserve.

The High Court of Jharkhand has recently wondered why Palamau Tiger Reserve should be called a tiger reserve since there are no tigers and observed that officers are not even aware of how many male and female big cats exist in Jharkhand.

Kumar Ashutosh, the Area Director of the reserve, told PTI that a healthy and young male tiger was spotted by a team of forest guards under Range Officer Tarun Kumar Singh at Baresad forest on Monday evening.

The team saw the tiger crossing the Medininagar-Mahuadandh road and moving from one forest to the other slowly from a distance of about 10 feet, the official said.

On seeing the tiger, the forest workers who were on a regular patrol for the safety of the wildlife kept an eye on it, the official said.

The Director said that, from this morning onwards, skilled forest guards have been deputed to collect the excreta-footprint (stug-pug route) of the tiger.

The Betla National Park located in Jharkhand's Palamau Tiger Reserve was thrown open for tourists on October 1 after it was closed during pandemic since March 2020.

Also, the counting for wild animals has begun in the Palamau Tiger Reserve, known globally for undertaking the world's first census for big cats as early as 1932. For counting of wild animals 509 trap cameras have been installed in the Palamau Tiger Reserve.

Of the 1129.93 sq km area of Palamau Tiger Reserve, 414.08 sq km is marked as core area (critical tiger habitat) and the rest 715.85 sq km as a buffer area. Of

the total area, 226.32 sq km is designated as Betla National Park. In the buffer zone, 53 sq km is marked as a tourist zone.

Palamau was declared a protected forest reserve in 1973-74 when Project Tiger was launched. The reserve, according to information, recorded its highest tiger population in 1995 with 71 big cats but since then their population has been dwindling.

The Palamau Tiger Reserve consists mainly of Sal forests, mixed deciduous forests and bamboo groves. The reserve zone is the watershed area for three important rivers Koel, Burha and Auranga.

The Palamau Tiger Reserve was one of the first nine tiger reserves created in the country at inception of Project Tiger and has the distinction of being the first sanctuary in the world in which a tiger census was carried out based on pugmark count, as early as 1932 under the supervision of JW Nicholson, the then DFO, Palamau.

Apart from leopards, it boasts of elephants, grey wolf, gaur, sloth bear, four-horned antelope, Indian ratel, Indian otter and Indian pangolin among its inhabitants.

A total of 47 species of mammals and 174 species of birds have been identified, according to officials who said that apart from these, a total of 970 species of plants, 17 species of grass and 56 species of medicinal plants have also been identified.

Betla National Park under Latehar district of the state is located about 150 km from Ranchi and 25 km from Palamu headquarter Medininagar (Daltongani).

The High Court of Jharkhand in September had come down heavily on the forest department for having failed to protect the flora and fauna in reserve forests of the state and a division bench of Chief Justice Dr Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad, while hearing a public interest litigation, observed that it is shameful to know that there are just five tigers in the wild in the state.

Mizoram Chief Minister gets clean chit in abuse of power, corruption case



AIZAWL: A special court, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, has acquitted Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga in two cases -- one related to misuse of power and the other to possession of disproportionate assets.

Two organisations -- People Right to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram (PRISM), the erstwhile anti-corruption watchdog, and Mizoram Upa Pawl, a senior citizens' association -- had filed a case in 2009 against Zoramthanga for alleged misuse of power as a public servant to procure angle iron posts and goat-proof wire mesh from the agriculture department for his farm at Aipuk area in Siphphir in 2007.

Back then, too, Zoramthanga was the

chief minister. The state Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) had filed an additional charge sheet alleging that Zoramthanga held assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

The charge sheet said that in 2003, Zoramthanga had declared in his affidavit that he owned assets worth 54.18 lakh, which then grew to over 1.38 crore before 2008 elections, without having registered any known source of income.

In the first case, judge Vanlalenmawia said on Monday that materials from the agricultural department were legally issued for the benefit of needy farmers.

There is a provision for giving out those fencing materials under the scheme -- Assistance to Small Marginal Farmers, he said. "In fact, under

the scheme, those farming implements could be issued to AiiPuk Farmers' Association at 50% subsidy or even free of cost depending upon the availability of the materials. Mention may be made in this regard that the AiiPuk Farmers' Association applied to the Agriculture & Minor Irrigation department for Angle Iron posts and G.P. wire mesh and the same were given to the association," the judgment order stated.

The court further said that it did not find sufficient evidence to prove the accused had assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, and therefore he is not liable to be convicted under Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (punishment for offence by a public servant).

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister visits Chennai amid floods, distributes food

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin today visited rain-affected and water-logged areas in Chennai and distributed food to needy people in various parts of the city.

The chief minister reviewed the situation of the areas affected in the wake of incessant rains in the city. With the onset of northeastern rains, Chennai received the heaviest rains in the past six years, recalling the 2015 floods. It resulted in flooding in the central and northern parts of the city.

Meanwhile, according to the India Meteorological Department

(IMD), low pressure has formed over the south-east Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood which is likely to move from west to northwestwards and reach near the north Tamil Nadu coast by the early morning of November 11.

"Under the influence of the cyclonic circulation over the southeast Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood, a low-pressure area has formed over the same region. Associated cyclonic circulation extends upto mid-tropospheric levels," IMD said in a tweet.

"It is very likely to concentrate into a Depression over Southwest

& adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal during the next 36 hours. It is likely to move west-northwestwards and reach near the north Tamil Nadu coast by the early morning of November 11, 2021," it added.

Earlier in the day, IMD predicted that heavy rainfall will occur over Tamil Nadu on November 9-11.

"Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall with Isolated extremely heavy falls is very likely over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry&Karaikal during 09th-11th and over south Coastal Andhra Pradesh on 11th November," IMD said.

Manipur congress leaders meet Sonia Gandhi ahead of State polls next year

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the 2022 assembly elections, a meeting of Manipur Congress leaders with party interim president Sonia Gandhi is underway at her residence in the national capital on Tuesday, informed sources.

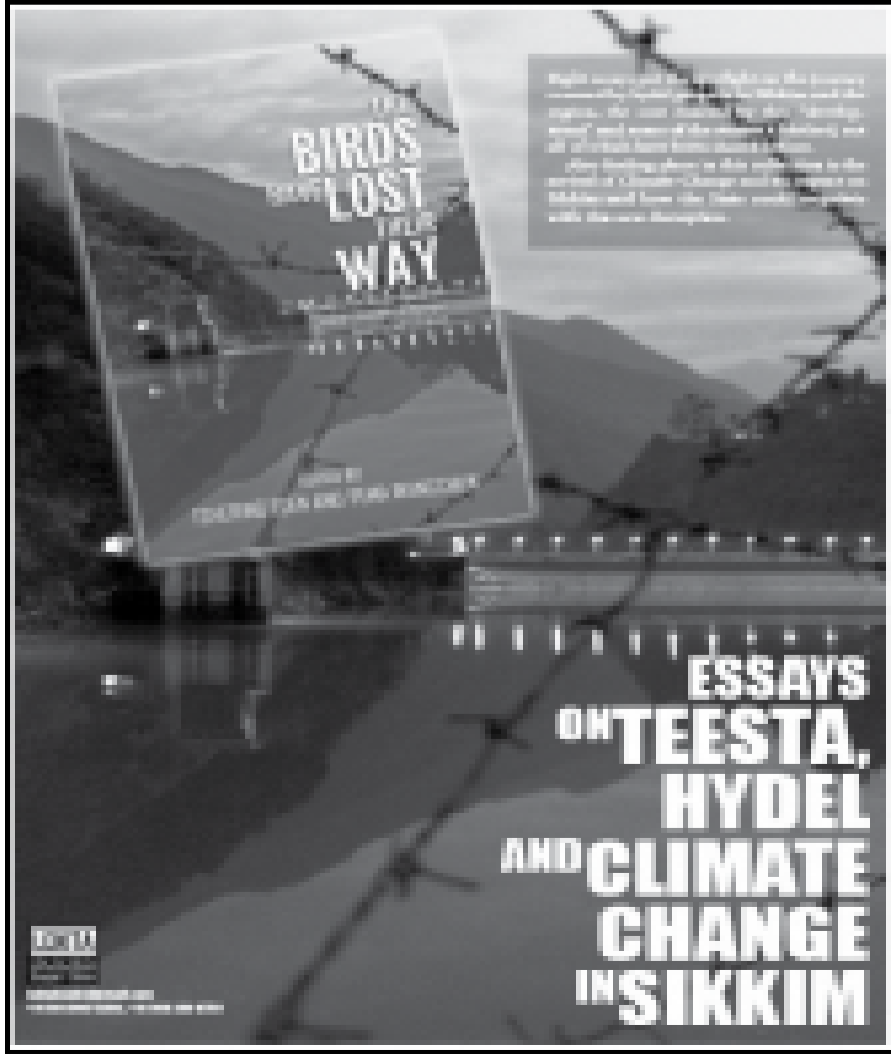
All India Congress Committee (AICC) Manipur in charge BhaktaCharan Das, senior observer Jairam Ramesh along with other party leaders met Sonia Gandhi.

Former Manipur Chief Minister Okram-bobi Singh and Gaikhan-

gamGangmei are also present in the meeting.

The meeting is crucial as elections are due in early next year and Manipur is an important state in the north east region.

Manipur has 60 assembly seats wherein BJP is currently in power.



Grizzlies rally to top Timberwolves in OT, 125-118

MEMPHIS, TENN. (AP): JaMorant scored 33 points, reserve Brandon Clarke had 20 points and nine rebounds, and the Memphis Grizzlies put together a furious fourth-quarter rally before defeating the Minnesota Timberwolves 125-118 in overtime on Monday night.

Memphis trailed by as many as 16 with 7:30 left in regulation but a 21-4 burst erased Minnesota's advantage. Over the final 5:22 of regulation, Minnesota made only one of 10 shots and had five turnovers.

The one successful shot came as the Timberwolves forced OT with a 39-foot 3-pointer banked in by Karl-Anthony Towns as regulation expired. "It was a real tough shot," Clarke said. "I was watching him shoot. Watching it go up, and I was like 'That might go in' because he shot it with a bunch of touch.

"I knew if it hit the backboard, it would have a chance of going in."

But even after the unlikely shot, Memphis pulled away in the extra period, keyed by an offensive rebound and put back by Clarke with 22.7 seconds left.

DeAnthony Melton had 19 points for the Grizzlies, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 14, Desmond Bane had 13 and Kyle Anderson added 12 points and nine rebounds for Memphis, which also had erased a double-digit deficit in the first half.

"We fought to the end," Morant said of the late rally and overtime. "Went down early in the game, late in the game. Went on a run of our own. Big-time run. Got stops. Were able to score."

It was Minnesota's sixth straight loss. D'Angelo Russell, who missed the previous two games with a sprained right ankle, led the Timberwolves with 30 points. Towns had 25 points and 13 rebounds. Anthony Edwards, who entered the game shooting 30% from 3-point range, connected on 4 of 9 from outside the arc and ended up with 27 points. "We didn't execute at a high level," Towns said. "Just didn't play good enough. It's as simple as that. We didn't do enough to win. We did enough to hang on, and we have to give a little more of ourselves."

Memphis struggled in the third quarter to stop the Timberwolves — especially Russell, who scored 13 points in the frame, including connecting on 3 of 5 from outside the arc. Minnesota had an 11-point lead after the third quarter, which swelled to 16 in the fourth before the Grizzlies made their run.

Then the Timberwolves fell apart down the stretch and in the extra period. "We played better for longer tonight," Minnesota coach Chris Finch said. "I still think we're a good team, and we have good basketball in us. I think we have good basketball in our future. "We've just got to figure out a way to close and win these games that we've been able to create an advantage in."

Bulls pull away in 4th, win 118-95 to snap Nets' 5-game run

CHICAGO (AP): DeMarDeRozan scored 28 points, Zach LaVine added 24 and the Chicago Bulls used a 42-point fourth quarter to pull away for a 118-95 victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Monday night.

Rookie Ayo Dosunmu had a season-high 15 points and played a key role in the late rally as Chicago snapped a two-game losing streak.

Kevin Durant, who entered as the NBA's leading scorer with a 28.6 average, had 38 points but Brooklyn had its five-game winning streak snapped. LaMarcus Aldridge added 19.

The Nets had played Sunday in Toronto and appeared to run out of gas late.

Brooklyn held a 78-76 edge entering the final quarter. Aldridge hit a pair of free throws to open the scoring in the fourth, but Chicago responded with 13 straight points to take command.

"We stayed aggressive," DeRozan said. "We had a couple of stretches, especially in the first half, where we got messy on both ends. Turning the ball over, letting them get out in transition.

"We stayed resilient, especially going into that fourth quarter. We stayed aggressive and kept attacking, getting out on transition and making everything tough for them."

DeRozan had back-to-back jumpers to tie the score at 80 and Dosunmu put Chicago back on top with a free throw. Dosunmu then converted



a three-point play on the next possession to make it 84-80.

"He's really, really good off the dribble, he's really good going to the basket," Bulls coach Billy Donovan said. "To me, it's all about his makeup. He's got the 'it' factor. What I mean by that, he's going to impact the game, he's going to influence the game, and he's incredibly motivated." Chicago stretched the lead to 89-80 before Durant scored the Nets'

first field goal of the fourth with 7:46 remaining. Alex Caruso countered with a 3-pointer to stretch the lead to double digits for the first time at 92-82.

Last Monday, the Bulls put together a 39-11 fourth to rally for a win in Boston.

"They made shots," Durant said. "They were aggressive in everything that they did. They got stops, ran out. They got some high-level shot-

makers on that team, so they made tough ones all night. You got to give them credit, they played with a lot of intensity.

"We're frustrated. We want to win every game."

Nikola Vucevic added 11 points and 13 rebounds for Chicago, which had dropped back-to-back games to the Philadelphia 76ers.

Unlike the previous three games, Chicago got off to a fast start and

took a 35-27 lead after the first quarter. The Bulls were up 47-45 late in the second quarter before Brooklyn took control with 10 straight points, sparked by two 3-pointers by Joe Harris, for a 55-47 lead.

The Nets led 57-51 at halftime, with Durant and Aldridge leading the way with 15 points apiece.

TIP-INS

Nets: They scored just 17 points in the fourth quarter ... James Harden had 14 points and Blake Griffin had just two points ... Aldridge came off the bench to go 7 for 8 from the field in the first half.

Bulls: G Coby White (offseason left shoulder surgery) has been cleared to practice. "(Sunday) we had him work with some of the player development guys and (he) went through some contact," Donovan said. "He came out of that really good. He will practice with us tomorrow and he'll make the trip with us out West." There's no timeline for when White will be ready to play in games.

HOMETOWN FAVORITE

Dosunmu, who is from Chicago, quickly has become a crowd favorite and is cheered loudly every time he enters the game.

"I love it and we feed off it," DeRozan said. "If he sneezes, the crowd goes nuts."

UP NEXT

Nets: At Orlando Magic on Wednesday night.

Bulls: Host Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday night.

Curry scores 50 points to go with 10 assists in Warriors win

SAN FRANCISCO (AP): Stephen Curry's personal shooting coach and passing man, Bruce Fraser, offered some pregame thoughts that worked wonders to get the reigning scoring champion right back in rhythm.

"We kind of talked about certain preparations into my shot, just certain mechanics that he called it even having a little bit more conviction about when it's time to shoot," Curry said. "Just a little seed he planted. I took that into warmups and the rest of the game. He was very timely with those words of wisdom."

Curry scored an NBA season-high 50 points with nine 3-pointers, 10 assists and seven rebounds, almost single-handedly leading the Golden State Warriors past the Atlanta Hawks 127-113 on Monday night.

Oh, yes, Curry sure wanted that 50-spot. And if he wasn't counting, his teammates were committed to getting him there.

"It's always nice," he said. "You never come out with like a certain number in mind. It's just when you get it going, you just keep going."

Only Hall of Famers Wilt Chamberlain and Rick Barry had registered a game with 50 points and 10 assists in Warriors franchise history.

"When he gets going like that, it's a special day," teammate and brother-in-law Damion Lee said.

Curry dominated for long stretches and danced in delight, repeatedly raising his arms in the air to encourage everyone fortunate enough to witness another of his brilliant performances.

He scored Golden State's first 13 points, then 10 straight down the stretch in the third before dishing off for Juan Toscano-Anderson's 3-pointer that made it 102-85 following the Warriors' spectacular, 41-point quarter.

"That was just a stunning performance by Steph," coach Steve Kerr said. "... He was amazing. I want to say I've never seen anything like it but I've been watching it for seven years, so I have seen something like it and still it's just incredible to watch."

Playing to chants of "MVP! MVP!," Curry gave fans a scare



with 8:48 left in the first when he jammed his left shoulder. He was examined by the medical staff during a Hawks timeout and could be seen nodding and moving his arms to shake out the shoulder before drawing cheers when he stayed in the game.

Curry notched his 10th career 50-point game and already had 24 points on 7-for-12 shooting by halftime with five 3-pointers.

"It doesn't get old, for sure," Kerr said.

Curry wound up 14 for 28 from the floor and made all 13 of his free throws as the Warriors won their fifth straight. They are holding opponents to 95.8 points during the unbeaten stretch.

"The fact that Steph got that many open looks was crazy," Hawks star Trae Young said. "He is the best shooter of all time."

Young had 28 points and nine assists in Atlanta's fourth straight loss and sixth in seven.

Jordan Poole added 16 points and Andrew Wiggins 13 for Golden State (9-1) in the second game of a back-to-back, the Warriors' first time playing on consecutive nights so far this season. The Warriors fell behind 55-40 in the second but got within 65-61 at halftime before their decisive third.

LITTLE G

Hawks coach Nate McMillan is thrilled for Gary Payton II, son of McMillan's old teammate Gary Payton on the Seattle SuperSonics.

McMillan recalls the younger Payton always hanging out at Sonics headquarters.

"Little G. I just remember when he was running around the court with a ball and following his pops,"

McMillan said. "To see him grow, he's worked himself into this league and he has earned a right to have spot on a roster and he's contributing. He's playing great basketball."

TIP-INS

Hawks: The Hawks had a three-game winning streak against the Warriors snapped and lost for the 10th time in the last 12 on Golden State's home floor. ... Atlanta dropped to 1-6 on the road and has lost its last five road games. ... The Hawks' 18 turnovers led to 23 Warriors points.

Warriors: Warriors assistant Mike Brown wasn't feeling well and didn't attend the game. ... Golden State is 9-1 for the first time since starting 10-1 in 2018-19. ... Veteran Andre Iguodala was back after a break to rest his sore left hip Sunday night against Houston. He played in his 1,200th career game, joining LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony as the only active players at that mark. ... F Otto Porter Jr. was out to protect a left foot injury. "He's obviously been banged up for the last couple years, so this is all part of maintenance and making sure we're handling things the right way," Kerr said. "He should be good to go Wednesday, and it makes sense to give him tonight off, but we'll see. He's been fine. He's in a really good place but yeah, we've got to be smart especially in the early part of the season."

UP NEXT

Hawks: At Utah on Tuesday night.

Warriors: Host the Timberwolves on Wednesday night before Chicago visits Friday to wrap up an eight-game homestand that matches a franchise record.

Davis, Anthony lead Lakers in OT to defeat Hornets 126-123

LOS ANGELES (AP):

Even on a Los Angeles Lakers squad teaming with established veterans, Anthony Davis has had to take on more of a leadership role with LeBron James sidelined.

On Monday night, Davis showed his mettle and then some despite dealing with some ailments of his own. The All-Star forward had 32 points and 12 rebounds as the Lakers beat the Charlotte Hornets 126-123 in overtime.

"He's dealing with a lot of stuff and toughing it out," coach Frank Vogel said. "He made some big buckets and was terrific on the defensive end as well."

Davis has been dealing with a right thumb sprain and an illness. He said he threw up at the end of the third quarter, but that wasn't going to sideline him.

"I had 43 minutes of work. Now, I have 48 hours to replenish," Davis said. "With LeBron out, we don't have all our guys. I have to take command. Even when LeBron is playing, guys are telling me to make sure I stay in control of the team and put guys where they need to be."

Davis had six points in overtime, including a pair of free throws that gave Los Angeles a three-point lead with under a minute remaining. He also partially blocked Terry Rozier's jumper from the corner on the final possession as the Hornets tried to send it to a second overtime.

Russell Westbrook had his first triple-double with the Lakers and Carmelo Anthony scored a season-high 29 points off the bench. It's the Lakers' first victory in the four games that James has

missed this season.

Westbrook notched his 185th career triple-double. Finishing with 17 points and 14 assists, six of his 12 rebounds came in the fourth quarter and overtime.

Anthony was 7 of 10 from beyond the arc, including a 26-footer in transition to put the Lakers up for good at 122-121 with 2 minutes remaining in overtime.

"I'm not giving defenders a chance to close out. I feel good, I'm in a great rhythm and taking advantage of teammates finding me to knock those shots down," said Anthony, who is tied for third in the league with 39 3-pointers.

Rozier had a season-high 29 points, while Gordon Hayward added 21 and Miles Bridges had 19. The Hornets' fifth straight loss put a damper on LaMelo Ball's second career triple-double, as the Chino Hills, California, native had 25 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists.

"I thought he took a step forward as a professional. He moved the ball, he shared it and then made big shots," Hornets coach James Borrego said.

Monday's game was the first of the young season in which players on opposing teams had triple-doubles. It happened twice last season when, coincidentally, Westbrook was one of the players.

A dunk by Davis gave the Lakers a 110-99 advantage with 5:10 remaining before the Hornets went on a 16-5 run to tie the game at 115 with Bridges' 3-pointer with 23.7 seconds remaining in regulation.

Part of Charlotte's rally included five free

throws from Ball after the Lakers were assessed three technical fouls for delay of game and then to Anthony and Westbrook for arguing the call.

"I thought we played a fine game. We were right there and battled," Borrego said. "We were up, we were down. We had some good looks in overtime."

JAMES UPDATE

James did some light shooting Monday morning, but there still isn't a timeline for when he might return after missing three games due to an abdominal strain. James went to the seats opposite the Lakers' bench between the third and fourth quarters to talk to rapper Bad Bunny, who was in attendance.

LONG DISTANCE

Los Angeles outscored Charlotte 22-9 over the last 3:48 of the third quarter to take a 94-87 lead. Malik Monk, who finished with 10 points, punctuated the run with a 3-pointer from midcourt at the buzzer.

TIP-INS

Hornets: F PJ Washington is out for at least the next three games due with a left elbow hyperextension he suffered during the Nov. 3 game against Golden State. He will be re-evaluated early next week. ... All five Charlotte starters scored in double figures. Mason Plumlee was 6 of 7 from the field, scoring 13 points and grabbing 10 rebounds before fouling out.

Lakers: Rajon Rondo was ejected with 10:55 remaining in the game due to a flagrant 2 foul while Rozier was driving to the basket. ... DeAndre Jordan scored all of his 10 points in the first six minutes, as well as as four rebounds. He finished with eight boards.

Migrants camp overnight at Polish border after tense day

WARSAW, POLAND (AP): Polish police posted video early Tuesday showing a group of migrants who had camped overnight just on the far side of Poland's eastern border in Belarus. Polish riot police and coils of razor wire faced the migrants and police said the situation overnight was calm.

That followed a day of heavy tensions on the border, where a large group of migrants — hundreds if not thousands of people mostly from the Middle East and encouraged by Belarus — sought to illegally push their way into Poland.

In videos posted on Twitter, tents and campfires can be seen, in near-freezing temperatures, as the Polish police play an announcement warning the migrants that crossing the Polish border is only allowed at official border crossings. Visas are required.

But as of early Tuesday, the nearest crossing point, in Kuznica, in the northeast of the country, was closed.

The situation marks an escalation in months of migration pressure against Lithuania and Poland, and to a lesser extent Latvia, the three EU states on the bloc's eastern border with Belarus. The EU says Belarus is building the pressure, intending to desta-



bilize the bloc in retaliation for Western sanctions.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, accompanied by Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak, went to the border on Tuesday morning to meet with border guards and other security officials. Morawiecki praised them, also on behalf of the EU, for their "effective defense of our border," which is part of the EU's eastern frontier.

"We do not know what else Lukashenko's regime will come up with — this is the reality," Morawiecki said.

The migrants are mostly from Iraq and Syria, though some have come from Africa, seizing on a hope for a new migration route to enter Europe. Most seek to only pass through Poland to reach Germany or other countries in western Europe.

Poland has received strong signals of support and solidarity from the EU and EU member states and the United States as it faces its border crisis.

Germany's outgoing interior minister, Horst Seehofer, said on Tuesday that all EU countries "must stand togeth-

er, because (Belarusian President Alexander) Lukashenko is using people's fates with the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin to destabilize the West." He called for the European Commission to support Poland in securing the border.

"The Poles have reacted correctly so far," Seehofer told German daily Bild of Poland's reinforcement of the border. "We cannot criticize them for securing the EU's external border with admissible means ... the Poles are fulfilling a very important service for the whole of Europe."

Seehofer's deputy, Stephan Mayer, told Bild that "Germany could send police very promptly to support Poland if Poland wants that."

So far Poland's ruling nationalists have refused help from Frontex, the EU's border agency.

Many of the migrants fly to Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on tourist visas, and from there travel by taxi to the border with Poland. The EU is seeking to pressure airlines not to facilitate the illegal migration.

Although direct flights from Iraq to Minsk were suspended in August, migrants have been flying into Belarus via commercial and chartered flights from Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and even Russia, according to recent internal EU migration reports seen by The Associated Press.

On social media, smugglers have advertised transportation from Belarus to Germany by car. Drivers smuggling people across the Polish-German border were mainly from non-EU countries, according to the reports, although there were also EU nationals involved. Many of the migrants have ended up in Germany. But some continued their journey all the way to Finland by ferry via Sweden, one report said.

Russia comes in from cold on climate, launches forest plan

MOSCOW (AP): A Russian island north of Japan has become a testing ground for Moscow's efforts to reconcile its prized fossil fuel industry with the need to do something about climate change.

More than two-thirds of Sakhalin Island is forested. With the Kremlin's blessing, authorities there have set an ambitious goal of making the island — Russia's largest — carbon neutral by 2025.

Tree growth will absorb as much planet-warming carbon dioxide as the island's half-million residents and its businesses produce, an idea the Russian government 4,000 miles to the west in Moscow hopes to apply to the whole country, which has more forested area than any other nation.

"The economic structure of Sakhalin and the large share of forestland in the territory and carbon balance distribution reflect the general situation in Russia," said Dinara Gershinkova, an adviser to Sakhalin's governor on climate and sustainable development. "So the results of the experiment in Sakhalin will be representative and applicable to the whole Russian Federation."

The plan reflects a marked change of mood in Russia on climate change.

President Vladimir Putin joked about global warming in 2003, saying that Russians would be able to "spend less on fur coats, and the grain harvest would increase" if it continued.

Last year, he acknowledged that climate change "requires real actions and way more attention," and he has sought to position the world's biggest fossil fuel exporter as a leader in the fight against global warming.

The country's vast forests are key to this idea.

"By aiming to build a carbon-neutral economy by no later than 2060, Russia is relying, among other things, on the unique resource of forest ecosystems available to us, and their significant capacity

to absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen," Putin said in a video address Nov. 2 to the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. "After all, our country accounts for around 20% of the world's forestland."

Scientists say that natural forms of removing carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere will indeed play a key role in tackling global warming.

Many of the countries at the climate summit rely on some form of absorbing emissions to achieve their targets of being "net zero" by 2050 — that is, emitting only as much greenhouse gas as can be captured again by natural or artificial means.

But experts say the math behind such calculations is notoriously fuzzy and prone to manipulation by governments, who have a vested interest in making their emissions figures look good.

"Russia makes an enormous contribution in the absorption of global emissions -- both its own and others' -- by means of absorptive capacity of our ecosystems, firstly of forests, which is estimated at 2.5 billion (metric) tons of CO2 equivalent a year," said Viktoria Abramchenko, deputy prime minister for environmental issues, speaking at a recent conference in St. Petersburg.

The figure came as a surprise to scientists contacted by The Associated Press. It constitutes a fivefold increase on the 535 million metric tons of CO2 absorption that Russia reported to the U.N. climate office for 2019.

Natalia Lukina, the director of the Center of Ecology and Productivity of Forests, a government-funded research institute, said the estimates are actually assumptions because "there is no real accurate data."

"Unfortunately, our official information about forestland is 25 years old, then this data was updated somehow, but there were no direct measurements,"

she said.

One problem is that nobody knows how many trees are in Russia's forests.

Last year, its forestry body finished an inventory that took 13 years and cost at least \$142 million, but it hasn't been made public or shared with the scientific community.

Russia's network of emissions monitoring stations is likewise limited, Lukina said.

Vadim Mamkin, a scientist who maintains one of the country's 11 greenhouse gas measuring masts in the Tver region, said the carbon balance of such old forests is "usually about zero," though figures vary about 10% from year to year.

Wildfires that burn millions of hectares of forest are another, increasingly pressing problem. Forests that have stored carbon for decades suddenly become big emitters when they burn, undoing an absorption effect, said Sergey Bartalev, head of the boreal ecosystems monitoring lab at the Space Research Institute.

Such fires are becoming increasingly frequent in Russia, partly due to climate change.

This year saw a record 13.1 million hectares burned, leading to emissions of 970 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent, according to an estimate by the European Union's Copernicus Programme — almost twice as much as the last reported absorption.

Fire protection is now a priority in Moscow's new strategy of low-carbon development.

Ahead of the climate summit, Putin declared that Russia plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 — a goal similar to those set by China and Saudi Arabia — but a decade behind the mid-century deadline that the U.S. and EU are aiming for.

Scientists say that stopping additional emissions of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere by 2050 is the only way to achieve the Paris accord's goal to keep the Earth's warm-

ing below catastrophic levels of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

Russia sent a large delegation to the Glasgow summit, although Putin himself did not attend.

Environmental campaigns and other nations that are wary of giving Moscow a free pass while they ramp up their own efforts to cut emissions will be watching closely what Russian diplomats propose.

Vasily Yablokov, the head of Energy and Climate Sector at Russian Greenpeace, said Russia's forest calculations will play a key role in its climate plan, and he fears that estimates would be made to "fit into the answer."

One reason why Russia has a vested interest in minimizing its reported emissions in front of the United Nations is the prospect of a carbon tariff being mulled by the EU on imports from countries that are deemed to be not doing enough on climate.

"The role of forest is overestimated, unfortunately," said Alexey Kokorin, the head of climate and energy program at WWF-Russia. "It would be good to trust that Russia will be able to increase the absorption as it is in the draft strategy, and all of us will do the best to achieve it, but it looks like it's too much."

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Denmark wants to reintroduce phased-out coronavirus pass

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP): Denmark wants to again consider COVID-19 as "a socially critical disease," paving the way for the reintroduction of a digital pass months after the label was removed and restrictions were phased out.

The move, which still needs approval in parliament, will also allow Denmark to reintroduce other restrictions if deemed necessary. A majority seems to be backing the suggestion of the minority Social Democratic government.

The pass was introduced on July 1 but removed on Sept. 10, when Denmark declared that the outbreak no longer was to be considered "a socially critical disease," citing the high rate of vaccination.

However, Denmark has like many other countries seen an uptick in cases, with health authorities saying the number of infections and hospitalizations has risen faster than expected.

On Monday, Health Minister Magnus Heunicke said the COVID pass must apply to nightclubs, cafes, party buses and indoor restaurants but also outdoor events where

the number of people exceeds 2,000.

The Danish pass app shows a QR code with a green banner if the holder is fully vaccinated or received a first dose at least two weeks ago, has recently recovered from COVID-19 or has had a negative test in the past 72 hours. A paper version is also available.

The call to reintroduce the pass was immediately welcomed by the industry.

Kristian Noergaard, a senior member of Horesta, the employers' organization for the hotel, restaurant and tourism business, said that to them the most important thing "is that we avoid more shutdowns. It will be a disaster for a business that will have to pay off the debt from previous closures for a long time to come."

"At the same time, we expect that the initiative can create security around the running of many Christmas events," he said in a statement.

Brian Mikkelsen, head of the Danish Chamber of Commerce, said they too backed the reintroduction of the pass because "new shutdowns must and should be avoided."

Man with knife attacks passers-by in Norway, is shot dead

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK (AP): A man reportedly armed with a knife attacked passers-by on the streets of the Norwegian capital, Oslo, on Tuesday, before being shot dead by police, officials said.

Norwegian media published footage of the alleged attacker, naked from the waist up and wielding a knife. Police said only that there was "more than one" victim and gave no information about their condition. A news conference was called for late morning.

Police said a patrol car in the Bislett neigh-

borhood of northern Oslo drove into a building to halt the attacker's progress. He then attacked the vehicle and managed to open the car door, police spokesman Torgeir Brenden said.

He said "several shots" were fired at the man but did not specify whether it was the police officers in the car who opened fire. Brenden said the perpetrator was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died.

Last month a man armed with a bow and arrow and a knife killed five people in a small town southwest of Oslo.



Singapore delays appeal hearing on disabled man's execution

SINGAPORE (AP): Singa-

pore's top court on Tuesday postponed the appeal hearing for a Malaysian man on death row believed to be mentally disabled, after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, in a case that has drawn international attention.

Nagaenthran K. Dharmalingam, 33, was scheduled to be executed by hanging on Wednesday for trying to smuggle a small amount of heroin into the country — less than 43 grams (1.5 ounces).

The Malaysian national was sentenced to death in November 2010, under Singapore's strict anti-drug laws. Previous attempts to reduce his sentence to life in prison or receive a presidential pardon have all failed, despite pleas from the international community and rights groups.

The Court of Appeal's Judge Andrew Phang said Nagaenthran had tested positive for COVID-19, after the defendant had been brought into dock but then abruptly taken away again. The court dismissed a prosecutor's suggestion to have Nagaenthran testify via video. "We have to issue a stay of the execution until all proceedings are concluded. That is the proper order of things," Phang said.

The stay on the execution followed a court ruling on Monday that had already granted a similar order, pending the result of the appeal at Singapore's highest court.

Nagaenthran's defense lawyer, M. Ravi, has based his appeal on the argument that executing a mentally disabled person is a violation of Singapore's Constitution.



WRITER GIRL! Actress Emily Ratajkowski prepared for the release of her new book, *My Body*, with an appearance on *The View*.

Omar El Akkad wins Canadian literature award

TORONTO (AP): Omar El Akkad, an Egyptian-Canadian author and journalist, the author of a story of the global refugee crisis through the eyes of a child, has won Canada's richest literary award.

El Akkad won the Scotiabank Giller Prize for his book "What Strange Paradise" on Monday night. The former Globe and Mail journalist received the honor at a nationally televised Toronto gala Monday night.

"What Strange Paradise," published by McClelland & Stewart, is a novel about two children caught in the global refugee crisis.

The story alternates between the perspectives of Amir, a Syrian boy who survives a shipwreck on an unnamed island, and Vanna, the local teenage girl who saves him El Akkad, 39, moved to Canada when he was 16, and went to high school in Montreal before attending Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He lived in Toronto for about a decade, and did a stint in Ottawa as a Parliament Hill reporter.

The Portland, Ore.-based author won critical and commercial success with his debut 2017 novel, "American War," which won the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award, the Oregon Book Award for fiction, and the Kobo Emerging Writer Prize.

Monday night's black-tie affair reinstated the Giller as the bash of the fall books season after last year's celebration was held remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizers slashed the usual guest list by more than half to facilitate social distancing, and attendees were required to show proof of vaccination to take part in the festivities.



The Giller Prize is considered one of the most prestigious in Canadian literature. Past winners have included Margaret Atwood, Mordecai Richler and Alice Munro.

The Giller was created in 1994 by businessman Jack Rabinovitch in memory of his late wife, literary journalist Doris Giller. It honors the best in Canadian fiction.

Aries:

In his book *Be Here Now*, Mystic Ram Dass said, "I can do nothing for you but work on myself... and you can do nothing for me but work on yourself." And so, the secret to an ever-evolving relationship is turning your gaze inwards and showing up for yourself in a consistent manner. So, don't get complacent, Aries. Honour every difference as an opportunity to do the work. Remember, your shadows are the secret portals through which you can bring more light into your being.

Tip: Show up. Level up.

Taurus:

How do you feel about boundaries, Taurus? Are you able to stand up for yourself consistently, day after day? More importantly, do "you" feel worthy of the boundaries that you have set? It's time for some soul-searching, beautiful. We hope this inner dialogue brings about a big shift within and without, whilst helping to find balance in your relationships.

Tip: Do "you" feel worthy of the boundaries you have set?

Gemini:

We're talking about rebellion for the sake of rebellion, beautiful. We're talking about honouring the strings of your soul, reinventing the game, and giving yourself the permission to take the kind of risks you haven't taken before. Something tells us you're going to look back at this time with gratitude in your heart and pride in your eyes. As such, a pas-

sionate encounter may be on the cards for some. The only way to dance to the rhythm is by leaving your inhibitions at home.

Tip: Give yourself the permission to take all kinds of risks, Gemini.

Cancer:

If you're the kind of person who thrives on chaos, you're being asked to step back and observe. Step back and observe the energy you're sending out into the world. Now is the time to clear the clutter and take on as much as you are equipped to. Single-minded focus coupled with dedication will prove to be a game-changer, Cancer. What's more, you'll find that your consistency will bring about a positive change in your finances over a period of time.

Tip: Clear the clutter and focus on what really matters. Spirit has got your back, boo!

Leo:

What if the worst thing that happened to you is the best thing that happened for you? Trust the divine plan, Leo. Trust that you are protected and taken care of, no matter what, and that everything is taking place in your highest good. What awaits you at the end of this dark passageway is a realisation about your true path and purpose. Word for the wise: don't be afraid to follow the stirrings of your heart this time around.

Tip: The worst thing that happened to you is the best thing that could happen for you.

Virgo:

The cards are indicating a new and beautiful beginning in the realm of love, Virgo. The real question is: will you open yourself to what's coming through, or continue to operate from a space of insecurity and fear? Not every tale is a tragic one. By repeating the same you are keeping yourself stuck in a loop. So, embrace the spirit of love, beloved. Let your heart expand in a way it never has. As for the 'who', the 'what' and the 'why'? That's for Spirit to figure out.

Tip: Release those feelings of insecurity and doubt.

Libra:

In the bestseller 'Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life', Hector Garcia Puigcerver says, "The grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for." This is the philosophy on the basis of which you are being called to rewrite the story. But, dreaming up parallel reality is merely the first step. It is your commitment to your goals that will prove to be the game changer here. So, show up for your mission in a way you never have and know that the divine support you need is always available to you.

Tip: It's time to rewrite the story. It's time to show up for what you love.

Scorpio:

Here's the thing, Scorpio: not everybody is going to like what you have to say, and that's okay. This is "your"

cantly increased their investment in producing or licensing Indian shows over the last few years, signing up influential names among the Bollywood elite as partners. Nearly 40 video streaming platforms including Disney+ Hotstar, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and SonyLiv are operating in the country, presenting an array of original Indian programming to their international audiences.

U.S. video streaming platforms like

Indian creator of Int'l Emmy-nominated show hopeful of win

NEW DELHI (AP): Bollywood director and ad maker Ram Madhvani's internet series "Aarya" has already received plenty of love from viewers, along with widespread critical acclaim in India.

On Nov. 22, Madhvani will know whether the first season of the crime thriller wins an International Emmy, the award created to honor excellence in television programming outside the U.S.

One of the most popular Indian shows streamed on Disney+ Hotstar, "Aarya" is nominated in the best drama category and is an official remake of the Dutch crime drama "Penoza." The show is nominated alongside Chile's "El Presidente," Israel's "Tehran" and U.K. show "There She Goes" season 2.

"I think that this is really a great opportunity for me to tell people that this is the work that we have, not just from an 'Aarya' point of view, but from an India point of view," Madhvani told the AP in an interview.

The show, which is also streaming on Hulu and has been dubbed in multiple languages, features actor and former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen in a career-defining role.

Sen plays Aarya Sareen, whose world turns upside down when her husband is shot and she has to "choose between being a mother, a daughter and a wife," Madhvani said.

Two other Indians -- actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui for his Netflix movie "Serious Men" and Vir Das for his Netflix comedy special "Vir Das: For India" -- have also been nominated for this year's International Emmys.

Netflix show "Delhi Crime," a fictionalized version of a brutal New Delhi gang rape, won the best drama series last year, signaling the arrival and recognition of Indian internet content on the global scene.

Streaming platforms have signifi-

Netflix and Amazon Prime Video are also looking at the huge Indian market to power the next phase of their commercial growth, driven by cheap smartphones and affordable data. More than 40% of India's 1.3 billion people use the internet, according to the World Bank. An estimated 900 million internet users are expected in India by 2025.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) global entertainment and media outlook 2020-24 says India will overtake South Korea, Germany and Australia and become the sixth-largest market in 2024 with growth of more than 28%, the fastest of any world market.

To grow their streaming audience, Indian film makers are experimenting with both diverse stories and the narrative devices they use.

For "Aarya," Madhvani used what he calls System 360, which includes filming on actual locations, using multiple cameras and no lights.

"Basically I'll shoot with two, three, four, seven cameras and I allow the actor to do long scenes where I'm interested in life before action and after cut. I do it



in a bit of a documentary-like style," he said.

Madhvani is hoping the show will get a larger international audience thanks to the Emmy nomination. His team is currently working on the second season of the show, which promises to keep the emotional quotient of the crime thriller high.

The filmmaker's first movie in 2002, "Let's Talk," premiered at the Locarno film festival. His 2016 award-winning movie "Neerja" was a critical and commercial success and his next film, "Dhamaka," is slated for a Netflix release later this month.

Drake breaks silence about "devastating tragedy" after performing at Travis Scott's Astroworld Festival

Drake said his "heart is broken" in a message shared to social media to address the tragedy at Travis Scott's Astroworld music festival, which left eight people dead. Drake is addressing the tragedy that occurred at the Astroworld music festival. The rapper, who made a surprise onstage appearance at Travis Scott's Houston show on Friday, Nov. 5, took to Instagram on Monday, Nov. 8 to express his condolences. The concert left eight people dead and 25 others hospitalized, police previously confirmed.

"I've spent the past few days trying to wrap my mind around this devastating tragedy," Drake said in his post. "I hate resorting to this platform to express an emotion as delicate as grief but this is where I find myself."

He continued, "My heart is broken for the families and friends of those who lost their lives and for anyone who is suffering. I will continue to pray for all of them, and will be of service in any way I can. May God be with you all."

More than a dozen concertgoers have filed lawsuits against Travis, as well as the event's organizers. One concertgoer, Kristian Paredes, named Drake

in a lawsuit that was also named Travis, Live Nation and Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation, citing negligence. Per the lawsuit obtained by E! News, Drake allegedly "came on stage alongside Travis Scott and helped incite the crowd," and "the crowd became chaotic and a stampede began leaving eight dead and dozens including Kristian Paredes severely injured."

A spokesperson for Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation and venue NRG Park shared a statement to E! News that read, "Because of pending litigation and ongoing investigations, we are unable to comment." Live Nation did not respond to E! News' previous request for comment. E! News also previously reached out to Travis and Drake.

A day after the Astroworld show, Travis said in a statement posted to Twitter that he was "absolutely devastated by what took place last night." Houston Fire Department's public information officer Asuncion Cortez said in a statement released to E! News, "During the festivities up until the end of the festival, approximately 300 people were treated on site for minor injuries."

Ye's Yeezy pays nearly \$1M to settle slow-shipping lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP): Rapper and fashion mogul Ye's high-end clothing company Yeezy agreed Monday to pay \$950,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by four California district attorneys over slow shipping to customers.

The suit brought last month by the district attorneys of Los Angeles, Sonoma, Napa and Alameda counties alleged that Yeezy had engaged in false advertising about its shipping and had violated state law by failing to send online orders within 30 days. Last month, a judge approved a request from the artist formerly known as Kanye West legally changed his name to Ye.

He designs and sells sneakers under the Yeezy brand in collaboration with Adidas. The company also makes and sells clothes. Adidas was not named as a defendant in the lawsuit.

An email sent seeking comment from Yeezy was not immediately returned.

The settlement includes \$800,000 in civil penalties to the district attorneys' offices, \$50,000 in restitution to a state consumer protection fund, and \$100,000 in investigative costs.

ing that paradigm shift.

Tip: An opportunity that didn't quite work out for you in the past is coming back. Re-negotiate on your own terms.

Aquarius:

This is an exhilarating time for you on the professional front. You're not only moving forward at the right pace, but also attracting magnificent opportunities and gaining recognition for your work. But that's not the real reason for the mysterious smile on your face. It's the act of breaking past your past limitations that's making you feel like the most invincible version of yourself. The next phase of your career, however, is about tapping into the power of the collective. So meditate upon who it is that you would like to sync forces with as you take that next step.

Tip: The next phase of your career is about tapping into the power of the collective.

Pisces:

The cards are pointing towards the presence of an on-again-off-again kind of romance. The kind that has you pining for more every time you let go. But, where do you think this unhealthy pattern is stemming from? What's making your crave for their attention like a plate full of carbs? It's time to do the inner work, Pisces. Remember who you are and what you are worth will help you pluck the weeds out of your garden.

Tip: Give yourself the love and validation you deserve.